



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET DECEMBER 4-7, 2025

2025/26 SHEFFIELD SHIELD VICTORIA V WESTERN AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN FIRST-CLASS CRICKET AND THE SHEFFIELD SHIELD: A SHORT HISTORY

First-class cricket began in Australia in February 1851, as a result of a challenge issued by the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) to the Launceston Cricket Club the previous year. The men from Port Phillip sailed to Launceston, and after two days of play, lost by three wickets; the match being played on the local racecourse. This match was not *formally* recognised as a first-class match until the ICC determined that all intercolonial and interstate matches played in Australia before 1947 (when matches were first *formally* designated first-class in Australia) should retrospectively be considered first-class. In a return match in 1852 at Southbank, Melbourne, the home side had its revenge; winning by 61 runs. Two years later, the Tasmanians won the third challenge at the Launceston Cricket Ground by eight wickets.

Competition for the Sheffield Shield began in the 1892/93 season; Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia each played four matches. The Shield was won by the undefeated Victoria. The trophy was initially awarded on a challenge basis, being won by the most recent match-winner and held by that team until it was defeated. This proved unsatisfactory and, before the end of the season, it was agreed that the awarding of the trophy would take place after all matches were completed. A considerable period elapsed before the ranks of the competitors for the Shield increased, with Queensland competing first in 1926/27, Western Australia in 1947/48 and Tasmania in 1977/78. The competition was suspended during both World Wars: 1915/16 to 1918/19 and 1940/41 to 1945/46.

SHEFFIELD SHIELD PLACINGS FOR SEASON 2024/2025

		P	W	L	D	A	BatBP	BowBP	Adj	Pts
1	South Australia	10	6	1	3	0	7.61	9.0	0	55.61
2	Queensland	10	3	3	4	0	9.06	8.7	0	39.76
3	Victoria	10	4	5	1	0	5.19	9.3	0	39.49
4	New South Wales	10	3	4	3	0	6.99	8.4	0	36.39
5	Tasmania	10	3	5	2	0	7.72	8.2	0	35.92
6	Western Australia	10	3	4	3	0	5.83	8.6	0	35.43

Notes: Point allocation: Win (W) 6, Loss (L) 0, Draw (D) 1, Abandoned without a ball bowled (A) 1

Bonus Points (BP): Batting: 0.01 points for every run scored beyond 200 in first 100 overs of first innings

Bonus Points (BP): Bowling: 0.1 points for every wicket taken in first 100 overs of first innings

SHEFFIELD SHIELD PLACINGS AT END OF SEASONS 1892/93-2024/25

State	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seasons
New South Wales	47	26	23	13	8	6	123
Victoria	31	39	26	10	9	8	123
South Australia	15	22	35	13	22	16	123
Queensland	9	21	18	28	14	3	93
Western Australia	18	9	16	19	15	1	78
Tasmania	3	6	5	10	10	14	48

SHEFFIELD SHIELD VIC V WA, MARCH 5 AND 6, 1976

The Sheffield Shield game at the MCG between Victoria and Western Australia was the second last game of the season. The result had no bearing on the eventual outcome of the trophy because South Australia held a comfortable points lead over Queensland, both of which were playing the final game.

Victoria had had a wretched season, winning only one game, against NSW; a game in which both teams were depleted by the absence of their international representatives. On account of Victoria's lack of success during the season, the selectors made wholesale changes to the batting line-up. Recently selected Test player Graeme Yallop, was one who didn't play. Bob Baldry, Les Stillman and John Scholes, who had all been in the selected twelve for every other game of the season, were axed in favour of young debutants, Dav Whatmore (21), Graeme Matthews (22), David Broad (22), and Doug Rolfe (23).

It was certainly a baptism of fire for the newcomers. Sent into bat in bowler-friendly conditions by W.A.'s skipper Rod Marsh, the Vics had to face the dangerous opening attack of Dennis Lillee and Mick Malone. The debutants all batted in the top six of the order and had the experienced Paul Hibbert and Richie Robinson to assist them. The move backfired spectacularly. Before long Victoria was 4/6, with Hibbert and Robinson contributing five runs between them. Opener Matthews, number three Rolfe and number four Whatmore were all dismissed without scoring. Broad, coming in at number six, steadied the ship somewhat with a fine 26, batting for 80 minutes with three boundaries. Rolfe, who had been hit on the head by his first delivery from Lillee, was assisted from the field. He resumed his innings after Broad had been dismissed at 8/44, but didn't last long before falling to Malone. Victorian captain Richie Robinson declared at the fall of the ninth wicket, depriving W.A. of a bonus point. Lillee and Malone bowled unchanged; the innings was completed in 19.1 overs.

Western Australia began its innings with the sturdy openers Rick Charlesworth and Bruce Laird. Alan Hurst proved to be as difficult to face as the Western Australian quicks. W.A. passed the Vics' total with four wickets down before continuing to 142. Reliable all-rounder Ian Brayshaw guided his team to a 98 run lead with his innings of 28 in 90 minutes. He was assisted by small contributions of 13 by skipper Marsh, and 20 from Lillee. Hurst finished with the fine figures of 5/50 from his 13.2 overs.

Victoria's second innings was disappointing, being all out for 135 in 42.3 overs. Robinson top-scored with 26 and was assisted by Max Walker's 25. Broad added a useful 16 to add to his top score from the first innings. The batting duffer, future Test leg-spinner Jim Higgs, provided 15 runs as well. Lillee and Malone took another six wickets between them to set up their team's prospects of victory. W.A.'s second innings began requiring 40 runs for outright victory. They lost two wickets in the chase, having to survive another burst of fiery bowling from Hurst. He hit Test player Wally Edwards in the ribs from one delivery, then in the head with next, from where the ball hit the stumps, dismissing him for 19. The next ball bowled future Test captain Kim Hughes. W.A. achieved its target in just under an hour.

The best thing that came from the game, for Victoria, was that all the debutants survived their difficult initiation and continued their first-class cricket careers. Rolfe moved to South Australia and played four further games. Matthews played 20 more matches, scoring three hundreds. Broad added another dozen games. Whatmore went on to play seven Tests for Australia during the Packer years and scored ten centuries in his 108 first-class games, before becoming a successful coach for many teams around the world.

FACT SHEETS ON THE MCC WEBSITE

The MCC Library's matchday fact sheets can be accessed through the MCC website at <http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue>

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