

= Early life of Ricky Ponting =

Ricky Ponting is an Australian Test cricketer who was born on 19 December 1974 . He made his One Day International (ODI) debut for the Australian cricket team against the South Africa cricket team in New Zealand at the age of 20 on 15 February 1995 . The eldest of three children , Ponting emulated the feats of his father , playing cricket in summer and Australian rules football in winter , before breaking his arm while playing the latter sport for a junior North Launceston Football Club team as a 14 @-@ year @-@ old . He was educated in the Tasmanian state school system , studying at Mowbray Heights Primary and Brooks High School .

Ponting received a bat sponsorship with Kookaburra Sport at 14 , before being acclaimed the best 17 @-@ year @-@ old batsman that Australian Cricket Academy coach Rod Marsh had ever seen . At 17 years and 337 days , Ponting made his first @-@ class cricket debut for Tasmania , breaking David Boon 's record as the youngest player to represent the state . Later in the season , he became the youngest Tasmanian to score a first @-@ class century at 18 years and 40 days , eclipsing Boon 's record of 19 years and 356 days . Further into the 1992 ? 93 season , Ponting scored two centuries in a match against Western Australia ? the youngest player in Sheffield Shield history to do so . He played non @-@ international games against national teams for Australia A in the 1994 ? 95 World Series Cup , before making his Australian debut .

= = Birth = =

Born in Launceston , Tasmania , on 19 December 1974 , Ricky Thomas Ponting is the eldest of Graeme and Lorraine Ponting 's three children . His brother Drew is two years younger , while sister Renee was born when Ponting was six . Their uncle Greg Campbell played cricket for Australia in 1989 and 1990 . Graeme was " a good club cricketer " and played Australian rules , while Lorraine was a state vigoro champion . " Fiercely contested " in the 1950s and 1960s , vigoro is a mix between cricket and baseball , primarily played in the Australian states of Tasmania , New South Wales and Queensland . Ponting 's parents first lived in Prospect 4 @.@ 1 km (2 @.@ 5 mi) south of the city centre , before moving into the working @-@ class area of Newnham , 6 km (3 @.@ 7 mi) north of central Launceston . The suburb is near York Park , Tasmania 's largest capacity stadium and its only Australian Football League venue . Residents of the area were generally known as " swampies " because the land was previously swamp on the banks of the Tamar River .

= = Junior ranks = =

Introduced to cricket by father Graeme and uncle Greg , Ponting was able to play for the Mowbray Under ? 13s team at the age of 11 in 1985 ? 86 . In January 1986 , he took part in the five @-@ day annual Northern Tasmania junior cricket competition . On the Monday , he struggled to trouble the scorers , however , he bounced back with a century on Tuesday . Wednesday saw him make 117 not out and he continued his form into Thursday and Friday , scoring centuries on both days . Afterwards , bat manufacturer Kookaburra gave Ponting a sponsorship contract when he was still only 14 years old . Ponting took this form into the Under @-@ 16s week @-@ long competition less than a month later , scoring an even century on the final day . Ted Richardson , the former head of the Northern Tasmanian Schools Cricket Association said : " Ricky is certainly the equal of David Boon at this level . At his age he 's the best I 've seen in the north . His technique , application , and temperament are all excellent and he has the modesty he will need to progress further . "

Australian Rules football was also a big part of Ponting 's sporting life ; during winter he played junior football for North Launceston and until he was 14 , it could have become a possible sporting option , before he broke the humerus in his right arm playing for North Launceston Under ? 17s . Ponting 's arm was so badly damaged that it had to be pinned . Told to endure a 14 @-@ week lay @-@ off , he never played competitive football again . He later wrote : " At one stage I was concerned that the arm injury might also stop me from playing cricket but they [the doctors] did a pretty good job on pinning the bones ? and it hasn 't bothered me since . "

In 1986 , Ponting said : " I 'd love to play for Australia [...] I look up to David Boon because he 's from here [Launceston] . " During Tasmanian Sheffield Shield matches at the Northern Tasmanian Cricket Association Ground (NTCA Ground) , Ponting served as a scoreboard assistant , thereby surrounding himself with first @-@ class and international cricketers . After leaving school at the end of year 10 as a 16 @-@ year @-@ old in 1990 , he began work as a groundsman at Scotch Oakburn College , a private school in Launceston . In 1991 , the Northern Tasmanian Cricket Association sponsored Ponting so that he could attend a fortnight 's training at the Australian Institute of Sport 's Cricket Academy in Adelaide . The two weeks turned into a full two @-@ year scholarship as he was acclaimed to be the best 17 @-@ year @-@ old batsman Academy coach Rod Marsh had ever seen .

Playing five games for Tasmania in the 1992 Under ? 19 tournament in Perth , Ponting scored 350 runs , earning him selection in the 13 @-@ man national Under ? 19 development squad for the upcoming tour of South Africa ? the first Australian cricket team to make an official tour to the country since Bill Lawry 's team in 1970 ; South Africa were banned from international sport soon after because of their government 's policy of apartheid , and were not readmitted until the 1990s . Under the captaincy of Adam Gilchrist , the Australians played four one @-@ day and four three @-@ day games , winning five and drawing three . Ponting scored 430 runs at an average of 45 @-@ 67 . Later recalling the excitement of the experience , Ponting wrote :

It dawned on me when I was being fitted for my traveling uniform that I was about to represent my country . When that hit home it was a very proud moment in my life . Even though it was not a real representative tour it felt like it to me [...] It wasn 't until we all gathered at the airport that I got the real rush of excitement because there I was , this sixteen year @-@ old kid about to take off and play cricket in a strange country , and from what we had been told it would be in conditions like we had never experienced before . We were all excited with the prospect of taking on the South Africans and we had been told about the wickets being bouncy and fast , similar to the WACA strip in Perth .

= = Early Australian domestic career = =

After scoring 114 not out in a club match against Riverside , Ponting became the youngest player to appear for Tasmania in a Sheffield Shield match , breaking Boon 's record by 14 days . In November 1992 , at the age of 17 years and 337 days , he batted at number four in the order against South Australia at the Adelaide Oval . Despite scoring 56 in a 127 @-@ run partnership with Boon , he could not prevent defeat , scoring just four in Tasmania 's second innings . In his first match in Tasmania ? this time against New South Wales ? Ponting contributed 32 and 18 in a draw , before scoring 25 against Western Australia in a narrow loss . His first match in Sydney also marked the debut of future Australian opening bowler Glenn McGrath . At the end of the first day 's play , Tasmania were 6 / 200 , and Ponting was the only player to resist , reaching 98 not out . He eventually reached three figures the next morning , having endured three rain breaks and 54 minutes in the nineties . The century made him the youngest Tasmanian to score a first @-@ class century , at 18 years and 40 days , eclipsing Boon 's record of 19 years and 356 days . The next day he spoke about the achievement : " I knew I had to be patient and wait for it to come [...] I wasn 't that nervous last night , but I was a bit nervous this morning . " Dismissed for 125 out of a total of 298 , Ponting scored 17 boundaries in his five @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ hour stay at the crease . Coach Greg Shipperd was impressed in what he saw : " It was an excellent innings , one of classical stroke play . The way he freely put together a good , solid innings , showed that his potential is being realised . It was an indication , for him , of what it 's like to go the extra step . " These performances lead Ponting to his List A debut on 13 December against Victoria in Devonport . He struggled , however , scoring 22 from 45 balls in Tasmania 's defeat . His form , nonetheless , remained strong in first @-@ class cricket , scoring another half @-@ century , Ponting scored back @-@ to @-@ back centuries against Western Australia in Perth , the nation 's fastest wicket , thus becoming the youngest batsmen in Shield history to score two centuries in a match . After setting a goal of scoring 500 first @-@ class runs in the season , Ponting finished with 781 runs at 48 @-@

81 . But his form in List A games were not as strong , aggregating 99 at 33 in four matches . Still , Ponting hit an unbeaten 59 from 52 balls against a touring England A side in Hobart . After the season 's end , still aged 18 , Ponting played seven four @-@ day games for the Australian Academy , scoring 484 runs at 96 @.@ 70 .

Speculation ignited that Ponting was an outsider to be selected for the Australian squad on their 1993 tour to England . Of the speculation , Ponting said " At the start of the season I was wondering whether or not I 'd play Shield cricket this year and all of a sudden there 's talk in the papers that I 'm a chance go on an Australian tour of England . I think it 's way out of reach ? there are blokes like [South Australian] Jamie Siddons who have scored 20 or 30 first @-@ class centuries who are ahead of me . Nevertheless , Shipperd thought Ponting could handle the experience : " A lot of attention affects different people in different ways , but Ricky is such a well @-@ rounded young fella that it hasn 't changed him . I 've told him to enjoy the all the attention and if he just keeps on being himself I 'm sure he 'll cope well with all the success that I imagine he will achieve . " The selectors eventually chose Western Australian batsman Damien Martyn for the tour , with Ponting selected in the Academy squad captained by Justin Langer , which toured India and Sri Lanka for seven games in August and September in 1993 . Australian success was limited , with only a few wins . No batsman scored a century , but Ponting reached 99 not out in a one @-@ day game in Colombo . He finished the tour second highest in the run @-@ scorers behind Langer . Before the start of the 1993 ? 94 Sheffield Shield season , Ponting spoke of his goals for the summer . " I 've got myself the goal of making 1 @,@ 000 runs in the season . Hopefully , I can stay in the middle long enough or do that . You can 't worry about other people 's expectation . I don 't care at all what is written in the press . I like to read it but it doesn 't go too far into my head . " In Tasmania 's final round @-@ robin match of the season , they needed to defeat South Australia outright to qualify for the final . Set 366 runs to win in 102 overs , Ponting joined Dene Hills at the crease with the score at 2 / 35 . Ponting scored 161 in a 290 @-@ run partnership that ended with Tasmania needing just 41 runs for victory . Despite Tasmania losing four quick wickets after his dismissal , they won with four wickets in hand . Disappointingly for Ponting , he could not repeat the performance in the final against New South Wales . He scored just one and 28 , as Tasmania were defeated by an innings and 61 runs . The season saw Ponting score 965 runs at 48 @.@ 25 , close to his 1 @,@ 000 run goal .

A month after the final , he was again selected for the Academy squad for three limited overs matches against a touring Indian team . Queenslander Stuart Law captained the Australian side that included former Australian keeper Rod Marsh . In Australia 's victory in the first match in Canberra , Ponting top @-@ scored with 71 , before making 52 in a victory in Sydney . The last match was also successful for the home team , with Ponting not required to bat .

Ponting started his 1994 ? 95 campaign with a century against eventual Shield champions Queensland in Brisbane , in a performance that impressed Queensland captain Allan Border , who had just retired from international cricket after leading the national team for a decade . Border said of Ponting : " He 's just an outstanding prospect . The thing I like about him is he 's very aggressive , he plays all the shots , he 's equally at home on the front foot as the back foot . He cuts and pulls well , and he drives well . You don 't often see that , the ability to get on [the] front foot and back foot and play equally well . " Speculation once again arose that Ponting could be selected for the upcoming tour to the West Indies . When Tasmania played Western Australia at Bellerive Oval on 4 November 1994 , Ponting was 117 not out at stumps . That century was his fifth successive triple @-@ figure score against Western Australia ; Sir Donald Bradman is the only other batsman to score five consecutive centuries against another state in Shield history . He continued to 211 , sharing a 319 @-@ run stand with captain Rod Tucker in the process . Ten days after the double century , Ponting was named in the Australian XI to play England at Bellerive Oval in a match that was used as practice for fringe Australian players before the upcoming series in the West Indies . Future Australian representatives Matthew Hayden , Langer , Greg Blewett and Martyn were also selected . In a drawn match , Ponting compiled a half @-@ century , but Martyn scored a century .

A fourth team was introduced to the World Series Cup in 1994 ? 95 ? Australia A ? for the only time . The Australian selectors re @-@ shuffled both teams so that some players stepped up from the A

team to the main Australian team , and vice versa , during the competition , depending on their performance . The Australian captain Mark Taylor was not a fan of the innovation : " ... out there , on the field there was an ultra @-@ competitive attitude by blokes of both teams , spurred on by the crowds who were predominately [sic] barracking for against Australia and supporting the underdog Australia A , who were pepped up and firing . Of course it gave the Australia A guys a chance to break into the Australian team , but to me the focus of the summer was on beating the Poms [England] in the Tests and winning the World Series , not beating our own Australian mates . " Despite the negative feedback , the concept gave Ponting a chance on the international stage , and he scored 161 runs at 26 @.@ 83 with one half @-@ century . Two weeks after the World Series , Ponting was selected in the squad for the upcoming one @-@ day tri @-@ series involving South Africa , India and hosts New Zealand . Trent Bouts , a cricket writer for The Australian said : " His selection at age 20 would normally represent a bold gamble on youth but so precocious are his talents it amounts to a routine progression . " Ponting made his ODI debut against South Africa at the Basin Reserve in Wellington on 15 February 1995 .