

(Melbourne Cricket Ground, n.d.)

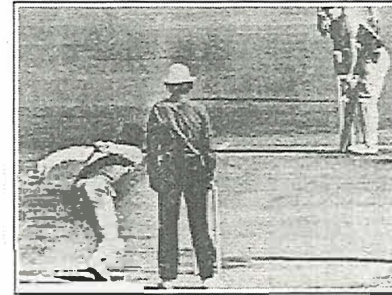
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The Underarm incident

Monday, February 1, 1981

New Zealand was never to declare war on Australia, the events of February 1, 1981 at the MCG would have tipped the Kiwis over the edge. This was the day of the infamous "Underarm Incident", aicketing low-point that was criticised by Prime Ministers on both sides of the Tasman.

It was the third final of the 1980/81 Benson & Hedges World Series Cup. Australia had scored a reasonable 4/235, but a patient century by Bruce Edgar allowed New Zealand to almost match the hosts. With one over left in the match, the Kiwis needed 15 runs for victory.



Healy backs Haddin Test return

IAN Healy has supported Brad Haddin's bid to win back his Test place, claiming it would be unfair to end his career because of a family illness.

Herald Sun

After a couple of lusty blows by Richard Hadlee and Ian Smith, then a couple of quick wickets, New Zealand was left needing six runs to tie the match with one ball remaining. The final delivery was to be bowled by Trevor Chappell to Kiwi number 10 Brian McKechnie.

Australian skipper Greg Chappell (Trevor's older brother) ordered that he deliver the ball underarm, and informed umpire Don Weser of his intentions. At this point underarm bowling was not specifically prohibited by the laws of the game.

To the disgust of McKechnie and the obvious dismay of several Australian players, Trevor Chappell rolled the ball down the pitch carpet bowls-style. The batsman blocked the ball then threw his bat away. Edgar at the non-striker's end made a two-fingered gesture to the bowler, and Kiwi skipper Geoff Howarth ran on to remonstrate with the umpires.

New Zealand Prime Minister Robert Muldoon called it, "the most disgusting incident I can recall in the history of cricket", and "an act of cowardice". Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser called it, "contrary to the traditions of the game". Greg Chappell's decision was universally condemned.

Immediately after the game he said, "If it's written in the rules of the game it is fair play," but he later apologised and claimed that the stress of the situation had got to him. It took many years for him to be fully forgiven.

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