

Barry Richards



BARRY ANDERSON RICHARDS was born in Durban, South Africa in 1945 and is considered by many to be one of the best to have ever played the game.

An elegant right handed batsman, his characteristic high backlift, full flow of the bat and almost distracted air, made him instantly recognisable to followers of the game. The banning of South Africa from Test cricket left Richards with a paltry four tests and many fans and commentators lamenting what might have been.

In his first season in the UK playing for Hampshire in the County competition he was a sensation. He scored 2395 runs at 47.9 on mainly uncovered wickets. The next highest aggregate in the competition was 990. He played for Hampshire for ten years and scored over 1000 runs in the season nine times. He twice scored two hundreds in a match (against Northants in 1968 and Kent in 1976). In South Africa, playing for Natal, he scored over 1000 runs in a season six times and he held the South African Domestic First Class record of 1284 runs in a season at an average of 81 for many years, at a time when opportunities were limited. Not only did Barry make 1000 runs in a season fifteen times, he also made a century before lunch nine times.

During the 1969/70 season Barry played his first and last Test series, dominating Bill Lawry's Australians, scoring his first hundred in his home town of Durban and reaching that total in the first over after lunch. In the four Tests against Australia Barry scored two hundreds and two fifties at an average of 72.57.

During the years of isolation, Barry played for South Australia in the 1970/71 Sheffield Shield season with mind boggling statistics. He scored an amazing 1538 runs at an average of 109.86 and scored a century against every State in the competition, this feat surpassed the record held up until then by Sir Don Bradman. During the same season he scored a century and a double century against the touring MCC side. He made 356 runs against Western Australia at the WACA which included 325 on the first day (in 320 minutes with 198 coming from boundaries). This feat has only been achieved twice in the history of the Australian competition. When Bill Ponsford scored 334 in a day, forty years earlier, 102 eight ball overs were bowled. Barry scored his 325 from 79 eight ball overs. The Western Australian bowling attack included Graham McKenzie, Dennis Lillee, Tony Lock, Tony Mann, John Inverarity and Ian Brayshaw.

Barry was the first batsman to score over 150 runs in a one day game.

Barry played for the Kerry Packer's World Series in 1977/78. In the fifth Super Test in Perth, Barry scored 207, Gordon Greenidge 140 and Viv Richards 177 in a total for the World Team of 560 all out, decimating the Australians. Barry scored a century (103 not out) in a total of 227 for 7 against Australia to win the Grand Final Super Test for the World XI. It is an amazing that Packer cricket has never been recognised as first class bearing in mind the quality of players and Barry's first class average actually goes up if these figures were included.

In First Class cricket, he scored over 28 000 runs with 80 centuries and over 170 half centuries and is in the top 20 all time batsmen with a career average of 55.0.

Sir Don Bradman rated Barry in the top three post war batsmen he has seen and the best right handed batsman ever. He chose Barry as his opening batsman in his personal selection of his best ever team of the century.

Barry was chosen as the Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1969, and was included in the ICC's First 50 inductees in the International Hall of Fame. He was voted by players and commentators in 2000 as one of the 25 Greats of the last 25 years. Also in 2000, Barry and Graeme Pollock were named the two top Players of the Century in South Africa.

After his retirement as a player Barry became involved in cricket administration as Director of Cricket for Natal in South Africa.

On moving to Australia in 1989, he coached South Australia to a Sheffield Shield Final and subsequently moved to Queensland Cricket as Chief Executive Officer. During the next 9 years, Queensland became a leader in all aspects of cricket in Australia. The naming of the team, The Queensland Bulls, was the first in any country in the world and the Gabba Cricket Ground was substantially re-developed to become one of the best arenas in the world. In 2000 a strategic plan was set in place and the fruits are there for all to see.

The “Holy Grail” was finally achieved with Queensland winning the Sheffield Shield for the first time in 1994, after 67 years in the competition, and they went on to win it four more times in the next seven years.

Barry returned to Western Australia in 1997 and presently resides in Perth, although he travels to South Africa on a regular basis. He is a highly respected freelance commentator, enjoys writing on the game and is a sought-after and insightful corporate speaker. He also consults internationally on many aspects of the game.

Barry is a member of the prestigious World Cricket Committee of the MCC, was for 9 years President of the International Players Association and has been President of his old county, Hampshire.