

Doug Walters MBE

Cricket

Doug Walters holds a somewhat mythical place in Australian cricket. Small, cheeky, popular and multi-skilled, he would drink all night without getting drunk then wipe sleep from his eyes to make a shot-laden century or take a crucial wicket or stunning catch. At his best Walters was a magnificent, if occasionally careless, batsman and a reliable fast medium swing bowler, once recording 5-66 in the 1973 series against the West Indies.

He scored 5357 Test runs at an average of 48.26 including 15 centuries. He took 49 Test wickets at an average of 29.08. His one-day international record is 513 runs at an average of 28.50, taking 4 wickets at an average of 68.25.

Growing up in country New South Wales, he chalked up such outrageous figures as 9 for 8, 9 for 4, and 8 for 7 for the Police Boys Club.

In first-class games he amassed 16,180 runs at an average of 43.84 including 45 centuries, with a personal best score of 253 for NSW against South Australia in 1964/65. In the same match he added 378 runs with Lyn Marks for a new Sheffield Shield second-wicket record and the second-highest of all partnerships in the 82-year history of the Shield. Walters made 253 - and went on to take 7 for 63. When it came to bowling, he took 190 wickets in first-class games for an average of 35.69.

Just before his 20th birthday he made a century (155) on Test debut in Brisbane against Mike Smith's England side. A second Ashes hundred came in the next match in Melbourne as he followed 155 with 22 and 115 (averaging 68) in a sparkling start that was upturned in 1966 by conscription for two years' national service. He was not called up for duty in Vietnam, and smoothly swapped training greens to whites. Two years later in 1968, as 2783873 Private Walters, K. D., he averaged 127 in two Tests against the touring Indians. He scored his 1000th Test run in only his 11th Test, on the 1968 tour of England.

Quick on to the back foot against the spinners, he was a fine straight-driver and hooker, and a valuable partnership breaker with his medium pace. Crowds relaxed and related to his instinctive and aggressive Test batting that three times brought up centuries in a session, the most famous arriving when he smacked the last ball of the day from Bob Willis for six at the WACA in 1974/75.

As a man of the people he was rewarded with a stand on the old SCG hill. "There will never be another like him," Dennis Lillee said. "I never saw him throw a bat, never heard him talk badly of anyone. He was so cool. He could bat, too."

(Bio thanks to SAHOF records)



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