

## AUSTRALIA V. NEW ZEALAND BOXING DAY TEST



DECEMBER 26, 2019  
FACT SHEET - DAY 1

### Test Cricket at the MCG

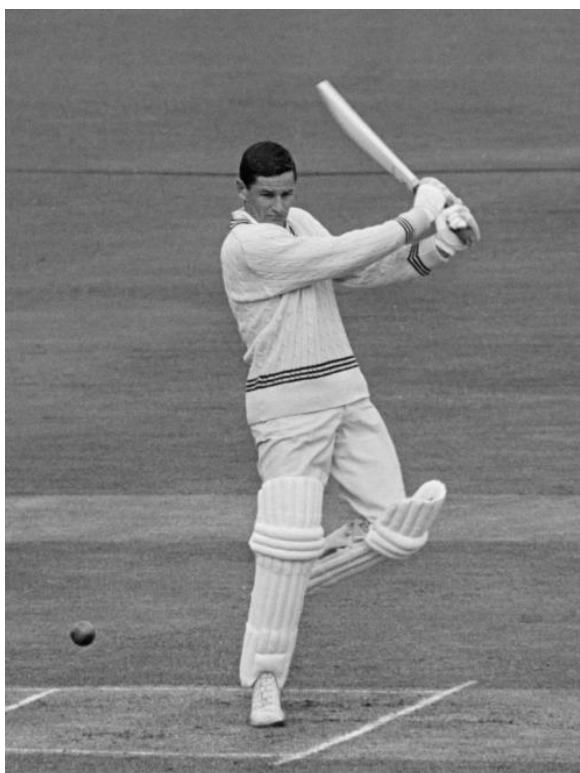
Beginning with the inaugural Test match in March 1877, 111 Tests have been staged at the MCG, 3 of which have involved New Zealand, the first in 1973/74. Australia has won one of these contests, with the remaining two being drawn. The other sides to play Tests at the MCG are England (56), the West Indies (15), South Africa (12), India (13), Pakistan (10) and Sri Lanka (2). One Test, scheduled to be played against England in 1970/71 was abandoned without a ball bowled and is not counted in the records.

### Boxing Day Tests at the MCG

Traditionally, the Victoria versus New South Wales Sheffield Shield clash was played at the MCG over Christmas, and prior to the 1968/69 season, only two MCG Tests had included play on Boxing Day, the Second against England in 1950/51, which began on Friday 22 December (Boxing Day, a Tuesday, being the third day of the match), and the Second Test against South Africa in 1952/53 which commenced on Christmas Eve. The first Test to **begin** on Boxing Day at the MCG was the Second Test against the West Indies in 1968/69, the 56th at the ground, when bleak conditions restricted the attendance to 18,786. During the following decade only two MCG Tests featured play on 26 December, the Second against England in 1974/75 and the Second against the West Indies next season, both of which commenced on that day.

From 1980/81, however, only one season has not featured Test cricket at the MCG on Boxing Day. This was in 1989/90 when, owing to the late arrival of the Pakistan team, a One-Day International against Sri Lanka was played instead, the MCG Test involving Pakistan being put back to mid-January. MCG Tests have begun on Boxing Day in each of the other seasons during this period, apart from 1984/85, when the Fourth Test against the West Indies started on 22 December and in 1988/89 and 1994/95, when matches against the West Indies and England both commenced on Christmas Eve.

Australia and New Zealand have only met in Tests at the MCG on three previous occasions. The MCC library fact sheets for each of the first three days of this match will highlight one of those contests. Today's sheet reviews the First Test of the 1973/74 series.



### NEW ZEALAND'S CAPTAIN

*A courageous and stubborn batsman, devoid of any flamboyant strokes or mannerisms, Bevan Congdon was thrust into the captaincy during the 1971/72 series in the West Indies, following a career-ending back injury to the long-serving Graham Dowling. If ever the added pressures and responsibilities of leadership rested easily on the shoulders of any player it was Congdon, producing a gritty 126 in his first innings in the position. After a quiet home series against Pakistan early in 1973, he was back to his inspirational best in the first two Tests in England a few months later. Set a formidable 479 to win in the first, he shrugged off a blow to the face from a sharply-lifting delivery from John Snow when 24 to compile 176 (409 minutes, 377 balls, 19 fours) and his side ultimately fell just 39 short of the target. A little over a week later, he again defied the England attack to anchor his side's 551 at Lord's with a marathon 175 (514 minutes, 454 balls, 12 fours). As Wisden was to observe years later: "Not many players thrown into Test captaincy do well, but the quietly determined Bevan Congdon was an exception." At the time of his arrival in Australia, he had played 42 Tests, in which he tallied 2553 runs at 34.04 and 33 wickets at 36.12.*

## The 1973/74 New Zealand touring team

### NEW ZEALAND CRICKET TEAM

AUSTRALIAN TOUR 1973/74



FRANK BOASE PHOTOGRAPH

42 SHEFFIELD STREET MALVERN, S.A. 5061

Back Row: J. F. M. Morrison, K. O. Campbell, B. L. Cairns.  
Middle Row: D. R. O'Sullivan, M. J. F. Shrimpton, B. Andrews, J. V. Coney, R. J. Hadlee, G. D. Alabaster.  
Front Row: D. R. Hadlee, K. J. Wadsworth, B. E. Congdon (Captain), R. A. Vance (Manager), G. M. Turner (Vice-Captain), B. F. Hastings, J. M. Parker.

The strength of the touring squad was potentially weakened by the unavailability, for a variety of reasons, of batsmen Mark Burgess and Rodney Redmond, bowlers Hedley Howarth and Dick Collinge, and all-rounders Vic Pollard and Bruce Taylor, all of whom had toured England earlier in the year. Nonetheless, the season was a momentous one for New Zealand cricket in view of Australia's long-overdue agreement to host a Test series against the Kiwis for the first time, ending decades of condescending attitudes to the playing standards of their nearest neighbour by successive Australian administrations, an assessment made through, as New Zealand cricket historian Don Neely more bluntly put it, "either indifference or disdain". Of the 727 Tests played by all countries ahead of the coming series, only one had been between Australia and NZ and that, at Wellington in March 1946, was not accorded official status until two years after the event.

### First Test Match, New Year Test : MCG, December 29, 1973 – January 2, 1974

Both sides sprang selection surprises. Australia included 20-year-old Ian Davis after only six first-class appearances, while New Zealand introduced 28-year-old Otago medium-pacer Bryan Andrews in preference to Lance Cairns, who had taken six wickets against South Australia only a few days earlier. The visitors also named a second debutant in John Morrison, relegating Jeremy Coney to 12th man. Max Walker was declared unfit on the morning of the match, having failed to recover from a badly bruised knee incurred in the previous Sheffield Shield match against New South Wales, allowing Gary Gilmour to also make his Test bow.

Having won the toss, Australian captain Ian Chappell had no hesitation in batting in hot, trying conditions and on a pitch that appeared full of runs. Keith Stackpole made his intentions clear from the opening over delivered by Richard Hadlee, playing just his third Test. He struck a three, a two and a four before skying the sixth ball towards cover, where Brian Hastings and Mike Shrimpton collided in attempting the catch and the ball dropped harmlessly to the turf. Undeterred, the burly opener continued his aggression, despite further chances when 32 and 48 in addition to losing opening partner Paul Sheahan at 1/75.



Ian Chappell joined Stackpole and saw Australia through to lunch at 1/97. The pair opened out after the adjournment, raising their century partnership in even time and extending it to 128 before Stackpole (222 minutes, 192 balls, 13 fours) top-edged Shrimpton to slip. The leg-spinner struck again nine runs later, having the Australian captain (135 minutes, 112 balls, three fours) caught at square leg. Greg Chappell (93 minutes, 115 balls, seven fours and a six) provided spectators with the aesthetic treat of the day, as he often did, with an array of elegant strokes which featured several perfectly-executed and graceful on-drives. Seemingly on course for a 100, his dismissal 40 minutes before stumps came as a complete surprise. Australia ended the day well placed at 4/335, with Walters on 52 and the debutant Davis 15.

Next morning, Davis was dismissed from the first ball he faced, followed soon after by Rod Marsh and Walters (179 minutes, 142 balls, nine fours). Dayle Hadlee accounted for all three in the space of 33 deliveries at a personal cost of 15 runs, before Gilmour (69 minutes, 58 balls, five fours) and Kerry O'Keefe (90 minutes, 67 balls, two fours) combined to add 81 for the eighth wicket. Gilmour left 10 minutes after the lunch break, at which point Ian Chappell declared.

Rain intervened three overs into the visitors' reply, sending the players off the field for 10 minutes, then a further 70 after returning for only three deliveries. When play resumed, "New Zealand thought safety first, second and third" to quote Barrie Bretland of the Melbourne *Sun*, scoring from only 31 of the 247 balls sent down by the Australian bowlers during the day. Glenn Turner (72 minutes) was caught at third slip from a sharply-rearing Tony Dell delivery, Shrimpton (43 minutes, one four) edged Gilmour to Marsh and Brian Hastings (26 minutes) was bowled via his pads by an O'Keefe wrong'un from the last ball of the day, without offering a shot, leaving a similarly immobile John Parker (143 minutes, one four) not out and NZ reeling at 3/51.

O'Keefe had Parker caught at slip within the first 10 minutes next day, as NZ maintained its policy of passive resistance. Bevan Congdon and Morrison (140 minutes, 139 balls, four fours), on debut, held firm for an hour but it was not until Ken Wadsworth came to the wicket after the skipper departed that the Australian attack was seriously challenged. In association with the stoic Morrison, he dominated their sixth-wicket stand of 89, causing Percy Beames of the Melbourne *Age* to reflect that "he cut, pulled and deflected in a way that made his innings rate with Greg Chappell's 60 for Australia".

When he was ninth out at 237, Wadsworth had made 80 (138 minutes, 126 balls, eight fours) of the 137 added while he was at the crease. Ian Chappell enforced the follow-on, but Parker and stand-in opener Morrison appeared untroubled by the opening attack of Dell and Gilmour. Enter Doug Walters, whose seemingly innocuous medium-pacers yet again demonstrated his uncanny ability to break partnerships. He captured all three wickets to fall, leaving the Kiwis 3/85 at stumps (Hastings 12, Congdon 1), still 140 runs adrift of making the home side bat again. To make matters worse, Turner was only going to bat as an absolute last resort, having re-injured the same finger during the first innings that he had fractured earlier in the tour.

Australia completed the formalities next day, winning the Test with a day and a half to spare, without having to bat a second time. Wadsworth (67 minutes, two fours) again gave a spirited display and Dayle Hadlee (97 minutes, five fours) demonstrated a sound technique that belied his lowly position in the order. Spinners O'Keefe and Ashley Mallett shared the bowling honours, ending proceedings an hour after lunch.

## AUSTRALIA v. NEW ZEALAND (1973-74)

### First Test Match

Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 29, 30, 1973, January 1 & 2, 1974.

Australia won by an innings & 25 runs. Toss: Australia.

#### Australia

K. R. Stackpole c Parker b Shrimpton. ..	122	† R. W. Marsh c Parker b D. R. Hadlee ..	6
A. P. Sheahan c Wadsworth b D. R. Hadlee	28	K. J. O'Keefe not out. . . . .	40
* I. M. Chappell c R. J. Hadlee		G. J. Gilmour b Congdon .. . . .	52
b Shrimpton. . . . .	54	Lb 4, w 1, nb 1. . . . .	6
G. S. Chappell c Wadsworth b Congdon	60		
K. D. Walters c Wadsworth b D. R. Hadlee	79	1/75 2/203 3/212 (8 wkts, dec.)	462
I. C. Davis c Wadsworth b D. R. Hadlee.	15	4/304 5/345 6/363 7/381 8/462	

A. A. Mallett and A. R. Dell did not bat.

Bowling: R. J. Hadlee 25-4-104-0; Andrews 19-2-100-0; D. R. Hadlee 20-2-102-4; O'Sullivan 22-3-80-0; Shrimpton 7-0-39-2; Congdon 8.5-1-31-2.

#### New Zealand

(followed on)

G. M. Turner c Gilmour b Dell. . . . .	6	- absent hurt	
J. M. Parker c I. M. Chappell b O'Keefe. . . . .	27	- c I. M. Chappell b Walters .. . . .	23
M. J. F. Shrimpton c Marsh b Gilmour .. . . .	16	- b Walters .. . . .	22
B. F. Hastings b O'Keefe. . . . .	1	- c Marsh b Mallett .. . . .	22
* B. E. Congdon st Marsh b Mallett. . . . .	31	- c Marsh b Mallett .. . . .	14
J. F. M. Morrison c Marsh b Gilmour. . . . .	44	- (1) c Marsh b Walters .. . . .	16
† K. J. Wadsworth c G. S. Chappell b Gilmour	80	- (6) c Stackpole b Mallett. . . . .	30
R. J. Hadlee c Marsh b Gilmour .. . . .	9	- (7) c I. M. Chappell b O'Keefe. . . . .	6
D. R. Hadlee run out .. . . .	2	- (8) c & b O'Keefe. . . . .	37
D. R. O'Sullivan c Davis b Mallett .. . . .	6	- (9) c & b Mallett. . . . .	8
B. Andrews not out .. . . .	0	- (10) not out. . . . .	5
B 8, lb 5, nb 2 .. . . .	15	B 8, lb 9. . . . .	17
1/19 2/47 3/51 4/56 5/100 6/189	237	1/37 2/54 3/83 4/109 5/113	200
7/215 8/230 9/237 10/237		6/134 7/150 8/188 9/200	

Bowling: First Innings — Dell 22-7-54-1; Gilmour 22-4-75-4; G. S. Chappell 4-2-4-0; Mallett 16.7-2-46-2; O'Keefe 14-4-40-2; I. M. Chappell 1-0-3-0. Second Innings — Dell 5-0-9-0; Gilmour 3-0-16-0; G. S. Chappell 7-3-18-0; Walters 13-4-26-3; O'Keefe 29.6-12-51-2; Mallett 24-4-63-4.

Close of play scores: 1st day — Aust 4/335 (Walters 52, Davis 15); 2nd day — NZ (1) 3/51 (Parker 26); 3rd day — NZ (2) 3/85 (Hastings 12, Congdon 1). Eight-ball overs.

Umpires: T. F. Brooks & J. R. Collins.

Facts sheet research by MCC Library Volunteers Ray Webster and Ross Perry.

Edited by David Studham and Trevor Ruddell.

Thanks to our friends at Tastats and Cricket Archive

## KEN WADSWORTH

Ken Wadsworth was an important member of New Zealand teams during his seven-year career, as evidenced by the fact that his 33 Test matches were consecutive. Confident and always competitive, he challenged the bowling by employing a range of aggressive and well-executed strokes. Impetuosity, however, often proved his undoing. Initially, his glove work was regarded as adequate but improved beyond recognition during his career, becoming outstanding in its athleticism and dexterity. He held the NZ record for Test dismissals (96) by the end of his career, a figure since surpassed by Ian Smith, Adam Parore and B-J Watling, who each made more than double his appearances.



Wadsworth first came under notice as a 17-year-old when chosen in a 15-man squad, under the auspices of the New Zealand Cricket Council, which played 42 non first-class matches (35 of which were one-dayers) in eight countries between June and August 1964. The party included only one Test player (Bob Cunis), three with first-class experience and the remaining 11 juniors of promise. Wadsworth contributed a useful 405 runs overall at an average of 18.40 and 30 dismissals (26ct, 4st).

Four years elapsed before his first-class debut in December 1968, two months later recording 103 (130 minutes, 128 balls, two sixes, 12 fours) for South Island against the West Indies at Dunedin. Renowned NZ critic Dick Brittenden, described the knock as "a glorious innings, with powerful driving from front foot or back, off slow bowling or fast-medium". Its quality virtually sealed Wadsworth's selection for NZ's ensuing tour of England, as second keeper to Barry Milburn, who had kept in all three of the recent Tests against West Indies.



Both men performed well in their primary function during the preliminary matches, Wadsworth getting the nod for all three Tests because of superior batting potential, even though he managed only 52 runs from five visits to the crease. Sound glove work, however, which included four second-innings catches on debut at Lord's, established his place in the side. Over the next six years, he visited India, Pakistan, West Indies, England a second time and Australia, in addition to appearing in home series against the same opponents.

Prior to the 1973/74 Australian tour, his most productive series with the bat had been the five-Test series against West Indies two years earlier when, aided by three not outs, he averaged 59 in scoring 177 runs, which included a defiant 78 at Kingston in a match-saving sixth-wicket stand of 220 in 4¾ hours with Glenn Turner (223 not out). Although the subsequent Australian series comprised only three matches, Wadsworth had his best series with 230 runs at 38.33, including two half-centuries.

In what was destined to be his final first-class appearance, Wadsworth compiled 117 (218 minutes, 14 fours) for Canterbury against Otago in the 1975/76 Shell Shield final, sharing a match-winning fourth-wicket partnership of 145 with Barry Hadlee (107). He was named in the NZ side to tour India and Pakistan later in the year, only to announce his withdrawal in June because of ill-health. Two months later, not only NZ sports lovers but also the cricket community world-wide, were shocked to learn of his death at the age of 29 from cancer, such was his popularity and the respect with which he was held.

Wadsworth's career encompassed a period in which NZ began to establish itself as a more consistently competitive Test nation. He contributed 1010 runs at an average of 21.48 and 96 dismissals (92ct, 4st) in 33 Tests, figures that he extended in all first-class cricket to 3664 runs at 25.62 and 291 dismissals (265ct, 26st) in 118 matches.

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