

= Neil Harvey with the Australian cricket team in England in 1948 =

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

Aged 19 , Harvey was the youngest player of the touring party . An attacking left @-@ handed middle @-@ order batsman , he had become the youngest Australian to score a Test century by compiling 153 in the Fifth Test against India in the preceding Australian summer of 1947 ? 48 . However , Harvey struggled early on in the tour , having difficulty adapting to English conditions . After being omitted from the first @-@ choice team in the first half of the tour , Harvey 's performances improved with his increasing familiarity with local conditions and he was called into the team for the Fourth Test at Headingley after an injury to Sid Barnes . Harvey scored 112 in a first innings counter @-@ attack to keep Australia in contention after they had suffered a top @-@ order collapse . Harvey hit the winning boundary in the second innings as Australia won the match with a Test world record successful run @-@ chase of 3 / 404 . He retained his place for the Fifth Test , ending the series with 133 runs at a batting average of 66 @.@ 50 .

Overall , Harvey ended with 1 @,@ 129 runs at 53 @.@ 76 in the first @-@ class matches with four centuries , placing him sixth on the run @-@ scoring aggregates and seventh in the batting averages for Australia . Harvey was an acrobatic fielder , regarded as the best in the Australian team . He was twelfth man in the Tests before he broke into the playing XI , and took several acclaimed catches throughout the tour , finishing with 17 catches as well as a solitary wicket with his occasional off spin .

= = Background = =

A somewhat diminutive left @-@ handed middle @-@ order batsman who was the second @-@ youngest of six cricketing brothers , Harvey made his debut in first @-@ class cricket for his state , Victoria , during the 1946 ? 47 Australian season . The following year , at the age of 19 , Harvey made his national debut in the Fourth Test against India in Australia in 1947 ? 48 after a series of impressive performances at domestic level . In the Fifth Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground , he hit 153 to break Archie Jackson 's record for the youngest Australian to make a Test century . The innings ensured him a place on the 1948 Invincibles tour of England as the youngest member of the 17 @-@ man squad . He was more than six and a half years younger than the next youngest players of the team , Arthur Morris and Bill Johnston . Speaking about Harvey 's selection , his captain (and one of three team selectors) , Donald Bradman , opined : " He has the brilliance and daring of youth , and the likelihood of rapid improvement " .

= = Early tour = =

Australia traditionally fielded its first @-@ choice team in the tour opener , which was customarily against Worcestershire . Despite scoring a century in Australia 's most recent Test , Harvey was made 12th man and it appeared that he was not initially in Bradman 's Test plans . Australia promptly crushed the hosts by an innings .

Harvey made his debut on English soil in the second tour match against Leicestershire . Batting at No. 5 , he came in at 3 / 316 and made 12 , struggling against the local spinners , as Australia collapsed to end on 448 before winning by an innings . Harvey played a key role in Australia 's victory in the next match against Yorkshire in Bradford , on a damp pitch that suited slower bowling . Harvey took two catches in the home side 's first innings of 71 . He made seven in the first innings as Australia replied with 101 . After the hosts were bowled out for 89 in their second innings , Australia collapsed to 4 / 20 in pursuit of 60 for victory . No sooner had Harvey walked out to bat at No. 6 , stand @-@ in captain Lindsay Hassett ? Bradman rested himself for the match ? top @-@ edged a pull shot and was caught to leave Australia at 5 / 20 . To make matters worse , Sam Loxton was injured and could not bat , so Australia were effectively six wickets down and faced their first

loss to an English county since 1912 . Harvey had scored a solitary run when he hit a ball to Len Hutton at short leg , who dived forwards and grabbed it with both hands before dropping it . Harvey then swept the next ball for a boundary . Colin McCool was out at 6 / 31 before Harvey and wicket @-@ keeper Don Tallon steadied Australia . Harvey was reprieved on 12 ; he took several steps down the pitch to the bowling of Frank Smailes and missed , but the wicketkeeper fumbled the stumping opportunity . Harvey then hit the winning runs by lifting Smailes for a six over the sightscreen , ending unbeaten on 18 not out .

The Australians travelled to London to play Surrey at The Oval . Harvey scored seven and struggled in contrast to the rest of the Australians , who prospered to total 632 , laying the foundation for an innings victory . Harvey took three catches in the match , including two leaping catches in the second innings with his hands above his head . His feats prompted the local spectators to say that such acrobatic catches had never been seen at The Oval . The home team 's captain Stuart Surridge lofted a drive down the ground , and Harvey ran 25 m from wide long @-@ on and leapt in the air to catch the ball , which would have cleared the boundary . Harvey managed only 16 before being run out while batting with Bill Brown as Australia piled on 4 / 414 declared and defeated Cambridge University by an innings in the following match .

Harvey was then rested as Australia crushed Essex by an innings and 451 runs , its largest winning margin for the summer . During this match , the other batsmen set a world record for the most first @-@ class runs scored in one day ? s play , adding 721 on the opening day . Harvey returned for the innings victory against Oxford University , but scored only 23 as Australia amassed 431 in their only opportunity at the batting crease .

The next match was against the Marylebone Cricket Club 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 , and given Harvey 's early struggles in English conditions and his failure to pass 25 in his first six innings , he was overlooked as Australia amassed 552 and won by an innings .

After asking Bradman about the reason for his difficulties with the bat , Harvey was told that these were caused by rash shot selection and a tendency to hit the ball in the air . Bradman said " He was technically perfect in his shot production . He was batting well enough and simply getting out early . " Harvey adapted his style and improved his performance . In the next match , he scored 36 and 76 not out on a turning pitch against Lancashire at Old Trafford in Manchester , putting on an unbroken century partnership with Ron Hamence in the second innings as the match ended in a draw . Harvey was rested for the following match against Nottinghamshire , which was also drawn .

Harvey returned in the next fixture against Hampshire and made one as Australia were dismissed for 117 in reply to the home side 's 195 . It was the first time the tourists had conceded a first innings lead on the tour . However , Harvey did not get another chance with the bat as Australia recovered to win by eight wickets .

= = Test omission = =

Harvey had one last chance to make his case for Test selection in the match at Hove against Sussex . It was the final county fixture before the First Test at Trent Bridge . He came to the crease at 3 / 360 and put on stands of 93 and 97 with Ray Lindwall and Hamence respectively to finish unbeaten on 100 in only 115 minutes . Australia declared at 5 / 549 when Harvey reached three figures and went on to complete an innings victory . Former Australian Test batsman Jack Fingleton described Harvey 's innings as " a superb century , rich in youthful daring and stroke production " . Harvey later rated it his best innings of the tour excluding the Test matches .

Up to this point , the reserve opener Brown had scored 800 runs on tour at an average of 72 @-@ 72 , with a double century , three other centuries and 81 not out , and was on his third tour of England . In contrast , Harvey had totalled only 296 runs at 42 @-@ 29 despite his unbeaten 100 against Sussex .

Brown thus gained selection for the First Test , batting out of position in the middle order while Sid Barnes and Morris opened , whereas Harvey was dropped despite making a century in Australia 's

most recent Test against India . This was the exact situation that had unfolded in the Worcestershire and MCC matches when Australia fielded their first choice team ; Harvey did not play and Brown batted out of position in the middle order . There was a chance of Harvey receiving a last minute call up when Barnes was ill with food poisoning in the week leading up to the Test , but the opener recovered .

Despite his omission , Harvey spent a large amount of the Test substituting as twelfth man for paceman Ray Lindwall , who succumbed to a hamstring injury in the first innings . Lindwall was nevertheless able to jog between the wickets when Australia batted , without needing a runner , but he did not take the field in the second innings . Fingleton said that Harvey was " by far the most brilliant fieldsman of both sides " and that Australia gained a substantial advantage through his presence on the ground . England captain Norman Yardley was sceptical as to whether Lindwall was sufficiently injured to be unable to field , but he did not formally object to the presence of Harvey . Former Australian Test cricket Bill O'Reilly said that Lindwall was demonstrably not " incapacitated " and that Yardley " must be condemned for carrying his concepts of sportsmanship too far " . O'Reilly decried the benefit that Australia derived through the substitution , agreeing with Fingleton that Harvey was the tourists ' best fielder by far . English commentator John Arlott went further , calling Harvey the best fielder in the world . Australia went on to defeat England by eight wickets although Brown made only 17 .

Between Tests , Harvey was called in for the match against Northamptonshire , scoring only 14 , while Brown was rested as Australia won by an innings . In the second match before the next Test , which was against Yorkshire , Harvey made 49 and 56 while Brown made 19 and 113 as an opener . Harvey hit the ball to all parts of the ground and Fingleton opined that " [Harvey] probably gained the respect of this most discerning crowd more quickly than any other cricketer in recent years " . However , Brown retained his middle order position for the Second Test at Lord 's ahead of Harvey ; Australia fielded an unchanged team . O'Reilly criticised the retention of Brown , who had appeared to be noticeably uncomfortable in the unfamiliar role . He said that despite the fact that Brown had made an unbeaten double century on his previous Test at Lord 's in 1938 , Loxton and Harvey had better claims to selection . Bradman ' s men went on to a crushing win by 409 runs , although Brown made only 24 and 32 in the middle order .

The next match was against Surrey and started the day after the Second Test . Brown injured a finger while fielding in the first innings , so he was not able to bat in Australia 's first innings , in which Harvey made 43 before being run out . In the second innings , Harvey caught Surrey captain Errol Holmes from a leaping catch , snaffling the ball as it flew through a flock of pigeons . On the final day , Australia wanted to finish the run chase quickly so they could watch the Australian John Bromwich play in the Wimbledon tennis final . Harvey volunteered to play as a makeshift opener alongside Sam Loxton and promised Bradman that he would reach the target quickly . Australia chased down the 122 runs needed for victory in just 58 minutes to complete a 10 wicket win in just 20 .1 overs . Harvey ended unbeaten on 73 and the Australians arrived at Wimbledon in time for the championship deciding match .

For the following match against Gloucestershire before the Third Test , Brown did not play . Harvey came to the crease at 3 / 304 and put on 164 for the fourth wicket before his partner Morris was out for 294 . He put on another 63 with Loxton before falling for 95 . During his innings , Harvey repeatedly advanced out of the crease to attack the spinners . Loxton ended on 159 not out as Australia reached 7 / 774 declared , their highest score of the tour , which underpinned a dominant innings victory . Harvey and the other Australian batsmen repeatedly left their crease to charge and attack the off spin of Tom Goddard , who ended with 0 / 186 . Goddard had been touted as a possible England selection because the bowlers used in the first two Tests had failed to challenge the supremacy of Australia ' s batsmen , but the tourists ' attack ended his prospects . Loxton 's innings earned him Brown 's middle order position for the Third Test at Old Trafford , which was a rain affected draw .

= = Fourth Test = =

During the drawn Third Test , Barnes was injured and Ian Johnson was used as a makeshift opener because Morris was the only specialist opener left in the team after the omission of Brown . In the meantime , Barnes 's injury had opened up a vacancy for the Fourth Test . Harvey managed only ten and Brown only eight as Australia defeated Middlesex by ten wickets in their only county match between Tests .

Despite his low score in the preceding match against Middlesex , Harvey was called into the team for the Fourth Test at Headingley at the expense of Barnes . The selectors had overlooked Brown as a replacement for Barnes 's opening position . Instead , vice @-@ captain Hassett would move from the middle @-@ order to accompany Morris at the top of the innings , while Harvey would slot into the middle @-@ order .

England batted first and amassed 496 . Australia began their reply on the second afternoon and Bradman and Hassett saw the tourists to stumps at 1 / 63 . The next morning , Hassett and Bradman fell in one Dick Pollard over to leave Australia at 3 / 68 with two new batsmen at the crease . Harvey came in bareheaded at No. 5 to join cavalier all @-@ rounder Keith Miller . Australia were more than 400 behind and if England were to remove the pair , they would expose Australia 's lower order and give themselves an opportunity to take a large first innings lead . Upon arriving in the middle Harvey told his senior partner " What 's going on out here , eh ? Let 's get stuck into ' em " . Harvey got off the mark by forcing the ball behind point for a single .

The pair launched a counterattack , with Miller taking the lead . He hoisted off spinner Jim Laker 's first ball over square leg for six . Miller shielded Harvey from Laker , as the young batsman was struggling against the off breaks that were turning away from him , especially one ball that spun and bounced , beating his outside edge . Miller drilled an off @-@ drive from Laker for four , and then hit another flat over his head , almost for six into the sightscreen . This allowed Australia to seize the initiative , and Harvey joined the fightback during the next over , hitting consecutive boundaries against Laker , the second of which almost cleared the playing area . He then took another boundary to reach 44 , with Miller on 42 . Miller then lifted Laker for a six over long off , and a four over long on from Yardley to reach 54 . Miller drove the next ball through cover for four . Yardley responded by stacking the on side with outfielders and bowling outside leg stump , challenging Miller to another hit for six . The batsman obliged , but edged the ball and was caught at short fine leg for 58 . The partnership yielded 121 runs in 90 minutes , and was likened by Wisden to a " hurricane " . Fingleton said that he had never " known a more enjoyable hour " of " delectable cricket " . O 'Reilly said that Miller and Harvey had counter @-@ attacked with " such joyful abandon that it would have been difficult , if not absolutely impossible , to gather from their methods of going about it that they were actually retrieving a tremendously difficult situation " . Arlott said that " two of the greatest innings of all Test cricket were being played " during the partnership .

At 4 / 189 Loxton came in to join Harvey , who continued to attack the bowling , unperturbed by Miller 's demise . Ken Cranston came on to bowl and Harvey square drove and then hooked to deep square leg for consecutive boundaries . Yardley then moved a man from fine leg to where the hook had gone ; Harvey responded by glancing a ball to the fielder 's former position , collecting three more runs . Australia thus went to lunch at 4 / 204 , with Harvey on 70 .

After lunch , Australia scored slowly as Loxton struggled . Yardley took the new ball in an attempt to trouble the batsmen with livelier bowling , but instead , Loxton began to settle in . He lofted Pollard to the leg side , almost for six , and then hit three boundaries off another over . Harvey accelerated as well , and 80 minutes into the middle session , reached his century to a loud reception as Australia passed 250 . Harvey 's knock had taken 177 minutes and included 14 fours . Loxton then dominated the scoring and brought up his 50 with a six . The partnership yielded 105 in only 95 minutes . Harvey was eventually out for 112 from 183 balls , bowled by Laker while playing a cross @-@ batted sweep . His shot selection prompted Bradman to throw his head back in disappointment . Nevertheless , it was an innings noted for powerful driving on both sides of the wicket and the high rate of scoring helped to swing the match back from England 's firm control . Harvey fell at 5 / 294 , and Australia slumped to 8 / 355 before a counterattack by Ray Lindwall saw them to 458 , restricting England 's lead to 38 . O 'Reilly said that Harvey 's innings was one of " no inhibitions " and that it was " completely unspoiled by any preconceived plan to eliminate any

particular shot ". He added that it was " the very mirror of truth in the batting art " , " delightfully untrammelled by the scourage of good advice or any other handicapping influence " , and that Harvey 's innings was the most pleasing he had seen since Stan McCabe 's 232 at Trent Bridge in 1938 .

England then progressed to 0 / 129 in their second innings before Harvey intervened . On 65 , Cyril Washbrook attempted a hook from Bill Johnston . Connecting with the middle of the bat , he imparted much power on the ball , which flew flat and never went more than six metres above the ground , but Harvey quickly ran across the ground and bent over to catch the ball at ankle height while still on the run . Jack Fingleton said that it " was the catch of the season ? or , indeed , would have been had Harvey not turned on several magnificent aerial performances down at The Oval [against Surrey] " . O ? Reilly doubted " whether any other player on either side could have made the distance to get to the ball , let alone make a neat catch of it " . He added that the " hook was a beauty and the catch was a classic " . Later in the day , captain Yardley was caught by a leaping Harvey while attempting a lofted shot from Johnston .

After five minutes on the final morning , Yardley declared at 8 / 365 . Batting into the final day allowed Yardley to ask the groundsman to use a heavy roller , which would help to break up the wicket , thereby causing more uneven bounce and making the surface more likely to spin . The declaration left Australia to chase 404 runs for victory . At the time , this would have been the highest ever fourth innings score to result in a Test victory for the batting side . Australia had only 345 minutes to reach the target , and the local press wrote them off , predicting that they would be dismissed by lunchtime on a deteriorating wicket expected to favour the spin bowlers . However , Morris partnered Bradman in a stand of 301 in 217 minutes to set up the win , although they were helped by England 's fielders , who missed several catching and stumping chances . Harvey came to the crease at 3 / 396 and got off the mark by hitting the winning boundary .

Immediately after the Headingley Test , Harvey made 32 in a fleet @-@ footed cameo attack against the local spinners as Australia amassed 456 and defeated Derbyshire by an innings . In the next match against Glamorgan , he came to the crease at the fall of third wicket and made nine runs before rain ended the match in the second innings . Harvey then made a duck , bowled by a big @-@ turning leg break from Eric Hollies in the first innings as Australia defeated Warwickshire by nine wickets ; he was not required to bat in the second innings . Harvey 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 , scoring two out of Australia 's 282 in a rain @-@ affected draw , which ended after the first day without reaching the second innings .

= = Fifth Test = =

Although he had only scored 41 runs in four innings between Tests , Harvey was retained for the Fifth and final Test at The Oval . England elected to bat on a rain @-@ affected pitch . Precipitation in the week leading up to the match had delayed the start , and Yardley 's decision to bat was regarded as a surprise , as the weather suggested that bowlers would enjoy the conditions . This proved to be correct as Australia cut England down for 52 on the first day , with Lindwall (6 / 20) in particular managing to make the ball bounce at variable heights . Australia had already passed England by the close of play , reaching 2 / 153 . The next day , Harvey came to the crease at 4 / 243 and quickly displayed the exuberance of youth . He hit Jack Young for a straight @-@ driven four and then pulled him for another . Harvey then succumbed to Eric Hollies for 17 , hitting a catch to Young , leaving Australia at 5 / 265 . The Warwickshire spinner noticed this , and delivered a topspinner that dipped more than usual , and the batsman mistimed his off @-@ drive , which went in the air towards mid @-@ off . Australia finished at 389 and then bowled England out for 188 to complete victory by an innings and 149 runs and seal 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 Harvey made 60 , including a 104 @-@ run stand with Brown before falling at 4 / 283 , part of a collapse in which Australia lost their last seven wickets for 89 to end at 361 . Despite stumbling with the bat , the tourists completed an innings victory . In the next match against the Gentlemen of England , Harvey was rested as Australia amassed 5 / 610 and won by an innings . He returned for the match against Somerset , putting on 187 for the second wicket with Hassett in 110 minutes . Harvey hit 14 fours and 2 sixes , both of which came in one over , in top @-@ scoring with a " glorious " 126 as Australia compiled 5 / 560 declared and won by an innings and 374 runs . Harvey performed a similar feat in the following match against the South of England , coming in at 3 / 237 and scoring 110 , adding 175 in 110 minutes in conjunction with Hassett , who also made a second successive century as Australia declared at 7 / 522 . Harvey reached his century in just 90 minutes . The match was washed out , but not before Harvey bowled for the first time during the tour and took his only first @-@ class wicket for the season , that of Trevor Bailey . He ended with 1 / 15 .

Australia 's biggest challenge in the post @-@ Test tour matches was against the Leveson @-@ Gower 's XI . During the last Australian tour in 1938 , Leveson @-@ Gower ? s team was effectively a full @-@ strength England outfit , but this time Bradman insisted that only six current England Test players be allowed to play . Bradman then fielded a full @-@ strength team , with the only difference from the Fifth Test team being the inclusion of Ian Johnson at the expense of Doug Ring . Harvey made 23 before being bowled by Freddie Brown as the match ended in a draw after multiple rain delays . For the entire first @-@ class tour , Harvey scored four centuries and aggregated 1 @,@ 129 runs at 53 @.@ 76 .

The tour ended with two non @-@ first @-@ class matches against Scotland . In the first match , Harvey was rested as the Australians took an innings victory . In the second match , Harvey scored four and then took 2 / 13 in the second innings as Australia ended their campaign with another innings victory .

= = Role = =

At the age of 19 , Harvey was the youngest player of the touring party ? more than six and half years younger than all the other members of the squad . An attacking left @-@ handed middle @-@ order batsman , Harvey had become the youngest Australian to score a Test century , by making 153 in the Fifth Test against India in the preceding Australian summer . However , Harvey struggled early in the tour and had difficulty adapting to English conditions . After being omitted from the first @-@ choice team in the early part of the tour , Harvey 's performances improved with increasing familiarity with local conditions , and he was called into the team for the Fourth Test , where he batted at No. 5 behind Miller and in front of Loxton due to the injury to Barnes . Upon Barnes ? return for the Fifth Test , the trio were each pushed down one position .

Overall , Harvey ended with 1 @,@ 129 runs at 53 @.@ 76 in the first @-@ class matches with four centuries , placing him sixth on the aggregates and seventh in the batting averages . He played the bulk of his 27 first @-@ class innings between No. 4 and No. 6 in the batting order . Only three times did he bat elsewhere . He scored an unbeaten 73 in less than an hour in the second innings of the second match against Surrey as a makeshift opener , setting up a ten @-@ wicket victory . He made 23 batting at No. 3 against Oxford University and one against Hampshire while batting at No. 7.N-

Harvey was an acrobatic fielder , regarded as the best in the Australian team . Fingleton said that Harvey was " by far the most brilliant fieldsman of both sides , who was to save many runs in the field " . O'Reilly agreed Fingleton that Harvey was Australia 's best fielder by far , Arlott went further , calling Harvey the best fielder in the world . He was twelfth man in the early Tests because of his fielding ability , before breaking into the playing XI and taking several acclaimed catches throughout the tour . He took 17 catches for the tour and claimed a solitary wicket with his occasional off spin , bowling only ten overs for the entire summer .