

## ***The Forgotten One Day Match – Johannesburg 1967***

The match between Australia and England played at the MCG on January 5, 1971, has come to be recognised as the first limited-overs one-day international. However, four of the Australians – Lawry, Redpath, Stackpole and McKenzie – had played on March 4, 1967, in a little-known forerunner at the New Wanderers in Johannesburg. Like the very first Test match of 1877, it was an addition to the tour fixtures and went unreported in *Wisden*.

The match was played just after the South Africans had very convincingly defeated Australia in the 1966-67 Test series, making Bob Simpson's team the first Australian touring party to lose three Tests in a full five-match contest. Only a rain storm had prevented another decisive South African triumph in the Fourth Test at Johannesburg. While Graeme Pollock viewed the tour as "tight and often exciting", the recently-retired Richie Benaud described it as "the most disastrous overseas tour ever conducted by an Australian cricket side". The visitors had contributed significantly to their own downfall. According to South African all-rounder Mike Proctor,

The Australians had problems throughout the tour with their middle order batting and their spinners never really bowled to their full potential. On top of it they dropped numerous catches at vital stages and this did not help their cause in the least, particularly in the tests where missed chances cost them dearly.

Moreover, as Graeme Pollock pointed out, the visitors "were re-building. They had a number of new 'names', but also a lot of experienced players to call upon. No doubt they hoped their veterans would pull the youngsters through while the latter gradually got the feel of things. But unfortunately for them the experienced players never quite came off ... Apart from Simpson and Redpath, the Australian batting was nothing like as strong as we feared". Peter Pollock believed that the Australian batsmen were "just not equipped to deal with our non-stop attack." On top of that, he felt that "when McKenzie was not bowling, the Aussie attack wore its mediocrity like a badge. If Simpson, Lawry and Redpath failed, it was trouble ..." <sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the talented South Africans regarded themselves as more than a match for the Australians. They had levelled the 1963-64 series in Australia with an emphatic ten-wicket triumph in Adelaide. Mike Proctor maintained that South Africa's 1965 victory in a three-match series against England had boosted his team-mates' confidence in their ability "to take on anyone":

There was a complete air of confidence coming from the players and administrators and I think this tougher mental attitude made all the difference ... We were now thinking like winners ...

This determined outlook was strengthened by the fact that skipper Peter van der Merwe and his predecessor Trevor Goddard had moulded a group of "individualists" into a very strong team. As Keith Stackpole put it, the South Africans were now "absolutely merciless once they had a grip on the match." <sup>2</sup>

Cricketers had long regarded a South African tour as "the best outside England". In many respects, Simpson's team found that, in many ways, this was still the case. Compared with the hectic pace of modern tour schedules, they enjoyed "an idyllic existence" in South Africa. Graham McKenzie, for example, remembers generous hospitality from people who "had the means to entertain well", with "swimming pools, servants and familiar foods", making his time off the field "very pleasant". <sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the Australians "were not a happy bunch." Gideon Haigh has suggested that, while "several younger players" found their captain "stand-offish", several older players, "having felt the sharp edge of Simpson's tongue, also became disillusioned." Neil Hawke claimed that the players could not "get through" to their skipper, saying "We can't understand him." Tom Veivers' opinion that "Simmo seemed a bit preoccupied on that trip" is significant, since Simpson certainly had a major worry on his mind in South Africa: a defamation writ relating to his book *Captain's Story* had been served on him just before the First Test. As he commented, "It was a worrying time for me. It wasn't pleasant. Who wants legal action?" <sup>4</sup>

According to Veivers, Simpson was also "preoccupied" with the standard of umpiring, which English journalist Michael Melford suggested was the "least satisfactory feature of the series". After the Second Test, the touring party "had lost all confidence" in umpire Hayward Kidson. Their outlook was not improved when, despite objections lodged by manager Bill Jacobs, the South African Cricket Association appointed Kidson for the entire series. Though Keith Stackpole shared Graham McKenzie's view that "the South African hospitality was overwhelming," he found that there were social occasions when the attitude of the locals "was often irritating":

For the first time in history they were on their way to being the number one cricket nation, and as the tour progressed they became increasingly cocky and arrogant. Perhaps this was understandable, for they had many critics in the world because of

their apartheid policy and, with a white population about the size of Victoria's, they delighted in any international triumph.

Along with being shocked by the racial segregation of the crowds, Tom Veivers was at times troubled by the attitude of many Afrikaners, whom he found "hard to deal with":

I remember going to a barbecue ... at Bloemfontein, and how, when the locals wanted to talk among themselves, they'd drop into Afrikaans. It was very awkward. They weren't very likeable people.<sup>5</sup>

Despite its various tensions, the tour had been an enormous financial success. According to Gideon Haigh, "aggregate crowds of 577,000 exceeded those of the preceding Ashes series. Australia's profit share exceeded \$66,000 from seventy-six days' cricket, compared to \$60,000 from more than 100 days on its last tour of England." Consequently, as Bill Jacobs recalled, the South African officials "put it to us that we play another game."<sup>6</sup> By the end of the Fifth Test, the Australians had been in Africa for 135 days. Given the strains that had arisen on the tour, they were not enthusiastic about extending their stay.

The proposal put before the tourists was highly unusual, particularly at the international level: a one-day match limited to fifty overs for each side. In 1962, some one-day limited-overs matches involving first-class cricketers had been played in England, with the Gillette Cup competition commencing a year later. (Not until 1969-70 would Australia introduce "a very modest domestic program of Limited Overs".)<sup>7</sup> In South Africa fixtures for many years had included a small number of one-day encounters between Currie Cup elevens and combinations representing South African schools and universities. However, these were not limited-overs contests – in 1964, for example, North Eastern Transvaal had bowled as many as 96 overs in an innings against a Schools' team. Occasionally, teams had batted on after passing the opposition score, and there had even been games in which a third innings was commenced. In 1963, a new element appeared in South Africa's one-day matches when twelve players from South African Schools, including Barry Richards, Mike Procter and Hylton Ackerman, faced an International Cavaliers Eleven led by Australian Test captain Richie Benaud. Among the others in his team were Arthur Morris, Bill Alley, Graham McKenzie, Johnny Martin, Phil Sharpe, Micky Stewart and David Sincock.

The reluctance of Simpson's team to play the proposed additional fixture was eased by the South African Broadcasting Corporation's offer of 600 rand for the winning team, and 400 for the loser. According to Bill Jacobs, Ian Chappell wanted the money to be split evenly,

but the South Africans "were pretty keen on themselves" and were not interested in dividing the purse evenly. Since the rand was "approximately equivalent to the Australian dollar", the prize money represented, in those pre-WSC times, "a substantial amount". Jacobs recalled that "The fellas were happy as we were going to divide it among each of the 15 players." <sup>8</sup>

In selecting their team, the tourists made an unusual move. As Bill Jacobs explained, they were so serious about winning that Bob Simpson opted to keep wickets himself. The plan was that, by dropping wicket-keeper Brain Taber from their Fifth Test side, the Australians could play an extra batsman. Grahame Thomas therefore came into the team, along with Tom Veivers and Jim Hubble, who replaced Ian Chappell and Johnny Martin. In hindsight, Chappell's omission might seem surprising, but the South African tour had been "an unhappy time" for him. At a time when his international career seemed to hinge on his all-round abilities, the five Tests had exposed the young South Australian's discomfort as a middle-order batsman and leg-spinner, leaving him with only 196 runs and five wickets at 59.20 to his credit. <sup>9</sup> The South African eleven contained nine players from the recent Test, with skipper Peter van der Merwe and Jackie Du Preeze making way for Barry Richards and Atholl McKinnon. However, the unusual feature about the selection process was that it was not handled by the official selectors; instead, the team was chosen by popular vote among listeners to the South African Broadcasting Commission's Sports Round-Up radio program.

Batting first after winning the toss, the Australians scored at more than six runs an over, with opener Bill Lawry making 91. The decision to include Grahame Thomas certainly paid a solid dividend. Coming in at the first drop, the elegant New South Wales right-hander scored 70 before being bowled by Peter Pollock. For Ian Redpath, the most memorable moment in the match came during Keith Stackpole's innings of 47. Facing Pollock, "who had given us so much trouble during the series", Stackpole clouted one delivery from the end of his bat "over the long-on fence and clean out of the park". Redpath felt that "we all preferred to remember that hit than anything else in the whole game – or for that matter the whole series ..." <sup>10</sup> It was a stroke that lifted Australian spirits immensely and, with 8/323 on the board after their fifty overs, the tourists regarded themselves as well placed to win the match.

A slow start from the South Africans reinforced their optimism. However, all such hopes were dashed by 23-year-old Graeme Pollock. At Perth in 1963, the brilliant left-hander had hit 127 runs between lunch and tea, with 22 fours, inspiring Sir Donald Bradman to remark, "When next he bats like that, I'd like to be present." Richie Benaud believed that, on that 1963-64 tour, Pollock's batting "was as good as anything that has ever been seen in our

country".<sup>11</sup> On this day in Johannesburg, Pollock was again in blazing form. With a commanding 132 not out that included a "rapid-fire" partnership of 45 with his brother Peter, he helped South Africa to a victorious 7/327.

The match was soon forgotten. *Wisden* was not alone in failing to note that it had taken place. In the two books written in English about the 1966-67 tour, Jackie McGlew's *Six For Glory*, and Dick Whittington's *Simpson's Safari*, the New Wanderers fixture is not mentioned. (In fact, Whittington had left South Africa before the Fifth Test.) Apart from Ian Redpath's comments about Stackpole's six in *Always Reddy*, there is no reference to the one-day encounter in books by, or about, players who had taken part in it. However, under the heading "Australia v. 'Sports Round-Up' (South African Broadcasting Corporation) Invitation XI", the Victorian Cricket Association's 1966-67 *Annual Report* provided batting and bowling details, as well as the fall of wickets, for each innings. In recent years, this basic information has also appeared on the Cricinfo and Cricket Archive websites which respectively refer to Australia's opponents as "South Africa" and "South African XI". Cricket Archive ranks the game as a "List A Match", using a category created by the Association of Cricket Statisticians and made official by the ICC in 2006. (Matches included under the List A classification are one-day internationals, the "top limited over matches in domestic cricket" and one-day matches played between touring and domestic teams.)

Whatever it was, the day at the New Wanderers on March 4, 1967, deserves to be remembered as a significant harbinger of the revolution that would engulf cricket in the years to come.

*Alf Batchelder*

### *Notes*

1. Pollock, Graeme: *Down the Wicket*, London, 1968, pp.98-99; Whittington, R.S.: *Simpson's Safari*, Melbourne, 1967, pp.xvii, 210. Procter, Mike: *Cricket Buccaneer*, Cape Town, 1974, p.96. Pollock, Graeme: *op.cit.*, pp.98-99; Pollock, Peter: *God's Fast Bowler*, Vereeniging, 2001, p.72.
2. Procter, Mike: *op.cit.*, p.96; Stackpole, Keith: *Not Just for Openers*, Abbotsford, 1974, p.52.
3. Jaggard, Ed.: *Garth – The Story of Graham McKenzie*, Fremantle, 1993, pp.134-135, 141.

4. Pollock, Peter: *op.cit.*, p.72; Haigh, Gideon: *The Summer Game*, Melbourne, 1997, pp.242-243.
5. Jaggard, Ed.: *op.cit.*, pp.134-135, 141; Stackpole, Keith: *op.cit.*, p.52; Haigh, Gideon: *op.cit.*, pp.242-243.
6. Haigh, Gideon: *op.cit.*, p.245; Piesse, Ken: *One-Day Magic*, Sydney, 1996?, pp.8-9.
7. Cashman, Richard, in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Cricket*, Melbourne, 1996, p.308.
8. Piesse, Ken: *op.cit.*, pp.8-9.
9. Mallett, Ashley, with Chappell, Ian: *Chappelli Speaks Out*, Crows Nest, 2005, pp.24-26.
10. Redpath, Ian, with Phillipson, Neill: *Always Reddy*, Toorak, 1976, p.79.
11. Pollock, Peter and Graeme: *Bouncers and Boundaries*, Johannesburg, 1969, p.9.