

= Colin McCool with the Australian cricket team in England in 1948 =

Colin McCool was a member of Donald Bradman's famous Australian cricket team, which toured England in 1948. Bradman's men were undefeated in their 34 matches and this unprecedented feat by a Test side touring England earned them the sobriquet The Invincibles.

A frontline leg spinner and middle order batsman, McCool was not prominent in the team's success. Although McCool started his Test career strongly, his form began to decline during the previous Australian season. After starting the tour in Bradman's first choice team, a bloodied callus on his spinning finger troubled McCool. This prevented him from bowling for prolonged periods, and along with Ron Hamence, he was one of two squad members who did not play a Test on tour. Along with Doug Ring, the trio called themselves "ground staff" because of the paucity of their on field duties in the major matches and they often sang ironic songs about their status.

During the tour, McCool took 57 first class wickets at a bowling average of 17.82; he was the fifth most prolific wicket taker and had the fourth best average among Australia's seven frontline bowlers. With England agreeing to have a new ball available after every 55 overs, more frequently than the old rule of replacing the ball after every 200 runs, fast bowling dominated over spin. As a result, McCool did not play in the Tests, but was used heavily in the tour matches so the leading pacemen could conserve their energy for the important matches. Outside the Tests, McCool had the fourth heaviest workload among the regular bowlers, although overall, he delivered the least overs because of his injured finger. McCool took five wickets in an innings three times, his best return being 7 / 78 against Cambridge University.

Although McCool also played as a frontline batsman during his career, his performances during the tour were far below his usual standards, scoring only 306 runs at a batting average of 20.40 with three half centuries. However, he remained prominent with his fielding, taking 20 catches in 17 matches.

= = Background = =

Following the resumption of cricket after World War II, McCool had started his Test career strongly. After making his debut in a one off Test against New Zealand in 1945-46, he played in all five Tests against England during the 1946-47 home season, scoring 272 runs at an average of 54.40 and taking 18 wickets at just over 27 apiece. Wisden said his batting featured "wristy cuts" and "vigorous hooks", adding that there were "few better players of spin bowling on a difficult pitch". Wisden judged his slow and loopy leg spin "a clever mixture of leg breaks and googlies". However, when India toured Australia for the first time in 1947-48, McCool played in three Tests without much success, scoring only 46 runs and taking only four wickets. As a result, he was dropped for the last Test.

= = Early tour = =

Nevertheless, McCool gained selection as part of Australian team to tour England in 1948 under Donald Bradman. Australia had traditionally fielded its first choice team in the opening match of the tour, which was customarily against Worcestershire. Although he was only selected sporadically during the preceding Test series against India, McCool was chosen alongside off spinner Ian Johnson and appeared to be part of Bradman's Test plans. The home side batted first and McCool took his maiden wicket on English soil, having former England captain Bob Wyatt stumped by fellow Queenslander Don Tallon. He removed Wyatt's replacement for a duck without further addition to the score and ended with 2 / 38 as the home side were dismissed for 233. McCool returned the favour during Australia's innings. Coming in at No. 5, he made a fifth ball duck and was part of a middle order collapse that saw Australia lose 4 / 38 before steadying to declare at 8 / 462. In the second innings, McCool did the bulk of the damage, taking four of the five first wickets - two of whom were stumped by Tallon - to leave the hosts at 5 / 122 before Australia completed an innings victory. McCool had been the most successful bowler in the opening

match .

McCool was rested for the second tour match against Leicestershire , which Australia won by an innings . The next match against Yorkshire ? on a damp pitch favourable to slower bowling ? was the closest Australia came to defeat for the whole tour . McCool made three in the first innings as Australia replied to Yorkshire 's 71 with 101 . After the hosts were bowled out for 89 in their second innings , Australia collapsed to 5 / 20 in pursuit of 60 for victory when McCool arrived at the crease . To make matters worse , Sam Loxton was injured and could not bat , so Australia effectively only had four wickets in hand and faced the prospect of losing to an English county for the first time since 1912 . McCool scored five before hitting a long hop back to left @-@ arm spinner Johnny Wardle to leave Australia at 6 / 31 . However , Australia lost no further batsmen and scraped home by four wickets . McCool ? s leg spin was used as Keith Miller and Bill Johnston bowled almost unchanged for the entire match .

McCool was rested as the Australians travelled to London to play Surrey at The Oval and won by an innings . McCool returned for the next match , which was Cambridge University . After going wicketless for 31 runs in the first innings , he did not bat as Australia declared at 4 / 414 in reply to the hosts ? 167 . In the second innings , McCool took the first four wickets ? including two stumpings by Ron Saggers ? to leave the hosts at 4 / 73 . He returned to take three more wickets and end with 7 / 78 as Cambridge fell for 196 to lose by an innings and 51 runs .

McCool was rested as Australia defeated Essex by an innings and 451 runs , its largest winning margin for the summer . During this match , the other batsmen set a world record by scoring 721 on the first day , the most first @-@ class runs compiled in a day ? s play . He returned for the innings victory against Oxford University . McCool made his first substantial contribution with the bat , coming in at 5 / 214 and scoring 50 in a 91 @-@ run partnership with Loxton as Australia made 431 . He removed Indian Test cricketer Abdul Hafeez Kardar in the first innings , before taking 3 / 29 in the second as Australia won by an innings .

The next match was against the Marylebone Cricket Club ( MCC ) at Lord 's . The MCC fielded seven players who would represent England in the Tests , and were basically a full strength Test team , while Australia fielded their first @-@ choice team . It was a chance to gain a psychological advantage , with Len Hutton , Denis Compton and Bill Edrich ? three of England 's top four batsmen ? all playing . Batting at No. 8 , McCool made a duck as Australia collapsed late in their innings , losing 5 / 54 to be bowled out for 552 . He was not required to bowl in the first innings as the three pacemen Ray Lindwall , Ernie Toshack and Miller skittled England for 189 . McCool was given the shortest spell of the frontline bowlers in the second innings as the fast bowlers again made early inroads . He sent down 7 @.@ 2 overs , and disposed of the tail , removing the last four wickets , including MCC and England captain Norman Yardley . McCool ended with 4 / 35 as the MCC lost their last four wickets for 28 to be all out for 205 , giving Australia a victory by an innings and 158 runs .

Four matches followed the MCC fixture before the First Test at Trent Bridge . McCool was rested for the first of these against Lancashire at Manchester , a rain @-@ affected draw that was Australia 's first non @-@ victory of the season . He returned for the following match against Nottinghamshire , which was drawn , but had little success , taking a total of 0 / 68 . He failed to maximise his promotion to No. 4 , making only 17 as Australia scored 400 in their only innings . McCool did not get any more opportunities to push for selection , as he was rested from the next two matches against Hampshire and Sussex . Australia won the former by eight wickets after conceding a first innings lead for the first time on the tour , before winning the second by an innings by 325 runs .

= = Test omission = =

Bill Johnston ? a left arm bowler who could bowl both pace and spin ? was not initially in Bradman 's plan for the First Test at Trent Bridge . However , Bradman changed his mind on the morning when rain was forecast . Johnston was played in the hope of exploiting a wet wicket ; he had previously taken match @-@ winning figures of 10 / 40 and 11 / 117 against Yorkshire and Hampshire respectively on rain @-@ affected surfaces . In addition , McCool had been struggling

with an injury on his spinning finger , and Bradman was worried McCool would not have the endurance required for a five @-@ day Test , which was two days longer than a normal tour match . Johnston 's inclusion at the expense of McCool was the only difference between the team for the First Test and those against Worcestershire and the MCC . Johnston subsequently cemented his position by taking nine wickets in the match ? the most among the Australians . Johnson , the only specialist spinner chosen , took 1 / 85 .

Between Tests , McCool was recalled for the match against Northamptonshire . He took 1 / 19 in the first innings before coming in at the fall of the fifth wicket and scoring an unbeaten 50 as Australia declared at 8 / 352 . McCool only bowled three overs in the second innings and went wicketless as Australia won by an innings . Johnson , the incumbent Test spinner , took 4 / 59 . In the second match before the Second Test , against Yorkshire , McCool made only four and seven not out before Australia declared in their second innings . After not being bowled in the first innings , he took 2 / 33 in the last hour of the match as Yorkshire ended at 4 / 85 to secure a draw . McCool was overlooked for the Second Test at Lord 's , where Australia fielded the same XI that had won the First Test by eight wickets . Bradman 's men went on to complete a crushing win by 409 runs , and Johnson registered match figures of 3 / 75 .

The next match was against Surrey and started the day after the Second Test . McCool bowled only three overs in the first innings , before contributing 26 with the bat in Australia 's reply . After the tourists had taken a first innings lead of 168 , McCool bowled heavily as Bradman eased the workload on his Test players in the second innings . McCool removed Surrey 's top three batsmen ? two of them stumped by Siggers ? to leave the hosts at 3 / 94 . A 107 @-@ run seventh wicket stand saw Surrey recover to 6 / 267 before McCool took three of the last four wickets to end the innings at 289 . McCool ended with 6 / 113 from 45 @.@ 5 overs , having bowled approximately 40 % of the overs . Australia chased down the 122 runs required for victory in less than hour to complete a 10 @-@ wicket win .

In the following match against Gloucestershire before the Third Test , McCool came to the crease late on the first day with Australia at 5 / 529 . Unbeaten on eight at stumps , with the score at 5 / 560 , he continued the next morning and proceeded to add 140 for the sixth wicket with Loxton , before falling for 76 , his highest first @-@ class score of the season . Australia reached 7 / 774 declared , its highest of the tour , laying the foundation for an innings victory . McCool bowled a total of 19 overs to end with 0 / 51 , while Johnson took 11 / 100 and retained his place for the Third Test at Old Trafford , which was drawn amid inclement weather .

The match against Middlesex was the only fixture between the Tests . McCool toiled for 18 overs before snaring the last two wickets to end with 2 / 54 after the hosts had batted first . He made a duck as Australia scored 317 to take a 114 @-@ run lead . In the second innings , McCool took 3 / 54 including the wickets of John Dewes and Leslie Compton as the hosts lost 4 / 22 to be all out for 135 . With only 22 runs needed for victory , Bradman let McCool and fellow leg spinner Doug Ring open the batting . The pair duly saw Australia home without losing a wicket , with McCool on seven .

McCool was again overlooked for the Fourth Test at Headingley , in which Australia posted 3 / 404 in the second innings to win by seven wickets , setting a world record for the highest successful run @-@ chase in a Test . Immediately after the Headingley Test , McCool made 31 ? batting at No. 8 ? as Australia amassed 456 against Derbyshire . After taking 0 / 45 in the first innings , McCool bounced back as Australia enforced the follow on . A 100 @-@ run second wicket partnership by Arnold Townsend and Denis Smith took Derbyshire to 1 / 110 . McCool removed Townsend for 46 and quickly dismissed the next two batsmen to leave Derbyshire at 4 / 116 . He returned with the score at 5 / 163 and took three further wickets in close succession to dismiss the hosts for 182 , sealing victory by an innings . McCool ended with 6 / 77 from 29 overs .

In the next match against Glamorgan , McCool neither batted nor bowled in a rain @-@ affected draw that did not reach the second innings . In the following fixture against Warwickshire , McCool did not bowl in the first innings and scored 19 , before taking 4 / 56 in the second innings , helping to set up a win by nine wickets . McCool was then rested as Australia faced and drew with Lancashire for the second time on the tour . He returned for the non @-@ first @-@ class match against

Durham , and came to the crease with Australia in trouble at 3 / 22 . He top @-@ scored with 64 to help Australia reach 282 all out . McCool took 1 / 17 as the hosts fell to 5 / 73 in reply when rain ended the match after the first day . After taking only seven wickets at 61 @.@ 00 in the first four Tests , Johnson was dropped for the Fifth Test at The Oval . However , it was fellow leg spinner Ring and not McCool who was called in . Australia crushed England by an innings and 149 runs to take the series 4 ? 0 .

= = Later tour matches = =

Seven matches remained on Bradman 's quest to go through a tour of England without defeat . Australia batted first against Kent and McCool made a duck in their total of 361 . He then took 2 / 13 as the hosts were skittled for 51 . Forced to follow on , Kent were bowled out for 124 to lose by an innings , but not before attacking McCool and taking 42 runs from his five wicketless overs . In the next match against the Gentlemen of England , McCool was rested as Australia amassed 5 / 610 and won by an innings . He returned for the next match against Somerset . Promoted to fourth drop , McCool could only make six as Australia declared at 5 / 560 . Somerset reached 2 / 63 in reply before McCool took four quick wickets amid their collapse to 7 / 68 . McCool ended with 4 / 21 as the hosts folded for 115 . Forced to follow on , Somerset reached 3 / 49 before McCool took four of the next five wickets as the hosts fell to 8 / 66 , and eventually 71 all out , handing Australia victory by an innings and 374 runs . In the following match against the South of England , McCool batted at No. 8 and made five as Australia declared at 7 / 522 . McCool toiled for 36 overs in taking 2 / 89 as the hosts were bowled out for 298 when rain caused the match to end in a draw .

Australia 's biggest challenge in the post @-@ Test tour matches was against the Leveson @-@ Gower 's XI . During the last tour in 1938 , this team was effectively a full @-@ strength England outfit , but this time Bradman insisted only six current England Test players be allowed to play . After the hosts had complied , Bradman selected a full @-@ strength team , with the only difference from the Fifth Test team being Ring ? s omission for Johnson , so McCool was left out . After Australia had taken a 312 @-@ run first innings lead , the match ended in a draw after multiple rain delays .

The tour ended with two non @-@ first @-@ class matches against Scotland . In the first match , McCool came in with Australia 4 / 91 and put on 109 with Arthur Morris to consolidate the innings . When McCool was out for 52 and Morris for 109 , the Australians collapsed and lost 6 / 36 to end with 236 . McCool took 1 / 19 and 1 / 20 as Australia enforced the follow on and completed an innings victory . In the second match , McCool took 3 / 31 as the hosts made 178 after batting first . He opened the innings with the bat and made 108 in three hours , with 13 fours . Australia declared at 6 / 407 and McCool took 0 / 19 in seven overs as Australia wrapped up the tour with another innings victory .

= = Role = =

A frontline leg spinner and middle @-@ order batsman , McCool was not prominent in the team 's success . Although he had started his Test career strongly , McCool 's form began to decline in the previous Australian season of 1947 ? 48 . In his first full Test season in 1946 ? 47 , which featured five Tests against England , McCool batted at No. 6 and scored 95 and 104 not out . He also took five wickets in an innings on two occasions . He ended the series with 272 runs at an average of 54 @.@ 40 and took 18 wickets at just over 27 apiece . However , in the following season he made only 46 runs and took only three wickets in three Tests against India before being dropped . Nevertheless , McCool started the tour in Bradman 's first @-@ choice team , and was selected in the tour opener against Worcestershire and later against the MCC in his role as an all rounder .

Bowling for long periods caused McCool to continually tear a callus on his third finger , which he used to impart spin on the ball . As a result , Bradman felt compelled to leave him out of the Test matches , feeling that his finger would not be able to handle the necessarily long bowling spells . This decision was aided by England and Australia ? s agreement to allow a new ball to be used every 55 overs , instead of the incumbent regulation of permitting a new ball for every 200 runs

scored , which usually took longer than 55 overs . This meant the ball was in a shiny state more often , and therefore more conducive to fast and swing bowling , so Bradman relied heavily on his pacemen . For the rest of his career , McCool was troubled by the skin rubbing off his spinning finger .

McCool was thus one of two players along with Ron Hamence who did not play a Test during the season . Along with Doug Ring , Hamence and McCool called themselves " ground staff " because of the paucity of their on @-@ field duties in the major matches , and they often sang ironic songs about their status . The cricket writer Alan Gibson , who knew McCool well in his later cricket career at Somerset , said the omission " distressed him greatly at the time , though he could be philosophical enough about it later " .

McCool took 57 first @-@ class wickets at 17 @.@ 82 ; he was the fifth most prolific wicket @-@ taker and had the fourth best average among Australia 's seven frontline bowlers . As England agreed to have a new ball available after every 55 overs , fast bowling dominated in the Tests , so McCool was used heavily in the tour matches to allow the leading pacemen to conserve their energy in preparation for the Tests . Outside the Tests , McCool had the fourth heaviest workload among the regular bowlers , although overall he bowled the least overs due to his injured finger . McCool had the worst economy rate among the regular bowlers , but he took his wickets at a faster rate ; his strike rate was second only to paceman Ray Lindwall .

Although McCool also played as a frontline batsman during his career , with a first @-@ class average of 32 @.@ 85 and 18 centuries , his batting performances during the tour were far below his usual standards , garnering only 306 runs at 20 @.@ 40 with three half @-@ centuries . His highest score was 76 against Gloucestershire , although he added two more fifties and a century against Scotland in the three non @-@ first @-@ class fixtures . During the tour , McCool usually batted from Nos. 5 to 8.N- A specialist at first slip , McCool remained prominent with his fielding , taking 20 catches in 17 matches .

= = = Statistical note = = =

= = = General notes = = =