South Africa in Australia 1910-11 Five Tests. *Australia Won 4 - 1.*

Balls per over: 6 Playing Hours: 5 hr days (timeless) Captains: C Hill (Aus), PW Sherwell (SA)

South Africa's first tour of Australia, under Percy Sherwell, came at a time when a fad for googly bowling had swept that country. Most of South Africa's bowlers were wrist spinners, with the level of accuracy that usually implies, and who largely came to grief on the hard Australian pitches; the result was a record for the fastest-scoring five-Test series (60.9 runs/100 balls) that would not be broken until England hosted the Ashes in 2001. Australia possessed an experienced team, although they had lost their revered captain Monty Noble. The Board of Control for Australian cricket had, since its inception in 1905, indulged in backroom politics and acted to curtail player power; this forced Noble to sever ties with the game in 1910.

The high-scoring pattern of the series was set on the first day, when Australia's left-handers Clem Hill and Warren Bardsley demolished South Africa's googly theory. In his first Test as captain, Hill scored 191 after reaching 100 off 106 balls, while the 239-ball partnership of 224 occupied less than two hours. Australia finished the day at 6 for 494 off 99 overs, a one-day output unsurpassed in Australia since. There was salt for the wounds; rain then livened up the pitch, and South Africa had no answer to Cotter's pace.

In Melbourne, South Africa bowled Australia out for 348 without any bowler sending down more than 13 overs or taking more than two wickets. Their great all-rounder, Aubrey Faulkner, who in those days of infrequent Tests would play just 25 Tests over 18 years, then made his presence felt, scoring South Africa's first double century as they reached 506. It should have been enough, but Trumper, who had been bowled by the first bosie bowled to him by Bosanquet back in 1902, now feasted on them, scoring a record 133 runs off 136 balls in an extended (2½ hour) post-tea session, as wickets fell regularly. The eventual lead of 170 was enough for Whitty, swinging the ball heavily in a cross-breeze, to bring South Africa down for 80; he finished with 6 for 17.

Facing another challenge in Adelaide after South Africa scored 482, Trumper produced an even greater innings, a flawless 214 not out, a new record for Australia. He reached his 200 off 236 balls without a false stroke. But South Africa batted well again – Faulkner now had 486 runs in three Tests – and the target of 378 was just a little too much for Australia, even in a match which produced 1,646 runs and eleven half-centuries on a benign pitch. Schwarz, the best of the googler gang, took 4 for 48. Trumper's innings stood for 90 years as the highest Test innings made for a losing side (since broken by Brian Lara and Nathan Astle). South Africa's first win against Australia would be their last against them for over 40 years.

The Australians applied themselves a little more in the final Tests; their batting always looked strong, even though Sherwell sent them in to bat in both matches, and they now had an effective legspinner of their own in HV Hordern, who took eight wickets on debut. South Africa had to play catch-up and chase throughout; Hill hit a century off 96 balls in the fourth Test in Australia's record second innings of 578, while Charlie Macartney, after being dropped for one Test, returned in Sydney with 137 and 56, reaching the latter half-century in 35 minutes (44 balls). Some good individual performances by the South Africans, Schwarz 6 for 47 and Zulch 150 in Sydney, were too isolated to change the outcome.

It was a series for record-breaking: Faulkner's 732 runs and Trumper's average of 94.4 were new highs for a five-Test series, as was Whitty's 37 wickets. Australia's 3,475 runs have only twice been exceeded by a team in a five-Test series.