



# MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET DAY 2 - DECEMBER 27, 2024

## 2024 BOXING DAY TEST AUSTRALIA V INDIA

### TEST CRICKET AT THE MCG

Beginning with the inaugural Test match in March 1877, 116 Tests have been staged at the MCG. India has been involved in 14 of the Tests played here. Australia has won 8 of these contests and India 4, with the other two drawn.

Other sides to play Tests at the MCG are England (57) the West Indies (15), South Africa (13), Pakistan (11), New Zealand (4), and Sri Lanka (2). One Test, scheduled against England in 1970/71, was abandoned without a ball bowled and is not counted in the records.

Two women's Tests have also been played at the MCG, between Australia and England in 1934/35 and 1948/49. Both were drawn.

### THE 1977/78 TOUR

The Indian team arrived amidst the furore created by the threat to the traditional game posed by the privately promoted World Series Cricket, which had contracted 35 of the world's leading players, including 18 Australians, for its own series of matches in opposition to establishment cricket.

The Board of Control reacted by banning the 18, which included Ian and Greg Chappell, Dennis Lillee, Rod Marsh, Doug Walters, Rick McCosker, Max Walker, David Hookes, Gary Gilmour, Ian Davis and Jeff Thomson, from all competitions under its jurisdiction. Thomson subsequently withdrew from his contract, thus remaining eligible for Test selection. Only India and New Zealand of the Test-playing nations remained unaffected, allowing the former to be full-strength for the tour.

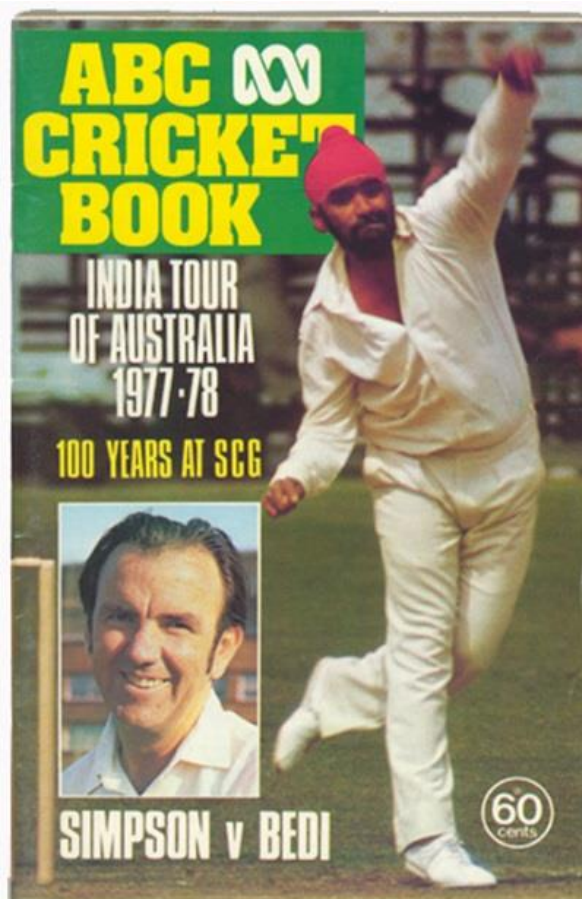
From an Australian viewpoint the WSC incursion devalued the forthcoming official Test series, but to the delight of the supporters of establishment cricket, all five matches proved to be keenly contested, and the result of the series remained in doubt until the final afternoon of the Fifth Test.

India's victory in the Third Test was all the more memorable in view of the heavy defeats sustained on each of its previous tours down under, in 1947/48 and 1967/68.

### THE BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

This trophy, first awarded to India after they won a one-off Test against Australia in India in October 1996, is named in honour of distinguished former test captains, Australia's Allan Border and India's Sunil Gavaskar.

The winners of all Australia-India test series since 1996 have been awarded the Border- Gavaskar trophy. In recent years, the only occasion when the Border-Gavaskar Trophy has not been contested during Australia-India matches was when the two sides met in the final of the ICC World Test Championship at The Oval, London, in 2023. Australia won this match, but the Border-Gavaskar Trophy remains in India's hands after their victory in 2022/23 Test series in India. In fact, the most recent time Australia secured the trophy was after their win in the 2014/15 home series. India won it back in the 2016/17 series in India.



# INDIA'S FIRST TEST WIN IN AUSTRALIA

## THIRD TEST MATCH, DECEMBER 30, 1977 – JANUARY 4, 1978

Fortunes had fluctuated throughout each of the first two Tests, the home side eventually emerging victorious in both by the narrowest of margins – 16 runs in Brisbane and two wickets at Perth. Both sides made changes to their line-ups for this match. Australia brought in Gary Cosier, who had carried the drinks at Perth, at the expense of Kim Hughes, who was relegated to 12th man, while India substituted Ashok Mankad, Kharsan Ghavri and Erapalli Prasanna for Brijesh Patel, Srinivas Venkataraghavan and Sharma Madan Lal, who was named 12th man.



Indian captain Bishan Bedi won the toss and elected to bat in fine but overcast conditions. Both his opening batsmen, however, departed before a run had been scored. After Sunil Gavaskar had survived Jeff Thomson's opening over, Chetan Chauhan was caught at second slip from the sixth ball of Wayne Clark's first over and his partner then caught by the keeper from the first ball of Thomson's second over. Undeterred by the situation, Gundappa Viswanath (59 from 95 balls, four fours) assisted Mohinder Amarnath to add 105 in 154 minutes, during which the latter left the field briefly to have his forefinger stitched, after being struck a severe blow on the right hand. After Viswanath left, Dilip Vengsarkar and Amarnath (a patient 72 in 269 minutes from 178 balls, three fours) shared a fourth-wicket stand of 69 in 94 minutes, but the dismissal of both within the space of six runs, followed by Syed Kirmani to the last ball of the day, reduced India to 6/234, with Mankad not out on 30.

Next morning, the advent of the second new ball quickly wrapped up the Indian innings, the last four wickets tumbling for two runs in the space of eight deliveries, including those of Prasanna and Bhagwat Chandrasekhar each to their first ball. Any elation at dismissing the visitors for a seemingly disappointing total was cut short by the left-arm medium-paced inswing of Ghavri, who bowled John Dyson with the second delivery of the Australian reply and then trapped David Ogilvie lbw with the second ball of his third over. Gavaskar shared the new ball in the absence of Amarnath, off the field because of his injured finger, before giving way to Bedi after a token two overs. Cosier (67 in 128 minutes from 101 balls, nine fours) responded with characteristic aggression, dominating a third-wicket stand of 104 with Craig Serjeant before falling to Chandrasekhar in the lively leg-spinner's second over.

His dismissal was Chandrasekhar's 200th in Tests. Simpson followed three balls later and, despite a brief flurry of runs from Peter Toohey, Tony Mann and Steve Rixon, Chandrasekhar was never mastered. His 6/52 included the last four wickets for six runs from his final 16 deliveries, including that of Serjeant (85 in 216 minutes from 170 balls, eight fours), who was the eighth man dismissed. Buoyed by an unexpected lead, Gavaskar and Chauhan added 40 to India's 43-run advantage before the latter was run out by a smart return from Cosier at square-leg. Nightwatchman Kirmani (5) held on with Gavaskar (25) until stumps were drawn at 1/50.

Light rain delayed the start of the third day by two hours, playing resuming after an early lunch had been taken. The Australian attack was initially handicapped by damp approaches and a ball which had to be continually dried. Kirmani resisted for more than an hour, after which Viswanath (54 in 114 minutes from 94 balls, four fours) contributed his second half-century of the match to a third-wicket partnership of 98 with Gavaskar. Clark dismissed both he and Vengsarkar for the addition of only 11 runs, but Mankad (15) stayed with Gavaskar (103) until stumps at 4/234. The latter's century was his third in as many Tests, following 113 at Brisbane and 127 in Perth, both also compiled in the second innings.

Gavaskar (118 in 354 minutes from 285 balls, 12 fours) fell to Sam Gannon within the first hour of the fourth day, soon after the new ball was taken, followed by Mankad and Ghavri shortly before lunch. Amarnath, batting down the order because of his finger injury, extended India's lead to 386, supported by Prasanna and Bedi; Chandrasekhar completed a king pair when trapped lbw first ball by Cosier's gentle medium pace. Dyson and Cosier confidently began the Australian pursuit of the 387 required, scoring 42 in even time against the medium pace of Ghavri and Amarnath. The introduction of spinners Bedi and Chandrasekhar, however, stopped the home side in its tracks. Bedi dismissed Dyson with his first ball and had Ogilvie unhappily caught bat-pad four balls later. Cosier soon after edged a ball from Chandrasekhar into his stumps while attempting a pull shot, to leave Australia a shaky 3/52 at tea. The leg-spinner continued his dominance of the Australian batting after the adjournment, bowling unchanged throughout the final session to take a further five wickets. Clark (2) and Thomson (0) hung on until stumps, with their side staring down the barrel of defeat at 8/123.

<b>1977/78</b>	
<b>AUSTRALIA v. INDIA</b>	
<b>Third Test Match</b>	
Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 30, 31, 1977, January 2, 3 & 4, 1978.	
<b>India won by 222 runs. Toss: India.</b>	
<b>India</b>	
S. M. Gavaskar c Rixon b Thomson .....	0 - c Serjeant b Gannon .....
C. P. S. Chauhan c Mann b Clark .....	0 - run out .....
M. Amarnath c Simpson b Clark .....	72 - (7) b Cosier .....
G. R. Viswanath c Rixon b Thomson .....	59 - lbw b Clark .....
D. B. Vengsarkar c Simpson b Thomson .....	37 - c Cosier b Clark .....
A. V. Mankad c Clark b Gannon .....	44 - b Clark .....
† S. M. H. Kirmani lbw b Simpson .....	29 - (3) c Thomson b Mann .....
K. D. Ghavri c Rixon b Gannon .....	6 - c Simpson b Clark .....
E. A. S. Prasanna b Clark .....	0 - c Rixon b Gannon .....
* B. S. Bedi not out .....	2 - not out .....
B. S. Chandrasekhar b Clark .....	0 - lbw b Cosier .....
Lb 3, nb 4 .....	7 Lb 1, nb 7 .....
1/0 2/0 3/105 4/174 5/180 6/234	256 1/40 2/89 3/187 4/198 5/265 343
7/254 8/254 9/256 10/256	6/286 7/294 8/315 9/343 10/343
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Thomson 16-2-78-3; Clark 19.2-2-73-4; Gannon 14-2-47-2; Cosier 12-3-25-0; Simpson 3-1-11-1; Mann 5-1-15-0. <i>Second Innings</i> — Clark 29-3-96-4; Gannon 22-4-88-2; Cosier 12.7-2-58-2; Thomson 18-4-47-0; Mann 4-0-24-1; Simpson 3-0-22-0.	
<b>Australia</b>	
J. Dyson b Ghavri .....	0 - lbw b Bedi .....
G. J. Cosier c Chauhan b Chandrasekhar .....	67 - b Chandrasekhar .....
A. D. Ogilvie lbw b Ghavri .....	6 - c Chauhan b Bedi .....
C. S. Serjeant b Chandrasekhar .....	85 - b Chandrasekhar .....
* R. B. Simpson c Mankad b Chandrasekhar .....	2 - lbw b Chandrasekhar .....
P. M. Toohey c Viswanath b Bedi .....	14 - c Chauhan b Chandrasekhar .....
A. L. Mann c Gavaskar b Bedi .....	11 - c Gavaskar b Chandrasekhar .....
† S. J. Rixon lbw b Chandrasekhar .....	11 - c & b Chandrasekhar .....
W. M. Clark lbw b Chandrasekhar .....	3 - c Ghavri b Bedi .....
J. R. Thomson c Ghavri b Chandrasekhar .....	0 - c & b Bedi .....
J. B. Gannon not out .....	0 - not out .....
B 6, lb 7, nb 1 .....	14 B 6, lb 4 .....
1/0 2/18 3/122 4/124 5/166 6/178	213 1/42 2/42 3/52 4/60 5/77 164
7/202 8/211 9/211 10/213	6/98 7/115 8/122 9/151 10/164
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Ghavri 9-0-37-2; Gavaskar 2-0-7-0; Bedi 15-2-71-2; Chandrasekhar 14.1-2-52-6; Prasanna 10-1-32-0. <i>Second Innings</i> — Ghavri 4-0-29-0; Amarnath 3-0-10-0; Prasanna 8-4-5-0; Bedi 16.1-5-58-4; Chandrasekhar 20-3-52-6.	
Close of play scores: <i>1st day</i> — Ind (1) 6/234 (Mankad 30); <i>2nd day</i> — Ind (2) 1/50 (Gavaskar 25, Kirmani 5); <i>3rd day</i> — Ind (2) 4/234 (Gavaskar 103, Mankad 15); <i>4th day</i> — Aust (2) 8/123 (Clark 2, Thomson 0). 8-ball overs.	
Umpires: R. A. French & M. G. O'Connell.	

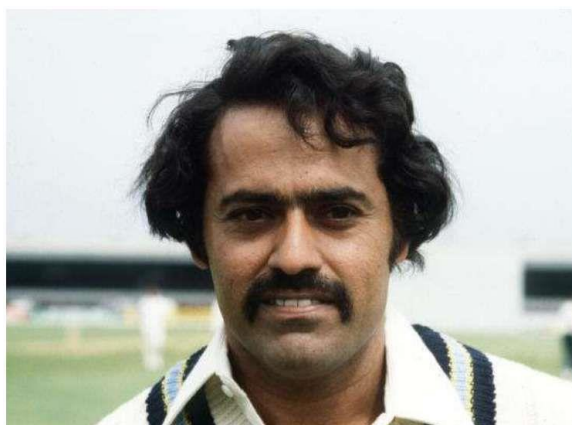


Next morning, the overnight pair offered stout resistance for just on 40 minutes before Thomson, beaten in flight, spooned a return catch to Bedi with the score at 151. Clark, having been missed when 31, holed out to deep mid-wicket a few minutes later and the visitors jubilantly completed their first-ever Test win in this country. Chandrasekhar, who claimed the identical figures of 6/52 in each innings, deservedly won the man of the match award.

**Copies of the match score sheets for this Test are on display in the MCC Library foyer, courtesy of Mike Ringham, who was the Australian scorer for the Test.**

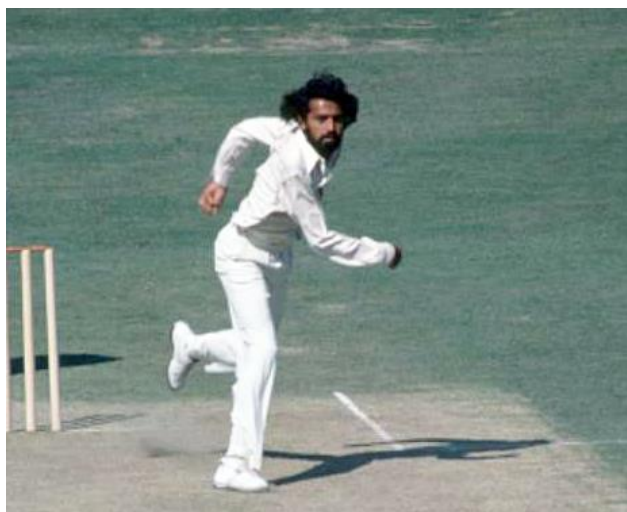
# Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, the Architect of India's First Ever Test Win in Australia

Chandrasekhar, or Chandra as he was popularly known, has been classified as a wrist-spinner but his method was more akin to that of a medium-pacer. He showed no interest in employing the subtleties of the flight and spin of conventional leg-spinners, delivering his own brand of the craft at a lively pace after a 10-metre approach. This he achieved with the very fast action of a right arm which had been withered by poliomyelitis contracted at the age of five. Writing in the 1972 edition of *Wisden*, Dicky Rutnagur expressed the belief that “the thinness of his arm gives it the flexibility of whip-cord, enabling him to produce the extra bite in his top-spinner”. When fielding, Chandra used his stronger left arm to return the ball. His ability with the bat was rudimentary at best, being dismissed without scoring in Tests on 23 occasions (including four pairs), a record for India that has since been exceeded only by Zaheer Khan (29) and Ishant Sharma (28).



Chandra shot to prominence during the 1963/64 season, with match figures of 9/60 and 8/106 against Andhra and Madras respectively in only his third and fourth appearances for Mysore in the Ranji Trophy competition. Within two months of his first-class debut, the 18-year-old was included in the Indian side to play England at Bombay (now Mumbai) and his unorthodox deliveries troubled the visiting batsmen in the first innings to such an extent that he finished up with 4/67 from 40 overs. A year later, his match figures of 8/123 from a collective 56 overs were an important factor in India's exciting two-wicket triumph over Australia at the same venue.

The very nature of Chandra's method, however, resulted in periods of inconsistency, when full tosses and long-hops far outnumbered well-directed deliveries. On his day, however, he could be well-nigh unplayable. He headed the aggregates and averages in series against the West Indies in India in 1966/67, England in England in 1967 and at home against England in 1972/73, with tallies of 18 wickets at 28.50, 16 at 27.18 and 35 at 18.91, respectively. In the latter series, he produced a career-best 8/79 in the first innings of the opening Test, at Delhi, followed by significant contributions to his side's victories at Calcutta (now Kolkata) and Madras (now Chennai), with figures of 5/65 and 4/42 in the first of those and 6/90 in the second.



Chandra also bowled well in successive home series in 1976/77 against New Zealand and England, providing the more prolific Bedi (in both series) and Prasanna (against England) with strong support. Having begun slowly against Australia in 1977/78, he was in irresistible form at the MCG and finished the series strongly to end up with 28 wickets at 25.14 in the five Tests.

He opened the 1978/79 home series against the West Indies with 5/116 in the drawn First Test, but was later handicapped by a recurring heel injury which kept him out of the Third and Fourth Tests and, although he returned for the Fifth, he was never the same bowler again. He toured England with the 1979 Indian team and, after failing to take a wicket in the First Test, was omitted for the rest of the series, thus ending his international career at 58 Tests, 242 wickets at 29.74 and 167 runs at 4.07. Overall, he

appeared in 246 first-class matches, gathering 1063 wickets at 24.03 and 600 runs at 4.61. Incredibly, his number of wickets taken almost doubled his runs made at both levels.

*Fact Sheet research by MCC Library Volunteers Rosie Bushnell, Quentin Miller, Ross Perry, Ann Rusden OAM, Ray Webster OAM, and Ian Wilkinson, assisted and edited by David Studham and Trevor Ruddell.*

*Sources consulted: Ray Webster's First-Class Cricket in Australia. Vol. 2, Wisden Cricketers' Almanac – various issues. Thanks to our friends at <https://www.tastats.com.au> and [www.cricketarchive.co.uk](http://www.cricketarchive.co.uk)*

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