



# MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB

BOXING DAY TEST  
DECEMBER 28, 2022

AUSTRALIA VS. SOUTH AFRICA  
LIBRARY FACT SHEET - DAY 3

## Double Centuries in Australia versus South Africa Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

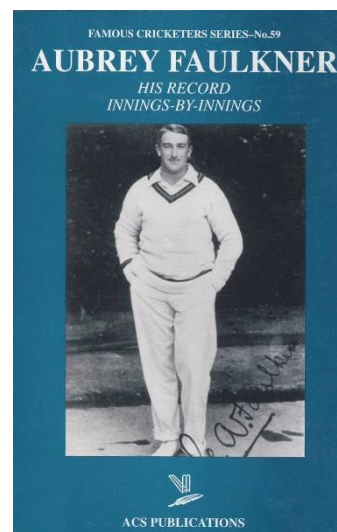
In the 12 Tests matches between Australia and South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, two batters have scored a double century. Firstly, during the 1910/11 series, Aubrey Faulkner of South Africa in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. Then Neil Harvey of Australia scored 205 in the 5<sup>th</sup> Test of the 1952/53 series. Ironically, in both matches, and despite their achievements with the bat, at the end of these Tests both men finished on the losing team. However, these feats are recorded on the honour boards in the Australian and visiting teams change rooms at the MCG.

### G.A. Faulkner

George Aubrey Faulkner was born 17 December 1881 in Port Elizabeth. He had a hard upbringing, with a violent alcoholic father. He enlisted in the Imperial Light Horse in 1900 to fight in the Anglo-Boer War. Faulkner's early career in the Currie Cup from 1902 to 1905 was unremarkable, and he only came to prominence when he scored a fifty and took six wickets with his googlies for Transvaal against the touring MCC in 1905/6. He was selected and played his part in the 4-1 series win. He then went to tour England in 1907, where at Headingley, he had the remarkable analysis of 6 for 17 off eleven overs. 1909-1911 saw Faulkner at the peak of his career, playing in two series against England and the one against Australia. After that series he married and moved to England where he hoped to play county cricket. That never transpired and the rest of his career was limited to matches for South Africa in England and various festival matches.

He again served in the British Army following the outbreak of World War I. He served on the Western Front, Macedonia and Palestine, helping to capture Jerusalem. He was promoted to Major, and received the DSO and the Order of the Nile for his bravery. He also contracted malaria. His absence due to the war led to the disintegration of his marriage and he was divorced in 1920. Faulkner was regarded as something of a charming sporting and military figure who had many female admirers. He married again in 1928.

His swansong was the famous game played at Eastbourne for AC McLaren's XI v the 1921 Australians. After being dismissed for 43 in its first innings, A.C. McLaren's XI inflicted the Australians' only defeat for the tour. Faulkner scored 153 in the second innings and took six wickets for the match, including the important one of WW Armstrong in the Australians' second innings. After an unsuccessful recall to the 1924 injury-depleted South African side, he retired and formed a coaching school. He is credited with having an influence over Doug Wright, Ian Peebles and Denis Tomlinson. His cricket school was not a financial success, and he had bouts of depression, possibly made worse by the malaria. He gassed himself on 10th September 1930, aged 38.



### 204, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test, 31st December 1910, 2nd, 3rd, 4th January 1911.

Australia were up 1-0 going into the second Test of the series. In Ray Webster OAM's *First-Class Cricket in Australia, Volume 1, 1850/51 to 1941/42*, Webster summarised the match,

*"Faulkner (204 in 315 minutes, 26 fours) survived chances at 64 and 126 but gave an otherwise masterly display in scoring South Africa's first Test double century. Zulch (42 in 124 minutes, 5 fours), Snooke (77 in 150 minutes, 10 fours) and Sinclair (58 not out in 90 minutes, 2 sixes and 6 fours) also batted well. South Africa's second-innings collapse occurred when the wicket was still in good condition, "all credit to the fine bowling of Whitty and Cotter (Age). Bardsley (85 in 115 minutes, 8 fours) gave a polished display in Australia's first innings, sharing a century second-wicket stand with Hill (39 in 49 minutes, 2 fours), who was out to the first ball he received in the second innings. Ransford (58 in 77 minutes, 1 five and 6 fours) and Armstrong (75 in 120 minutes, 5 fours) made other important contributions. However, the innings of the match was considered to be Trumper's chanceless 159 in 171 minutes, with 1 six and 15 fours. He reached 50 in 63 minutes and 100 in 117 minutes and it was plainly stated: "During his stay at the wicket he never made a false stroke" (Age). As Australia's second innings began at 3.30 pm after an early tea break, Trumper's 133\* in 154 minutes can be considered to have occupied one session."*



Left, Page from CC Mullen's scrapbook on the South African tour of Australia in 1910/11, showing scoring sequence for Faulkner's 204 at the MCG in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test. MCC Museum collection, M15494.

The 1910/11 Series between Australia and South Africa was the first played between these teams in Australia. After an easy win in Sydney in the 1<sup>st</sup> Test, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test in Melbourne was a cracker. Aubrey Faulkner, the South African all-rounder, scored a fine 204 in 315 minutes, hitting 26 fours. This established a first innings lead of 158 runs. Victor Trumper helped restore the balance by scoring 133 not out in 154 minutes during the last session of the third day's play. Set 170 runs to win, they were bowled out for 80, thanks to W. J. Whitty's left arm swing bowling.

South Africa won the 3<sup>rd</sup> Test convincingly in Adelaide, Faulkner scoring 56 and 115.

Trumper scored a then record for Australia of 214 not out. They then returned to Melbourne for the 4<sup>th</sup> Test scheduled to start on the 10 of February. It rained on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup>. After a considerable amount of discussion between various parties the match was postponed until the following Friday 17<sup>th</sup>. Australia won the match by a massive 530 runs, scoring 578 in the second innings. Faulkner scored 20 and 80. The last Test of the series in Sydney was again won by Australia. Faulkner once more made runs, 52 and 92, and finished with a series aggregate of 732 runs at 73.20.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test, the Melbourne *Herald* published an extract on discussion of Faulkner from back in South Africa:

*"Writing on the tour of the South Africans, 'The Latest' (Durban) remarks that: 'It will be interesting to read Australian opinion of Faulkner as an all-round exponent of the game. My own opinion is that he is entitled to rank with Hirst and Noble at their best, as the greatest all-rounder of the last 15 years. As a batsman he is probably not as good as Noble has been, and as a bowler he may not have equalled Hirst; but, on the other hand, as a bowler he is Noble's superior, and as a batsman Hirst's. With Faulkner it is a difficult matter to say which he is the better—batsman or bowler.' On what we have seen of him Australians would have no hesitation in saying that his batting is far better than his bowling."*

Obviously Australian opinion of Faulkner and his batting was high, as can be seen from the article in the *Hamilton Spectator* of March 10, 1911.<sup>2</sup> Faulkner was presented with a miniature gold bat by the Victorian Cricket Association to commemorate his 204. Where is that little bat today?

**SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKETERS**  
**FAREWELLED IN MELBOURNE,**  
**APPROPRIATE PRESENTATIONS.**  
 (Wire From Our Correspondent.)

**MELBOURNE, Thursday.**  
 The South African cricketers, who commence their last match against South Australia at Adelaide to-morrow, were entertained at a farewell luncheon by the Victorian Cricket Association at the Vienna cafe to-day.

Several speeches were made, and Mr. G. A. Faulkner, who made 204 in the second test match, was presented with a miniature gold bat in commemoration of his notable innings.

Silver-mounted balls were also presented to Messrs. D. Nourse and M. Commaile for their brilliant catches in the second test match.

Mr. Sherwell, captain of the South Africans, was also presented with a small silver ball.



Photo by "Sport and General."  
**G. A. FAULKNER,**  
 The South African champion, who scored 204 runs against the Australian Eleven. It is the second highest score made in Australia. Faulkner has shown splendid form in all matches.



Photo by Alice Mills.  
**W. J. WHITTY,**  
 The Adelaide bowler, who dismissed six of the South Africans for 17 runs. He bowled 96 balls, of which only 12 were scored off.



Photo by Talma, 374 George-street.  
**A. COTTER,**  
 The fast bowler of the Australian Eleven, who captured four for 47 in the second innings, and with Whitty was responsible for the collapse of the Springboks for 80 runs.



Photo by Talma, 374 George-street.  
**V. TRUMPER,**  
 Who scored 159 runs in the second innings against South Africa.

**HEROES OF THE SECOND TEST MATCH.**

<sup>1</sup> HERE AND THERE. (1911, January 6). *The Herald* (Melbourne, Vic.), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKETERS" *Hamilton Spectator* (Vic.: 1870 - 1918) 10 March 1911: p. 3.



## Neil Harvey

Robert Neil Harvey was born on October 8th 1928 at Fitzroy, Melbourne. He was an elegant left handed batsman and magnificent cover point. He debuted at the age of 19 years and three months, playing the final two Tests of India's first tour of Australia in 1947/1948. Harvey scored 153 at the MCG in his second Test match, and was selected for the 1948 Australian Ashes touring side. This was the first of his three centuries in Tests at the MCG, all were over 150. He became the lynchpin of the Australian batting line-up for the 1950s. In a 79 Test career he scored 21 Test centuries.

Harvey was passed over for the captaincy twice, first by Ian Craig, and then by Richie Benaud. However, he did captain Australia to victory at Lord's when Benaud was injured in 1961. He retired after the 1962/63 Ashes series. In all Harvey scored 6149 runs at 48.41 in 79 Tests. He was inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame in 2000, alongside Warwick Armstrong and Allan Border, and was also selected in the Australian Cricket Board's official Test Team of the 20th Century.

### 205, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Test, February 6-7, 9-12, 1953.

Australia won the First Test at the Gabba by 96 runs, thanks to superb bowling by Doug Ring and Ray Lindwall, and superb batting by Neil Harvey (109 in 1<sup>st</sup> innings). South Africa levelled the series in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Test at the MCG (See Day 2 Factsheet and Tayfield's 13 wickets for match), the Australians comprehensively won the 3<sup>rd</sup> Test at the SCG where Harvey scored 190 in the Australian's only innings. The 4<sup>th</sup> Test at the Adelaide Oval was drawn

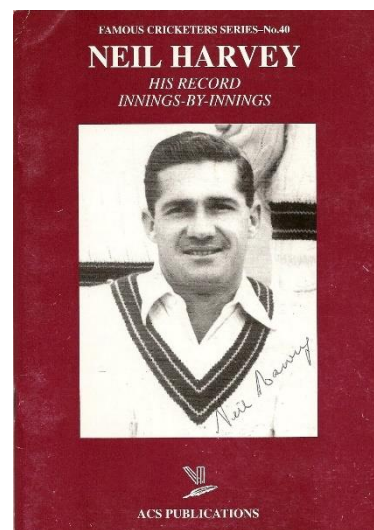
In Ray Webster OAM's **First-Class Cricket in Australia, Volume 2, 1945/46 to 1976/77**, Webster summarised the match:

*South Africa scored a remarkable victory after appearing to be outplayed for the first four days. The visitors were without D.J. McGlew (broken finger). Australia rested R.R. Lindwall and K.R. Miller, reportedly to ensure their fitness for the 1953 England tour. Craig, aged 17 years 239 days, became the youngest player to represent Australia in Tests. Overnight rain delayed the start by 84 minutes. McDonald (41 in 134 minutes, 1 four), Morris (99 in 163 minutes, 7 fours), Harvey (205 in 295 minutes, 19 fours, chances at 151 and 173), Hassett (4) in 118 minutes, 1 four, and Craig (53 in 107 minutes, 6 fours) batted Australia into a seemingly impregnable position. Morris was highly praised for a magnanimous gesture in sacrificing his own wicket, when not at fault, to save that of Harvey. Waite (64 in 154 minutes, 4 fours), Watkins (92 in 193 minutes, 1 six, 8 fours, chance at 7), McLean (81 in 93 minutes, 1 six, 10 fours), Cheetham (66 in 193 minutes, 7 fours, chance at 9) and Mansell (52 in 151 minutes, 4 fours) took South Africa to within 85 runs of Australia's massive total. Superb bowling and fielding restricted the Australian second innings when only Morris (44 in 124 minutes, 2 fours) and Craig (47 in 114 minutes, 4 fours) batted with authority. Disciplined batting from Edean (70 in 180 minutes, 3 fours, chance at 11) and Watkins (5) in 162 minutes, 4 fours) established the foundation for victory. A spectacular innings from McLean (76 not out, out of 106 in 80 minutes, 14 fours, difficult chance first ball), with support from Keith (40 not out in 118 minutes, 4 fours) completed the task just prior to the tea adjournment.*

Harvey's double century received widespread positive coverage in the local press.

*"Harvey seemed to me to bat with the definite purpose of scoring 200 runs. He set himself the same task in the third Test in Sydney but got out at 190 by slashing at a swinging ball outside the off stump. He gave slip chances at 151 and 173 on Saturday but, although neither error was a careless stroke, Harvey looked very annoyed with himself each time. Bowling to a Harvey with the sureness of eye and quickness of reflex to slash runs from almost any ball is a disturbing prospect for any bowler, but trying to dislodge a Harvey who cuts down on risks until an objective is reached would be frightening. For years Harvey has batted with apparent greater pleasure in the strokes he plays than the actual gain in runs. Now there seems to be coming into his play a trace of the relentlessness that gave Bradman and Ponsford records." (Kevin Hogan in **The Sun**, Melbourne, 9.2.1953).*

*"I've sat throughout this season stunned by the very impact of Harvey's dashing batting. He brooks no interference. He's labelled – 'This man is dangerous!' Accuracy deserts bowlers as Harvey jumps two yards out of the popping crease and makes his own length to accuracy. His stroking is brilliant. Perhaps his best shot is one which he seems to rescue from his toes as he drives it with full-blooded fury, wide of mid-on, to the fence. It's a dream shot! He cover-drives, back-cuts, straight-drives, glides to fine leg, or robustly pulls the ball." (H.A. de Lacy in **Sporting Globe** 11.2.1953).*





## Is Neil Harvey the best batsman in the world today?

This question was asked by A.B.C. cricket commentator, Charles Fortune, after Harvey's brilliant 205 against South Africa in the fifth Test on Saturday.

First reply came from A. G. (Johnny) Moyes, former South Australian and Victorian player, now a special commentator for the A.B.C.

Said Moyes: "If there is a better player I would like to see him."

Last night Moyes added these comments: "This season Neil Harvey has grown to manhood in his batting. There is maturity and concentration that were previously lacking and he must be regarded as one of the great batsmen of the present day."

**"Twice as hard to get out"**

Sam Mirwis, South African Press Association representative, who reported the Test series between South Africa and England in 1950-51, said:

"England will see a new Harvey this year. I would rank him with Len Hutton as the best present-day batsman. Gone is the carefree attitude Harvey had in South Africa when he made four centuries in the 1949-50 season Test series.

"He will be twice as hard to get out as he was then."

**Bill Ponsford, former**



Neil Harvey

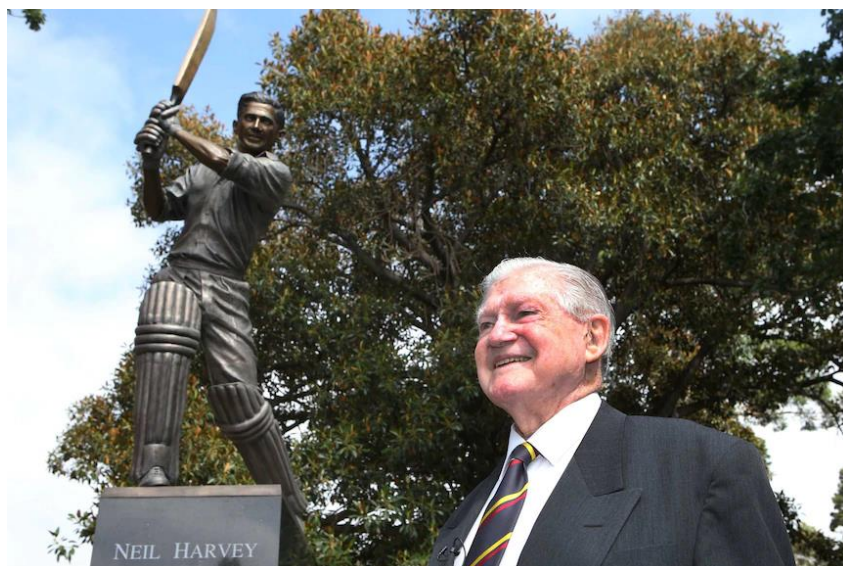
champion Australian opening batsman: "In his present wonderful form there is no doubt that Harvey is one of the best batsmen in the world. There is no reason why he should not go on and become even better."

Sun cricket writer Kevin Hogan says: "Harvey broke one of Bradman's records on Saturday when he brought his total for the present Test series to 827 runs in eight innings.

"Bradman scored 806 against the South African team which visited Australia in 1930-31. He will go to England the undisputed successor to Bradman as a match-winning run-getter."

After he retired from Test cricket at the conclusion of the 1962/63 Ashes series, Alan Ross wrote in his book **Australia 63**:

"Cardus called him Mozartian. He was certainly the most unobtrusive of the great post-war batsmen. He never seized the imagination, or button-holed the onlooker. He lacked magnetism and aggressiveness. One could forget he was on the field - until the ball went to him. But once in action, the grace, the physical co-ordination, the footwork, the brilliance of execution, revealed him indelibly. His throwing from cover was beautiful and deadly. Batting, strokes steamed from him almost as if he had not made them himself. His quickness into position, his instinctive judgment and eye, tended to simplify the whole art of batting, so that one was conscious of ease and felicity, never of struggle. When he was out of touch he could look more fallible than most, but this was simply because his methods were based on instinctive appreciation, on fluid principles that never congealed. I cannot ever remember being bored by Harvey. At his best, he had a magical fluency, a lightness of touch that, even on bad wickets, prevented him from getting bogged down. Perhaps he was Mozartian, if by that one means effortlessness and virtuosity, a control that had long since progressed beyond the mere mastery of techniques. The good player makes one conscious of his methods, of the skeletal origin; the great one leaves one admiring and exhilarated, the bone filleted. Harvey made no demands on the spectator; he engulfed him, occasionally astonished, but it was with diffidence, with tact and courtesy." (Alan Ross in Australia 63).



The Neil Harvey statue on the *Australia Post Avenue of Legends* is located near Jolimont Station. It was sculpted by Lis Johnson, and unveiled in January 2014.

## Test Cricket at the MCG

Beginning with the inaugural Test match in March 1877, 114 Tests have been staged at the MCG. South Africa has been involved in 12 of the Tests played here. Australia has won 7 of these contests and South Africa 3, with the other two drawn.

Other sides to play Tests at the MCG are England (57) the West Indies (15), India (14), Pakistan (10), 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.

## 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 2nd Test against England in 1950/51, which began on Friday December 22 (Boxing Day, a Tuesday, being the third day of the match), and the 2nd 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 2nd 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 December 26: the 2nd Test against England in 1974/75, and the 2nd Test against the West Indies the following season, both of which commenced on that day.

Since 1980/81, 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 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 4th Test against the West Indies started on December 22 and in 1988/89 and 1994/95, when matches against the West Indies and England both commenced on Christmas Eve

Fact sheet research by MCC Library Volunteers Ray Webster and Ross Perry.

Edited by David Studham and Trevor Ruddell.

Thanks to our friends at [Tastats](#) and [Cricket Archive](#).