

AUSTRALIA V. INDIA BOXING DAY TEST



DECEMBER 26, 2018
FACT SHEET - DAY 1

Test Cricket at the MCG

Beginning with the inaugural Test match in March 1877, 110 Tests have been staged at the MCG, 12 of which have involved India, the first in 1947/48. Australia has won eight of these contests and India two, 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), Pakistan (10), New Zealand (3) 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.

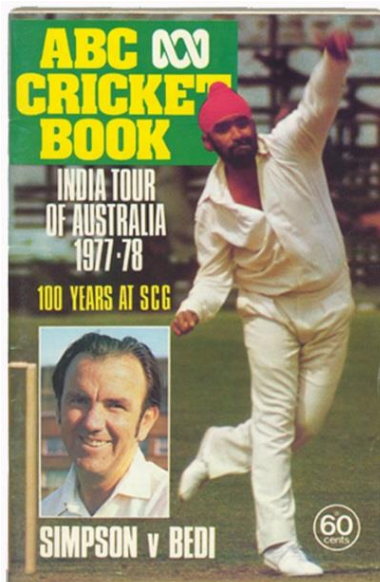
Boxing Day Tests at the MCG

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 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.

The MCC library fact sheets for each day of this Test match highlight outstanding individual performances that determined the course and result in Test matches at the MCG between Australia and India, as well as in the context of their impact on the series. Each will also include a brief account of the respective player's career. Today's sheet reviews the Third Test of the 1977/78 series, in which India recorded its first-ever win in Australia, and profiles Bhagwat Chandrasekhar.

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.

AUSTRALIA'S CAPTAIN

At the age of 41, Bob Simpson had nothing to prove and everything to lose when he accepted the appointment as captain for the series. He had played no first-class cricket since announcing his retirement 10 years before, having played 52 Tests (29 as captain), in which he scored 4131 runs at 48.62, captured 60 wickets at 39.20 and taken 99 catches. One of Australia's finest opening batsmen, he was also a more than useful leg-spin bowler and by general consent the country's greatest slips fieldsmen. He had maintained fitness and form by appearing regularly in the Sydney first-grade club competition. His appointment by the embattled ACB was welcomed by supporters of the traditional game, including former Test great Bill O'Reilly who proclaimed: "Simpson will be a model leader for young aspirants who work beside him." It proved to be an inspired choice.



Third Test Match, December 30, 1977 – January 4, 1978:

Indian Cricket Team — AUSTRALIA 1977 - 78 —



TESTS PLAYED 5 WON 2 LOST 3.

The Indian tourists: BACK ROW: Sharma Madanlal, Chetan Chauhan, Mohinder Amarnath, Dilip Vengsarkar, Bharat Reddy, Karson Ghavri, Anshuman Gaekwad, Syed Kirmani, Brijesh Patel. FRONT ROW: Polly Umrigar (manager), Ashok Mankad, Gundappa Vishwanath, Bishan Bedi (captain) Sunil Gavaskar, Erapalli Prasanna, Srinu Venkat, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar. Photos courtesy WD & HO Wills.

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.

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.



1977/78

AUSTRALIA v. INDIA

Third Test Match

Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 30, 31, 1977, January 2, 3 & 4, 1978.

India won by 222 runs. Toss: India.

India

S. M. Gavaskar c Rixon b Thomson	0	- c Serjeant b Gannon	118
C. P. S. Chauhan c Mann b Clark..	0	- run out	20
M. Amarnath c Simpson b Clark..	72	- (7) b Cosier..	41
G. R. Viswanath c Rixon b Thomson	59	- lbw b Clark	54
D. B. Vengsarkar c Simpson b Thomson..	37	- c Cosier b Clark	6
A. V. Mankad c Clark b Gannon	44	- b Clark	38
† S. M. H. Kirmani lbw b Simpson	29	- (3) c Thomson b Mann..	29
K. D. Ghavri c Rixon b Gannon	6	- c Simpson b Clark..	6
E. A. S. Prasanna b Clark..	0	- c Rixon b Gannon	11
* B. S. Bedi not out	2	- not out	12
B. S. Chandrasekhar b Clark..	0	- lbw b Cosier..	0
Lb 3, nb 4	7	Lb 1, nb 7	8

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: *First Innings* — 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. *Second Innings* — 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.

Australia

J. Dyson b Ghavri..	0	- lbw b Bedi	12
G. J. Cosier c Chauhan b Chandrasekhar	67	- b Chandrasekhar..	34
A. D. Ogilvie lbw b Ghavri	6	- c Chauhan b Bedi	0
C. S. Serjeant b Chandrasekhar..	85	- b Chandrasekhar..	17
* R. B. Simpson c Mankad b Chandrasekhar..	2	- lbw b Chandrasekhar..	4
P. M. Toohey c Viswanath b Bedi	14	- c Chauhan b Chandrasekhar	14
A. L. Mann c Gavaskar b Bedi	11	- c Gavaskar b Chandrasekhar	18
† S. J. Rixon lbw b Chandrasekhar	11	- c & b Chandrasekhar	12
W. M. Clark lbw b Chandrasekhar	3	- c Ghavri b Bedi	33
J. R. Thomson c Ghavri b Chandrasekhar..	0	- c & b Bedi..	7
J. B. Gannon not out..	0	- not out	3
B 6, lb 7, nb 1	14	B 6, lb 4..	10

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: *First Innings* — 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. *Second Innings* — 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: *1st day* — Ind (1) 6/234 (Mankad 30); *2nd day* — Ind (2) 1/50 (Gavaskar 25, Kirmani 5); *3rd day* — Ind (2) 4/234 (Gavaskar 103, Mankad 15); *4th day* — Aust (2) 8/123 (Clark 2, Thomson 0). 8-ball overs.

Umpires: R. A. French & M. G. O'Connell.

**Facts sheet research by
MCC Library Volunteers**

Ray Webster and Ross Perry.

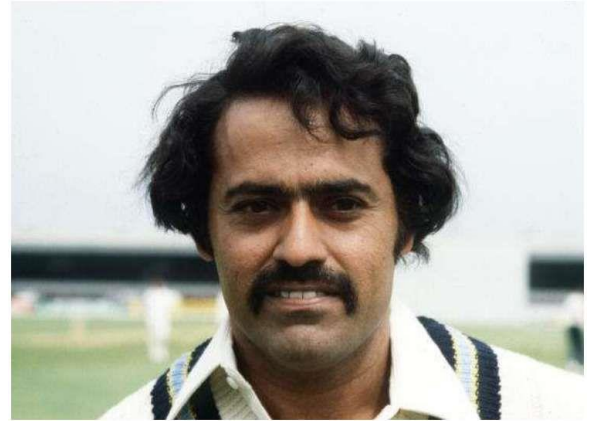
Edited by

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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.

FREE WIFI AT THE MCG

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