



MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB

BOXING DAY TEST
DECEMBER 27, 2021

AUSTRALIA V. ENGLAND
LIBRARY FACT SHEET - DAY 2

Vale Colin Campbell McDonald AM, November 17, 1928 – January 8, 2021

Today we pay tribute to former Australian Test opener, MCC Premiership player and member of the MCC team of the 20th Century, Colin Campbell McDonald, who died earlier this year.

“An Australian of considerable, if rather different, quality was Colin McDonald of Victoria; a right-hander whose ability against the swinging ball early marked him as a natural choice for opening bat. He was an intelligent and cultured man who exhibited a considerable capacity for dogged defence. He was a capable player of spin who, with top score in either innings, offered the major resistance to Jim Laker’s great performance at Old Trafford in 1956: while his resolution against pace virtually decided the series of 1960/61 in West Indies for Australia. He was a regular in Australian sides for the decade from 1951 to 1961. A likeable human being, he retired to become an administrator in Australian lawn tennis.” (John Arlott in Wisden Cricket Monthly, December 1986).

Test Career Batting and Fielding (1951/52-1961)

M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct
47	83	4	3107	170	39.32	5	17	14

Test Career Bowling (1951/52-1961)

Balls	Mdns	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	5wl	10wM	SRate	Econ
8	0	3	0	0-3	-	-	-	-	2.25

Colin McDonald was born at Glen Iris, Melbourne, on November 17, 1928. One of Australia’s finest opening batsman, he was an extremely skilful player of fast bowling, where his short backlift and sound footwork were seen to advantage. Mainly a backfoot player, he was a strong cutter and very adept at on-side placements and sometimes revealed a forcing cover drive. Although chiefly remembered for his batting against pace, he was also a skilful player of spin.

He made his Test debut in the 5th Test against West Indies in 1951/52 alongside his fellow University and Victorian opening partner, George Thoms. He made 32 and 62, and the following season scored an impressive 437 runs at 49.55 against



South Africa which included his maiden Test hundred, 154 in the Fourth Test at Adelaide, January 24-29, 1953.

“His century innings was studded with many well-timed cover shots which demanded a brand of footwork that has generally been missing from his previous Test performances. This excellent innings has certainly clinched a place for McDonald in the Australian team for England. The most promising feature of McDonald’s batting was the fact that the suicidal off-side flourish that had marred his displays this season was conspicuously absent.” (W.J. O’Reilly in the Advertiser (Adelaide) January 26, 1953).

“McDonald, becoming a little leg-weary after his long innings in the broiling sun, lifted Tayfield for four, and then was stumped off that bowler for 154, made in five and a quarter hours. He hit sixteen fours and a six in easily his best-looking innings of the series. There were some lucky ones, but many really good strokes, and once again McDonald showed that his eye was keen and his

concentration excellent. He and Hassett added 275 runs for the second wicket, this eclipsing the previous record of 274, held by Woodfull and Bradman.” (A.G. Moyes in *The South Africans in Australia 1952-1953*).

“As Australia’s No.1 in the last six Tests, McDonald has scored consistently, though he has yet to rectify a couple of flaws in technique which Bedser spotted in innings against West Indies last year. McDonald’s best assets now, are brown-eyed serenity, easy footwork against spin bowling and a good cover-drive. One of his well-wishers believes his shortcomings originate in his adoption of a poky back-lift which fails to liberate his elbows from his ribs. McDonald is young enough to tighten the loose nuts if he gives his mind to it.” (Ray Robinson in *The Cricketer Spring Annual 1953*).



(Above, Colin McDonald being introduced to HM The Queen during the Australians match against Middlesex at Lord’s 1953. Top Right, Arthur Mailey’s caricature of McDonald from the same tour.)

After such a promising start he proved a big disappointment on the 1953 tour of England and was not picked for the Tests. Recalled for the Fourth Test against England in 1954/55, after Australia’s batting had been ripped apart by England’s pace attack, he immediately impressed, scoring 186 runs at 46.50 in the last two Tests and was thereafter an automatic selection for the Test side until a wrist injury compelled his retirement during the 1961 tour of England.



He formed an effective opening partnership with Jim Burke, their stands of 190 against South Africa at Cape Town in 1957/58 and 171 against England at Adelaide in 1958/59 both setting up Australian victories.

South Africa v Australia at Newlands, Cape Town, December 31, 1957 - January 4, 1958.

“Ian Craig’s advantage in winning the toss – and it was time he won a toss – was consolidated on the first day by a slow, laborious, grinding-down start by McDonald and Burke who took the score to 178 at tea time, and South Africa looked right out of the game before the first day was over. Then cricket showed its unpredictability, and with the score at 190 McDonald was out, caught off Fuller by Waite, edging a ball high outside the off-stump. McDonald’s score, unhappily, was 99.” (*South African Cricket Review January 1958*).

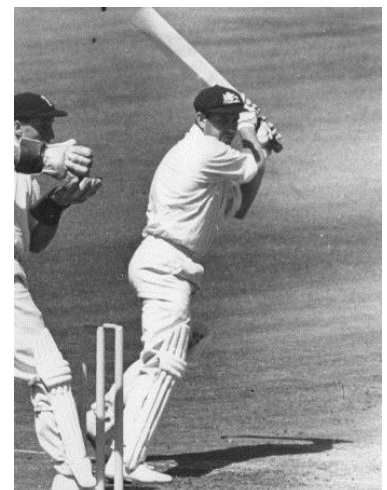
Other notable performances included his tenacious 32 and 89 at Manchester in 1956 where he twice top-scored in the Test in which Jim Laker took his world-record nineteen wickets.

England v Australia at Old Trafford, Manchester, July 26-31, 1956.

“McDonald, out only eleven short of a hundred, had shown wariness and resource for five and a half hours: his feet were not always in the right place, but, unlike several more illustrious colleagues, his heart was. It was a warm persistent innings, one which, considering its context, had surprisingly few dull passages.” (Alan Ross in *Cape Summer and The Australians in England*).

His finest series was against England in 1958/59, when his consistency at the top of the order was a key factor in Australia regaining the Ashes – his 519 runs at 64.87 included his Test-highest score of 170 at Adelaide, and a fine double of 133 and 51 not out in the final Test at Melbourne. That 133 (209 balls, in 339 minutes, 7 fours) is recorded on the Australian Centuries at the MCG Honour Board, located in the home team dressing room.

“He is no stylist. He plays a lot with his bottom hand and doesn’t move on the balls of his feet so that his footwork is not as deft as others but there is no mistaking his capacity or temperament. He has some very neat off-side shots and was forever pushing the English attack for singles to the on-side. He never allowed the leg-trap to worry him, glancing with impunity and allowing placement and, sometimes, good fortune to take the ball through the gaps. He reminded me of Herbert Sutcliffe and that must be pretty high praise.” (Jack Fingleton in *Four Chukkas to Australia: The 1958-59 M.C.C. Tour of Australia*).



McDonald's courageous 91 against the West Indies, including Wes Hall at his fastest, in front of the world record attendance of 90,800 at Melbourne in 1960/61 was one of his favourite cricket memories.

In 60 matches for Victoria between 1947/48 and 1962/63 McDonald scored 3919 runs at 42.14. His eight centuries for the state included two double-centuries, a career-highest 229 against SA in 1953/54, and 207 against NSW in 1951/52, five weeks before his Test debut. He succeeded Neil Harvey as Victoria's captain in 1958/59, but international commitments restricted him to just eight matches as captain.

After a short period as a schoolteacher, he worked as an insurance broker before turning his hand to tennis administration, serving as executive director of the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia from 1977 to 1987, and secretary of the National Tennis Centre Trust from 1987 to 1990. Richard Yallop, tennis journalist for the *Age* and *Tennis Australia Magazine*, encapsulated the development of the National Tennis Centre in one of his articles from September 1985:

"The speed with which the stadium has moved from someone's grand idea to an architect's building plan is a credit to the willpower and vision of those at the LTAA [Tennis Australia] and in the Government who have abandoned bureaucratic caution and 'thought big'. There were lobbies to be overcome – the environmentalists and Kooyong, principally, who have argued the stadium would destroy public parkland and waste public money – but they were no match for Messrs Brian Tobin and Colin McDonald, respectively the LTAA's president and executive director."

Opening in time for the 1988 Australia Open, the centre has changed the sporting landscape of Melbourne, catering to some of the largest and most enthusiastic tennis crowds in the world.

In the 1960's and 1970's Colin was a well-known cricket commentator, chiefly on television. Dr Ian McDonald, Victoria's highly efficient wicket-keeper from 1948/49 to 1952/53, was his elder brother, and Keith Rigg, Australian Test cricketer of the 1930s, was a cousin.

Always interested in politics – "I used to be enthusiastically Liberal, now I've gone a long way down the leftwing track," he said in 2010 – he served as a Melbourne city councillor from 1963 to 1973. He was made a member of the Order of Australia in 2014.

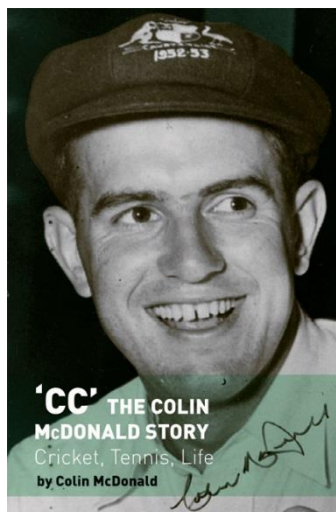
After his death was announced in January, Cricket Australia chairman Earl Eddings said McDonald "will forever be remembered as a legend of Victorian and Australian cricket. He was fearless against the fast bowlers and skilful when playing the spinners both in Australia and across tours of England, the Caribbean, South Africa, India and Pakistan. Australian cricket is a better place for Colin's many years of outstanding service at international and state level, as well as his club career with Melbourne University, Melbourne Cricket Club and Brighton. Our sincere condolences and best wishes go out to Colin's family."

First-Class Career Batting and Fielding (1947/48-1962/63)

	M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100	50	Ct	St
Overall	192	307	26	11375	229	40.48	24	57	55	2

First-Class Career Bowling (1947/48-1962/63)

	Balls	Mdns	Runs	Wkts	BB	Ave	5wl	10wM	SRate	Econ
Overall	301	6	192	3	1-10	64.00	0	0	100.33	3.82



Colin McDonald's autobiography, **CC, The Colin McDonald Story: Cricket, Tennis, Life** was published in 2009 by Australian Scholarly Publishing (ISBN 9781921509490)

It was publicised as "Cricketer, councillor, administrator, visionary ... they are all part of Colin McDonald's considerable C.V. A schoolboy star from Scotch College, he played Test cricket for a decade from 1952 onwards. A former Melbourne Cricket Club premiership captain, he averaged just on 40 as an opening batsmen in 47 Test matches. Fifty years ago this year he was world cricket's No. 1 ranking batsman, having made back-to-back Ashes centuries against old enemy England. This memoir also tells of McDonald's pivotal role in the building of Australia's Grand Slam tennis centre, now known as Rod Laver Arena. It relates his time as a Melbourne City councillor and of his conscience regarding the injustices of apartheid during both his roles as a cricketer and senior tennis administrator."

Colin had a real fondness for his captain, Richie Benaud, who provided the foreword. The pair made their Test match debuts together at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1952, and toured England three times, as well as the West Indies, South Africa, India and Pakistan.

The MCC Library holds copies, which are available to peruse in the library. The MCC Library catalogue can be browsed online at <https://mcc.softlinkhosting.com.au>

Colin McDonald and the Melbourne Cricket Club

Colin McDonald played for the Melbourne Cricket Club in the VCA's District Cricket competition from 1944/45 to 1949/50, and from 1956/57 to 1962/63. In 60 1st XI matches he scored 2090 runs at 33.17, with five centuries, the highest being 133 not out against Northcote in 1947/48.

Colin captained the club in 1958/59 and 1960/61. He was a member two of Melbourne's two premiership teams. Firstly in 1948/49, alongside his brother Ian. Secondly as captain of the 1958/59 team.

He topped the club's batting averages twice. In 1947/48, when aged only nineteen, he scored 623 runs at 56.63, and in 1949/50 with 449 runs at 40.81.

In addition, he represented University from 1950/51 to 1955/56, bringing his record in all first XI District games to 3744 runs at 33.42.

Colin McDonald was selected in the Melbourne Cricket Club's team of the century announced by MCC Cricket chairman Bob Lloyd at the Members Dinner on December 1, 1999.

MCC Team of the Century: W.H. Ponsford, C.C. McDonald, D.M. Jones, H.S.T.L. Hendry, A.P. Sheahan, W.W. Armstrong, H. Trumble, R.I. Templeton, M.N.H. Walker, H.I. Ebeling, H. Ironmonger and V.S. Ransford (12th man). In the team painting by Alexandra Sassé on display on Level two of the Members' Reserve, the players are portrayed as their playing age. As part of her work Sassé produced contemporary head and shoulders studies of the then living members of the team, and these are displayed surrounding the painting. (Colin's is reproduced below left. Can you match the names to the players in the team painting?)

When the Melbourne Cricket Club introduced the membership category of "Honorary Cricket Member" in 2004, Colin was one of the inaugural intake.

