

= Ron Saggars with the Australian cricket team in England in 1948 =

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

The team 's reserve wicket @-@ keeper , Saggars played in only the Fourth of five Tests , due to an injury to first @-@ choice gloveman Don Tallon . The match was Saggars 's Test debut and he scored five in his only innings with the bat and took three catches . Despite being the second @-@ choice gloveman , Saggars conceded byes at a lower rate than Tallon did during the English summer . During the Fourth Test , Saggars conceded only six byes as England amassed a match total of 861 , the lowest percentage of byes conceded by Australia in a match during the tour . Despite this , Tallon remained the favoured gloveman , as Bradman deemed him to be faster and more athletic .

Bradman rotated the two glovemen during the tour , and Saggars played in 17 of the 31 first @-@ class matches , taking 23 catches and 20 stumpings . Due to Australia 's powerful batting line @-@ up , Saggars had few opportunities with the bat , scoring 209 runs at an average of 23 @.@ 22 , including his only century at first @-@ class level , 104 not out against Essex .

= = Background = =

Saggars started the tour as the clear second @-@ choice wicket @-@ keeper , as Don Tallon had played in each of Australia 's 11 Tests since the resumption of cricket after the Second World War , while Saggars was yet to make his Test debut . Saggars made his first @-@ class debut shortly before the start of the war , and after the resumption , was regarded as the second in line for Test selection behind Tallon . However , as Australia did not make any substantial tours in the years immediately after the end of hostilities , there was no need to take a reserve gloveman on such trips . However , the trip to England meant more than six months abroad , so a back @-@ up wicketkeeper was needed , and Saggars was selected for his first national squad .

= = Early tour = =

Australia traditionally fielded its first @-@ choice team in the tour opener , which was customarily against Worcestershire . Accordingly , Tallon was selected as the wicket @-@ keeper for the match . Tallon scored six , made five dismissals and conceded 11 byes as Australia crushed the hosts by an innings and 17 runs .

Tallon was then rested and Saggars took his place for the next county match against Leicestershire . Saggars scored six , took a catch in each innings and conceded only six byes as Australia won by an innings . Saggars was then rested for the next two matches , against Yorkshire and Surrey . Australia scraped home by four wickets in the former and won by an innings in the latter . Tallon batted steadily with 10 , 17 not out and 50 not out , but conceded 35 byes while taking two catches . Tallon was having difficulty with the bounce and movement of the ball in English conditions , and sustained a bruised right finger when he lost sight of a Ray Lindwall bouncer on a misty morning during the Surrey match . He was hit after placing his hand over his face for protection , and the ball ran away for four byes .

While Tallon nursed a bruised finger , Saggars played in three successive tour matches . Against Cambridge University , he made two stumpings and took one catch , and was not required to bat as Australia won by an innings . He then played in the match against Essex where Australia scored 721 runs on the first day to set a new world record for the most runs scored in a day of first @-@ class cricket . Saggars made his highest first @-@ class score , 104 not out ? the only first @-@ class century of his career ? in a partnership of 166 runs in 65 minutes of batting with Sam Loxton . This made him the fourth century @-@ maker for the innings after Bill Brown , Bradman and Loxton . Of Saggars 's innings , former Test batsman Jack Fingleton said that " he reminded me at times of Alan Kippax in his artistry . He plays all the strokes . " Saggars took one catch as Australia won by an

innings and 451 runs , their largest winning margin of the season .

He then faced Oxford University , scoring six runs and taking one catch in another innings victory . Siggers conceded six , eight and 14 byes respectively in the three matches . Up to this point , Siggers had conceded only 34 byes in his four tour matches , while Tallon had conceded 46 in three.N-

The next match was against the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord 's . The MCC fielded seven players who went on to represent England in the Tests , N- and were basically a full @-@ strength Test team , as were Australia , who fielded their first @-@ choice team . It was a chance for players from both countries to gain a psychological advantage ahead of the Test matches , and Tallon was selected ahead of Siggers despite conceding byes at a higher rate in the opening tour matches . Siggers looked on as Tallon conceded 26 byes and Australia won by an innings .

There were four more county fixtures before the First Test , against Lancashire , Nottinghamshire , Hampshire and Sussex . Australia drew the first two before winning the latter pair by eight wickets and an innings and 325 runs respectively . Siggers played in all but the Nottinghamshire match . Against Lancashire , Siggers came in at 6 / 145 and held up his end , making an unbeaten 22 as Australia reached 204 . He then completed a stumping and conceded 11 byes as the hosts replied with 182 before the rain @-@ affected match ended in a draw . Siggers went without a dismissal and conceded 16 byes as Hampshire made 195 in their first innings . He came to the crease with Australia having scored 98 runs for the loss of seven wickets (7 / 98) and was last man out for 17 , one of only four players to pass five , as Australia made 117 and conceded a first innings lead for the first time in the season . He then completed another stumping in the second innings and conceded four byes as Australia recovered to win by eight wickets . Siggers ' final opportunity to stake a claim for Test selection was in the match against Sussex . He did not concede a bye and took a catch in the first innings . Siggers was not required to bat as Australia declared their innings closed at 5 / 549 , and then made three more dismissals and conceded five byes as Australia won by an innings .

= = Test omission = =

In Siggers ' last three matches before the First Test , he conceded 36 byes and made six dismissals . In contrast , Tallon conceded 18 byes in his only match and scored 27 . Despite averaging more byes per innings than Siggers during the warm @-@ up matches , N- Tallon was retained in the Test team . He took four catches and conceded 17 byes as Australia won by eight wickets .

Between Tests , Australia played Northamptonshire and Yorkshire , and Tallon was rested for both matches . The first was won by an innings and the second was drawn . Siggers scored four against Northamptonshire and 22 against Yorkshire . After not making a dismissal against Northamptonshire , he took two catches and two stumpings in the latter match . He conceded 14 and 10 byes in the two matches respectively .

Tallon was retained for the Second Test at Lord 's , where he scored 53 , took three catches and conceded 16 byes as Australia won by 409 runs . A dive to stop a leg glance resulted in Tallon severely bruising the little finger on his left hand . Nursing his finger injury , Tallon was rested for both tour matches between the Tests , which were against Surrey and Gloucestershire . Australia won the matches by ten wickets and an innings respectively . In Tallon 's place , Siggers scored 12 , completed a catch and made four stumpings while conceding 18 byes against Surrey . In the match against Gloucestershire , Siggers was deprived of an opportunity to bat as Australia amassed 7 / 774 , its highest score of the tour and its second highest ever in England . He took two catches , completed three stumpings and conceded 13 byes for the match .

Tallon was retained as the teams then played out a draw in the Third Test at Manchester . During the match , Tallon conceded 16 byes and dropped Denis Compton three times as the English batsman went from 50 to 145 not out . Tallon 's little left finger swelled up after the Third Test and he exacerbated the injury during the next tour match against Middlesex , which Australia won by ten wickets .

= = Test debut = =

As a result of Tallon 's finger injury , Siggers made his Test debut in the Fourth Test , which started at Headingley on 22 July 1948 . As England made 496 runs in their first innings , Siggers took catches to remove Denis Compton for 23 , caught down the leg side , and Jim Laker for four . During the innings , Siggers was noted by Fingleton for maintaining a quiet presence behind the stumps , whereas Tallon was characteristically known for loudly appealing in concert with the bowler when he was playing . Fingleton felt that Siggers ' failure to appeal dampened the morale of the bowlers , who were vocally supported by Tallon in the other four Tests . Australia conceded 496 runs but Siggers leaked only two byes .

Australia replied with 458 , but Siggers was unable to make a substantial contribution , stumped by England 's wicket @-@ keeper Godfrey Evans off the bowling of Laker for only five runs . England 's second innings reached 8 / 365 , as Siggers took one catch to secure the wicket of Ken Cranston and conceded four byes . This left Australia needing a world record Test run chase of 404 for victory . However , an innings of 182 runs from Arthur Morris and 173 not out from Bradman meant that Siggers was not required to bat in the second innings ; Australia defeated England by seven wickets , and set a world record for the highest successful Test run chase . Siggers 's six byes out of England 's match total of 861 runs was the lowest percentage of byes conceded by Australia in a match on the tour.N-

Siggers made six not out , completed two catches , a stumping and conceded 15 byes in the innings victory over Derbyshire , before being rested in the next match against Glamorgan . In his first match back from injury , Tallon took a catch and two stumpings , but conceded 19 byes in a rain @-@ affected draw . Tallon 's byes were 9 @.@ 64 % of the hosts ' total , the highest percentage contribution made by byes to an innings on the tour.N- Siggers returned for the nine @-@ wicket win over Warwickshire and struggled , making a duck . Although he took two catches and a stumping , he conceded 28 byes , 9 @.@ 56 % of Warwickshire 's total runs , the second highest percentage contribution of byes to a match total against Australia.N- Siggers was then rested for Australia 's second match and second draw against Lancashire as Tallon made three dismissals and conceded 23 byes . In the non @-@ first @-@ class match against Durham , Tallon played purely as a batsman , while Siggers kept wicket . Siggers came in at 8 / 226 and made 22 to help Australia reach 273 . He then made two stumpings and conceded four byes as the hosts reached 5 / 73 when rain ended the match . With Tallon fit again for the Fifth Test , Siggers was omitted as Australia won by an innings and 149 runs to complete a 4 ? 0 series victory .

= = Later tour matches = =

Seven matches remained on Bradman 's quest to complete an English tour without defeat . Tallon was rested for three consecutive matches against Kent , the Gentlemen of England , and Somerset , and Siggers kept wickets in all three fixtures ; Australia won all three by an innings . Siggers made only eight as Australia scored 361 against Kent . He then conceded only two byes and took two catches and made two stumpings as the home side made 51 and 124 . Siggers did not bat as Australia amassed 5 / 610 against the Gentlemen of England . He then took a catch and conceded 19 byes as Australia enforced the follow on and won . The match against Somerset was similar ; Siggers did not bat in Australia 's 5 / 560 declared , before making two stumpings and conceding eight byes . In total , he made seven dismissals and conceded 29 byes in the six innings of the three matches . Siggers was rested as Tallon returned for the following match against the South of England . Tallon took three catches and conceded 13 byes before the match was washed out when the hosts were dismissed for 298 .

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 that only six current Test players be allowed to represent the hosts . Bradman then fielded a first @-@ choice team ; the only difference from the Fifth Test team

was Ian Johnson 's inclusion at the expense of Doug Ring . Siggers was left out as 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 , Tallon played as a batsman while Siggers kept wicket . Siggers scored only eight in Australia 's 236 and then took two catches , three stumpings and conceded 13 byes in the innings victory . In the second match in Aberdeen , Siggers was rested as Australia completed another innings win .

= = Role = =

The reserve wicket @-@ keeper , Siggers played in 17 first @-@ class matches and scored 209 runs at an average of 23 @.@ 22 , including a career high score of 104 not out against Essex , 23 catches and 20 stumpings , also career records for one season . This compared with the first @-@ choice gloveman Tallon , who scored 283 runs at 25 @.@ 72 . In all his matches on tour , Tallon missed 249 byes as Australia conceded 5331 runs , a bye percentage of 4 @.@ 67 % . In contrast , Siggers conceded 221 byes from the 6190 runs scored against Australia when he was behind the stumps , a percentage of 3 @.@ 57 % .N- In his 1950 book Farewell to cricket , Bradman said of Siggers , " [he] had not quite the speed or agility of Tallon but could always be relied on for a solid performance . A most polished and unostentatious player . "

During the tour , Siggers had few opportunities with the bat , generally batting between No. 8 and No. 10 , N- because Australia 's frontline bowlers included the likes of Ray Lindwall , Colin McCool , Ian Johnson and Doug Ring , who were all capable batsmen . Lindwall scored two Test centuries in his career , while McCool scored 18 first @-@ class centuries , one in Tests . Johnson and Ring both scored more than 20 fifties at first @-@ class level . As a result , many of the bowlers batted before he did . As Australia often won by an innings , and declared in the first innings on many occasions , Siggers only had 12 innings in his 17 first @-@ class fixtures and was not out three times after his remaining partners had been dismissed .

= = = Statistical notes = = =

= = = General notes = = =