

## England v West Indies 1957: Comparison of Balls Faced Sources (Re-scoring of scorebooks v *Daily Express* published BF)

For many years I have been going back through old newspapers to search for mentions of balls faced by batsmen. I thought I must have nearly exhausted the sources, so I was most surprised to find that the *Daily Express* newspaper in England had in 1957 included a column for Balls Faced in its published scorecards. This is now the earliest known source to report in this way: earlier sources, which are rare enough, reported Balls Faced in a Notes section (for example, the 1920-21 Ashes). Previously, the earliest Tests for which I had seen Balls Faced reported in this format was in the *Rand Daily Mail* in South Africa a few months later (against Australia). It remained highly unusual for many years.

I wondered if this reporting might have been related to Bill Ferguson coming out of retirement to score this series. However, the *Express* maintained this style right through the series including the 5th Test, even after Ferguson suffered a terrible misfortune after the 4th Test. I haven't seen a full description of what happened to Fergie, but it appears that he had a bad fall at a hotel in August, was in hospital for quite some time, then died on 22<sup>nd</sup> September shortly after being discharged from hospital. He did not score the final Test of the series in August.

This was the first year of such detailed reporting in the *Express*. In 1956, there was a column for minutes batted but not Balls Faced. After 1957, the BF reporting continued up to 1961 for home Tests. They gave up on it for the 1962 Tests, and it is a shame that it didn't catch on elsewhere.

It has created a bit of a problem; the BF data found so far is sometimes difficult to reconcile fully with my own re-scoring of the traditional scoresheets preserved from this series. I will have to study this more at some stage.

The *Daily Express* has been a paper that has mostly been out of reach in Australia in the past. The extended British Newspaper Archive (subscription required) has been progressively adding more years of this most useful paper to its online service.

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Previously, I had calculated balls faced figures by re-scoring surviving scorebooks. I have tabulated these and compared them to the *Express* figures (where available – not all innings were covered) in the attached table.

The comparison was disconcerting in places, in that there were many differences between the two data sets. In my original analysis, I had already flagged the fact that anomalies, even provable errors, had cropped up in some of the scores. This was not uncommon in scores from this era. Additional uncertainty was created because byes and leg byes were not marked in the scores; I had to estimate their position in a way that preserved the batsmen's runs scored and sequence of scoring strokes. Balls faced for most large innings contained uncertainties.

Does this mean that the *Express* figures are more reliable? Prima facie, yes. However, we are not informed how the figures were obtained. There are also innings which the balls faced simply cannot be reproduced using the scorebooks, even if the byes and leg byes are shuffled around. At Lord's Kanhai's first innings comes to 65 balls while the *Express* says 54. While some fudging of the re-score is possible, the score data cannot be stretched enough to produce a figure of 54 balls.

I have done closer study of the Edgbaston Test, important thanks to the record-breaking May/Cowdrey partnership. My original re-score gave May 625 balls and Cowdrey 621. There were problems with the score, including the fact that on the batting page of the score Cowdrey's strokes added up to 150 rather than 154. The *Express* published balls faced came to May for 635 and Cowdrey 610. Playing around with the leg byes, I was able to get the Cowdrey innings down from 621 to 613, but I could not match the 610. Is close enough good enough?

If Cowdrey faced 613 balls, then his century came off 527 balls; I previously had 535. The 527 is still the slowest known Test century of all time, although Nazar Mohammad probably came very close to this at Lucknow in 1952-53 (no published figures for Balls faced, but Nazar batted 174 overs to reach 100, to Cowdrey's 166).

An additional problem with this innings is the difference in balls faced by the openers. The rescore gives Peter Richardson 100 balls but the *Express* says 119, a wide gap. Once again there are identifiable errors in the score, so maybe we should accept the *Express* numbers. But note that the 119 balls would require about 62 % of the strike to Brian Close's 38 %, possible but rather unusual for a 32-over partnership.

What figures to use? The scores, which have more problems than usual for a series in England, are probably not as precise as the *Express* figures. However, apart from the Edgbaston Test, I will not alter my database figures; I will just leave a link to the table of the differences for others to ponder.

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				Runs	Rescore BF	Daily Express BF Inns 1 NA
Birmingham	Eng	PE Richardson	CGT	47	150	
Birmingham	Eng	DB Close	CWK	15	33	
Birmingham	Eng	DJ Insole	BWD	20	41	
Birmingham	Eng	PBH May	CGT	30	96	
Birmingham	Eng	MC Cowdrey	CGT	4	30	
Birmingham	Eng	TE Bailey	BWD	1	5	
Birmingham	Eng	GAR Lock	BWD	0	5	
Birmingham	Eng	TG Evans	BWD	14	38	
Birmingham	Eng	JC Laker	BWD	7	9	
Birmingham	Eng	FS Trueman	N.O	29	45	
Birmingham	Eng	JB Statham	BWD	13	26	
Birmingham	WI	RB Kanhai	LBW	42	94	
Birmingham	WI	BH Pairaudeau	BWD	1	11	
Birmingham	WI	CL Walcott	CWK	90	240	
Birmingham	WI	EdeC Weekes	BWD	9	24	
Birmingham	WI	GStA Sobers	CGT	53	113	
Birmingham	WI	OG Smith	LBW	161	350	341
Birmingham	WI	FMM Worrell	BWD	81	250	263
Birmingham	WI	JDC Goddard	CGT	24	59	60
Birmingham	WI	DStE Atkinson	CGT	1	3	3
Birmingham	WI	S Ramadhin	N.O	5	6	6
Birmingham	WI	R Gilchrist	RO	0	0	0
Birmingham	Eng	PE Richardson	CSB	34	100	119
Birmingham	Eng	DB Close	CGT	42	164	144
Birmingham	Eng	DJ Insole	BWD	0	4	7
Birmingham	Eng	PBH May	N.O	285	625	635
Birmingham	Eng	MC Cowdrey	CSB	154	621	610
Birmingham	Eng	TG Evans	N.O	29	34	33
Birmingham	Eng					
Birmingham	Eng					
Birmingham	Eng					
Birmingham	Eng					
Birmingham	WI	RB Kanhai	CGT	1	5	5
Birmingham	WI	BH Pairaudeau	BWD	7	22	21
Birmingham	WI	GStA Sobers	CGT	14	29	26
Birmingham	WI	EdeC Weekes	CGT	33	105	104
Birmingham	WI	FMM Worrell	CGT	0	24	29
Birmingham	WI	CL Walcott	CGT	1	34	33
Birmingham	WI	OG Smith	LBW	5	81	88
Birmingham	WI	JDC Goddard	N.O	0	51	45
Birmingham	WI	DStE Atkinson	N.O	4	9	9
Birmingham	WI					

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					Rescore BF	Daily Express BF
Nottingham	Eng	PE Richardson	CGT	126	291	294
Nottingham	Eng	DV Smith	CWK	1	13	14
Nottingham	Eng	TW Graveney	BWD	258	500	483
Nottingham	Eng	PBH May	LBW	104	200	200
Nottingham	Eng	MC Cowdrey	RO	55	130	138
Nottingham	Eng	DW Richardson	BWD	33	86	78
Nottingham	Eng	TG Evans	N.O	26	45	46
Nottingham	Eng	TE Bailey	N.O	3	9	6
Nottingham	Eng	FS Trueman	DNB			
Nottingham	Eng	JB Statham	DNB			
Nottingham	Eng	JC Laker	DNB			
Nottingham	WI	FMM Worrell	N.O	191	505	505
Nottingham	WI	GStA Sobers	BWD	47	139	144
Nottingham	WI	CL Walcott	C&B	17	49	48
Nottingham	WI	RB Kanhai	CWK	42	139	134
Nottingham	WI	EdeC Weekes	BWD	33	60	65
Nottingham	WI	OG Smith	CWK	2	10	10
Nottingham	WI	DStE Atkinson	CWK	4	8	7
Nottingham	WI	JDC Goddard	CGT	0	3	4
Nottingham	WI	R Gilchrist	CGT	1	8	8
Nottingham	WI	AL Valentine	BWD	1	3	2
Nottingham	WI	S Ramadhin	BWD	19	40	41
Nottingham	WI	FMM Worrell	BWD	16	40	42
Nottingham	WI	GStA Sobers	LBW	9	25	26
Nottingham	WI	CL Walcott	CWK	7	20	16
Nottingham	WI	RB Kanhai	CWK	28	68	66
Nottingham	WI	EdeC Weekes	BWD	3	17	19
Nottingham	WI	OG Smith	BWD	168	375	386
Nottingham	WI	DStE Atkinson	CWK	46	125	118
Nottingham	WI	JDC Goddard	CWK	61	195	193
Nottingham	WI	S Ramadhin	BWD	15	19	19
Nottingham	WI	R Gilchrist	BWD	0	3	3
Nottingham	WI	AL Valentine	N.O	2	3	2
Nottingham	Eng	PE Richardson	CWK	11	18	17
Nottingham	Eng	DV Smith	N.O	16	40	43
Nottingham	Eng	TW Graveney	N.O	28	45	42
Nottingham	Eng					
Nottingham	Eng					
Nottingham	Eng					
Nottingham	Eng					

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