



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET DAY 3 - DECEMBER 28, 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 1980/81 INDIAN TOUR

India and New Zealand each played three Tests in Australia during the 1980/81 season. New Zealand's were played in late November and December, including the Boxing Day clash at the MCG, while India's were staged in the New Year, the first beginning at the SCG on 2 January. The World Series one-day competition was interspersed between the Test matches.

It began on 23 November, with Australia, India and NZ playing 10 matches apiece, the two leading sides then playing off in a best-of-five finals series commencing at the end of January. As India won only three of its preliminary games it failed to qualify. Apart from the Tests and ODIs, the tourists also played first-class matches against five of the six Australian states and a number of minor one-day contests. Following their long programme in Australia, the Indians subsequently travelled to NZ where they played a further two ODIs and three Tests.



1980/81 Indian team for the first match of their tour at the WACA, Perth on November 22, 1980

THIRD TEST MATCH

February 7-11, 1981: **INDIA 237** (GR Viswanath 117; DK Lillee 4/65, LS Pascoe 3/29, B Yardley 2/45) **and 324** (CPS Chauhan 85, SM Gavaskar 70, DB Vengsarkar 41, SM Patil 36, GR Viswanath 30; DK Lillee 4/104, LS Pascoe 2/80, B Yardley 2/65) **defeated AUSTRALIA 419** (AR Border 124, KD Walters 78, GS Chappell 76, RW Marsh 45; DR Doshi 3/109, SM Patil 2/28, NS Yadav 2/100 DK Ghavri 2/110) **and 83** (Kapil Dev 5/28, DK Gharvri 2/10, DR Doshi 2/33) **by 59 runs.**

This was India's last match on the Australian leg of its tour. Australia had won the First Test at Sydney by an innings and although India shaped better in the Second at Adelaide, it eventually only just managed to hang on for a draw. Both teams named the same 12 from the previous Test, Australia's substitution of Jim Higgs for Rodney Hogg being the only alteration to the final elevens.

The pitches at the MCG had been heavily criticised throughout the summer, but on seeing a well-grassed surface Australia's captain Greg Chappell opted to send the tourists in, with the expectation that it would provide early assistance to his pace bowlers and hold together throughout the match. Initially the move was successful as Dennis Lillee and Len Pascoe swept through the Indian top order, but the experienced Viswanath (114 in 274 minutes from 222 balls 11 fours) held firm. Arriving with the score at 2 for 22, he was ninth out at 230, having scored nearly half his team's runs in a most accomplished display. The home side ended the day at 0/12, John Dyson on 9 and Graeme Wood 1.

Next day, Dyson and Wood were dismissed within the space of two runs and Kim Hughes was unable to reproduce the form displayed in his double century at Adelaide. Greg Chappell (76 in 227 minutes from 175 balls, six fours), who was nursing a groin strain, was joined by Allan Border and the pair batted steadily during a fourth-wicket stand of 108. Chappell's exit brought Doug Walters, playing in his last Test, to the crease and he stayed with Border until the end of play, at which the home side was 4/272, with Border on 95 and Walters 36.

Border (124 in 303 minutes from 265 balls, 12 fours) and Walters (78 in 209 minutes from 148 balls, six fours) began the third day by extending their fifth-wicket partnership to 131. Rod Marsh (45 in 129 minutes from 118 balls, three fours) also batted well, and received useful support from Lillee to increase the Australian lead to 182. India's openers Gavaskar (59) and Chetan Chauhan (41) had reduced that deficit to 74 at stumps by sound and resourceful batting.

Next morning, they added a further 57 runs in 85 minutes before Gavaskar (70 in 226 minutes from 180 balls, five fours) was adjudged lbw to the bowling of Lillee. Furious with the decision, Gavaskar indicated to the umpire that he had edged the ball into his pads and, as he walked past Chauhan on his way to the pavilion, he urged his partner to leave the field with him and thereby forfeit the match. Fortunately the Indian manager, Wing Commander S.K. Durrani intervened, meeting the batsmen at the gate and ordering Chauhan to return to the crease. Chauhan (85 in 243 minutes from 198 balls, 12 fours), clearly unsettled by the incident, fell not long after, becoming Lillee's 249th Test wicket, which moved him past Richie Benaud as Australia's highest Test wicket-taker. Although Viswanath, Dilip Vengsarkar and Sandeep Patil all later made useful contributions, India managed to establish a lead of only 142, thereby setting what seemed a straight-forward target for the home side. India's position was worsened by the fact that

two of its key bowlers Kapil Dev (thigh strain) and Shivlal Yadav (broken toe) were unable to take the field when Australia began its run-chase late on the fourth day. As a result Kharsan Ghavri and Patil, no more than an occasional bowler, shared the new ball. Ghavri struck almost immediately, dismissing Dyson (3) and then knocking back Chappell's leg stump first ball. Graeme Wood also fell before the close, leaving Australia a shaky 3/24 at stumps, with Hughes and nightwatchman Yardley both on 4.

Despite the tumble of wickets on the previous evening, it seemed that Australia, with seven wickets in hand, would have little difficulty on the final day in scoring the remaining 119 runs needed. Kapil Dev, with his injured thigh strapped, however, had other ideas. After Dilip Doshi, another of the Indian bowlers to be handicapped by injury, gained the initial breakthrough by removing Hughes, he bowled fast and straight to sweep through the remainder of the Australian batting. With the ball often keeping low on the wearing pitch, he captured five of the last six wickets (the other was a run out), to take his country to a most remarkable victory, which also enabled it to square the rubber. Australia's total of 83 remains its lowest in all Tests at the MCG, its previous lowest having been 104 in its second innings of the very first Test match in 1876/77.

The remarkable events on the final day deserved a much larger audience than the 2874 who attended. Staged late in the summer, the match was poorly attended throughout, only 50,130 being present over the five days.



1980/81	
AUSTRALIA v. INDIA	
Third Test Match	
Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on February 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11, 1981.	
India won by 59 runs. Toss: Australia.	
India	
* S. M. Gavaskar c Hughes b Pascoe	10 - lbw b Lillee
C. P. S. Chauhan c Yardley b Pascoe	0 - c Yardley b Lillee
D. B. Vengsarkar c Border b Lillee	12 - c Marsh b Pascoe
G. R. Viswanath c Chappell b Yardley	114 - b Lillee
S. M. Patil c Hughes b Lillee	23 - c Chappell b Yardley
Yashpal Sharma c Marsh b Lillee	4 - b Pascoe
Kapil Dev c Hughes b Pascoe	5 - (8) b Yardley
+ S. M. H. Kirmani c Marsh b Lillee	25 - (7) run out
K. D. Ghavri run out	0 - not out
N. S. Yadav not out	20 - absent hurt
D. R. Doshi c Walters b Yardley	0 - (10) b Lillee
B 1, lb 8, w 6, nb 9	24 - B 11, lb 8, nb 7
1/0 2/22 3/43 4/91 5/99 6/115	237 1/165 2/176 3/243 4/245 5/260 324
7/164 8/190 9/230 10/237	6/296 7/296 8/308 9/324
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Lillee 25-6-65-4; Pascoe 22-11-29-3; Chappell 5-2-9-0; Yardley 13-3-45-2; Higgs 19-2-65-0. <i>Second Innings</i> — Lillee 32.1-5-104-4; Pascoe 29-4-80-2; Yardley 31-11-65-2; Higgs 15-3-41-0; Border 2-0-8-0.	
Australia	
J. Dyson c Kirmani b Kapil Dev	16 - c Kirmani b Ghavri
G. M. Wood c Doshi b Ghavri	10 - st Kirmani b Doshi
* G. S. Chappell c & b Ghavri	76 - b Ghavri
K. J. Hughes c Chauhan b Yadav	24 - b Doshi
A. R. Border b Yadav	124 - (6) c Kirmani b Kapil Dev
K. D. Walters st Kirmani b Doshi	78 - (7) not out
+ R. W. Marsh c sub (K. B. J. Azad) b Doshi	45 - (8) b Kapil Dev
B. Yardley lbw b Doshi	0 - (5) b Kapil Dev
D. K. Lillee c & b Patil	19 - b Kapil Dev
L. S. Pascoe lbw b Patil	3 - run out
J. D. Higgs not out	1 - lbw b Kapil Dev
B 12, lb 6, nb 5	23 - lb 5, nb 2
1/30 2/32 3/81 4/189 5/320 6/356	419 1/11 2/11 3/18 4/40 5/50 83
7/356 8/413 9/413 10/410	6/55 7/61 8/69 9/79 10/83
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Kapil Dev 19-7-41-1; Doshi 52-14-109-3; Ghavri 39-4-110-2; Yadav 32-6-100-2; Chauhan 2-0-8-0; Patil 12.3-4-28-2. <i>Second Innings</i> — Ghavri 8-4-10-2; Patil 2-0-5-0; Doshi 22-9-33-2; Kapil Dev 16.4-4-28-5.	
Close of play scores: <i>1st day</i> — Aust (1) 0/12 (Dyson 9, Wood 1); <i>2nd day</i> — Aust (1) 4/272 (Border 95, Walters 36); <i>3rd day</i> — Ind (2) 0/108 (Gavaskar 59, Chauhan 41); <i>4th day</i> — Aust (2) 3/24 (Hughes 4, Yardley 4). 6-ball overs.	
Umpires: M. W. Johnson & R. V. Whitehead.	

DRAWS AND A TIE

In 1985/86 these two sides met in a three Test series in Australia. With batsmen holding sway, high scores were the norm, with India amassing 520 in the First Test, 445 in the Second Test and 4/600 in the Third Test. A year later, in India, things had not changed.

The opening Test, at Madras (now Chennai) produced only the second tie in Test history. Following a courageous double-century by Dean Jones and hundreds from David Boon and Allan Border, Australia was able to declare its first innings at seven for 574.

In reply, India, for whom skipper Kapil Dev contributed a hard-hit century, got to within 177 of that total, following which a second declaration by Australia set the home side 348 to win. With four wickets in hand and only 16 runs needed, India appeared to hold the upper hand, but in a pulsating finish, Greg Matthews and fellow-spinner Ray Bright ripped through the lower order, with the former trapping the last Indian batsman lbw with the scores level. Matthews and Bright each took five wickets.

Unfortunately the series fell away after this eventful start. The Second and Third Tests were rain affected and were both drawn. This meant that there had been no result for either of these sides in six consecutive Tests in 1985/86 and 1986/87.

KAPIL DEV (B. 1959)

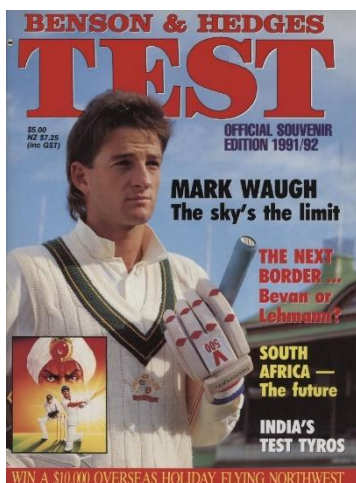
Kapil Dev is the second of three Indian bowlers that are twice on the visitors' honour board for taking 5+ wickets in an innings in an MCG Test.

An outstanding all-rounder, Kapil Dev was the finest fast bowler ever produced by India, as well as one of its best batsmen. Six feet (183 cm) tall and athletically built, he took a springy approach to the wicket and delivered the ball with a classic side-on action. He was renowned for his accuracy and ability to swing the ball away from right-handers. He was also a gifted, clean-hitting middle-order batsman. He made his Test debut in 1978/79 and his potential was obvious from the outset. When Australia toured India in 1979/80 he was the series' leading wicket-taker, with 28 at 22.32. On the first of his three tours of Australia, in 1980/81, he took 5/28 at Melbourne to bowl India to a sensational victory when Australia, set only 143 to win, was dismissed for 83, its lowest ever total on the MCG.

On his next visit, in 1985/86, he took 8/106 in the opening Test at Adelaide and on his final tour, in 1991/92, he claimed 25 Test wickets at 25.80, with best figures of 5/97 at Melbourne. Although not seen at his best as a batsman in Australia, he made 119 in the tied Test at Madras in 1986/87. In 1993/94 he became the highest wicket-taker in Test cricket when he overhauled the previous record of 431 set by Hadlee. In 131 Tests (another record at the time), 34 as captain, he captured 434 wickets at 29.64, an exceptional achievement considering Indian pitches seldom favoured pace, as well as scoring 5248 runs at 31.05. A fine limited-overs cricketer, aggregated 253 wickets and 3783 runs in 225 One-Day International matches and led India to an unexpected victory in the 1983 World Cup. In all first-class cricket he scored a total of 11356 runs and took 835 wickets. He was named India's Cricketer of the Century in 2002.



THE 1991/92 INDIAN TOUR



Unlike its last two visits to Australia, India more or less had the Australian summer to itself, playing a full five-Test series, the first beginning at the Gabba on 29 November and the last at the WACA on 1 February. The World Series one-day competition, which also featured the West Indies, was divided into two blocks, the first in December between the First and Second Tests, and the second, including the finals, in January between the Third and Fourth Tests. The tourists played only two first-class matches outside the Tests, one against New South Wales before the First Test (lost by an innings) and the second against Queensland prior to the Second (won). As they had just come off a succession of ODIs on the subcontinent, it was hardly the ideal itinerary for a gruelling Test series down under. The 16-man party (a 17th player was added later) was captained by Mohammad Azharuddin, who was appointed to the position just a fortnight before the team left home. Unfortunately, the pattern for the series was established in the opening Test at the Gabba when the home side cruised to a 10-wicket victory inside four days, with Craig McDermott capturing nine wickets and Mark Taylor making 129 runs for once out.

Second Test Match

December 26-29, 1991: **INDIA 263** (KS More 67*; BA Reid 6/66) **and 213** (DB Vengsarkar 54; BA Reid 6/60) **lost to AUSTRALIA 349** (GR Marsh 86, IA Healy 60, DM Jones 59; Kapil Dev 5/97, M Prabhakar 4/84) **and 2/128** (MA Taylor 60) **by 8 wickets.**

Australia maintained its dominance with its second successive victory within four days, with Bruce Reid, who had missed the opening Test with a side strain, producing an outstanding match-winning bowling performance.

Despite overcast conditions and a pitch that was damp underneath, Azharuddin elected to bat first after winning the toss. The tourists were soon in trouble against Australia's three-pronged pace attack of Reid, McDermott and Merv Hughes and soon after tea on the opening day had slumped to eight for 151. The innings was partially rescued by a sensible innings from keeper Kiran More (189 minutes, five fours) who added 77 for the ninth wicket with Venkatapathy Raju.

For a time, Australia struggled in reply, as Taylor, Boon and Border (bowled for a fifth-ball duck by Kapil Dev) all fell cheaply before Geoff Marsh (351 minutes, five fours) and Dean Jones (144 minutes, six fours) righted the innings with a fourth wicket stand of 108. Later, an enterprising knock from Ian Healy (136 minutes, four fours), who received good support from Hughes, lifted Australia to a first innings lead of 86. India's opening attack of Kapil Dev and Manoj Prabhakar impressed and took nine wickets between them.

India lost five wickets in clearing the arrears and never looked likely to make a game of it. Dilip Vengsarkar (287 minutes, one four), top-scored but was never able to seize the initiative from the Australian attack. The best batting came from 18-year-old Sachin Tendulkar (122 minutes, five fours) who looked set to make a big score before he fell to an astonishing outfield catch by Border, who had to run a long distance from mid-on under the flight of the ball and dive full length to grasp the steeping catch. Reid repeated his first innings success to claim another six wickets, giving him match figures of 12 for 126. His performance bore an uncanny resemblance to his feat in the Boxing Day Test twelve months earlier, when he routed England with match figures of 13 for 148.

Set 128 to win, Border, who had been lucky to survive a confident run out appeal a few balls earlier, scrambled the winning run off the last possible ball of the fourth day. Several umpiring controversies marred the match, the most notable of which was when Dean Jones was adjudged not out after a confident appeal for handled ball on the second day. The overall match attendance was 89,169, of whom 42,294 were present on Boxing Day.

India's best performance of the summer was achieved in the next Test at the SCG, when a double-century from Ravi Shastri and a dazzling unbeaten 148 by Tendulkar enabled it achieve a first-innings lead of 170. Australia just managed to hold on for a draw, bad light and rain which shaved five hours off the overall playing time, almost certainly robbing India of a clear-cut victory. The match is best-remembered for the fact that it marked the Test debut of Shane Warne – he finished with figures of one for 150 from 45 overs.

The tourists lost both remaining Tests, however, to lose the series four-nil. The Fourth Test at Adelaide produced the best cricket of the rubber, with the tourists going down by only 38 runs, but Australia proved far too strong in the final Test at the WACA, despite another dazzling hundred from Tendulkar. India just edged out the West Indies to qualify for the finals of the World Series one-day competition, but as in 1985/86 they lost both finals.

Tendulkar was easily India's highest run-scorer in the five-Test series with 368 at 46.20 while Shastri (300 at 60.00), who flew home with knee damage before the Fourth Test, was the only other visiting batsmen to make 300 runs. Kapil Dev (25 wickets) and Manoj Prabhakar (19) both enjoyed good series with the ball. David Boon (556 runs at 79.42) was the home side's outstanding batsman, while McDermott (31) and Hughes (22) were the top wicket-takers.

1991/92		AUSTRALIA v. INDIA	
Second Test Match			
Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 26, 27, 28 & 29, 1991.			
Australia won by 8 wickets. Toss: India.			
India			
R. J. Shastri c Healy b Reid	23	- c Healy b Reid	22
K. Srikkanth c Boon b Reid	5	- lbw b Reid	6
M. Prabhakar b Reid	0	- (9) c Healy b Reid	17
S. V. Manjrekar c Waugh b Reid	25	- (3) c M. A. Taylor b McDermott ..	30
D. B. Vengsarkar c Reid b Hughes	23	- (4) c sub (M. R. Whitney)	
		b McDermott	54
* M. Azharuddin c Jones b McDermott ..	22	- (5) c M. A. Taylor b Reid	2
S. R. Tendulkar c Waugh b Reid	15	- c Border b P. L. Taylor	40
Kapil Dev c Hughes b McDermott	19	- c Healy b Reid	12
+ K. S. More not out	67	- (10) lbw b Reid	12
S. L. V. Raju c Border b Hughes	31	- (6) c & b McDermott	1
J. Srinath c Border b Reid	14	- not out	0
B 1, lb 8, w 6, nb 4	19	B 1, lb 6, nb 10	17
1/11 2/11 3/61 4/64 5/109 6/109	263	1/13 2/48 3/75 4/78 5/79	213
7/128 8/151 9/228 10/263		6/141 7/155 8/173 9/213 10/213 ..	
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — McDermott 30-6-100-2; Reid 26.2-7-66-6; Hughes 23-6-52-2; Waugh 8-1-16-0; P. L. Taylor 6-0-20-0. <i>Second Innings</i> — McDermott 29-8-63-3; Reid 29-9-60-6; Hughes 19-6-43-0; P. L. Taylor 11-3-40-1.			
Australia			
G. R. Marsh c Vengsarkar b Kapil Dev	86	- (2) lbw b Prabhakar	10
M. A. Taylor c Tendulkar b Prabhakar	13	- (1) st More b Raju	60
D. C. Boon c Srikkanth b Kapil Dev	11	- not out	44
* A. R. Border b Kapil Dev	0	- not out	5
D. M. Jones c More b Prabhakar	59		
M. E. Waugh c More b Shastri	34		
+ I. A. Healy lbw b Kapil Dev	60		
P. L. Taylor c More b Prabhakar	11		
M. G. Hughes c Tendulkar b Kapil Dev	36		
C. J. McDermott not out	16		
B. A. Reid c Kapil Dev b Prabhakar	3		
Lb 9, nb 11	20	Lb 3, nb 6	9
1/24 2/55 3/55 4/163 5/211 6/229	349	1/16 2/122	(2 wkts) 128
7/262 8/326 9/337 10/349			
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Kapil Dev 35-9-97-5; Prabhakar 34-7-84-4; Srinath 25-3-71-0; Raju 17-3-52-0; Tendulkar 4-1-16-0; Shastri 7-1-20-1. <i>Second Innings</i> — Kapil Dev 12-1-30-0; Prabhakar 11-0-38-1; Srinath 8-0-28-0; Raju 6-0-17-1; Shastri 3-1-12-0.			
Close of play scores: <i>1st day</i> — Ind (1) 9/243 (More 50, Srinath 12); <i>2nd day</i> — Aust (1) 5/215 (Marsh 79, Healy 4); <i>3rd day</i> — Ind (2) 5/92 (Vengsarkar 14, Tendulkar 8). 6-ball overs.			
Umpires: L. J. King & T. A. Prue.			

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 Studdham and Trevor Ruddell.

Sources consulted: Ray Webster's First-Class Cricket in Australia. Vol. 2, Wisden Cricketers' Almanac – various issues.

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