

= Fifth Test , 1948 Ashes series =

The Fifth Test of the 1948 Ashes series , held at The Oval in London , was the final Test in that cricket series between Australia and England . The match took place on 14 ? 18 August , with a rest day on 15 August . Australia won the match by an innings and 149 runs to complete a 4 ? 0 series win . It was the last Test in the career of Australian captain Donald Bradman , generally regarded as the best batsman in the history of the sport . Going into the match , if Australia batted only once , Bradman needed only four runs from his final innings to have a Test batting average of exactly 100 , but he failed to score , bowled second ball for a duck by leg spinner Eric Hollies .

With the series already lost , the England selectors continued to make many changes , on this occasion , four . In all , they had used 21 players for the series and were severely criticised for failing to maintain continuity . England captain Norman Yardley won the toss , and elected to bat on a pitch affected by rain . After a delayed start due to inclement weather , the Australian pace attack , led by Ray Lindwall , dismissed England within the first day for just 52 . Lindwall was the main destroyer , taking six wickets for 20 runs (6 / 20) . The English batsmen found it difficult to cope with his prodigious swing and pace ; four of his wickets were either bowled or leg before wicket . Len Hutton was the only batsman to resist , making 30 before being the final man dismissed . In reply , Australia 's opening pair of Arthur Morris and Sid Barnes passed England 's score on the same afternoon with no loss of wickets . The opening stand ended at 117 when Barnes fell for 61 and Bradman came to the crease to a standing ovation and three cheers from his opponents . He fell second ball , but Australia reached 153 / 2 at stumps on the first day .

On the second day , Australian batsmen fell regularly once Lindsay Hassett was dismissed at 226 / 3 , most of them being troubled by Hollies , who had been selected after taking 8 / 107 against Australia for Warwickshire . Morris was an exception and he made 196 , more than half his team 's total , before being run out as Australia were dismissed for 389 . Hollies took 5 / 131 . England reached 54 / 1 at stumps and by lunch on the third day were 121 / 2 , Hutton and Denis Compton batting steadily . However , they suffered a late collapse to be 178 / 7 when bad light and rain stopped the day 's play . Hutton top @-@ scored for the second time in the match for England , making 64 . The next morning , Bill Johnston took the last three wickets as England were bowled out for 188 , ending the match . Johnston ended with 4 / 40 and Lindwall 3 / 50 .

The match was followed by speeches from both captains , after which the crowd sang " For He 's a Jolly Good Fellow " in Bradman 's honour . Having been undefeated in their matches up to this point , the Australians maintained their streak in the remaining fixtures , gaining them the sobriquet of The Invincibles .

= = Background = =

After the first four Tests , Australia led the series 3 ? 0 , having won all but the Third Test , which was rain @-@ affected . They had taken an unlikely win in the Fourth Test at Headingley , scoring 404 / 3 in their second innings , the highest ever score in a successful Test run chase .

Australia had been unbeaten throughout the tour . Between the Fourth and Fifth Test , they played five tour matches . They defeated Derbyshire by an innings , before having a washout against Glamorgan . The Australians then defeated Warwickshire by nine wickets , before drawing with Lancashire , who hung on with three wickets in hand on the final day . Australia 's final lead @-@ in outing was a two @-@ day non @-@ first @-@ class match against Durham , which was drawn after rain washed out the second day .

With the series already lost , England made four changes to their team . John Dewes replaced Cyril Washbrook ? who broke his thumb in a match for Lancashire against the Australians ? at the top of the order . Dewes had gained attention after scoring 51 for Middlesex in the tour match against the Australians . In the three weeks between then and the Test , he had scored 105 and 89 against Lancashire and Sussex respectively . However , he had averaged less than 40 for the season and made three consecutive scores below 20 leading into the Tests . The journalist and former Australian Test cricketer Bill O 'Reilly condemned the decision , claiming that aside from defending

the ball , Dewes was too reliant on slogging towards the leg side with a horizontal bat . O 'Reilly claimed Dewes was not ready for Test cricket and that asking him to face the rampant Australians could have psychologically scarred him . He said the selection " was tantamount to asking a young first @-@ year medical student to carry out an intricate operation with a butcher 's knife . "

Allan Watkins replaced Ken Cranston as the middle order batsman and pace bowler . Both Dewes and Watkins were making their Test debut , and the latter became the second Welshman to play in an Ashes Test . Watkins had scored 19 and taken 1 / 47 for Glamorgan in their match against Australia two weeks earlier , but had only scored 168 runs at 18 @.@ 66 and taken 11 wickets in his last six matches . Cranston had made a duck and 10 , and taken 1 / 79 on his debut in the previous Test . While acknowledging Cranston 's poor performances and concluding that he had not been of international quality , O 'Reilly said Watkins ' performance in Glamorgan 's match against the Australians " had not inspired anyone with his ability " to counter the tourists ' bowling .

England played two spinners ; left arm orthodox spinner Jack Young replaced fellow finger spinner Jim Laker , while the leg spin of Eric Hollies replaced the pace bowling of Dick Pollard . Hollies was brought into the team because he had caused the Australian batsmen difficulty in the tour match against Warwickshire . He took 8 / 107 in the first innings , the best innings figures against the Australians for the summer . His performance included bowling Bradman with a topspinner that went between bat and pad . It was part of a month @-@ long run in which he took 52 wickets in seven matches , including two ten @-@ wicket match hauls . Young had taken 12 and 14 wickets in consecutive matches against Northamptonshire and Surrey since his omission following the Third Test , while Pollard and Laker had managed totals of only 2 / 159 and 3 / 206 respectively in the Headingley Test .

Having made only 5 and 18 in the previous Test , Jack Crapp was originally dropped from the team but was reprieved by Washbrook 's injury . The England selectors were widely condemned for their decisions , which were seen as an investment in youth rather than necessarily picking the best players available at the time . Their frequent changes meant the home team had used a total of 21 players for the five Tests .

Australia made three changes . Having taken only seven wickets in the first four Tests at an average of 61 @.@ 00 , off spinner Ian Johnson was replaced by leg spinner Doug Ring . Australia 's second change was forced on them ; the injured medium pacer Ernie Toshack was replaced by the opening batsman Sid Barnes , who had missed the Fourth Test with a rib injury . This meant Australia were playing with one extra batsman and one less frontline bowler . The final change was the return of first @-@ choice wicket @-@ keeper Don Tallon from injury and the omission of his deputy Ron Saggars .

The two nations had last met at The Oval in the Fifth Test of the 1938 Ashes series , during Australia 's previous tour of England . On that occasion , England made a Test world record score of 903 / 7 declared , and Len Hutton made 364 , an individual Test world record . Australia batted in both innings with only nine men because of injuries sustained by Bradman and Jack Fingleton during Hutton 's 13 @-@ hour marathon effort . They collapsed to the heaviest defeat in Test history , by an innings and 579 runs . It was Australia 's last Test before World War II and they had not lost a Test since then .

Hundreds of spectators had slept on wet pavements outside the stadium in rainy weather on the eve of the Test to queue for tickets . Bradman had announced his forthcoming retirement at the end of the season , so the public were anxious to witness his last appearance at Test level .

= = Scorecard = =

= = = England innings = = =

= = = Australia innings = = =

= = 14 August : Day One = =

English skipper Norman Yardley won the toss and elected to bat on a rain @-@ affected pitch . Precipitation in the week leading up to the match meant the Test could not start until after midday . Yardley 's decision was regarded as a surprise . Although The Oval had a reputation as a batting paradise , weather conditions suggested that bowlers would be at an advantage . Jack Fingleton , a former Test team @-@ mate of Bradman who was covering the tour as a journalist , thought the Australians would have bowled had they won the toss . However , O 'Reilly disagreed , saying the pitch was so wet it should have favoured the batsmen because the ball would bounce slowly from the surface . He further thought the slippery run @-@ up areas would have forced the faster bowlers to operate less vigorously to avoid injuring themselves . The damp conditions necessitated the addition of large amounts of sawdust to allow the bowlers to keep their footing , because parts of the pitch were muddy . The humidity , along with the rain , assisted the bowlers ; Lindwall in particular managed to make the ball bounce at variable heights .

Dewes and Len Hutton opened for England , a move that attracted criticism of Yardley for exposing the debutant Dewes to the new ball bowling of Lindwall and Keith Miller . After Hutton opened the scoring with a single from the second ball of the day , Dewes was on strike . The single had almost turned into a five when Sam Loxton fired in a wide return , but Sid Barnes managed to prevent from going for four overthrows . Dewes took a single from the opening over ? bowled by Lindwall ? and thus faced the start of the second over , which was delivered by Miller . Dewes had been troubled by Miller in the past . During the Victory Tests in 1945 , Miller had repeatedly dismissed the batsman , and during a match for Cambridge University against the Australians earlier in the tour , Dewes had used towels to pad his torso against Miller 's short balls . During his short innings , Dewes was also visibly nervous and kept on moving around , unable to stand still .

Miller caused a stoppage after his first ball in order to sprinkle sawdust on the crease . With the second ball , he bowled Dewes ? who was playing across the line ? middle stump for one with an inswinger to leave England at 2 / 1 . However , despite the early wicket , the bowlers appeared to lack confidence in their run @-@ up on the soggy ground . Bradman made an early bowling change and brought Johnston into the attack to replace Miller after the latter had bowled three overs for the concession of two runs . At this time , Bradman adopted relatively defensive field settings despite the early breakthrough . Bill Edrich joined Hutton and they played cautiously until the former attempted to hook a short ball from Johnston . He failed to get the ball in the middle of the bat and it looped up and travelled around 10 metres (33 ft) . Lindsay Hassett took the catch just behind square leg , diving sideways and getting two hands to the ball . This left England at 10 / 2 as Denis Compton came to the crease . Lindwall bounced Compton , drawing an edge that flew towards the slips cordon . However , the ball continued to rise and cleared the ring of Australian fielders . Hutton called Compton for a run , but his surprised partner was watching the ball narrowly evade the slips catchers and dropped his bat in panic . Luckily for Compton , the ball went to Hassett at third man , who stopped the ball and waited for Compton to regain his bat and his composure before returning the ball , thereby forfeiting the opportunity to run him out . However , this sporting gesture did not cost Australia many runs because when Compton was on three , Lindwall bowled another bouncer . Compton went for a hook shot and Arthur Morris ran from his position at short square leg to take a difficult catch . Bradman later said he had remembered how Compton had been out in exactly the same position in the corresponding match at the same ground during the 1938 series . Fingleton described Morris 's effort as " one of the catches of the season " . England were 17 / 3 , and Crapp came in to join Hutton . At this point , Bradman began to put in place more attacking field settings . Johnston then hit Hutton on the fingers with a ball that rose sharply after pitching . Bradman took Lindwall off after 50 minutes and replaced him with Miller , who then removed Crapp , caught behind from an outside edge for a 23 @-@ ball duck , leaving England at 23 / 4 . When play was adjourned for lunch with England on 29 / 4 , Hutton was 17 while Yardley was on four . According to Fingleton , Hutton " had never been in the slightest difficulty " . He had played cautiously but did not seem hurried by the bowling . Miller had taken 2 / 3 from six overs .

After the lunch break , England added six runs to be 35 / 4 , before Lindwall bowled Yardley with a swinging yorker . The debutant Watkins came in , having earned a reputation in Glamorgan 's match against Australia for hooking . He made several attempts at the shot in his innings of 16 balls . He attempted a hook shot from a short ball and missed before being hit on the shoulder by another Lindwall bouncer , having tried to hook the ball downwards in an unorthodox manner akin to a tennis serve . He was then dismissed without scoring after playing across the line and being trapped leg before wicket by Johnston for a duck to leave England at 42 / 6 . For his troubles , Watkins also collected a bruise from the hit to the shoulder , which inhibited his bowling later in the match . Lindwall then removed Godfrey Evans , Alec Bedser and Young , all yorked by swinging deliveries in the space of two runs , as England fell from 45 / 6 to 47 / 9 . This brought Hollies in at No. 11 to accompany Hutton , who then hit the only boundary of the innings , lofting Lindwall for a straight drive back over his head . The ball almost went for six , landing just short of the boundary . The innings ended at 52 when Hutton ? who never appeared troubled by the bowling ? leg glanced Lindwall and was caught by wicket @-@ keeper Don Tallon , who caught the ball one @-@ handed at full stretch to his left . Lindwall described the catch as one of the best he had ever seen , while O 'Reilly called it " extraordinarily good " .

The match saw Lindwall at his best . In his post @-@ lunch spell , Lindwall bowled 8 @.@ 1 overs , taking five wickets for eight runs , and finishing with 6 / 20 from 16 @.@ 1 overs . Bradman described the spell as " the most devastating and one of the fastest I ever saw in Test cricket " . Fingleton , who played against the Bodyline attack in 1932 ? 33 , said " I was watching a man almost the equal of Larwood [the Bodyline spearhead] in pace ... Truly a great bowler " . O 'Reilly wrote Lindwall 's " magnificent performance must go down as one of the greatest bowling efforts in Anglo @-@ Australian Tests . He had two grueling long sessions in the innings and overcame each so well that he set the seal on his well @-@ earned reputation as one of the best bowlers ever . " Hutton was the only batsman to resist the Lindwall @-@ led attack , scoring 30 in 124 minutes and surviving 147 deliveries . The next most resilient display was from Yardley , who scored seven runs in 31 minutes of resistance , facing 33 balls . Miller and Johnston took 2 / 5 and 2 / 20 respectively , and Australia 's pace trio removed all the batsmen without Bradman having to call upon Ring 's leg spin .

In contrast , Australia batted with apparent ease , as the overcast skies cleared and sun came out . The debutant Watkins sent down four overs for 19 runs with his bruised shoulder and did not bowl again . He was in much pain and his limp bowling did little to trouble the Australian openers . Morris and Barnes batted comfortably and passed England 's first innings total by themselves , taking less than an hour to push the Australians into the lead . O 'Reilly felt the Australian openers wanted to prove " the pitch itself had nothing whatever to do with the English batting debacle " . Australia reached 100 at 17 : 30 with Barnes on 52 and Morris on 47 . The only chance came when Barnes powerfully square cut Bedser low to point , where Young spilled the catch . When Young came on to bowl , his finger spin was expected to trouble the batsmen on a rain @-@ affected surface , but he delivered little variation in pace and trajectory and Barnes in particular hit him repeatedly through the off side field . The score had reached 117 after only 126 minutes , when Barnes was caught behind from Hollies for 61 . The right @-@ handed Australian opener stumbled forward to a fast @-@ turning leg break that caught his outside edge . He had overbalanced and would have been stumped if he had failed to make contact with the leather . This brought Bradman to the crease shortly before 18 : 00 , late on the first day . As Bradman had already announced the tour would be his last at international level , the innings would be his last at Test level if Australia batted only once . The crowd gave him a standing ovation as he walked out to bat ; Yardley led the Englishmen and the crowd in giving his Australian counterpart three cheers , before shaking Bradman 's hand . With 6 @,@ 996 Test career runs , Bradman needed only four runs to average exactly 100 in Test cricket . Bradman took guard and played the first ball from Hollies , a leg break , from the back foot . The leg spinner pitched the next ball up , bowling Bradman for a duck with a googly that went between bat and pad as the Australian skipper leaned forward . Bradman appeared stunned by what had happened and slowly turned around and walked back to the pavilion , receiving another large round of applause . It was claimed by many , including Hollies , that Bradman became emotional and had

tears in his eyes at the ovation given to him by the crowd and the English players , and that this hampered his ability to see and hit the ball . Bradman admitted to being moved by the applause , but always denied shedding tears , saying " to suggest I got out , as some people did , because I had tears in my eyes while I was looking at the bowler was quite untrue . Eric Hollies deceived me and he deserves full credit . "

Hassett came in at 117 / 2 and together with Morris saw Australia to the close at 153 / 2 . Morris was unbeaten on 77 , having hit two hook shots from Hollies for four . Hassett was on 10 .

= = 16 August : Day Two = =

15 August was a Sunday , and thus a rest day . Play resumed on Monday , the second morning , and Morris registered his third century of the Test series and his sixth in ten Ashes matches . Overall , it was his seventh century in 14 Tests . It had taken him 208 minutes and he had hit four fours . Hassett and Morris took the score to 226 before their 109 @-@ run stand was broken when Young trapped Hassett lbw for 37 after 134 minutes of batting . As the Australians had dismissed their hosts cheaply on the first day and were already well in the lead , they had plenty of time to complete a victory , so Hassett and Morris had no need to take undue risks and scored at a sedate pace . The following batsmen were unable to establish themselves at the crease . Miller came in and tried to attack , but made only five before overbalancing and stumbling forward out of his crease , allowing Evans to stump him from the bowling of Hollies . Harvey , the youngest player in the Australian squad at the age of 19 , came to the crease at 243 / 4 and quickly displayed the exuberance of youth . He hit Young for a straight @-@ driven four and then pulled him for another boundary , but the attacking strokeplay did not last . Harvey succumbed to Hollies , hitting him to Young . The young batsman was having trouble against the turning ball , so he decided to use his feet and step towards the pitch of the ball . 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 . Hollies ' success against the middle @-@ order prompted Yardley to opt to continue with the older ball even when a replacement was available , a move that was rarely made throughout the series as the pacemen dominated the bowling . Hollies did not spin the ball significantly but relied on variations in flight to defeat his opponents .

Loxton came in with the score at 265 / 5 and accompanied Morris for 39 further runs before he fell to the new ball . He appeared uncomfortable with the outswingers and leg cutters of Bedser , and was beaten several times , before Edrich had him caught behind for 15 . Lindwall came in and attacked immediately , scoring two fours before falling for nine . He played a cover drive from the bowling of Young , but hit the ball too early and thus launched it into the air , and it was caught by Edrich at cover point to leave the score at 332 / 7 . Morris was then finally removed for 196 , ending an innings noted for its numerous hooks and off @-@ drives . It took a run out to remove Morris ; he attempted a quick run to third man after being called through from the non @-@ striker 's end by Tallon , but was too slow for the substitute fielder Reg Simpson 's arm . Tallon , who scored 31 , put on another 30 runs with Ring , before both were out with Australia 's score on 389 , ending the tourists ' innings . Both were caught by Crapp in slips from the bowling of Hollies and Bedser respectively . Morris had scored more than half the runs as the rest of the team struggled against the leg spin of Hollies , who took 5 / 131 . England had relied heavily on spin bowling ; Young took 2 / 118 and of the 158 @.@ 2 overs bowled , 107 were delivered by the two slow men . Hollies pitched the ball up repeatedly , coaxing the Australians into playing front @-@ foot shots from balls that spun after pitching on off stump .

England started their second innings 337 runs in arrears . Dewes took strike and got off the mark from Lindwall when he aimed a hook shot and was credited with a boundary when the ball came off his shoulder . Lindwall 's steeping bouncer rose over his bat and narrowly missed his head . Soon after , Lindwall made the early breakthrough , bowling Dewes ? who offered no shot ? for 10 to leave England 20 / 1 . Dewes had often committed to playing the ball from the front foot before the bowler delivered the ball , thereby putting himself into difficulty . This was because of his habit of leaning his weight onto his back foot as the ball was being bowled , which meant that a forward lean

would instinctively result . Edrich joined Hutton and the pair consolidated the England innings , which reached 54 / 1 at the close at the second day 's play , which was hastened by bad light .

= = 17 August : Day Three = =

Early on the third day , Lindwall bowled Edrich ? who was playing across the line ? between bat and pad for 28 , hitting the off stump with a ball that cut inwards , leaving the score at 64 / 2 , before Compton and Hutton consolidated the innings and took the score to 121 at lunch without further loss . Hutton and Compton were 42 and 37 respectively . Compton started slowly but had accelerated as the adjournment approached . The morning 's batting had been relatively slow , with only 67 runs scored in 100 minutes , of which Hutton added only 23 . The morning session also featured a tight spell of 13 overs by Ring . The leg spinner did not bowl consistently or accurately , and although the batsman hit him regularly , they did not place their shots , which often went to the fielders . At the other end , Johnston bowled his finger spin from around the wicket with a well @-@ protected off side . There were four men in the off side ring and they had much work to do as Hutton hit the ball there repeatedly . The English batsmen progressed steadily and both Johnston and Ring had one confident appeal for lbw against Compton , but there were no other scares . Towards the end of the morning session , the second new ball became available but Bradman decided to bide his time . He allowed Johnston to rest after his morning spell and used Lindwall and Miller ? delivering off spinners ? to bowl with the old ball for the last half hour before lunch break so that the trio could use the adjournment to recuperate before attacking with the new ball .

After lunch , Lindwall and Johnston took the new ball , and the partnership progressed only four further runs to 61 in 110 minutes . On 39 , Compton aimed a hard cut shot from Johnston 's bowling , which flew into Lindwall 's left hand at second slip for a " freak slip catch " . Hutton managed to continue resisting the Australians before Miller struck Crapp in the neck with a bouncer . The batsman did not react to the blow and did not bother to rub the point of impact . After hitting a series of cover drives for boundaries , Hutton edged Miller to Tallon and was out for 64 , having top @-@ scored in both innings . He had batted for over four hours and left England at 153 / 4 . Thereafter , the home side collapsed . Crapp was bowled by Miller for nine , and two runs later , Ring dismissed debutant Watkins for two , his only wicket for the match . Watkins swung Ring to the leg side and the ball went straight into the hands of Hassett , who did not need to move from his position on the boundary , leaving England at 167 / 6 . Lindwall returned and yorked Evans , who appeared to not detect the delivery in the poor light , for eight . The umpires thus called off play after Yardley appealed against the light . The ground was then hit by rain , resulting in a premature end to the day 's play with England at 178 / 7 , having lost 4 / 25 .

= = 18 August : Day Four = =

England resumed on the fourth morning with only three wickets in hand and they were still 159 runs in arrears . Johnston quickly removed the last three wickets to seal an Australian victory by an innings and 149 runs . Only ten runs were added ; the match ended when Hollies fell for a golden duck after skying a ball to Morris , immediately after Yardley 's departure . Johnston ended with 4 / 40 from 27 @.@ 3 overs while Lindwall took 3 / 50 from 25 overs . Miller claimed 2 / 22 while Ring bowled the most overs , 28 , to finish with 1 / 44 . Given the time lost to inclement weather on the first day , Australia had won the match in less than three days of playing time .

= = Aftermath = =

This result sealed the series 4 ? 0 in favour of Australia . The match was followed by a series of congratulatory speeches . Bradman began with :

No matter what you may read to the contrary , this is definitely my last Test match ever . I am sorry my personal contribution has been so small ... It has been a great pleasure for me to come on this tour and I would like you all to know how much I have appreciated it ... We have played against a

very lovable opening skipper ... It will not be my pleasure to play ever again on this Oval but I hope it will not be the last time I come to England .

Yardley spoke after Bradman :

In saying good @-@ bye to Don we are saying good @-@ bye to the greatest cricketer of all time . He is not only a great cricketer but a great sportsman , on and off the field . I hope this is not the last time we see Don Bradman in this country .

Bradman was then given three cheers and the crowd sang " For He 's a Jolly Good Fellow " before dispersing .

The win brought Australia closer to Bradman 's aim of going through the tour undefeated . The Fifth Test was the last international match , and Australia only had seven further matches to negotiate . They secured three consecutive innings victories against Kent , the Gentlemen of England and Somerset . They then took first innings leads of more than 200 against the South of England and Leveson @-@ Gower 's XI , but both matches were washed out . The last two matches were two @-@ day non @-@ first @-@ class matches against Scotland , both won by an innings . Bradman 's men thus completed the tour undefeated , earning themselves the sobriquet The Invincibles .