



ISSN: 2456-0057

IJPNPE 2021; 6(1): 174-178

© 2021 IJPNPE

www.journalofsports.com

Received: 14-11-2020

Accepted: 28-12-2020

Sachin Prakash

Ph.D., Research Scholar,
Department of Physical
Education, Indira Gandhi TMS
University, Ziro, Arunachal
Pradesh, India

Dr. Sandeep Bhalla

Director - Sports & Physical
Education Department, Indira
Gandhi TMS University, Ziro,
Arunachal Pradesh, India

History of men test cricket: An overview

Sachin Prakash and Dr. Sandeep Bhalla

Abstract

The concept of Test cricket came from First-Class matches, which were played in the 18th century. In the 19th century, it was James Lillywhite, who led England to tour Australia for a two-match series. The first official Test was played from March 15 in 1877. The first-ever Test was played with four balls per over. While it was a timeless match, it got over within four days. The first notable change in the format came in 1889 when the over was increased to a five-ball, followed by the regular six-ball over in 1900. While the first 100 Tests were played as timeless matches, it was since 1950 when four-day and five-day Tests were introduced. The Test Rankings was introduced in 2003, while 2019 saw the introduction of the World Test Championship. Traditionally, Test cricket has been played using the red ball, as it is easier to spot during the day. The most revolutionary change in Test cricket has been the introduction of Day-Night Tests. Since 2015, a total of 11 such Tests have been played, which three more scheduled. The specialty of these Tests is that they can be played under light and the pink ball is used instead of red, since the former is more visible under the night sky. The latest revolutionary introduction has been the ICC World Test Championship. It was introduced to give Test cricket a similar identity like ODIs and T20Is, which have World Cups of their own. The tournament would be played over two years, involving top teams. The tournament would also include Day-Night Tests, while the player jerseys have their names printed on the back, unlike previously. As of now, it looks like Day-Night Tests are likely to be the future of the format, as it would help in bringing back the viewership, which is dwindling in today's busy life. Also, the World Test Championship would make players fight for something in the format. As for the next change, curtailing the game to four days is still in works.

Keywords: Test cricket, first-class matches, day-night tests, world test championship, ICC, ODI, T20, world cup

Introduction

Test cricket is the form of the sport of cricket with the longest match duration, and is considered the game's highest standard ^[15]. Rotary Test matches are played between national representative teams that have been granted Test status, as determined and conferred by the International Cricket Council (ICC). The term *Test* stems from the fact that the long, grueling matches are mentally and physically testing ^[16]. Two teams of 11 players each play a four-innings match, which may last up to five days (or more in the past). It is generally considered the most complete examination of a team's endurance and ability. The first officially recognized Test match took place between 15 and 19 March 1877 and was played between England and Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). In October 2012, the ICC recast the playing conditions for Test matches, permitting day/night Test matches. The first day/night game took place between Australia and New Zealand at the Adelaide Oval, Adelaide, on 27 November – 1 December 2015.

Early history

Sides designated as "England" began to play in the late 18th century, but these teams were not truly representative. Early international cricket was disrupted by the French Revolution and the American Civil War. The earliest international cricket match was between USA and Canada, on 24 and 25 September 1844. This has never been officially considered a "Test Match". Tours of national English sides abroad took place, particularly to the US, Australia and New Zealand. The Australian Aborigines team became the first organised overseas cricketers to tour England in 1868. Two rival English tours of Australia were proposed in the early months of 1877, with James Lilly white campaigning for a professional tour and

Corresponding Author:**Sachin Prakash**

Ph.D., Research Scholar,
Department of Physical
Education, Indira Gandhi TMS
University, Ziro, Arunachal
Pradesh, India

Fred Grace for an amateur one. Grace's tour fell through and it was Lilly white's team that toured New Zealand and Australia in 1876–77. Two matches against a combined Australian XI were later classified as the first official Test matches. The first match was won by Australia, by 45 runs and the second by England. After reciprocal tours established a pattern of international cricket, The Ashes was established as a competition during the Australian tour of England in 1882. A surprise victory for Australia inspired a mock obituary of English cricket to be published in the *Sporting Times* the following day: the phrase "The body shall be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia" prompted the subsequent creation of the Ashes urn. The series of 1884–85 was the first to be held over five matches: England player Alfred Shaw, writing in 1901, considered the side to be "the best ever to have left England". South Africa became the third team to play Test cricket in 1888–89, when they hosted a tour by an under-strength England side.

Test status

Test matches are the highest level of cricket, played between national representative teams with "Test Status", as determined by the International Cricket Council. As of June 2017, twelve national teams have Test status, the most recently promoted being Afghanistan and Ireland on 22 June 2017.

Teams with test status

Test status is conferred upon a country or group of countries by the ICC. There are currently twelve men's teams that have been granted this status. International teams that do not have Test status can play first-class cricket in the ICC Intercontinental Cup, under conditions which are similar to Tests. The teams with Test status (with the date of each team's Test debut) are:

1. Australia (15 March 1877)
2. England (15 March 1877)
3. South Africa (12 March 1889)
4. West Indies (23 June 1928)
5. New Zealand (10 January 1930)
6. India (25 June 1932)
7. Pakistan (16 October 1952)
8. Sri Lanka (17 February 1982)
9. Zimbabwe (18 October 1992)
10. Bangladesh (10 November 2000)
11. Ireland (11 May 2018)
12. Afghanistan (14 June 2018)

Most of these teams represent independent sovereign nations. The exceptions are the England cricket team, which represents the constituent countries of England and Wales; the West Indies, a combined team from fifteen Caribbean nations and territories; and Ireland, representing both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Following the D'Oliveira affair in 1969, South Africa was suspended from all forms of cricket from 1970 until the end of the Apartheid regime in 1991. Zimbabwe's Test status was voluntarily suspended in 2006 because of poor performances. Its Test status was reinstated in August 2011. The ICC has made several proposals to reform the system of granting Test status. Unimplemented proposals include having two tiers with promotion and relegation, or a play-off between the winners of the ICC Intercontinental Cup and the team with the lowest Test ranking. These proposals have not been successful.

Notable statistics about test cricket

For statistical purposes, Tests are considered to be a subset of first-class cricket. Performances in first-class matches count towards only the first-class statistical record, but performances in Test matches count towards both the Test statistics and the first-class statistics. Statisticians have developed criteria to determine which matches count as Tests, if they were played before the formal definition of Test status. The first list of matches considered to be "Tests" was drawn up by Clarence Moody, an Australian, in the mid-1890s. Representative matches played by simultaneous England touring sides of 1891–92 (in Australia and South Africa) and 1929–30 (in the West Indies and New Zealand) are deemed to have "Test Status". In 1970, a series of five "Test Matches" was played in England between England and a Rest of the World XI. These matches, originally scheduled between England and South Africa, were amended after South Africa was suspended from international cricket because of their government's policy of apartheid. Although initially given Test status (and included as Test matches in some record books, including *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack*), this was later withdrawn and a principle was established that official Test matches can only be between nations (although the geographically and demographically small countries of the West Indies have since 1928 been permitted to field a coalition side). Despite this, in 2005, the ICC ruled that the six-day Super Series match that took place in October 2005, between Australia and a World XI, was an official Test match. Some cricket writers and statisticians, including Bill Frindall, ignored the ICC's ruling and excluded the 2005 match from their records. The series of "Test matches" played in Australia between Australia and a World XI in 1971–72 do not have Test status. The commercial "Supertests" organised by Kerry Packer as part of his World Series Cricket enterprise and played between "WSC Australia", "WSC World XI" and "WSC West Indies" from 1977 to 1979 have never been regarded as official Test matches.

Conduct of the game in test cricket

Playing time

A standard day of Test cricket consists of three sessions of two hours each, the break between sessions being 40 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for tea. However, the times of sessions and intervals may be altered in certain circumstances: if bad weather or a change of innings occurs close to a scheduled break, the break may be taken immediately; if there has been a loss of playing time, for example because of bad weather, the session times may be adjusted to make up the lost time; if the batting side is nine wickets down at the scheduled tea break, then the interval may be delayed until either 30 minutes has elapsed or the team is *all out*; the final session may be extended by up to 30 minutes if 90 or more overs have not been bowled in that day's play (subject to any reduction for adverse weather); the final session may be extended by 30 minutes (except on the 5th day) if the umpires believe the result can be decided within that time. Today, Test matches are scheduled to be played across five consecutive days. However, in the early days of Test cricket, matches were played for three or four days. Four-day Test matches were last played in 1973, between New Zealand and Pakistan. Until the 1980s, it was usual to include a 'rest day,' often a Sunday. There have also been 'Timeless Tests', which have no predetermined maximum time. In 2005, Australia played a match scheduled for six days against a World XI, which the ICC sanctioned as an official Test match, though

the match reached a conclusion on the fourth day. In October 2017, the ICC approved a request for a four-day Test match, between South Africa and Zimbabwe, which started on 26 December 2017 and ended on the second day, 27 December. The ICC trialed the four-day Test format until the 2019 Cricket World Cup. In December 2019, Cricket Australia were considering playing four-day Tests, subject to consensus with other Test nations. Later the same month, the ICC considered the possibility of making four-day Test matches mandatory for the ICC World Test Championship from 2023. There have been attempts by the ICC, the sport's governing body, to introduce day-night Test matches. In 2012, the International Cricket Council passed playing conditions that allowed for the staging of day-night Test matches. The first day-night Test took place during New Zealand's tour to Australia in November 2015.

Play

Test cricket is played in *innings* (the word denotes both the singular and the plural). In each innings, one team bats and the other bowls (or fields). Ordinarily four innings are played in a Test match, and each team bats twice and bowls twice. Before the start of play on the first day, the two team captains and the match referee toss a coin; the captain who wins the toss decides whether his team will bat or bowl first.

In the following scenarios, the team that bats first is referred to as *Team A* and their opponents as *Team B*. Usually the teams will alternate at the completion of each innings. Thus, Team A will bat (and Team B will bowl) until its innings ends, and then Team B will bat and Team A will bowl. When Team B's innings ends, Team A begin their second innings, and this is followed by Team B's second innings. The winning team is the one that scores more runs in their two innings.

A team's innings ends in one of the following ways:

- The team is "all out". This typically occurs when a team has lost ten wickets (ten of the eleven batsmen having been dismissed) and are "bowled out". It may occasionally occur with the loss of fewer wickets if one or more batsmen are unavailable to bat (through injury, for example).
- The team's captain declares the innings closed, usually because they believe they have enough runs. A declaration before the innings starts is called an innings forfeiture.
- The team batting fourth score the required number of runs to win.
- The prescribed time for the match expires.

If, at the completion of Team B's first innings, Team A leads by at least 200 runs, the captain of Team A may (but is not required to) order Team B to have *their* second innings next. This is called enforcing the follow on. In this case, the usual order of the third and fourth innings is reversed: Team A will bat in the fourth innings. It is rare for a team forced to follow on to win the match. In Test cricket it has only happened three times, although over 285 follow-ons have been enforced: Australia was the losing team on each occasion, twice to England, in 1894 and in 1981, and once to India in 2001.

If the whole of the first day's play of a Test match has been lost because of bad weather or other reasons like bad light, then Team A may enforce the follow on if Team B's first innings total is 150 or more fewer than Team A's. During the 2nd Test between England and New Zealand at Headingley in 2013, England batted first after the first day was lost because of rain. New Zealand, batting second, scored 180

runs fewer than England, meaning England could have enforced the follow on, though chose not to. This is similar to four-day first-class cricket, where the follow on can be enforced if the difference is 150 runs or fewer. If the Test is 2 days or fewer then the "follow-on" value is 100 runs.

After 80 overs, the captain of the bowling side may take a new ball, although this is not required. The captain will usually take the new ball: being harder and smoother than an old ball, a new ball generally favours faster bowlers who can make it bounce more variably. The roughened, softer surface of an old ball can be more conducive to spin bowlers, or those using reverse swing. The captain may delay the decision to take the new ball if he wishes to continue with his spinners (because the pitch favours spin). After a new ball has been taken, should an innings last a further 80 overs, then the captain will have the option to take another new ball.

A Test match will produce a result by means of one of six scenarios

- All four innings are complete. The team batting fourth are all out before overtaking the other team, usually before matching the other team's score. The team that batted third are the winners by a margin equal to the difference in the aggregate runs scored by the two teams (for example, "Team A won by 95 runs"). Very rarely (in over 2,000 Test matches played, it has only happened twice) the scores can end level, resulting in a tie.
- The team batting in the fourth innings overtakes the opposing team's run total. The match ends, and the team batting fourth is the winner by a margin equal to the number of wickets still to fall in the innings (for example, "Team B won by five wickets").
- The third innings concludes with the team that batted twice still trailing the team that batted once. The match ends without playing a fourth innings. The team that batted only once is the winner by a margin equal to "an innings" plus the difference in aggregate run totals of the teams (for example, "Team A won by an innings and 26 runs").
- Time for the match expires without a result being reached. This usually occurs at the end of the last day of the match. The result is a draw: there is no winner, no matter how superior the position of one of the sides. Rain causing a loss of playing time is a common factor in drawn matches, although matches may be drawn even without interference from the weather: usually as a result of poor time management or an intentional effort on the part of one team to avoid losing.
- The match is abandoned because the ground is declared unfit for play. This has occurred three times, resulting each time in a draw being declared: England v Australia at Headingley, Leeds, 1975 (vandalism); West Indies v England at Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica, 1998 (dangerous ground); West Indies v England at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Antigua, 2009 (dangerous ground).
- The match is awarded through a forfeiture. If a team refuses to take the field of play, the umpires may award the match to the opposing team. This has only happened once in Test cricket, in the 2006 fourth Test between England and Pakistan.

Competitions

Tours

Test cricket is almost always played as a series of matches between two countries, with all matches in the series taking

place in the same country (the host). Often there is a perpetual trophy that is awarded to the winner, the most famous of which is the Ashes contested between England and Australia. There have been two exceptions to the bilateral nature of Test cricket: the 1912 Triangular Tournament, a three-way competition between England, Australia and South Africa (hosted by England), and the Asian Test Championship, an event held in 1998–99 and 2001–02.

The number of matches in Test series has varied from one to seven. Up until the early 1990s, ^[17] Test series between international teams were organised between the two national cricket organisations with umpires provided by the home team. With the entry of more countries into Test cricket, and a wish by the ICC to maintain public interest in Tests in the face of the popularity of one-day cricket, a rotation system

was introduced that sees all ten Test teams playing each other over a six-year cycle, and an official ranking system (with a trophy held by the highest-ranked team). In this system, umpires are provided by the ICC. An elite panel of eleven umpires was maintained since 2002, and the panel is supplemented by an additional International Panel that includes three umpires named by each Test-playing country. The elite umpires officiate almost all Test matches, though usually not Tests involving their home country.

Perpetual Trophies

Several pairs of Test teams have established perpetual trophies which are competed for whenever teams play each other in Test series.

Table 1: Show the trophy first and latest contested

Name of trophy	Team 1	Team 2	First contested	Latest contested
The Ashes	England	Australia	1882–83	2019
Anthony De Mello Trophy	India	England	1951 ¹	2016
Frank Worrell Trophy	West Indies	Australia	1960–61	2015
Wisden Trophy / Richards – Botham Trophy	West Indies	England	1963	2020
Trans – Tasman Trophy	New Zealand	Australia	1985–86	2019–20
Border – Gavaskar Trophy	Australia	India	1996–97	2020–21
Southern Cross Trophy	Australia	Zimbabwe	1999	2003
Sir Vivian Richards Trophy	West Indies	South Africa	2000–01 ^{45]}	2016
Clive Lloyd Trophy	West Indies	Zimbabwe	2001	2017
Basil D'Oliveira Trophy	South Africa	England	2004–05	2019–20
Pataudi Trophy	India	England	2007	2018
Warne – Muralitharan Trophy	Sri Lanka	Australia	2007–08	2018–19
Freedom Trophy (Gandhi-Mandela Trophy)	India	South Africa	2015–16	2019–20
Sobers – Tissera Trophy	West Indies	Sri Lanka	2015–16	2018
Ganguly – Durjoy Trophy	India	Bangladesh	2017	2019–20

A The Anthony De Mello Trophy is awarded for India–England test series played in India, whilst the Pataudi Trophy is for series played in England.

International Test rankings

The twelve Test-playing nations are currently ranked as follows:

Table 2: Show the team matches points rating

Rank	Team	Matches	Points	Rating
1	New Zealand	27	3,198	118
2	India	32	3,765	118
3	Australia	31	3,498	113
4	England	44	4,734	108
5	Pakistan	26	2,328	90
6	South Africa	29	2,595	89
7	Sri Lanka	33	2,742	83
8	West Indies	28	2,252	80
9	Bangladesh	20	1,020	51

Reference: ICC Test Rankings, 14 February 2021

"Matches" is no. matches + no. series played in the 12–24 months since the May before last, plus half the number in the 24 months before that.

World test championship

There has been no World Cup for Test cricket conducted thus far. However, a league competition for Test cricket began in 2019–21. The schedule for this Championship is a set of typical bilateral series in various countries, where one team is the host and other team is the visitor. The length of each series varies between 2 matches and 5 matches. Ireland, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan are not competing in this competition, but instead play a program of Test matches against competing teams, and each other, during the period of the Championship.

Popularity

There is a common perception that Test cricket may be losing popularity, particularly in the face of the advent of short form cricket. Day/night Test matches have been floated as one way to address this problem. However, this fall in popularity has been disputed, with a Marylebone Cricket Club poll showing that 86% of all cricket fans support Test cricket, more than any other format ^[18].

Conclusion

The first Test match, played by two national teams of the best

players, was between Australia and England in Melbourne in 1877, Australia winning. When Australia again won at the Oval at Kennington, London, in 1882, the *Sporting Times* printed an obituary notice announcing that English cricket would be cremated and the ashes taken to Australia, thus creating the “play for the Ashes.” The Ashes, kept in an urn at Lord’s irrespective of which country is victorious, are supposed to be those of a bail burned on the England tour of Australia in 1882-83. In 1907, South Africa first played Test matches in England and also took on Australia, whose dominance between the two world wars was symbolized by the prodigious run scoring of D.G. (later Sir Donald) Bradman. This period saw a notable growth in the number of Test match countries with the arrival of the West Indies in 1928, New Zealand in 1930, and India in 1932. After World War II, there were Test matches in England every summer, Australia being the most frequent visitor, and the Test ranks were increased by the addition of Pakistan in 1952. There was a steady escalation of tours between the Test-playing countries to the extent that, while the first 500 Test matches were spread over 84 years, the next 500 occupied only 23. Sri Lanka’s entry in 1982 as the eighth Test-playing nation came during an era dominated by the West Indies, whose devastating attack was founded, for the first time in cricket history, on four fast bowlers. Zimbabwe was admitted as a Test nation in 1992 and Bangladesh in 2000. One-day internationals—answering the complaint that Test matches went on too long—began in 1972. In 1975, the first World Cup was contested in England in a series of one-day matches of 60 over’s a side. The event was a great success and continued at four-year intervals. It was held outside England, in India and Pakistan, for the first time in 1987. Test cricket has faced a number of crises since the late 1960s. In one such case in 1969-70, a South African tour of England was canceled because of opposition to the South African racial separation policy. Test cricket was again rocked by a scandal that began in 1999 regarding match fixing. While betting on matches had been common in England in the early days of cricket, many Test nations had banned such betting in the modern era. In India and Pakistan, betting on cricket was legal, however, and cricketers playing international matches there reported being asked by bookmakers and betting syndicates to under-perform in return for money. A number of players were eventually found to have fixed matches. Members of the Australian, South African, Indian, and Pakistani national teams were all tainted by this scandal.

References

1. Alan Gibson, *Jackson's Year: The Test Matches Of 1905* 1966.
2. John Arlott, *Test Match Diary* 1953.
3. Brian Bassano, *South Africa versus England: 106 Years of Test Match Glory* 1996.
4. Reg Hayter, "The Centenary Test Match", *Wisden* 1978, 130–32p.
5. ICC Test Match Playing Conditions". ICC 2019.
6. Guha, Ramachandra. *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport*. London: Picador 2002. ISBN 0-330-49117-2.
7. Altham HS.. *A History of Cricket, Volume 1 (to 1914)*. George Allen & Unwin 1962.
8. Bowen, Rowland. *Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development*. Eyre & Spottiswoode 1970.
9. Major, John. *More Than A Game*. HarperCollins 2007.
10. Mote, Ashley. *The Glory Days of Cricket*. Robson 1997.
11. Terry, David. "The Seventeenth Century Game of Cricket: A Reconstruction of the Game" (PDF). Sports Library 2008.
12. Wynne-Thomas, Peter. *From the Weald to the World*. Stationery Office Books 1997.
13. Altham HS.. *A History of Cricket, Volume 1 (to 1914)*. George Allen & Unwin 1962.
14. Birley, Derek. *A Social History of English Cricket*. Aurum 1999.
15. Bond, David. "Test cricket: Does the oldest form of the game have a future?". BBC 2013.
16. Rundell, Michael. *Dictionary of Cricket*. London: A&C Black Publishers Ltd 2006 336p. ISBN 978-0-7136-7915-1.
17. Rajesh S. "Neutral umpires" 2011. ESPNcricinfo.
18. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Test_cricket#cite_note-3