



# MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET DAY 4 - DECEMBER 29, 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 2003/04 TOUR

The team was captained by Sourav Ganguly, who had replaced Sachin Tendulkar soon after India's previous tour in 1999/00. There was an expectation among Australian supporters that their side, which had dominated Test cricket for the past decade, would win the series comfortably, especially in view of India's past record down under, it having won only three Tests in six series since its first visit in 1947/48.

This assumption, however, obviously overlooked the fact this Indian team, led by the feisty Ganguly and boasting a batting lineup which included Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, V.V.S. Laxman and Virender Sehwag, was much stronger than before and that the Australian attack was weakened by the absence of Glenn McGrath (injured) and Shane Warne (suspended).

The rain-affected first Test of the series, played at the Gabba, was drawn with honours fairly evenly divided, but the tourists then upset tour preconceptions, winning by four wickets at Adelaide in the second, despite going into the match without the services of bowlers Zaheer Khan (hamstring strain) and Harbhajan Singh (sore spinning finger).

### THIRD TEST MATCH

December 26-29, 2003: **INDIA 366** (103 overs) (V Sehwag 195, R Dravid 49, A Chopra 48, SC Ganguly 37; SCG MacGill 3/70) **and 286** (99.5 overs) (R Dravid 92, SC Ganguly 73, SR Tendulkar 44; BA Williams 4/53) **were defeated by AUSTRALIA 558** (151.2 overs) (RT Ponting 257, ML Hayden 136, DR Martyn 31; A Kumble 6/176, AB Agarkar 3/115) **and 1/97** (22.2 overs) (ML Hayden 53\*, RT Ponting 31\*) **by nine wickets.** *Player of the Match:* Ricky Ponting

Both teams made changes to their sides from Adelaide for this match. Australia recalled Nathan Bracken, who had played in the first Test but missed the second, and Brett Lee for Jason Gillespie (injured) and Andy Bichel, who was relegated to 12th man, while India brought back Zaheer Khan and omitted Irfan Pathan.

Ganguly won the toss and openers Sehwag and Aakash Chopra made good use of ideal batting conditions, combatting a barrage of fast, short-pitched bowling from Lee and Brad Williams in their contrasting styles, Sehwag characteristically aggressive while Chopra was solid and watchful. A wayward return allowed Sehwag to escape being run out when 5 and the belligerent opener was twice struck on the helmet by Lee but never flinched and continued on his merry way. The pair survived the pace onslaught and remained together at lunch on 0/89, Sehwag 51, Chopra 31.

Sehwag was quickly into his stride after the adjournment, sparing no bowler as he unleashed an amazing array of strokes. He was missed on 66 by Simon Katich at point and lost Chopra (48 in 182 minutes from 138 balls, six fours) with the score at 141, but found another staunch partner in Rahul Dravid (49 in 105 minutes from 89 balls, five fours), who assisted with the addition of a further 136 for the second wicket.

The local attack drew some relief from the latter's dismissal at 278, followed by Sachin Tendulkar first ball and then Sehwag (195 in 312 minutes from 233 balls, five sixes, 25 fours), who mishit a Katich full toss after having dispatched the previous delivery for six. India steadied to end the day on 4/329, with Ganguly on 20 and Laxman 6.

Next morning, India unaccountably slumped to 345 all out, losing its last six wickets for only 16 runs. In reply, Australia lost Justin Langer at 30, but a commanding second-wicket stand of 234 in even time from Matthew Hayden (136 in 260 minutes from 173 balls, one six, 17 fours) and Ricky Ponting denied the Indians further success until well into the final session, when wrist-spinner Anil Kumble trapped Hayden leg before. It was the powerful Queenslander's third successive century in Boxing Day Tests at the MCG. Ponting reached his century two overs later but Kumble struck again at 295, removing Adam Gilchrist, who had been promoted in the batting order. Damien Martyn (7) stayed with Ponting (120) until stumps were drawn at 3/317.



The overnight pair took the score to 373 inside the first hour before Ajit Agarkar had Martyn caught at the wicket and two balls later forced skipper Steve Waugh to retire hurt, after striking him a painful blow on the left elbow; Waugh resumed his innings at 5/437 when Katich was dismissed. The third day, however, belonged to Ponting (257 in 590 minutes from 458 balls, 25 fours), who improved on his 214 at Adelaide with another exhibition of flawless, classically-correct batting, joining Sir Donald Bradman as the only players to have recorded three Test double centuries in a calendar year. Kumble was rewarded for his skill and persistence, claiming 6/176 from 51 overs. India, 192 in arrears, lost both Chopra and Sehwag to be 2/27 at stumps, with Dravid and Ganguly both not out on 6.

2003/04	
AUSTRALIA v. INDIA	
Third Test Match	
Played at Melbourne Cricket Ground on December 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30, 2003.	
Australia won by 9 wickets. Toss: India.	
<b>India</b>	
A. Chopra c Katich b MacGill .....	48 - c Gilchrist b Bracken..... 4
V. Sehwag c Bracken b Katich .....	195 - c Williams b Lee..... 11
R. Dravid & Martyn b Waugh.....	49 - c Gilchrist b Lee..... 92
S. R. Tendulkar c Gilchrist b Lee.....	0 - (5) c Gilchrist b Williams..... 44
* S. C. Ganguly c Langer b Lee.....	37 - (4) b Bracken..... 73
V. V. S. Laxman c Hayden b MacGill .....	19 - c Hayden b MacGill..... 18
+ P. A. Patel c Gilchrist b Bracken.....	0 - not out..... 27
A. B. Agarkar run out.....	0 - b Williams..... 1
A. Kumble c Langer b Williams.....	3 - lbw b Williams..... 0
Zaheer Khan not out.....	0 - c Hayden b Williams..... 1
A. Nehra c Gilchrist b MacGill.....	0 - c Hayden b MacGill..... 0
Lb 3, w 1, nb 11.....	15 B 4, lb 3, w 1, nb 7..... 15
1/141 2/278 3/286 4/311 5/350 6/353 366	1/5 2/19 3/126 4/160 5/253 286
7/353 8/366 9/366 10/366	6/258 7/271 8/271 9/277 10/286
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Lee 27-7-103-2; Bracken 28-6-71-1; Williams 20-6-66-1; MacGill 15-3-70-3; Katich 4-0-18-1; Waugh 9-0-35-1. <i>Second Innings</i> — Lee 22-3-97-2; Bracken 25-13-45-2; Williams 22-5-53-4; MacGill 26.5-6-68-2; Katich 4-0-16-0.	
<b>Australia</b>	
J. L. Langer c Tendulkar b Agarkar.....	14 - lbw b Agarkar..... 2
M. L. Hayden lbw b Kumble.....	136 - not out..... 53
R. T. Ponting st Patel b Kumble.....	257 - not out..... 31
+ A. C. Gilchrist c Nehra b Kumble.....	14.....
D. R. Martyn c Patel b Agarkar.....	31.....
* S. R. Waugh lbw b Kumble.....	19.....
S. M. Katich c Chopra b Kumble.....	29.....
B. Lee c Laxman b Kumble.....	8.....
N. W. Bracken c & b Tendulkar.....	1.....
B. A. Williams not out.....	10.....
S. C. G. MacGill lbw b Agarkar.....	0.....
B 4, lb 8, w 5, nb 17, pen 5.....	39 B 4, lb 2, w 1, nb 4..... 11
1/30 2/264 3/295 4/473 5/437 6/502 558	1/9 (1 wkt) 97
7/535 8/542 9/555 10/558	
Bowling: <i>First Innings</i> — Agarkar 33.2-5-115-3; Zaheer Khan 25-4-103-0; Nehra 29-3-90-0; Kumble 51-8-176-6; Tendulkar 13-0-57-1. <i>Second Innings</i> — Agarkar 7-2-25-1; Nehra 6-3-16-0; Kumble 6.2-0-43-0; Sehwag 3-0-7-0.	
Close of play scores: <i>1st day</i> — Ind (1) 4/329 (Ganguly 20, Laxman 6); <i>2nd day</i> — Aust (1) 3/317 (Ponting 120, Martyn 7); <i>3rd day</i> — Ind (2) 2/27 (Dravid 6, Ganguly 6); <i>4th day</i> — Ind (2) 286 all out. 6-ball overs.	
Umpires: B. F. Bowden (NZ) & D. R. Shepherd (Eng).	

Ganguly (16) was forced to retire early next day when the total had reached 39, after being struck on the head by a Williams bouncer. Tendulkar (44 in 107 minutes from 79 balls, five fours) advanced the score to 126 with Dravid before edging Williams to Gilchrist. Ganguly (73 in 164 minutes from 125 balls, 12 fours), who had pluckily returned to the crease following Laxman's dismissal at 160, and Dravid (92 in 332 minutes from 244 balls, 13 fours) fought hard to keep their side in the match. The departure of both, however, again saw the later batsmen offer little resistance, the last six wickets falling for only 33 runs, three of them to Williams. There was no time before the scheduled drawing of stumps for Australia to begin its pursuit of the 97 required to win.

The home side reached its target in the opening session next day, to win by nine wickets and square the series. Agarkar again removed Langer cheaply, but Hayden (53 in 95 minutes from 63 balls, nine fours) and Ponting (31 in 73 minutes from 59 balls, three fours) scored freely and were still together when victory was achieved.

Moving on to Sydney, which was the occasion of the last of Steve Waugh's 168 Tests, India batted into the third day before declaring at 7/705, its highest total in Tests to that time (since surpassed by its 7/759 declared against England in 2016/17). In doing so, Ganguly ensured that his side could not lose and made certain that the series would be tied by batting a second time and not enforcing the follow-on when more than a day remained.

# ANIL KUMBLE (B. 1970)

Kumble is the third Indian bowler to twice appear on the visitors' honour board for taking 5+ wickets in an innings of an MCG Test match.

Kumble was by far the most successful bowler on either side during the 2003/04 series, gathering 24 wickets at an average of 29.58 to finish well ahead of team-mate Ajit Agarkar (16) and Australian Stuart MacGill (14). The differential is further accentuated by the fact that both Agarkar and MacGill played in all four Tests, whereas Kumble appeared in only three.

Although much taller and more robust in stature, his method was strikingly similar to that of Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, who was profiled in the second day fact sheet. As with his predecessor, Kumble delivered his wrist-spin at a pace which tied even the most fleet-footed batsman to the crease. He turned the ball only marginally either way, his most dangerous delivery being a fizzing top-spinner which accounted for the high number of lbw, bowled and close-to-the-wicket catches among his dismissals.

Kumble made his first-class debut in November 1989, creating an immediate impression by taking 24 wickets at 19.62 in five Ranji Trophy matches for Karnataka. Before the season was out, he had made four appearances in an under-19 series against Pakistan, which produced 12 wickets at 28.16 and a century (113) at Delhi on debut, resulting in his inclusion in the Indian team to visit England later in the year. He made his only appearance in the three-Test series in the drawn match at Manchester, where he claimed 3/105 in the first innings. He did not become a regular in the side until 1992/93, when his 18 wickets at 25.94 headed the aggregates and averages in the inaugural Test series between India and South Africa.

Kumble enjoyed particular success against Australia, securing more wickets (111 at 30.32 in 20 Tests) against it than any of the other Test nations. In his very first appearance, in October 1996, his figures of 4/63 and 5/67 played a significant part in his side's seven-wicket victory in the one-off Test at Delhi. He was again a thorn in the Australian side at home in 1997/98, when his 23 wickets at 18.08 were a major contribution to his side's 2-1 series win. The 2004/05 home series was Kumble's most productive against Australia, although his 27-wicket haul at 25.37 was unable to prevent his side going down 2-1. He made three tours to Australia, in 1999/00, 2003/04 and 2007/08, the last as captain.

On February 7, 1999, Kumble joined England's Jim Laker as the only bowlers to have captured all 10 wickets in a Test innings, when he took 10/74 in Pakistan's second innings at Delhi. It is interesting to note that his only Test century (110 not out in 217 minutes from 193 balls, one six, 16 fours, against England at The Oval in August 2007) was made in his 118th appearance (the most Tests by any player before a maiden hundred) and at 36 years of age was the oldest to score a century for India.

Kumble holds the record for the most wickets in Tests for India, with 619 at 29.65 in 132 matches between 1990 and 2008/09, while as a capable lower order batsman he also scored 2506 runs at 17.77, with the one century mentioned above. He also represented India in 269 One-Day Internationals, in which he tallied 334 wickets at 30.83 and 903 runs at 10.37. In all first-class cricket, he secured 1136 wickets at 25.83 and made 5572 runs at 21.68, including seven hundreds, in 244 games between 1989/90 and 2008/09.



# 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.

All Tests played between Australia and India at the MCG since 1985 have commenced on Boxing Day

## BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

This trophy, first awarded to India after they won a one-off Test against Australia in India in October 1996, is named in honour of distinguished former test captains, Australia's Allan Border and India's Sunil Gavaskar. The winners of all Australia-India test series since 1996 have been awarded the Border- Gavaskar trophy.

In recent years, the only occasion when the Border-Gavaskar Trophy has not been contested during Australia-India matches was when the two sides met in the final of the ICC World Test Championship at The Oval, London, in 2023. Australia won this match, but the Border-Gavaskar Trophy remains in India's hands after their victory in 2022/23 Test series in India.

In fact, the most recent time Australia secured the trophy was after their win in the 2014/15 home series. India won it back in the 2016/17 series in India.



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](http://www.cricketarchive.co.uk)

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