

Jeff Thomson 'Thommo'

CRICKET



Jeffrey Robert Thomson (born 16 August 1950 in Greenacre, New South Wales) is a former Australian cricketer. Known as "Thommo", he was one of the fastest bowlers ever to play Test cricket.

Thommo, as he was affectionately known, made his Test debut in the '72/'73 season against Pakistan. But he failed to take a wicket and was subsequently dropped. Later on it was discovered that he had played with a broken foot and had hidden this from the selectors.

In '74/'75 he made his return to the Australian side against England. In a ploy to intimidate the English he was quoted as saying: "I enjoy hitting a batsman more than getting him out. I like to see blood on the pitch".

Thommo took 6/46 in the second innings of that match to guide Australia to victory. In the Perth test he claimed 5/93 in the second innings as well as injuring some of the opposition on the way to another win. Bowling in the most lethal partnership in cricket history with Dennis Lillee, Thommo ended up taking 33 wickets in the series that was cut short due to an injury.

On the next tour to England, even though the wickets were much slower, Thommo managed to take 16 wickets over the 4 test series and play a pivotal role in the victory that led to Australia retaining the Ashes. He made 49 from 67 balls and took 5/38 in the Edgbaston test. The only result in the series, giving the Ashes to Australia 1-0.



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Yet, with Lillee out injured, and as the spearhead of the Aussie attack, Thommo claimed 23 wickets at 25.28.

In 1976 at the Adelaide Oval in a test against Pakistan, Thommo was involved in a collision which kept him out of the game for the rest of the season. When he did return for the Ashes in England, he never regained the raw pace he had previously enjoyed.

In the rebuilt Australian Test team of 1977-78 due to the advent of World Series Cricket, Thomson was the senior player after the recalled veteran, captain Bob Simpson. In the first Test against India at Brisbane, Thomson contributed seven wickets and 41 not out towards an Australian victory. During the second Test at Perth, he claimed six wickets and finished the series with 22 wickets at 23.45 average. Australia won the series 3-2 which was a major boost to the side as most of the top players were playing in the WSC.

Thommo eventually did play WSC where he excelled as before. He retired from test cricket after claiming Graham Gooch as his 200th test wicket.

Jeff Thomson will always be remembered for his blistering pace and his unique action. He would amble in then lean back and sling the ball at the batsman. He was once clocked at over 160 km/h past the stumps. Rod Marsh said there was no doubt on occasion he hit 180 km/h!

Thommo played in 51 tests, taking 200 wickets at an average of 28. He played in 50 ODI's and took 55 wickets.

