



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET DAY 5 - DECEMBER 30, 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.

Tests matches at the MCG were timeless (played to a result) until the Second World War. From 1946/47 to 1958/59 they were six-day matches. Five-day Test matches commenced in the 1960/61 season. As a result, over the years there has been one Test lasting two days, 10 Tests lasting three days, 46 Tests lasting four days, 51 Tests lasting five days, five Tests lasting six days, two Tests lasting seven days, and one lasting eight days.

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

THE JOHNNY MULLAGH MEDAL

Player of the match in the MCG's Test is awarded the Johnny Mullagh Medal in tribute to the leader of the 1868 Aboriginal tour to the UK. The best player in the Boxing Day Test receives the Johnny Mullagh Medal in tribute to one of the country's finest cricketing pioneers. The design is a recreation of the original belt buckle worn by the 1868 team, with a faded black and white photo of the Aboriginal players inside the buckle.

Mullagh, whose real name was Unaarrimin, starred for the Indigenous squad on their 1868 tour, highlighted by taking 245 wickets at 10 and scoring 1698 runs at 23.65. Mullagh featured in 45 of the 47 matches played during that inaugural tour.



Winners so far: 1. Ajinkya Rahane (2020); 2. Scott Boland (2021); 3. David Warner (2022); 4. Pat Cummins (2024).

INDIA'S LAST TEST TOUR OF AUSTRALIA – 2020/21

The 2020/21 Australia versus India Test series saw the visitors fighting to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy that India had won 2-1 during their 2018/19 Australian tour.

THE 1ST TEST - A MAJOR COLLAPSE AT ADELAIDE OVAL

The first Test between Australia and India in the 2020/21 season was played at the Adelaide Oval. Batting first, India put together a respectable 244 with captain Virat Kohli (74), Cheteshwar Pujara (43) and Ajinkya Rahane (42) being their leading scorers. Australia struggled against tight Indian bowling and it was their captain Tim Paine with 73 runs who held the innings from collapse. Despite this, the home side was all out for 191.

Then things went badly wrong for the visitors. Unbelievably, not one of their batsmen reached double figures! Opener Mayank Agarwal with 9 off 40 balls was their top scorer followed by Hanuma Vihari with 8. The damage was done by Josh Hazlewood who had the remarkable figures of 5/8 off five overs and Pat Cummins with 4/21 off 10.2 overs.

This left Australia with a target of 90 runs for victory, which they reached comfortably, with opener Joe Burns making 51 not out. Australia's wicketkeeper and captain Tim Paine, who had held the home side's first innings together and taken seven catches for the match was named Player of the Match.

This is India's lowest score in their Test history. It is also the only instance in Test cricket where all players and extras failed to reach double figures. South Africa against England in 1924 saw all batsmen fail to reach double figures, but extras got to 11.

December 17-19, 2020: **INDIA 244** (93.1 overs) (V Kohli 74, CA Pujara 43, AM Rahane 42; MA Starc 4/53 PJ Cummins 3/48) **and 36** (21.2 overs) (JR Hazlewood 5/8, PJ Cummins 4/21) **were defeated by AUSTRALIA 191** (72.1 overs) (TD Paine 73*, M Labuschagne 47; R Ashwin 4/55, UT Yadav 4/30, JJ Bumrah 2/52) **and 2/93** (21 overs) (JA Burns 51*, MS Wade 33) **by eight wickets.** *Player of the Match:* Tim Paine.

THE 2ND TEST - INDIA BOUNCE BACK AT THE MCG

The second Test in the series was the 2020 Boxing Day Test at the MCG. Due to the COVID pandemic, the daily crowds for this test were limited to 30,000.

Australia won the toss and decided to bat, however they were soon in trouble. Joe Burns was out for a duck (caught by Pant off Bumrah) when the score was 10. Then Wade (30, caught by Jadeja) and Smith (0, caught by Pujara) both caught off the bowling of Ashwin had the Australians 3/38. Labuschagne and Head steadied to take the score to 124 before Head (38) was caught by Rahane off Bumrah. Labuschagne (48, c Gill b Siraj) fell to leave Australia 5/134.

Both Green (12, lbw b Siraj) and Paine (13, c Vihari b Ashwin) fell with the score on 155 and the home side seven wickets down. Starc (7, c Siraj b Bumrah) soon followed when the score was 164. While a useful partnership between Cummins and Lyon took the score to 191 before the latter was dismissed lbw to Bumrah for 20. Cummins (9 c Siraj b Jadeja) was out the following over, concluding the Australians first innings at 195. The damage was done for India by Bumrah with 4 wickets and Ashwin with three.

In reply, Mitchell Starc struck early to trap Agarwal lbw for a duck with India's score on zero. However, Gill and Pujara put together a stand of 61 before they both were dismissed "c Paine b Cummins" – Gill for 45 with the score on 61, and 10 balls later Pujara for 17 leaving India 3/64.

However the turning point for India came with Ajinkya Rahane at the wicket. In partnerships with Vihari (21, c Smith b Lyon, 4/116) Pant (29, c Paine b Starc 5/173) and Jadeja, Rahane (112 off 223 balls in 365 minutes, including 12 fours) weathered the Australian bowling onslaught and took the visitors to 294 before he was run out (Labuschagne to Paine) for the sixth wicket.

Jadeja was caught by Cummins off Starc for 57 with the score on 306. Yadav (9, c Smith b Lyon) and Ashwin (14, c Lyon b Hazlewood) with fell India's score at 325. Three balls later Bumrah was c Head b Lyon for a duck, to leave India all out for 326, and a handy lead of 131.

In their second innings Australia lost Burns in the third over to be 1/4. Then with the score on 42, Labuschagne was c Rahane b Ashwin for 28. Bumrah bowled Smith for 8, to leave the Australians 3/71. Wade (40, lbw to Jadeja) and Head (17, c Agarwal b Siraj) were the next two to fall, both with the score on 98. The Australian captain Paine was then caught by Pant off the bowling of Jadeja to leave the home team 6/99, still 32 runs in arrears.

Pat Cummins and Cameron Green combined for a 57 run partnership before Cummins was caught Agarwal bowled Bumrah. Eight overs later Green (45, c Jadeja b Siraj) became the eighth wicket to fall, with the score on 177. At 185 Nathan Lyon became the ninth, when he was c Pant b Siraj for 3. Josh Hazlewood was on 10 when he became the final Australian wicket with the score on 200, leaving Starc 14 not out.

India required 70 runs for victory, and two quick wickets fell early in the innings – Agarwal was caught Paine bowled Starc for 5 when the score was 16, and three runs later Pujara caught Green bowled Cummins for 3. However Gill (35*, 7 fours) and Rahane (27*, 3 fours) saw the visitors through to the winning score without any further lost wickets. India completed a memorable victory to square the series one-all. It was their fourth Test win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, and second in a row.

Ajinkya Rahane scored his second Test century on the MCG, to be listed on the Visitors honour board alongside his 147 in the 1st innings of the 2014 Boxing Day Test. He became the second Indian Test cricketer to achieve this feat, after Vinoo Mankad's 116 and 111 in the 3rd and 5th Tests of the inaugural Australia/India series in 1947/48. Rahane was awarded the inaugural Johnny Mullagh medal for player of the match in the MCG Test.

December 26-29, 2020: **AUSTRALIA 195** (72.3 overs) (M Labuschagne 48, TM Head 38, MS Wade 30; JJ Bumrah 4/56, R Ashwin 3/35) **and 200** (103.1 overs) (CD Green 45, MS Wade 40; M Siraj 3/37) **were defeated by INDIA 326** (115.1 overs) (AM Rahane 112, RA Jadeja 57, S Gill 45; NM Lyon 3/72, MA Starc 3/78) **and 2/70** (15.5 overs) (S Gill 35*) **by eight wickets**. *Player of the Match: Ajinkya Rahane*

THE 3RD TEST – A DRAW AT THE SCG.

The New Year Test in Sydney was the 13th between the two teams at the SCG, with Australia having won five, India one (the 4th Test of the 1977/78 series) and six draws (or 50%). After morning showers the toss took place under brilliant sunshine, however it had rained the previous six days and the forecast for the match was for more rain.

India selected Navdeep Saini to make his Test debut. Australia recalled David Warner to the team and he was joined by Will Pucovski who played his first (and only) Test. Pucovski was the 41st Melbourne Cricket Club First XI player to be selected in a Test for Australia.

The home side batted first, and in the fourth over of the match David Warner was dismissed for 5, and debutant opener Will Pucovski was joined by Marnus Labuschagne. Rain delayed play until after tea, and with Pucovski the only wicket to fall after tea, (lbw to Saini for 62) Australia was 2/166 at the end of the day's play, (Labuschagne 67*, Smith 31* off 55 overs).

The next morning Smith and Labuschagne completed their century partnership before the latter was dismissed on 91, caught Rahane bowled Jadeja. Smith kept building the score while Wade (13, 4/232), Green (0, 5/249), Paine (1, 6/225) and Cummins (0, 7/278) came to the crease and were dismissed cheaply. Smith was on 98 when joined by Starc, and he soon completed his 27th Test century. Starc scored a quick 24 off 30 balls before he was dismissed with the score at 310. When Lyon fell for a duck five runs later to leave Australia 9/315, Smith hit out before he was run out on 131 (226 ball, 303 minutes, 16 fours) with the Australian innings ending on 338.

In reply India started strongly before losing their first wicket at 70 (Sharma caught and bowled by Hazlewood for 26) and at the close of play for day 2 they were 2/96. The next morning they moved to 4/195 before a collapse of 6 for 49 left them all out for 244 and give Australia a handy lead of 94 runs.

Pucovski (10) and Warner (13) both fell cheaply with Australia 2/35, before Labuschagne and Smith combined for a second century partnership of the Test. Labuschagne fell for 73 in the opening session of the fourth day. After Wade was the fourth wicket, dismissed for 4 with the score on 148, Green combined with Smith to take the score to 208 before the latter was lbw to Ashwin for 81. Captain Tim Paine joined Green, who hit out to take the Australian score to 312 when he was caught behind for 84 (132 balls in 183 minutes, 8 fours and 4 sixes). With an early tea interval called upon Green's dismissal, Paine declared at 6/312 as Australia had stretched their lead to 406.

India started their pursuit of victory strongly with Sharma and Gill combining to take the score to 71 before Gill was dismissed for 31 caught by Paine off Hazlewood at the start of the 23rd over. Sharma was the next to fall with the score on 92, caught Starc bowled Cummins for 52. At stumps on Day 4, India were 2/98, still needing 308 for an unlikely victory.

The next morning when Rahane was caught by Wade off Lyon for 4, leaving India 3/102 the Australians might have sniffed a chance at victory. However, Pant joined Pujara at the wicket and they started to put together a strong partnership. At lunch on the 5th day India were 3/206, needing another 200 for victory with seven wickets in hand.

The match was anyone's. With Pujara and Pant still at the crease India started to eye off an unexpected victory. The partnership reached 148 when Pant was caught by Cummins off Lyon for 97 (118 balls, 183 minutes, 12 fours and 3 sixes) for the next wicket. Soon after with the score on 272 Pujara was bowled by Hazlewood for 77, leaving India 5/280 at tea. The momentum had swung back to the homeside, hoping for a collapse of the Indian tail in the final session.

While the Australian bowlers pressed for wickets with the new ball, Ravi Ashwin and Hanuma Vihari batted brilliantly, denying the Australians any more wickets. Vihari (23* off 161 balls in 236 minutes, 4 fours) and Ashwin (39*

off 128 balls in 190 minutes 7 fours) stonewalled to hold their nerve and batted through the final session to hold on for a well-earned draw.

January 7-11, 2021: **AUSTRALIA 338** (105.4 overs) (SPD Smith 131, M Labuschagne 91, WJ Pucovski 62; RA Jadeja 4/62, N Saini 2/65, JJ Bumrah 2/66) **and 6/312dec** (875 overs) (CD Green 84, SPD Smith 81, M Labuschagne 73; N Saini 2/65, R Ashwin 2/95) **drew with INDIA 244** (100.4 overs) (S Gill 50, CA Pujara 50, RR Pant 36; PJ Cummins 4/29, JR Hazlewood 2/43) **and 5/334** (131 overs) (RR Pant 97, CA Pujara 77, RG Sharma 52, R Ashwin 39*, S Gill 31; JR Hazlewood 2/39, NM Lyon 2/114). *Player of the Match*: Steve Smith

THE 4TH TEST - A THRILLING VICTORY AT THE GABBA.

With the series drawn 1-1 India only needed to draw the fourth and final Test in Brisbane to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy.

Played at the 'Gabba, Australia won the toss and elected to bat. India's side included two new inclusions, Thangarasu Natarajan and Washington Sundar, neither of whom had previously played Test cricket, they replaced Jasprit Bumrah and Ravichandran Ashwin, both of whom were injured.

Australia lost both openers early, with Warner dismissed for one off the final ball of the first over, and then Harris out for five off the first ball of the eight over, leaving Australia at 2/17. Labuschagne and Smith put on 70 runs before Smith was caught for 36. And the home team 3/87. Wade combined with Labuschagne to take Australia to 200 before Wade was dismissed for 45. Joined by Green, Labuschagne continued on to his century before being c Pant b Natarajan for 108 (204 balls, 296 minutes, 9 fours). At close of the first day's play Australia was 5/274.

The next day saw Australia all out just before lunch for 369. A rain interrupted afternoon saw India 2/62 at the close.

The morning of day three saw India in trouble at 6/186 but enterprising resistance by debutant Sundar and Shardul Thakur saw the side progress to be all out for 336, just 33 runs short of Australia's first innings total. Australia was 0/21 at the end of the day.

Despite a strong start to day four, suddenly Australia found themselves at 4/149 at lunch. Rain saw an early tea taken and with Mohammed Siraj taking a five-wicket haul, the home side was all out for 294, leaving the visitors a target of 328 runs to win, or 114 overs to bat to force a draw, either result seeing them retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Rain again forced the day to close early with India 0/4.

At no point did the visitors look for a draw. By tea on day five they were 3/183, needing a further 145 runs off the remaining 37 overs. In stepped wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant. Quickfire partnerships with Cheteshwar Pujara and Sundar saw India overhaul Australia's total with three overs to spare and three wickets in hand. Pant had made 89 not out from 138 balls and was named player of the match.

This was Australia's first Test loss at the 'Gabba for 32 years and is regarded as one of India's finest Test victories. The visitors retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2-1.

January 15-19, 2021: **AUSTRALIA 369** (115.2 overs) (M Labuschagne 108, TD Paine 50, CD Green 47, MS Wade 45, SPD Smith 36; T Natarajan 3/78, MS Washington Sundar 3/89, SN Thakur 3/94) **and 294** (75.5 overs) (SPD Smith 55, DA Warner 48, MS Harris 38, CD Green 37; M Siraj 5/73, SN Thakur 4/61) **were defeated by INDIA 336** (111.4 overs) (SN Thakur 67, MS Washington Sundar 62, RG Sharma 44, MA Agarwal 38, AM Rahane 37; JR Hazlewood 5/57, MA Starc 2/88, PJ Cummins 2/94) **and 7/329** (97 overs) (S Gill 91, RR Pant 89*, CA Pujara 56; PJ Cummins 4/55, NM Lyon 2/85) **by three wickets**. *Player of the Match*: Rishabh Pant.

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

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