

STEVE SMITH – A RETROSPECTIVE AFTER 50 TEST MATCHES

The 3rd Test against Pakistan at the SCG in January was Steve Smith's 50th Test match. As we're on the eve of his most challenging assignment as Test captain so far, the four Test series in India, I thought it would be appropriate to review his career to date.

Steve made his Test debut on 13 July 2010 in the 1st Test against Pakistan at Lord's, selected primarily as a leg-spinner. He scored 1 & 12 (batting at #8 & #9) and took 3-51 off 21 overs in the second innings. In the 2nd Test at Headingley, he scored 10 & 77 and didn't take a wicket in either innings. He didn't play either of the Tests on the tour of India in October 2010 and then missed the first two Tests of the Ashes series in 2010-11. He returned to the side for the 3rd Test at the WACA in December 2010 and played the last three Tests of the series, now as a middle order batsman. He finished the series with 54no in the second innings at the SCG in January 2011. At this stage, his career record was 259 runs (average 28.78), 3 wickets (average 73.33) and 3 catches in 5 Tests.

He missed the next 22 Tests that Australia played, before returning to the side for the 3rd Test in India in March 2013, when he scored 92 in the first innings. He has played all 45 Tests that Australia has played since he came back into the side. In those 45 matches, he scored 4493 runs at an average of 64.19, including 17 centuries in his 82 innings. His career record now stands at 4752 runs (average 60.15), 17 wickets (average 52.41) and 67 catches in 50 Tests.

Steve's achievements in the second phase of his Test career have been well-publicised, but here is a summary of the main ones:

- First Sutherland junior to captain Australia
- First Australian player to score centuries in first two Tests as captain
- Second player from all countries to score centuries in first three Tests as captain
- Second player from all countries to score centuries in each match of a four Test series
- Series aggregate of 769 vs India in 2014-15 is the most ever for all countries in a four Test series
- Second Australian player to score a century in first ODI as captain
- Only player from all countries to score a century in first Test and first ODI as captain (he also scored 90 in his first T20I as captain, thus missing by 10 runs what would have been a remarkable record)
- Has won seven Man of the Match awards and two Player of the Series awards in Tests
- Has won seven Man of the Match awards and two Player of the Series awards in ODIs

From a statistical point of view, here are some highlights:

- One of only six players to have a career batting average over 60 (min 15 Tests) – D.Bradman 99.94 (52 Tests); A.Voges 61.87 (20 Tests); G.Pollock 60.97 (23 Tests); G.Headley 60.83 (22 Tests); H.Sutcliffe 60.73 (54 Tests); S.Smith 60.15 (50 Tests).

- Second highest batting average as captain (min 15 Tests) – D.Bradman 101.51 (24 Tests); S.Smith 73.73 (20 Tests); K.Sangakkara 69.60 (15 Tests); V.Kohli 63.96 (22 Tests).
- Second highest batting average in first innings of match (min 15 Tests) – D.Bradman 113.66 (22 inns); S.Smith 89.07 (30 inns); W.Ponsford 82.00 (15 inns).
- Third highest batting average in first or second innings of match (min 15 Tests) – D.Bradman 97.85 (52 Tests); A.Voges 82.06 (20 Tests); S.Smith 75.20 (50 Tests); E.Weekes 71.43 (48 Tests).
- Second highest batting average as captain in first innings of match (min 8 Tests) – D.Bradman 120.77 (10 inns); S.Smith 104.28 (8 inns); S.Tendulkar 77.08 (12 inns).
- Highest batting average as captain in first or second innings of match (min 15 Tests) – S.Smith 93.93 (20 Tests); D.Bradman 78.81 (24 Tests); V.Kohli 76.85 (21 Tests); M.Jayawardene 70.78 (38 Tests); B.Lara 70.15 (46 Tests).
- Second highest percentage of centuries in first innings of match (min 7 centuries) – D.Bradman 40.91% (9 in 22 inns); S.Smith 40.00% (12 in 30 inns); L.Hassett 31.82% (7 in 22 inns); E.Weekes 29.63% (8 in 27 inns).
- Fourth lowest number of innings taken to score 17 Test centuries – D.Bradman 50; S.Gavaskar & M.Hayden 82; S.Smith 90.

In terms of performances in a player's first 50 Tests:

- Third highest aggregate – D.Bradman 6790; S.Gavaskar 4947; S.Smith 4752.
- One of only four players with a batting average above 60 – D.Bradman 99.85; H.Sutcliffe 61.67; J.Hobbs 61.28; S.Smith 60.15.
- Equal third most centuries – D.Bradman 28; S.Gavaskar 20; M.Hayden & S.Smith 17.

Don Bradman and Steve Smith are the only two players to feature in all of the above statistical categories.

Steve achieved the ranking of the best Test batsman in the world according to the ICC Test rankings on 16 July 2015. He has held that ranking ever since, with the current rankings being S.Smith 933; V.Kohli 895; J.Root 842; K.Williamson 823; D.Warner 812.

The top 10 historical ICC Test batting rankings are:

D.Bradman 961; L.Hutton 945; J.Hobbs & R.Ponting 942; P.May 941; V.Richards, K.Sangakkara, G.Sobers & C.Walcott 938; S.Smith 937.

These are some statistics from an Australian perspective:

- Steve is the 51st player to play 50 Tests for Australia out of 450 Test players to date
- He is now the 21st highest run-scorer for Australia
- He is equal 15th on the list of Australian Test century scorers
- He is 16th on the list of catches by Australian fieldsmen
- His 67 catches in 50 Tests is a rate of 1.34 catches per Test. This is the sixth best of all Australian players with 50 or more catches – R.Simpson 1.77 (110 in 62 Tests); M.Taylor (157 in 104); M.Waugh 1.41 (181 in 128); G.Chappell 1.402 (122 in 87); I.Chappell 1.400 (105 in 75); S.Smith 1.34 (67 in 50).
- His first class average is the 6th highest of all Australian players who have played at least 50 innings – D.Bradman 95.14 (338 inns); W.Ponsford 65.18 (235); W.Woodfull 64.99 (245); L.Hassett 58.24 (322); D.Lehmann 57.83 (479); M.Bevan 57.32 (400); A.Kippax 57.22 (256); S.Smith 56.64 (174).
- His ODI average is the 7th highest of all Australian players who have played at least 30 innings – M.Bevan 53.58 (196 inns); M.Hussey 48.16 (157); D.Warner 44.84 (91); D.Jones 44.62 (161); M.Clarke 44.59 (223); M.Hayden 43.81 (155); S.Smith 43.68 (81).
- He is equal 8th on the list of ODI centuries scored for Australia – R.Ponting 29 (364 inns); M.Waugh 18 (236); A.Gilchrist 16 (278); D.Warner 13 (91); M.Hayden 10 (154); G.Marsh 9 (115); S.Watson 9 (169); S.Smith 8 (81); M.Clarke 8 (223).
- He has the 9th highest batting average in first class cricket for NSW of players who have scored at least as many runs as Steve – D.Bradman 5813 at 98.52; A.Kippax 8005 at 67.27; A.Morris 4660 at 63.83; M.Bevan 9309 at 63.33; S.Katich 5309 at 61.73; K.Miller 3538 at 57.06; S.Barnes 4733 at 54.40; S.McCabe 4556 at 54.23; S.Smith 2996 at 53.50; M.Waugh 8416 at 53.27.
- He has the highest batting average of all players who have scored at least 1000 runs in first grade for Sutherland – S.Smith 3398 at 49.97; P.Jaques 9566 at 45.34; R.Davison 4121 at 39.63.

[All statistics up to start of tour of India, 16 Feb 2017]

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