

Podcast 40 - Australia's Summer Sport - Cricket

by Rob McCormack - Friday, May 09, 2014

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Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 40 – Australia's Summer Sport - Cricket

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast40.mp3>

Hi,

The most important job in Australia is probably that of the Prime Minister. But there is another job in Australia which is almost as important, or at least that's how it seems sometimes. That job is the captain of the Australian Cricket Team. Cricket has a special place in the minds of most Australians. It's the main sport played here in summer and, like Australian Rules Football, it brings out the passion and the pride of Australians.

For those of you who don't know what cricket is, here's how it's played. There are 2 teams of eleven players. They play on a large oval field with a long rectangular strip in the middle called the pitch. The cricket pitch is about 20 metres long and 3 metres wide. At each end of the pitch is a set of 3 wooden wickets or stumps about 70cm high.



One team bats and the other team bowls and fields. Two batsmen bat at a time, one at each end of the pitch. The bowler starts from next to the wickets at one end of the pitch and bowls the ball towards the batsman at the other end of the pitch. He stands in front of the wickets which he tries to protect with his bat. The bowler must bowl the ball with a straight arm. The batsmen must not only protect his wickets but must also try to hit the ball away from the pitch. When that happens, the two batsmen each try to run to the other end of the pitch before the fielding team can throw the ball back to the wickets. This is called making a run. The aim of the batting team is to get as many runs as possible, with each batsman hoping to hit at least 100 runs. That's called a century. The aim of the bowling and fielding team is to get 10 of the 11 batsmen out, usually by the bowler hitting the wickets with the ball, or by a fielder catching a hit. A bowler bowls 6 times, which is called an 'over'. Then another bowler bowls from the other end of the pitch. Games can last anywhere from 20 overs for each team to games which go over 5 days where each team will bowl around 200 or more overs. When the batting team bats, that is called an innings. When 10 of the batsmen are out then their innings is over. The teams swap over and the other team bats. Although scoring can be a little complicated, the winning team is the one which scores the most runs in their innings. For a full description of cricket, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricket>

Games which go for 5 days are the most important and the most traditional form of cricket. Games like this, when played between cricket playing nations, are called Tests. Besides Australia, the major cricket playing nations in the world are England, India, Pakistan, South Africa, the West Indies, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Zimbabwe. It's hard to believe that we can stay interested in a game that takes 5

days to complete. But that's how test cricket is. It's a game of tactics, of periods of slow play, followed by periods of spectacular play. How do you get this batsman out? How do you stop that batsman from scoring? How will this batsmen make a century? And so on. One of the key players in a cricket team is the fast bowler. The fastest bowlers in the world can bowl at close to 160 kilometres per hour.



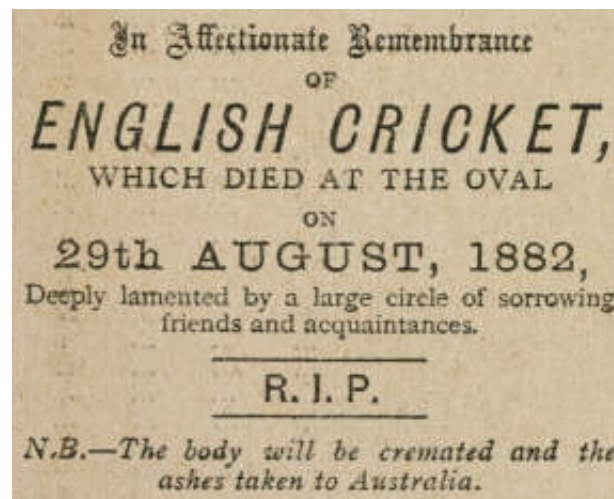
That's very fast with a hard ball. I don't know how the batsman can react in time, especially if the ball is flying towards your head.

<https://www.cricket.com.au/video/best-aussie-xi-fast-bowlers-mitchell-johnson-merv-hughes-jeff-thomson-dennis-lillee/2017-11-26>

Yet they mostly can, and they still make runs, even centuries.

Australians are very proud of their cricket history and their record in world cricket. When things don't go well for our cricket team in test matches, it is the subject of much discussion and headlines in the newspapers. It's almost as if our national pride is at stake. If our national cricket team fails in a test match, it is almost as if Australia has failed as a nation. That's why being the captain of the Australian Cricket Team is such an important job. You carry the pride of the whole nation on your shoulders. That's a lot to carry. Of course, we are not the only cricket playing nation that thinks like this. In fact, I think that India's and Pakistan's cricketers are under even more pressure to be successful. That is how much Indians and Pakistanis love their cricket. Cricket can do that.

The most important test matches for Australians are those against our old foe – England. There have been cricket test matches against England since 1877. A test series against England is made up of 5 tests. When played in Australia, there is one 5 day test played in each of Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane. The trophy for winning these tests is called the 'Ashes'. This name comes from the second ever test match played against England, played in England in 1882, which Australia won. The English public were greatly upset that a team from Australia could defeat the mighty English cricket team. Someone in England, as a joke, put a notice in the newspaper obituaries saying that English cricket had died and been cremated, and the ashes taken to Australia.



Since then, each series of 5 test matches played between England and Australia has been called an Ashes Test Series. Australia is the current holder of the Ashes, having won the 5 test Ashes Series played in Australia in the summer of 2013/14. Australians love to win an Ashes Test Series.

There have been 44 Australian cricket captains since 1877, including such great players as Alan Border, Steve Waugh and Ricky Ponting. Our current captain is Michael Clarke. Probably the most famous

cricket captain was Don Bradman, who first captained Australia in 1936.



He was arguably the best batsman ever to play cricket. Almost every Australian knows something about Don Bradman. He deserves a separate podcast which I will do in the future.

I'm looking forward to the next Ashes Test Series to be held in England in 2015. It will be a great contest, as always.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 23]

Vocabulary

arguably = you can argue something strongly

ashes = what is left after things are burnt in a fire

at stake = when something may or may not happen

bats = to hold a special piece of wood used to hit a ball, and to hit the ball with it

besides = as well as

bowls = to swing your arm above your shoulder with a ball in your hand, and to let the ball go

captain = the leader of a team

captained = when a team has a captain

complete = finish

complicated = not simple

contest = when two teams play against one another

cremated = to burn the body of a person after they have died

current = now

deserves = when someone has done something good and should be rewarded

discussion = to talk about something, to discuss something

fails = when you try to do something but are not able to

fielder = the person who stands in the field to stop the ball when it is hit by the batsman

fielding = to stand in the cricket field and stop the ball when it is hit by the batsman

foe = someone who you are against

headlines = the large print at the start of a newspaper story, telling you what it is about

history = what has happened in the past

holder = someone who holds something

joke = something you say or do for fun, to make people laugh

matches = games

mighty = very strong or very good at something

minds = the opinions, or what people think about something

nations = another word for countries. For example Australia, Turkey, Germany, England, Spain, etc

obituaries = a notice in the newspaper telling people that someone has died

oval field = a large area of grass shaped like an egg, where sport is played

passion = a strong feeling

period = a certain amount of time

pride = when you are very happy with something

Prime Minister = the leader of the Australian government

public = everybody

react = to respond, to do something when somebody else does something

record = what you have done in the past

rectangular = shaped like a long box, with 4 sides and 4 corners

scores = to make runs

separate = another

shoulders = where your arms join to your body. You can carry things on your shoulders

spectacular = when something is very exciting to look at

straight = not having a bend

strip = a long narrow space

stumps = another word for wickets

tactics = how you will do something in order to be a success

team = a group of players in a game

traditional = when something has been done for a long time

trophy = the prize for winning

wooden wickets = long pieces of smooth wood, shaped like a tube