World Series Cricket, television and Australian culture

Quick, Shayne Pearce, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1990

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WORLD SERIES CRICKET, TELEVISION AND AUSTRALIAN CULTURE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

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* * * * *

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To My Family
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of my graduate studies at the Ohio State University would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance of the following individuals. In alphabetical order they are; Chris Angourias, Jill Angourias, Jon Breukel, Dr. Richard Cashman, Greg Chappell, Dr. Timothy Curry, Ross Edwards, Chris Harte, Dr. Seymour Kleinman, Hermona Krikowa, Dr. David Lawson, Bruce McDonald, Dr. John O'Hara, David Richards, David Salter, Dr. Brian Stoddart, Dr. William Sutton, Phil Wilkins and Dr. Wray Vamplew.

I would also like acknowledge the assistance and friendship of my fellow graduate students.

A very special debt of gratitude is owed to Dr. Melvin Adelman and Robyn Gibson-Quick. Both were with me from the start and the success I have had is due in the main to these two unique individuals.
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INTRODUCTION

In May 1977 the cricket world was stunned by the announcement that Kerry Packer, an Australian entrepreneur and media mogul, had signed many of the leading international cricketers and challenged the long held monopoly of the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) over this sport. World Series Cricket (WSC) played its contests both home and abroad over the next two years; however, in 1979 a rapprochement was finally negotiated between the principal companies of WSC and the ACB. Their agreement allowed the WSC athletes to return to the fold of establishment cricket and resulted in a lengthy association between the ACB and PBL Marketing, a subsidiary of Publishers and Broadcasting Ltd., Packer's holding company. Although WSC existed only for a brief period, it profoundly altered the way cricket was presented, packaged and even perceived by the sporting public.

This study investigates how changes both within Australian culture and society interfaced with shifts in the cricket world to shape the development and meaning of World Series Cricket. Contrary to popular opinion, WSC did not simply spring forth from the head of Kerry Packer, or John Cornell and Austin Robertson who have been credited
for producing it. Rather it evolved from a variety of interacting influences. The coalescence of changing economic, demographic and social conditions, new government policies toward television and the increasing symbiotic relationship between sport and this medium created an environment that was receptive to entrepreneurial capital. In addition, the inability of a conservative sport governing body to accommodate neither the sport-television nexus nor a culture in flux significantly reduced the capability of the ACB to adopt a leadership position during this era. While there is no question that the WSC era is a watershed mark in the history of Australian sport, this era informs us as much about continuity and growth as it does about conflict and change.

I

In the decade since the cessation of WSC as an on-field venture a number of works have examined this turbulent period in cricket history. This trend is hardly surprising given the significance of cricket in Australian culture and WSC's challenge to the traditional ways this sport was organised, played and presented. The popular literature on WSC has examined in detail the development and key actors in this cricket drama. The various authors have collectively and correctly perceived WSC as a pivotal
era in the emerging symbiotic relationship between sport and television, but without exception they have been critical and denigrated the new linkages between sport and this medium. While the popular works offer a good overview of the era, as well as provide interesting reading, they suffer from problems that are typical of this genre of sport history. They are descriptive rather than analytical and fail to place and link WSC into a broader cultural context. Universally these works treat WSC as a self contained event, a confrontation between opposing cricket forces, without detailing the symbiotic interconnections between cricket and societal changes.

Several scholars have examined WSC but their treatments of this theme are incomplete either because they have explored it solely in terms of the growing symbiotic relationship between television and sport or have discussed it within the context of other themes they were investigating. The contentions of both Brian Stoddart and Bill Bonney that Packer created WSC to serve his own television needs is currently the accepted view within academic circles. Support for this position can be found in Packer's own statements to a Sydney businessmen's luncheon in 1978. He informed those attending that although he did not expect to make money out of World Series Cricket that year, the Nine Network would be spared
the cost of producing 300 hours of local television programs.

While the connections these and other writers make between sport and television are perfectly correct, to perceive WSC as solely a Packer creation is to give the man far too much credit. This event was much larger than the personalities involved or the sport they chose as their vehicle, and the prevailing view is limited by scholars' neglect to place the WSC era within its wider cultural context.

There have also been sporadic attempts to examine WSC from a leftist perspective. These authors explore WSC to analyse such themes as the role of television and cricket in reproducing the dominant order, the presentation of cricket as a distorted view of reality and the commercialisation of the sport in general. Such works are predictable in their condemnation of the involvement of entrepreneurial capital in the sport and without exception they view the relationship between sport and television as negative. As a result the discourse is usually one-directional. While they employ the concept of hegemony to avoid crude Marxist determinism their failure to investigate what the spectator brought to and extrapolated from their involvement, both as direct and indirect spectators, leads them inevitably back to a mechanistic
approach that their framework rejects. Their accounts too easily deny the sporting public the ability to accept or reject the media's offerings or that fans may extract quite different meanings than those intended by producers and television.

In addition a number of scholars have explored components of WSC as they relate to broader questions with which they are concerned. Although their research was not designed to examine the WSC in its totality their works are a valuable addition to the literature on cricket and are vital to a complete understanding of a variety of factors that shaped the sport during this era. Ric Sissons addresses WSC within the context of the developing professional cricketer. He investigates the influences the changing social and economic environment had on the potential remuneration available to cricketers and weaves within this theme an examination of the professional - amateur dichotomy. Sissons insightfully concludes a small section in his final chapter by stating that in one sense WSC was not new but rather a more successful attempt by players than similar previous ones to achieve some measure of control over their playing future. Several articles by Keith Sandiford's focus on the professionalisation of the sport of cricket. He examines issues such as the removal of the amateur - professional
distinction, the sponsorship of cricket and the accompanying changes in game performance in light of the new professionalism. Richard Cashman's works venture beyond the confrontation between the personalities involved in the sport of cricket to focus on the larger questions of how the twin forces of commercialism and professionalism in cricket are accommodated by both promoters and participants. He also addresses the issue from the perspective of the spectator arguing that not only are the fans a vital element in the way the game evolved, but attention to them sheds light on the context in which the game is situated. As part of his investigation Cashman indicates that the spectators who attended WSC matches were drawn from new groups of cricket fans. Peter Sloane adopts a unique posture in his discussion of the consequences of WSC. He examines recent trends in Britain and other countries to see how far economics can shed light on WSC development when it is analysed as selling a service for which spectators will pay, and he seeks to determine the price at which it can be produced given the components of supply and demand. Whilst much of Sloane's work is generic the references made to WSC are market-oriented and there is sense of bewilderment in his work as to why a 'WSC-type' venture was so long in creation. There are various limitations with the writings on WSC.
They have overwhelmingly relied on hastily penned secondary sources which mitigates against any genuine reflection and long term assessment. In addition they have all too often lacked a critical analysis. Parenthetically, I suspect this latter condition is the product of a traditionalist perspective toward cricket specifically and to sport in Australia generally. There has been little assessment of official records, no examination of the market research of the time, little in the way of personal interviews with the actors involved and no extensive analysis of newspaper reports. Similarly the scholarship has not adequately contextualized WSC as part of changing popular and/or economic culture. The major exception is Bonney's work which situates WSC within the changing conditions of Australian television. His work represents a positive, albeit tentative and partial, step towards a clearer understanding of the role of WSC in the sport - television nexus. However, his reliance on secondary sources and a few newspaper articles limits his assessment.

II

Our understanding of WSC can be enhanced by examining this era in terms of the interactions between internal developments within the cricket world and external changes within Australian culture and society. Changing social, economic and political conditions in Australia during the
1970s created an environment that was conducive to the acceptance of an alternative style of cricket. This situation was augmented by an unwillingness on the part of conservative cricket authorities to address sympathetically many of the athletes' concerns and their adherence to outmoded traditions. The combination of internal and external forces produced the WSC era.

In 1972 the new Labor government heavily promoted the rhetoric of social egalitarianism and nationalism and paid attention to the needs of many of the country's minority groups. Expressions of the new found patriotism were often witnessed in the sporting arenas. Unfortunately economic prosperity was not a companion of rising nationalism and the devaluation of the Australian dollar by successive governments had direct bearing on the ability of businessmen to purchase overseas, both in terms of finished products and technology. This situation impacted directly on the viability of WSC which was as much a product of a changing Australian economic and business culture as it was of shifting conditions within the world of cricket of sport. The multiple forces provided a new dimension in the nation's sporting experience and in the process raised national consciousness to a new level.

The rise in Australian nationalism occurred during a period of rapidly changing demographics. This created a
culture that was not only volatile, but also eclectic. In the post World War II era the nation looked to the United States instead of Great Britain for inspiration and this was particularly true in the world of sports. Moreover waves of immigrants, initially from a war-torn Europe and more recently from Asia, brought with them their own cultural institutions and traditions. While they attended to their heritage in their new country, many endeavoured to incorporate components of the new Australian culture as part of their ongoing existence. Sport was a relatively easy institution for such groups to access. As WSC catered to many groups the ACB previously ignored, this provided it with a new base of support.

While WSC tapped into many of the cultural movements that either existed or were emerging during the 1970s, it was also attentive to changing leisure patterns. The most prominent amongst them was the increased use of television as an entertainment device. Furthermore WSC was a direct response to the indigenous regulations that governed the development and use of television in Australia. As WSC was initiated during a period of local content requirement on Australian television it served two functions for the Nine Network. Domestic sport was cheaper to produce than local drama yet it rated reasonably well, especially in non-prime time. Furthermore as it was
Australian in content it satisfied the requirements of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal.

The 1970s witnessed an acceleration in the growth of the "sport - commercial television" nexus. Although a relatively new association domestically, international precedence had been in place for many years, especially in North America. Sport had proven to be an extremely viable vehicle for the conveyance of selected information to demographically defined audiences. Consequently media moguls were prepared to invest large sums of money to connect products with a potential market. Packer was obviously aware of the international trends relating to the symbiotic nature of sport and the media for he was among the first Australians to tap into the relatively new technology, designed to highlight and enhance the sport - television association. With the introduction of color in 1976 televised sport underwent a resurgence in popularity. Although Packer was not the only entrepreneur to recognise the potential for televised sport he was definitely the most bold, not just for his attention to the changing nature of television but also for his willingness to promote cricket.

Australian cricket is not only the country's most popular game, it is deeply rooted in traditional Anglo-Saxon culture. Hence Packer and WSC were treated with disdain by
the establishment, vilified by a conservative press and lambasted by traditional cricket lovers. Yet the eventual acquisition of fan support proved crucial to the success of WSC. Although approval was initially reserved and then only forthcoming for selected components of this sport—television package, within two years WSC had captured the attention of the Australian sports fan and forced the Australian Cricket Board to negotiate a "cricket peace."

The reluctance of conservative cricket authorities to adapt successfully to and lead cricket through this uncertain time severely weakened their monopoly over the game. Moreover the overarching organisational structure of cricket, and its accompanying mentality, was critical to the creation of an environment which made the sport vulnerable to an entrepreneurial intrusion. Unfortunately more than a decade after the rapprochement acrimony still exists within Australian cricket circles.

Fundamental to the eventual success of WSC was player acquisition. The athlete's acceptance is hardly surprising given the low remuneration available to them for the display and exercise of their skill, especially when compared to other professional athletes. Phil Wilkins suggests that "until the year 2000 and beyond cricketers of the world will look to them [WSC players] as pathfinders to recognition and remuneration: a fair day's pay for a fair
Although player acquiescence to the revitalised sport form was necessary to ensure its success, the arrangement was purely financial. WSC athletes simply switched their allegiance to take advantage of the improved benefits package offered. The external control over their labour was still as prevalent as ever. Moreover the improved conditions exacted a toll in the post-rapprochement era as the playing demands upon the athletes were substantially increased. McGregor argues that "the more that Greg Chappell heard as a putative compromise captain, the more he realised that Packer had won the commercial war and the players had lost the peace." However the long term benefits to current professionals, and the resultant changes in the player - management (ACB) relationship, can be attributed directly to the stand taken by WSC athletes.

In 1987, McKay and Rowe suggested that "there are few indepth historical analyses of how Australian sport has been affected by the media and vice versa." This examination of World Series Cricket, television and Australian culture attempts to partially rectify this situation. These issues will be examined chronologically as this approach illuminates the unfolding nature of the work's major themes. Chapters One and Two establish the emerging social forces and historical trends in cricket
in order to provide a cultural context for Chapters Three and Four which examines the World Series Cricket era and its impact on the sport - television relationship. The concluding chapter will establish that WSC and the increasing symbiosis between sport and television in Australia during the 1970s was as much a product of cultural evolution as it was a sporting revolution.
ENDNOTES


Most cricket anthologies and autobiographies of the last decade have made at least a passing reference to the WSC era. These have been written mainly by ex-athletes who directly benefitted by Packer's apparent munificence, or sportswriters who adopted an editorial policy regarding this issue. Such works tend to be non-analytic and internal to the world of cricket. See Tony Greig, My Story (London: Stanley and Paul, 1980), 148-75; Imran Khan, All Round View (London: Chatto and Windus, 1988), 30-34, 176-77; Max Walker, Back to Bay 13 (Melbourne: Garry Sparke and Assoc., 1980), 75-110; idem, Cricketer at the Crossroads (Melbourne: Garry Sparke and Assoc., 1988), 57-59, 77-91, 185-204; Ten Turbulent Years: Cricket in Australia (Birchgrove, N.S.W.: Swan Publishing, 1987).


4. See, Bonney, "Packer," 1-27; Geoff Lawrence, "It's just not cricket!" in Power Play: The Commercialisation of Australian Sport, Geoff Lawrence and David Rowe, eds., (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1986), 151-65; idem., "The


6. McFarline, A Game Divided and Beecher, The Cricket Revolution utilized newspapers in the writing of their books. These journalists merely collated events as they chronologically appeared in their respective newspapers. Furthermore each adopted an editorial tone, which was decidedly anti-WSC. See, Bonney, "Packer," 1-27.


8. The literature on this relationship is extensive. For some of the more prominent works see, Ben Rader, In Its Own Image: How Television Transformed Sports (New York: Free Press, 1984); Hart Cantelon and Rick Gruneau, "The

9. See Cashman, Ave A Go Yer Mug, 153; Stoddart, Saturday, 104.


CHAPTER I

SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE 1970s:
THE CRADLE OF WORLD SERIES CRICKET.

Australia in the 1970s was a nation in a state of flux as changing social forces had altered the country's cultural context and social composition. The new and varied influences had been slowly gathering momentum throughout the 1950s and 1960s but it was only in the subsequent decade that their consequences could no longer be ignored. By the 1970s indigenous issues coalesced with international events to create in Australia a new national consciousess.

The most significant manifestation of these social and cultural shifts was the emergence of the first Labor government in over twenty-five years who were swept into power by the rhetoric of the more liberal tone of the era. However Labor's victory proved of short duration as dramatic economic problems were instrumental in restoring the Liberal party to power. The changing of the political guard indicates that by the late 1970s a more conservative mentality once again underpinned social policy. However it could never eradicate the indelible mark the various societal alterations had on the nation's cultural
institutions.

Sport and television were two institutions that were profoundly influenced by the various societal movements of the 1970s and the symbiotic relationship between the two strengthened as the decade progressed. Yet the development of this association was as much a product of a conservative past as it was of a vibrant present and reflected the amalgamation of both eras. The conflict between the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) and World Series Cricket (WSC) during the late 1970s is one example of how an institution is not only directly influenced by tradition but at the same time it demonstrates how such institutions accommodate to broader cultural determinents, in order to ensure its own survival. To fully comprehend WSC in its cultural context societal forces need to be interwoven with a cricket mentality as well as being viewed against their respective patterns of growth.

Increasing Ethnicity and Australian Nationalism.

Ronald Conway argues that as recently as the pre-1960s the cultural cringe was concerned with the view that "inside the head of most Australians lurked a miniature Englishman." Coexisting with such suggestions was the tendency for the country's inhabitants to be generally viewed along the lines of pre-existing stereotypes and myths which emphasized masculinity, ruralness,
egalitarianism and imbued with a certain degree of levity. Such tags had proven to be powerful cultural determinants and while they were initially externally articulated there had been the tendency on the part of Australians to not only accept the inevitability of such rhetoric, but also to internalise it. The removal of such stereotypical thinking has not been easy. However it has been constantly under challenge in the post World War II era as a result of societal alterations.

The immigration patterns of the post World War II period resulted in the development of diverse ethnic communities within Australia, especially in the larger urban areas. By 1947, 170,700 displaced persons from Poland, Latvia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Estonia and Czechoslovakia had settled in Australia. At this time they comprised two percent of the total population. Between 1947 and 1969 more than 2,475,000 persons emigrated to Australia. Of these 45.4 percent were British and 21 percent were from Southern Europe. All of the above groups brought with them many of their cultural practices and continued to adhere to them in their new land. By the early 1970s Australia had become a nation where one in three of its inhabitants were either born overseas or were a first generation Australian. This stimulated the creation of a truly cosmopolitan society.
The changing ethnicity of the nation was only one of empowering social forces during this period as Australia was not immune from the social upheaval faced by much of the western world. As a consequence cultural change was both externally and internally driven. Yet not all sections of society endorsed the winds of change with the same degree of eagerness as a conservative element has always been a part of the country's social milieu. Hence while the 1970s ushered in an era flushed with new enthusiasm the nature of any change was stylistic not fundamental. Nevertheless, both liberal and traditional forces battled and intertwined to shape a culture that was eclectic and vibrant.

One writer speculates that by the 1960s there "was hardly a country in the world as fiercely patriotic, as self-confident or as eager to assume its destiny" as Australia. Moreover the future-oriented rhetoric had great appeal for the recent arrivals with a ravaged past. For many that vision was finally realised in 1972 with the election of Gough Whitlam and the first Labor government since 1949. The new prime minister swept into power under the banner of "Its Time" and was aided and abetted in his success by a significant number of the country's cultural intelligentsia. In addition household names in television, cinema, music, along with less well-known figures from the
stage and the arts flocked to the cause. For the next three years "Whitlamism" promoted an Australia with strong republican overtones, a country striving for its own self respect and also attempting to disassociate itself from both the United States and England at every turn. This process resulted in a "hand-on-heart" Australia which tended to cross cultural, ethnic and to a lesser extent social boundaries. However unreal, the mood was ebullient.

During the early 1970s the charismatic Whitlam spoke to an increasingly frustrated Australia in a language it wanted to hear. Promises were made that a Labor government would not only address the concerns of the underclasses but it also vowed to withdraw Australian troops from any further involvement in Vietnam. Pre-existing anti-American feeling had been exacerbated by the conscription of Australian troops to this action and by the incarceration of draft resisters. Whitlam's quest for a 'national' renaissance was also aided by a strong fiscal climate. The years between 1967 and 1973 were good ones for the Australian economy as its growth was fairly uniform and unemployment low. The strong economic prosperity of this era enabled the Australian public to focus its attention on social issues and make bold new choices.

The Labor government victory of 1972 was not surprising since it came quite close in its previous
attempt. The outgoing Liberal government had been severely hampered by an unpopular foreign policy, a lack of personality within the party and a failure to heed, or a lack of desire to accommodate, the concerns of a rapidly changing society. The ability of Whitlam and the Labor party electoral machine to read carefully the Australian mood at the time had a direct impact on his bid to become Prime Minister.

During the next three years liberalism and popular nationalism were on the upswing in the Australian community. Significantly, important social and cultural movements underpinned shifts in political policies. Issues such as the "Make it Australian" television campaign, an attempt by Australian producers to compete with cheaper imported materials, reflected not only an economic push but also an underlying republican mentality. The idea of a republic of Australia, divorced from England and the Commonwealth, had always attracted a certain degree of popular support and the Labor government quickly added its voice to the cause.

This perspective was not universally shared and forces existed within the country which continued to move along traditional lines. Individuals in institutions such government, education, and sport fiercely resisted any change, with cricket being an excellent example. Stephen Alomes claims that in a young but historically provincial
society the forces for change and for conservatism were both strong. Furthermore opposing groups were invariably marked by occupation and generation. The policies of Labor had its greatest support amongst the masses and as such this government appeared to touch base with the public at large. At the same time the government exhibited an inability to solve many of the domestic problems that engulfed the country. An election platform of Labor was the reduction of the unemployment rate but this continued to rise as did inflation.

The failure to resolve such issues stemmed from a number of factors. The stimulus for the economic boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s emanated from the private rather than the government sector. Australian good fortune had not been a product of governmental policy but rather because it had been in keeping with international trends. Consequently the 1974 oil price shock which stunned the Western World also triggered Australian economic decline. Equally significant was the devaluation of the Australian currency against the American dollar, initially in 1974 and then again in 1976. The first devaluation under the Labor government was 12 percent. The second under the Conservative government in 1976 was 17.5 percent. The net effect was that in two years the Australian dollar was devalued by nearly thirty percent. The impact of this
exchange rate policy was considerable both on the import/export market and the ability of Australian producers and buyers to purchase overseas. The events of 1974 and 1976 facilitated uncertainty in the business community. This precarious position was exacerbated when Australia failed to share in the strong economic recovery experienced internationally during the mid-1970s.

Much of the blame for the country's economic ills was directed towards government costs, trade unionism, rising wages and strikes. Similarly Australians were informed that their "she'll be right" attitude coupled with a propensity for the "long weekend" directly contributed to the economic malaise. Malcolm Fraser, leader of the conservative party and Prime Minister in the post Whitlam era, articulated the old values of individual initiative, hard work and self sacrifice. A comment by Fraser at the time, "life wasn't meant to be easy," exemplified his commitment to this rhetoric.

Conservative forces engineered the downfall of the Labor government in 1975 and a populace shell shocked at the frenetic pace of social change opted for a less dynamic mode of government in the ensuing election. Whilst Labor's first attempt at government in over two decades ended in three short years, its articulation of social egalitarianism and a new nationalism gave rise to a nation that paused to
contemplate how its inhabitants related to each other and their institutions.11

The demise of the Labor government heralded the end of the Whitlam period. However, both generally and specifically his legacy influenced the direction of Australian popular culture for years to come. The new nationalistic fervour created during these years did not subside following Whitlam's removal from office and its strongest adherents were the children of immigrants and first generation Australians who strove for acceptance. Since sport was a major vehicle for the display of Australian national identity, it is not surprising that new and potential citizens of the country rendered support for national teams as a means of being integrated into mainstream Australian society.

In the post-Whitlam era local television programs and personalities, such as Paul Hogan, continued to reinforce an Australian identity and promoted a national unity and uniqueness. However noble its intent, the obsession toward nationalism had a down side. Conway argues that advertising men such as John Singleton often pandered "to all which is culturally deadening in the Australian nature." The vast difference between popular nationalism and a cult of 'ockerism' should be obvious. Yet in the attempt to market patriotism at the populist level,
exhibitions of 'ocker' behaviour were often interpreted as outpourings of nationalistic fervour. The emergence of the "ad man's" mentality as an extension of Whitlam's position was definitely not compatible with the former Prime Minister's expressed beliefs. Rather it appears to be more consistent with the avowed conservative policy of keeping politics off the front pages. Hence instead of being the national unifying force advocated by the Labor government it has been reduced to a cause of anti-social behaviour.

Regardless of ideological position, Australians' attention to their country and cultural patterns grew rapidly throughout the 1970s and continued into the 1980s. By reinforcing and promoting that which all Australians shared, successive governments were able to divert focus away from those potentially socially divisive issues. An area in which the potential for social cohesion was at its strongest resulted from the nation's concern with sport.

**Development of the Australian Sporting Mentality**

Sport in the Australian community has been a vehicle for both continuity and change in national identity. While assisting in the creation of a unique Australian identity, it has also strongly reaffirmed the country's British heritage. The presence of both thrusts has profoundly influenced and shaped the Australian's historical sporting
mentality. The significance that is placed upon being simultaneously Australian yet linked to its cultural British heritage, whether symbolic or real, provides partial context for the WSC era.

Unquestionably sporting events have provided successive generations of Australians with the impetus toward self-identification and popular nationalism. At the arenas vast numbers of Australians congregate to express affiliative support. At the international level sport often has been regarded as a source of national unity. Clearly sport has been one of the more powerful cultural forces in the country's short history. The cultural emphasis placed upon it has been attributed to a variety of factors, including "the immaturity of a young country, the instant gratification of sport, the Australian distrust of the intellectual and the desperate search for identity and recognition." Whilst this list is not exhaustive it indicates the pervasiveness of the sport mentality and its far reaching historical and psychological determinants.

Hence sport has been central to the development of a sense of community within Australia. As a conservative institution it reinforced existing social mores and expectations and has had its virtues extolled as a positive contributor to desired social growth. Any interference with its many rituals inevitably have been by sporting fans
with concern and derision.

As a member of the British Empire it is hardly surprising that the new colony developed recreational habits that replicated those which existed in England. For many early Australians the establishment of British sporting activities was a important reminder of the civilized country from whence they came. This situation was so deeply rooted in the Australian psyche that it wasn't seriously challenged until the post World War II era. Moreover this involvement with sport was not just a matter of identifying with their Britishness. Australians of the nineteenth century saw in sport, and especially in cricket, a test of the country's worth. While sport has since been influenced by other cultural groups, this latter attitude has prevailed into the present day. The sporting environment has since expanded to include activities such as athletics, swimming, boxing, yachting, cycling, and tennis; however in many quarters it is still cricket that resurrects the fiercest of either anti-colonial or loyalist passions and both groups were equally incensed by the WSC incursion into establishment cricket ranks.

From the second half of the nineteenth century Australia was influenced by the approach and the rhetoric surrounding the social mores contained within games conducted in the British public schools system. Moreover,
the patterns of sport delivery evident in organisations in England at the time were transported directly to Australia with little thought given to local conditions. By the turn of the twentieth century Australian sport not only bore striking resemblance structurally to that of its British counterpart, but the underlying mentality of such had suffered little by the former’s geographic isolation.

British author Anthony Trollope noted the importance of sport to the colonies after his visit to Australia in the early 1870s, and he was astounded by the amount of sport played in their country. Another clear indication of the propensity of nineteenth century Australians for sport was that they came together on the playing field nearly a quarter of a century before they came together to create a government. This indicates their priorities at the time, the sparseness of the country’s population and their contentment with home rule.

A number of arguments have been forwarded as to reasons for the emphasis on both sporting achievements at this time and the desire to achieve. In the second half of the twentieth century Third World countries have demonstrated that national pride can be far more rapidly obtained through sporting success than in other areas. Similarly Australia in the late nineteenth century took a measure of satisfaction in its sporting success. This had
the effect of partially removing the penal stigma, the legacy of the convict era, and placing the country on an apparent equal footing with other members of the Empire. Conversely it reaffirmed within the Australian disposition the essential "Britishness" of it at its core.

The nation's attention to sport increased during the early twentieth century as the development of the radio became a major technological influence on the community. Initial usage commenced in 1923 and set ownership accelerated in the latter part of the decade. In an era of hard times the sales of wireless sets increased dramatically with families seemingly attaching a high priority to ownership, as radio entertained, gave comfort and provided for quiet reflection. Scholars of Australian culture have underemphasised the impact on Australian life but it rapidly impacted on the sporting environment and introduced new means of vicarious experiences. Sport became instant for legions of fans who could not attend the venues and new social conventions developed around the practice of listening to the sports broadcast on the set. Horseracing, wrestling, cricket, and football were amongst the first sports to be broadcast via the new medium.

Australian sporting growth continued in an unfettered manner until World War II. However in the subsequent era, the conservative mentality which dominated the sport
governing bodies failed to accommodate to post-War cultural shifts as increasing migration and technological advancements changed the sporting focus of the nation. The increasing ownership of the motor car and the growing accessibility of the countryside, as well as the introduction of television in 1956, radically altered the leisure patterns of Australians in the second half of the twentieth century. Spectatorship at major sporting events declined considerably as new forms of recreational activity became popular. Since World War II attendance at horse racing declined 25 percent, tennis also went through an extended crisis period, and between 1946 and 1972 attendance at Australian Rules Football games dropped from 9.1 percent to 5.3 percent of the population of Melbourne. There were also major decreases in the number of people watching cricket, especially at the district and Shield levels. The only exceptions to this trend were night activities such as trotting and greyhound racing. The significance of this latter fact cannot be ignored. In 1977 WSC would take advantage of the neglectful attitude of sporting bodies to new technology, cultural change and sport fans, and once again capture the sporting attention of the country. Moreover, WSC's greatest success would come as a result of its day – night matches.

Major Australian sporting achievements in the last
thirty years have been limited and this has been a source of frustration for many Australians. Twin factors have compounded this predicament. The prominence hierarchy of Australian sports has always been the product of white Australian male interests and as a result success in non-traditional or gender sports have in the main been pushed to sport's periphery. Cricket has had its moments of outstanding success yet in the pre-WSC era the game was still one for the cognoscente and as such its appeal was limited to those who understood its nuances and had the time to attend to its conventions. Isolated successes in boxing, tennis, motor-car racing, swimming and athletics have resulted in periodic resurgences of hope that Australia recapture a golden age, but such hopes have continually been quickly dashed. Moreover the nation’s preoccupation with mainstream sports has resulted in a profound ignorance of many of the international successes achieved by other activities. Squash, netball, hockey, surfing, lacrosse, snooker, motor-cycle racing are just a small selection of the sports that the Australian population have ignored in the last twenty-five years even though they have produced world class athletes.

What sporting success Australian’s have enjoyed in the last two decades has not been the result of long held traditions but rather has been in response to important...
cultural and demographic shifts. When Australia qualified for the World Cup of soccer in 1976 the impact of ethnicity was plainly obvious. The game had strong support from the rapidly expanding ethnic population in Australia and they were by far the primary factor in the rising popularity of this sport. Similarly the country's recent performances in basketball at the international level has been a confirmation of the multi-cultural nature of Australian society. Yet few of these successes have united the country as much as the 1983 win by Australia II in the America's Cup. For a brief period Australian pride in sporting achievement received a much needed boost. The fact vast numbers of Australians were awake in the small hours of the morning watching an event, of which they had little comprehension, escaped national scrutiny. All that was important was that Australia was the first nation to ever wrestle the prestigious America's Cup away from the United States. A renewed feeling of worth and identity had been created.

In the last decade athletic success at the international level has again been on the rise yet the impetus for such success has come from a different source. Natural talent, marvellous climate and the rhetoric of paternal organisations and volunteerism have not produced the modern champions. Rather, they have come as a result
of the infusion of corporate dollars on both the tournament and individual level, government support for the training of elite athletes and training programs developed from the cutting edge of science. The development and success of such athletes both home and abroad has been followed closely through the medium of television.

The Growth of Television and Its Influence on Australian Society.

Television had its Australian birth in the politically conservative era of the early 1950s and has continued to perpetuate such an ideology. It has reacted to social change rather than fostered it, and similar to sport, it has traditionally served the purposes of the dominant conservative culture. WSC was controversial not only because it marketed sport as a spectacle for television but because it utilized television as a facilitator of public support rather than simply a respondent to it. Not only did it break with sporting traditions, it also broke with the conventional wisdom of the broadcasting milieu.

The initial moves toward the television age were made in 1948 by the Chifley Labor government who, through the Postmaster Generals Department, called for tenders for six television transmitters and associated studios. Even with the defeat of the Labor Government the following year,
the Menzies led conservatives proceeded with the television issue and in 1950 decided to grant television licenses similar to that which had been done with radio. However by 1952, a changing economic climate forced the Liberal government to review its existing policy and in the process the introduction of television was shelved. A Royal Commission in 1953 recommended that television be introduced on a gradual basis to "secure reasonable standards of programs within existing financial constraints." Initially there was to be one national station under the auspices of the government funded Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), and two commercial stations in Sydney and Melbourne. The government announced the introduction of television on September 10, 1954 and experimental transmission began in July 1956, with regular transmission starting two months later. In September 1957 the extension of services to Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart was decided upon and in May 1959 applications for provincial licenses were called for. In the twelve month period between December 1961 and 1962, thirteen new provincial stations were created.

While the birth of television in Australia may appear to be straightforward, the dissension created by the initial issuing of licenses and the accompanying
regulations has been ongoing and has become problematic. In addition, the gulf between the ABC and the commercial stations is an expression of the tensions that exists within Australian society. The mandate of the ABC is to provide truly national coverage and as such it has the potential to be an instrument for national unity. As an alleged impartial, independent and objective reporting service it is regarded as "the guardian of professional standards, arbiter of good taste and civilizing in its effect." In the process it has become "paternalistic, undemocratic, conservative and plays an active role in mobilizing consent for the ruling order."

It is hardly surprising that the ABC shares much in common with many of sports governing bodies since their rhetoric essentially emanated from the same source. This commonality helped create a very close association between the two, and one that in many cases was deaf to the overtures of alternative suggestions. This was especially the case with cricket. The ongoing agreements between the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) and the ABC severely retarded the commercial growth of cricket and in the process denied financial benefit to Australian cricketers. While the ACB and the ABC enjoyed a cozy relationship, the longevity of this arrangement appears to be more the result of a lack of serious interest by outside promoters rather
than a testament to the perceived wisdom by either group.

Bill Bonney persuasively argues that the ABC unwittingly "serves the commercial sector by testing new markets and reducing the degree of risks particular in regard to BBC and ITV television." The most obvious example of this is Australian cricket. Over a period of years, first through radio and then television, the ABC built up a large cricket following. The potential for the market to be targeted and developed by commercial interests had existed for some time. Channel Nine's eventual takeover was the result of their attention to both the increasing scope of sport promotion and the changing conditions in society at large. However this does not indicate that Channel Nine was a model of progressiveness in Australian television culture. The commercial networks in many ways are more conservative and reactive than the ABC. This in part reflects the way initial licenses were granted.

When the first four licenses were granted in 1955 owners of the print media had substantial interests in television. In the 1930 depression era press ownership has contracted significantly and the interests of such ownership groups have usually "coincided with those of successive Liberal/Country Party governments". Hence as television was a mysterious new toy, the Menzies/Fadden government
entrusted it to old friends.

In 1956 the government established the Broadcasting and Television Act which limited ownership to one station per metropolitan area and no more than two stations nationwide. Sir Frank Packer was one of the key participants in these formative years of television. The Packer family had been involved in Sydney newspaper ownership since the 1920s. In 1954 Packer formed Consolidated Press as a holding company and this company was awarded the first Australian television license in 1955 (TCN 9 in Sydney). In 1960 the company acquired GTV 9 in Melbourne along with the national magazine The Bulletin. Arrangements were made eventually with Channel Nine in Brisbane and Perth regarding program purchasing and these four stations became known collectively as the Nine Network. By the end of the first decade of television in Australia, 90 percent of Sydney and 91 percent of Melbourne households had television sets. By 1976, the year before the advent of WSC, set saturation had continued to climb to a staggering ninety-five percent in most parts of the country.

Since its inception programming standards on Australian commercial television has been of rather dubious quality. In 1960 the Federal government initiated content regulations which stated that by 1963 stations would be required to televise Australian programs for a minimum of
40 percent of their transmission hours. In 1963 the Vincent Senate Committee on the 'Encouragement of Australian Productions for Television' articulated the dangers of the foreign domination of Australian culture through television. Stephen Alomes explains why media owners have shown a low level of commitment to Australian programs as it was more profitable for them to buy programs from overseas. Given that the purchase price of such programs was extremely low, once that cost was amortised throughout the network and to regional channels, Australian television was inundated with 'dumped' American programs. Although a problem was acknowledged as early as 1960 it was not until the Whitlam years, with its increased nationalistic fervour, that concrete action was taken.

In 1973 the government instituted a points system designed to stimulate the domestic television market and control the amount of foreign programming on the airwaves. Whilst the rhetoric behind such regulations was imbued with the best intent, networks quickly discovered the easiest way to comply with such guidelines was to televise or produce sport, quiz and variety shows rather than the drama, news and current affair programs the government's regulations intended. Such practices by the networks produced much larger audiences for advertisers and significantly reduced their productions costs.
The new regulations were not the only source of concern for network owners during this period. Research indicated that by the early 1970s the viewing public had become increasingly disenchanted with television programming and that on a national average, the percentage of 'sets-in-use' had progressively declined since the halcyon days of the mid-1960s. By 1975 television was in dire need of a fillip if it was to reach its previous saturation levels. The introduction of color provided the much needed boost. Although this innovation alone would have greatly enhanced the sport-television nexus, two additional factors further solidified this relationship. The success of the American television experience with professional football demonstrated the potential of the sport-television relationship. The probability of similar success in Australia was highly likely. Hence while color enhanced, advanced technology created exciting new visual experiences for the sport fan. Finally, one of the last actions of the outgoing Labor government was to ban all cigarette advertising on television. Consequently tobacco companies were in desperate need of alternative vehicles to promote their image. In an effort to maintain their association with lifestyle and leisure such companies ploughed large sums of money directly into sport, mainly in the form of event promotion. This cash injection into
sport lured greater numbers of elite athletes which further heightened the fan's attention to such contests. These three factors combined to mark the beginning of a new age in televised sport in Australia however they were not necessarily causal.

The willingness of commercial networks to televise sport developed slowly throughout the 1970s. Prior to this period, televised sport had largely been the purview of the ABC since it had been able to afford the associated costs. However as the symbiotic nature of the relationship gradually developed, problems within the ABC hampered its potential to be competitive. Budget cuts and new technology bans not only resulted in its inability to dramatize sport in the same manner as the commercial networks, but it also severely limited its capacity to compete in the purchasing for broadcast rights. The sport most affected by these limitations was cricket, a game the ABC had long regarded as its private domain.

This was not an isolated case but rather a glaring example of an emerging trend. The recalcitrance of many sport administrators to fully explore all the possible benefits and consequences of the sport - television nexus greatly hampered the potential to lure wider audiences or to compensate athletes adequately. The lack of attention to such a situation and possible scenarios is reflective of
both the conservative and amateur ideology that shackled
sport in an age of change.

Lynton Taylor from PBL marketing, a key figure in the
WSC era, commented in 1982 that sport management in
Australia had a tendency to hide behind committees that are
often reluctant to involve the media in the planning
process. He declared that they "attempt to build an aura
of secrecy around their decisions and appear, from the
outside, to take an off-hand approach to the development of
their sport and the media." Hence when such groups were
eventually forced to deal with marketing forces their
naivete in the business world restricted their ability to
maximise their position in any ensuing relationship. As a
result instead of attempting to negotiate from a position
of strength, governing bodies, such as the Australian
Cricket Board, continually turned their back on commercial
overtures, dealing with it only when they had no other
recourse.

Their obstinace was countenanced by an Australian
public that had always been somewhat ambivalent to the
alleged professionalisation of sport. Whilst they wanted
their sport on television they were neither prepared for
the marketing strategies that delivered it nor, as in the
case of cricket, for the regular insertion of paid
advertisements. The alleged number of traditional
Australian sport fans who watch cricket on the commercial network with the sound turned down so as to listen to the commentary on ABC radio is legendary. However Richard Cashman astutely notes that "even though many traditional sport fans are being alienated from the new forms, just as many and possibly more are being recruited to sport and have a positive attitude towards most aspects of commercialised and televised sport. They include the young, 39 women and migrants." In addition it is undeniable that the quality of the presentation of sport has increased dramatically in the post color era. Yet this situation is often perceived as a double-edged sword. While many new sport fans may have been created by the growing symbiosis between sport and television, their increased attention to this medium has simultaneously resulted in their increasing exposure to a variety of advertising mechanisms.

Sports popular appeal grew as the size of budgets allocated to sport programming dramatically expanded. No longer was televised sport simply for the converted but rather it was marketed as mass entertainment. WSC tried to interest everyone who "walked past a set while it was on." The benefits of such interest to the network, advertiser, sporting bodies and the fans have been innumerable. Grumblings of discontent, while focusing on perceived moral issues, appear to have more to do with the slicing of the
financial pie. Once the inevitability of televised sport was realised, sporting bodies quickly and readily offered their product in the hope of sharing in any financial windfall, especially as the ability of the live gate to fund certain sports adequately rapidly diminished. Cashman suggests that business proved to be the saviour of many sports that confronted spiralling costs.

In a short period of time the pendulum swung from sporting bodies ignoring the media to eventually clamouring for its attention. In the process, and of their own volition, they acceded to many of the networks requests in an effort to make sport more entertaining. Stoddart contends that during this period certain trends emerged "as channels vied for the rights to not only popular sports, but also to the most important segments of particular sports." Advertisers also became alert to the value of sport sponsoring, and astute sports organisations or their administrators, slowly became cognizant of the value their games had for the commercial networks. In football, rugby, horseracing, tennis and especially cricket, the increasing symbiosis of the sport - television relationship injected new life into the respective sports and enlarged its exposure to real and potential fans. While the expanding commercial content of such productions may have distressed traditional fans, such observations were based
on prior experience and for many of the new fans this was a moot point.

The nation's proclivity toward the use of television in moments of leisure definitely aided the efforts of television programmers and producers to place their products in a favourable light. From 1973 to 1977, Australians spent 3.3 hours per day working as opposed to 5.8 in leisure. Furthermore the most significant difference between Australia's leisure habits of the 1950s and the 1970s revolves around the avid attention to television. Hence, while the debate raged between the old and the new sport devotees, opinion polls suggested that the percentage of Australians that like to view televised sport rose from 87 percent to 93 percent in the immediate post-WSC era.

The viewer acceptance of the Australian sport-television nexus was critical for a number of reasons. Sport rates well for non-prime time material, it provides distinct demographic groups which makes it attractive to sponsors, it fulfils indigenous content, it is cheap to produce and it can become a prestige item for a network which would further increase ratings and sales.

The potential for the rapid development of this relationship during the 1970s should have been acknowledged and prepared for by sport organisations, fans and the media at large. Furthermore it should have been no surprise that
cricket was chosen as the vehicle to take this nexus into a new age since it is deeply rooted in Australian tradition and is played at the international level. The television experience did not change the fundamental underpinnings of Australian sport. While the presentation of the game may have been altered to situate the form more precisely within boundaries television established, the inherent meanings of sport are not easily tampered with. More importantly television has not tried to.
ENDNOTES


Similarly Stephen Alomes suggests that from the founding of the Commonwealth until as recently as the 1960s nationalism "was often expressed in speeches by English governors and through endless playings of the British national anthem. Most favoured was the rhetoric of imperial jingoism, lengthy exhortations to national self sacrifice and to dedication in maintaining Australia's role in the British Empire." See his, A Nation at Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism, 1880-1988 (N.S.W.: Angus and Robertson, 1988), 3-5. Brian Stoddart argues that in the post World War II period there was a gradual transfer to an alternative cultural model, to that of the United States. The American influence in the areas of fast food and popular culture was accompanied by a growing attention to American sport. See his, "The Hidden Influence of Sport," Constructing, 128.


6. Labor's post election majority was nine. The first international acts of the government included the withdrawal of support for the government of South Vietnam and recognition of the People's Republic of China. Domestically the government announced sweeping changes in education, health and social service. All forms of education spending were increased, fees for universities were abolished, compulsory health insurance resulted in free health care and Aboriginal land rights were granted. This is not meant to imply that Whitlam was 'the knight on a white horse' or that he related to the common man. One scholar maintains that the his government was as shamelessly elitist as it Liberal-NCP predecessor. See Conway, Land, 149.

7. Stephen Alomes argues that more Australians queried the old bush stereotypes and were ready to recognise the complexity of Australian society. The need existed for whites to face up to their pasts with fair deals for aboriginals, women and ethnic groups in the present. See his, A Nation, 237.
Labour supply had increased by nearly 3 percent per annum from the mid-1960s until the end of the decade and participation rates for married females continued a steady increase, rising from 26 percent to 36 percent during the same period. Between 1970 and 1973 the inflation rate jumped from three to seven percent per annum. Similarly by the end of the decade unemployment stood at 5.8 percent compared with 1.4 percent at the beginning.


10. Alomes, A Nation, Alomes also argues that the return of the conservative government and Fraser's conservative economic policy resulted in a redistribution of wealth from labour to capital, from the poor to the rich. 266-68.


12. Alomes quotes an unnamed historian as describing the years of the Whitlam government as a state of siege. The historian suggests that looking back from 1975, in a very real sense Labor had never been in power, they had merely been in office. See his, A Nation, 254.

13. Conway further argues that "booze, betting, rubbish, brassy hukastering, the hire-purchase lifestyle, the pre-packaged supermarket wasteland are not only the basis of the supermarket fortune, they are part of his professional aim of giving the low brows what they want." He contends that advertisers believe "that the masses should be furnished with their own particular trough of self interest to wallow in while men of sensibility get on with the business of civilization." See his, Land, 174.

14. Alomes contends that Ockerism was a young working class reaction to a young middle class trendism. A beer drinker's revolt against fashionable wine quaffing sophisticates. He further suggests that social nationalism had a striking expression in the cult of ockerism and was found among Test cricket's younger male drinking fans. Alomes, A Nations, 238-39.

16. Stoddart, "Hidden Influence," 135. Such a comment is an extension of a prior assessment the author made in *Saturday Afternoon Fever*. In that work Stoddart contends that sport has been and remains one of Australia’s most prominent social agencies. The country has a worldwide reputation for being obsessed with success in sport of all kinds. See, Stoddart, *Saturday*, 3.


20. Stoddart convincingly argues that the sport hero became symbolic of social progress generally and that success at the international level for that reason became particularly celebrated. See his, *Saturday*, 21.

21. Leonie Sandercock and Ian Turner, *Up Where Cazaly? The Great Australian Game* (London: Granada, 1981), 100-2. Also see, Stoddart, *Saturday*, 91-92, 102. Stoddart contends that regular broadcasting began in 1923 and by 1924, 38,000 sets were licensed. This figure doubled in the following year and nearly trebled in 1926. By 1929 there were 310,000 sets in use and by the late 1930s, well over one million.


24. Ibid., 122. Goldlust states that the final race of the America’s Cup series received live television coverage on all the major networks and millions of people, most of whom knew nothing about sailing, much less the rarified air of twelve metre yacht racing, suddenly became rabid partisans anxiously squinting at their television sets as two small specks bobbed along on the blue ocean. He further comments that the Australian Prime Minister was quick to identify himself and the entire nation with the victory.


28. Ibid., 264-5. Bonney also argues that as well as providing tested markets for the commercial networks, they have also served commercial interests by producing a ready supply of trained personnel. Many of whom established their credentials with the ABC were then attracted to the higher salaries the Commercial networks offered. Also see, Sandra Hall, *Supertoy: Twenty Years of Australian Television* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1976), 8-9.


30. The Postmaster General stated in parliament that “by its very nature commercial television like commercial broadcasting is a business undertaking. Large sums of money have to be invested in stations and the people who invest the money are entitled to expect a reasonable return for their outlay. But the conduct of commercial television is not to be considered as merely running a business for the sake of profit. Television stations are in a position to exercise a constant and cumulative effect on public tastes and standards of conduct, and because of the influence they bring to bear on the community the business interests of licensees must at all times be subordinated to the overriding principle that the possession of a license
is, as indeed the Royal Commission said, a public trust for the benefit of all members of the community. (Reps Hansard 19/4/56, 1536), xxviii. as quoted in Paul Chadwick, The Media Mates; Carving Up Australia's Media (Melbourne: McMillan, 1989), xxviii.

31. According to Bonney the whole organisation is structured as follows. Consolidated Press Holdings is a holding company which own wholly or partly a number of subsidiaries which in turn wholly or partly owns others. The main subsidiary is Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd., which wholly or partly owns most of the others including the original company Australian Consolidated Press. PBL also has subsidiaries which operate in insurance, film and videotape distribution for television advertising, WSC, the promotion of cricket (PBL Marketing formerly PBL Sports), records and radio. Bill Bonney, "Packer and Televised Cricket," Media Papers 2: Occasional Papers in Media Studies, (New South Wales Institute of Technology, 1980), 2-3.

32. Jones and Beechall, Television, 4-5.


34. Bonney, "Australian Broadcasting," 8-9. Hall denotes the late sixties as the period in which television executives started talking about demographics. The housewife was becoming unreliable as a target segment as it was believed her access to disposable income was not great, her family responsibilities were diminishing and she was somewhat apathetic in regard to new brands. See her, Supertoy, 49.

35. Hall, Supertoy, 51. Stoddart argues that for two decades the role sport played on Australian television was limited due to a number of factors. These included technical limitations, monochrome televisions, the reluctance of sport bodies to forge ties in this direction and, the perception of the advertising world that sport had limited use. See his, Saturday, 99-102. Also see, Nicola Cornwell, "Sports, Cents and Cinecameras: The Development of the Symbiotic Relationship between Sport, Business and
Television in the Australian Context," Unpublished B. Ed Honours Thesis, (University of Sydney, 1986), 71-72. Jones and Beechall contend that the changeover to color in Australia was one of the fastest in the world. Between 1975 and 1980 81% of Melbournians converted as did 83% of Sydneysiders. See their, Television, 5.


37. Stoddart contends that the lack of inquiry among sport groups themselves as to the underlying social purpose of sport, even though it was clear that there were major changes abroad is mind-boggling. By and large administrators fell back upon traditions that stemmed from the late nineteenth century. The administrators had stumbled upon another lucrative source of revenue without giving any thought to the changes it might necessitate. See his, Saturday, 103.


39. Richard Cashman, "Sport, Big Business and the Spectator: the Anguish of the Sports Fan," Current Affairs Bulletin, 63 (June 1986): 17-19. Cashman argues that many people are attracted by the colorful presentation and have no knowledge of the traditional ways of looking at sport. Furthermore television has helped explain Anglo-Saxon sports, such as cricket, to migrants.

40. Hall, Turning On, 72; Cashman, "Sport," 15. Cashman also contends that this spiral was clearly linked with the very success of televised sport which increased sport's market value.

41. Stoddart, Saturday, 102.

42. Conway, Land, 63, 265, 298.

CHAPTER II

TRADITIONS AND CONFLICT IN AUSTRALIAN CRICKET: PORTENTS IN THE CREATION OF WSC

Although the societal forces that led to the creation of WSC were located mainly in the decade prior to its inception, the internal influences evolved over a more extended period of time. Long before the advent of WSC, commercial overtones within Australian cricket and tensions between players and administrators shaped the tone and direction of the sport.

The history of Australian cricket has long been marked by tension between the ruling sport body and the players. As the game developed in Australia administrators readily adopted the rhetoric of cricket enunciated by the English. As a result players gradually lost control of their game and eventually became little more than salaried employees of the various governing bodies. Consequently tensions related to the lack of adequate financial returns to the players from the game, lack of player input into the organisation of cricket and the inadequate promotion of the sport have simmered beneath a veil of gentility from the late nineteenth century until the eruption of WSC in 1977.

Concurrently Australian cricket has had a commercial
dimension since the inception of first class matches. From the earliest organised games played for stakes and the contracting of international teams for significant financial outlays, through to player product endorsement over a century later, the financial component of cricket has been ever present. The emergence of WSC was merely a continuation of commercial involvement in cricket rather than its instigation.

Undoubtedly tensions within the cricket world have been intimately related alterations within Australian life. Societal changes occurring during the gold rush era, the Depressions of the 1890s and 1930s and the cultural upheaval during the 1970s were all reflected in the playing and viewing of cricket during these eras. While such cultural shifts influenced the presentation of the game, the overarching administration of cricket has exhibited a continuity of ideology and has shown a remarkable adroitness for survival. Even the dramatically expanding commercial presence of WSC did not totally eradicate this mentality. However this is more indicative of the role of cricket in Australian national development than it is a reflection of the sport’s fans agreement with the philosophy of the ruling body.

A Test Series against England still invokes traditional passions. Whilst the historical symbolism of
the occasion is undoubtedly lost on the majority of contemporary cricket followers they are still vaguely aware they are attending to a ritual which is larger than the game itself. Moreover success in Test cricket has constantly reaffirmed the Australian belief in its ability to operate at a comparable level internationally. WSC only eradicated much of the rhetoric that surrounded the game but not the traditions on which it was based.

Cricket in Australia - The Early Years

While there is some dispute when the first cricket contests was played in Australia it is evident that garrison soldiers and civilians engaged in the sport during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Indeed it is likely that the beginning of cricket in Australia occurred in the late eighteenth century as military garrisons accompanied the First Fleet and the officers of such invariably replicated the pastimes of England in the new lands.

The first recorded match was played between the officers of the Calcutta in Sydney in 1803. The first newspaper reference to cricket in Australia appeared in the Sydney Gazette on January 8, 1804, but the first recorded public match played at Hyde Park in Sydney did not occur until 1830. Within a decade the game assumed a certain degree of popularity amongst the colony's civilian
population. Whilst the initial dates are unimportant they indicate the rapidity with which English sporting conventions were replicated in the new land.

In 1826 the first Australian cricket clubs were established when the colony’s regiments founded the Military Cricket Club and the native born formed the Australian Club. These two sides played a match for twenty pounds per side. By mid-afternoon there were in excess of 200 people at the game. The locals won this game as well as the return match. The contest reveals that Australian cricket from its inception had a financial and spectatorial dimension.

The Melbourne Cricket Club was established in November 1838 by the gentlemen of the district of Port Phillip and played its first match against the military in the same month. The Melbourne Union Cricket Club, created the following year, drew its members mainly from the retail trade. Games between the Gentlemen and the Tradesmen then took place on various occasions. Although cricket clubs were established in other colonies shortly after their founding, it was in Victoria and New South Wales that attention to cricket grew at a rapid rate.

The first intercolonial game took place between the Port Phillip settlement and Van Dieman's Land in Launceston in 1851. In 1856 the first match considered as first class
was played between Victoria and New South Wales. The Melbourne Cricket Club instigated the match for a proposed stake of five hundred pounds. Sydney entrepreneur William Tunks called for the challenge to be accepted and organised public meetings and a committee to arrange the fixture. While the stake was declined the game was played. With the growth of cricket there emerged the desire to create an organisation to govern the direction of this sport. In April 1859 the secretaries of various cricket clubs gathered in Sydney to form an inter-colonial association. From this initial gathering a cricketing association was eventually formed with a comprehensive set of rules and office bearers decided upon the following year.

The Gold Rushes facilitated the growth of cricket during the mid-nineteenth century. The arrival in Australia of former public schools' cricketers who, had been part of the games revolution in England during the 1850s, was a major factor in the transformation of Australian cricket. Similarly Oxford and Cambridge graduates were amongst those shifting to the diggings to make their fortune and the sparse recreational time was often given over to cricket. With increased emigration from England to the colonies it was only a matter of time before word filtered back as to the burgeoning nature of Australian cricket and the rapidly developing expertise of
the local inhabitants. The increased attention to cricket during this era gave rise to the colony's desire to simultaneously view the best cricket in the world and to test its skill against it. In the coming decades international tours would allow them to do both.

The Beginning of International Tours

The first English team to tour Australia arrived in Melbourne on Christmas Eve in 1861. The entrepreneurial involvement in the organisation of this match indicates the presence of commercial overtones from the very beginning of international tours. Felix Spiers and Christopher Pond were refreshment contractors and proprietors of the Cafe de Paris in Melbourne. To promote their business they had initially invited Charles Dickens to undertake a public speaking tour. When this overture was rejected they turned towards cricket to achieve the same end. Spiers and Pond offered H. H. Stephenson's team 150 pounds per man and all first class travelling expenses in return for a monopoly of the catering and gate takings. The tour was such an outstanding success that the Melbourne Cricket Club gave each English player a bonus of 100 sovereigns. Spiers and Pond made a profit of 11,000 pounds, sold the Cafe de Paris and moved to Ludgate Hill in London.

During this period, the playing of cricket in England
was clearly divided along class lines. While the amateurs were usually members of the gentry, professionals were inevitably cricket ground labourers who only fraternised with their upper class teammates of the field. Separate changing rooms, eating facilities and even ground entries and exits were a continual reminder of their lesser status. However the Australian crowds who turned out in droves to witness games were not bothered that the English players were professionals. Leonie Sandercock and Ian Turner state that the colonial society lionized the visitors. Obviously such reception was a relatively new experience for these players given their somewhat lowly status at home. Compared with England, cricket in the colonies had decidedly different overtones at both the spectatorial and playing levels. Sandercock and Turner argue that cricket was the first modern spectator sport in Australia, "serving not only the needs of the players but also of the thousands of urbanites and suburbanites, among whom the pattern of life in the new commercial industrial administrative centres had created the hunger for popular entertainment and their leisure to enjoy it." Whether Spiers and Pond were cognizant of this emerging spectatorial trend or whether they were simply the right people in the right place at the right time is a matter for conjecture. However it is significant that this was the last time that
the Melbourne Cricket Club willingly handed over the promotion of cricket to an external body.

In 1863 George Parr led another English side which toured the country undefeated. A decade later a group of English cricketers under the leadership of W. C. Grace competed against their Australian counterparts. All these games were played by the English men against odds hence none of them were recognised as first class contests. Not until James Lillywhite's tour in 1876 did Australians meet Englishmen on level terms. This tour is significant because it is traditionally acknowledged that the first Test between the two countries was played in Melbourne during this tour. This occurred in March 1877. The games were initially promoted as All-England versus All-Australia but since the Australian side included only cricketers from Victoria and New South Wales, this term is misleading.

In 1894 cricket historian Charles Moody classified all representative matches played until that date and stated that the games of 1876-77 were worthy of the title Test. Initially the term Test had greater currency in Australia than in England with the use of the term fuelled by the sportswriters of the day. This was probably an attempt on the part of the latter to give style to their reporting and to create atmosphere for the contests.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century
commercial tours which resulted in varying degrees of financial success travelled both ways between England and Australia. In the period from 1873 to 1903, English teams undertook thirteen tours of Australia. All but three were comprised mainly of professionals and Shaw, Shrewsburry and Lillywhite organised and financed four tours during the 1880s. Unfortunately for these three entrepreneurs only one tour was profitable. Australian tours of England commenced in 1868 with a tour by Aborigines and a decade later a most successful tour, both financially and on the field, was undertaken. The net result for the stockholders who had fronted the money for it was a 750 pounds return 11 for an initial outlay of fifty pounds.

Australians went to England again in 1882 and were victorious in the one Test match. The British press were distraught at this result and the Sporting Times reacted to the defeat by printing the now famous mock obituary notice in its paper which led to the literary birth of "the Ashes." The following summer a tour to Australia reversed the result. It is alleged that after the Australian defeat in the Third Test a group of women burned a bail, sealed the ashes in an urn and presented it to the English captain Ivo Bligh. While this contention has its detractors the Ashes became the popular term for contests between the two countries with the winning team deemed to be in possession
of that trophy. In reality the urn permanently sits in the museum at Lords irrespective of who wins the series.12

Although Australian cricket grew considerably through international exchanges it was also underscored by a strong domestic rivalry and a unique underlying mentality. The New South Wales Cricket Association was formed in 1859 and the Victorian Cricket Association was established in 1864. Although the previously established Melbourne Cricket Club would remain the dominating force in Australian cricket until 1905, the new cricket associations began to exert influence over the direction cricket took. The South Australian Cricket Association was created in 1871 and the Queensland Association in 1876. Western Australia had an association by 1885 but did not compete against other states until 1893. Various Tasmanian Associations were formed as early as 1858 but it would be well over a century before this state would be on an equal footing with the other five. With the creation of the domestic Sheffield Shield competition in 1892-93, national cricket became a fixture that was not only intense in terms of interstate rivalry, but also well supported by the public for many decades. While its popularity declined in the technological age its importance to the history and development of Australian cricket cannot be underestimated.
Cricket’s Early Commercial Overtones

Australian cricket underwent phenomenal growth during the first half of the nineteenth century but in the post gold rush era the sport experienced a number of problems resulting in periods of momentary decline in its popularity. Often such problems were directly attributable to the game’s financial dimension as cricket’s commercial agenda was controversial from the outset. The second English tour of Australia in 1863 by George Parr was far less favourably received than its predecessor two years prior. Moreover it was the financial and social excesses of this tour that were the major factors in the reticence on the part of colonies to further encourage fully professional tours.

The conditions attached to the 1873 tour also stunned the Australian organisers. W. G. Grace required 1500 pounds and all expenses before he would consent to tour. Although the money was eventually paid the demands infuriated the local cricket officials who thought that Grace would ask for 500 pounds. When Grace returned in 1891-92 with Lord Sheffield he commanded 3000 pounds plus expenses for himself and his wife. In 1973 Dunstan speculated that in contemporary terms that amount would translate to approximately $30,000, a sum that would be similar to the amount paid to many of the WSC cricketers.
Disputes over financial arrangements were not limited to English sides. For the 1864-85 series, Australian players asked for 50 percent of the gate takings. When this request was denied they refused to play and new Australian caps were presented for the subsequent Test. Significantly of those chosen, five played only one game for Australia. In 1887-88 two English teams toured Australia simultaneously in part because of the intercolonial rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne. Both tours lost money which resulted in a cessation of international tours for four years. Hence the decline in the popular support for Australian cricket during this period can be attributed to a combination of factors. Along with the retirement of past champions newer ones were disenchanted with their lot and refused to play, and no other players emerged to take their place. These developments occurred at a time when the financial success of earlier tours had proved difficult to replicate.

The 1890s: A Period of National Cricket Growth

The absence of tours during the intervening years between 1888 and 1891 allowed Australian cricket to develop at both the club and the intercolonial level. Richard Cashman draws parallels between the 1887-88 season and the second season of WSC (1978-79) when there were five international teams in Australia at the same time. A
surfeit of cricket produced a decline in total attendances at grounds on both occasions. Comparisons could also be drawn between the Australian team selection in 1884-85 and during the WSC era. In both instances a number of cricketers, not quite at the elite level, made a fleeting foray into the world of international cricket. However their position in the national side was quickly forfeited when national teams were returned to full strength by the inclusion of the previously dissenting athletes.

The 1890s witnessed a revival in the fortunes of Australian cricket. What made this situation remarkable is that it occurred during an era of depression which significantly altered the colonial economy. Although the tour by Lord Sheffield and the introduction of the Sheffield Shield competition at the intercolonial level have been touted as major factors in the cricket revival, the renewed interest in cricket extended to the local level. This was achieved by linking clubs in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney to electoral communities and cricket clubs readily capitalised on the growth of suburbs and their appeal. The most obvious indicator of the return of cricket’s popularity during the last decade of the nineteenth century occurred at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1894 when England defeated Australia in the final match of the series in front of 100,000 people over five days.
Australian cricket during the 1890s was exciting and bold, more egalitarian at the playing level than in England, more democratic and more Australian. Burgeoning working class attention to the game diluted the upper class influence and the press furthered the cause by highlighting and promoting working class heroes with which the public could identify. In an era of Australian success on the field and rising nationalism off it, the art of barracking came to the fore. Cashman provides two possible explanations for the popularity of cricket during this era. First there was a dearth of leisure facilities in an era when the desire for leisure was great due to the somewhat harsh and rigorous nature of daily life. Second cricket was the only truly national game as it cut across all geographical and social boundaries. During this period cricket played a primary role in the emergence of Australian nationalism.

The success of the Australian cricket sides during the 1890s as well as the revival of its popular support, resulted in an increased level of national assuredness. Furthermore this growing national respect readily translated into the rhetoric of federation. This was achieved at the turn of the century. Notice of the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia was made on September 17, 1900. On January 1, 1901 the proclamation
Creation of the Australian Cricket Board of Control

While the playing structure of Australian cricket did not exactly replicate that of its English counterpart the ambience of the domestic game remained very English. Those who ran sport in Australia believed that colonial cricket should be governed along English lines and they sought a monopoly over decisions as to the rules of the game, the eligible participants and the overall context and tone of the sport. While such elitist mentality has had little effect on the broad base of popular support the game has enjoyed, it is indicative of the disregard that has historically been shown to both the consumer and the athlete within the cricket world.

The Australian Cricket Board of Control for International Cricket came into being in 1905 and replaced the Australasian Cricket Council that had been formed in 1892. In 1909 Australia along with England and South Africa founded the Imperial Cricket Conference. According to one writer "the Board was formed on rocky ground, with much prior debate between the States and between the Victorian Association and the Melbourne Cricket Club and it has travelled along bumpy roads ever since." The inability of the Board to relate to and be cognizant of the needs and fears of the players was not unique to the
immediate pre-WSC era. From its inception this ruling body has been autocratic and unsympathetic to the requests of successive generations of cricketers. The Board has always been far more in tune with the rhetoric of cricket ideals rather than the existing practicalities of effectively administering an international sport.

The first major conflict between the players and the Board occurred in 1912. Until its creation the Melbourne Cricket Club and private sponsors had organised Australian tours to England. This arrangement had generally proved successful for both sponsors and players, with the latter being especially happy with the existing situation. The formation of the Board resulted in the players being unable to share in the profits from tours and they became increasingly disenchanted with the new power brokers of cricket. The players firmly believed that only they knew cricket intimately and that they were directly responsible for any crowd attendance. The dispute was not simply one between the Board and the players but it also involved a power struggle between the Board, backed by the Victorian and New South Wales Associations, and the Melbourne Cricket Club who were supported by the South Australian Cricket Association and the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust.

By 1909 a truce between the Melbourne Cricket Club and the Australian Cricket Board of Control had been negotiated
and the latter had gained the approval of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). Consequently, the Board's control of Australian cricket grew rapidly. Conversely its relationship with the players continued to deteriorate and during the 1911-12 season the association reached a new low. For the 1912 tour of England the players wanted to choose their own manager which had historically been the custom. Not only did the Board choose to appoint the manager but it also charged his expenses against tour takings, thus cutting into player profits. Incensed, six players refused to make the trip and the Board, refusing to back down, selected six replacements. Significantly, as in 1884-85 the vast majority of the replacement players quickly faded into international obscurity. Author Ric Sissons contends that the 1912 dispute proved a bitter culmination as the Board sought and gained control over the Australian players. The tone the Board established in these initial dealings with the players was reified often over the next seven decades and was firmly in place during the days leading up to WSC.

**Between the Wars**

The inter-war years were ones of rapid increases in spectatorship with mammoth attendances being recorded at all levels of cricket. The sport rapidly entered a new age and reflected the period in the rise of popular personalities
and ever expanding commercial opportunities. Cashman contends that the dearth of leisure facilities and opportunities in an age of increasing leisure time was the main reason for the spectator boom. Similarly social attitudes towards women altered as a result of their involvement in the war effort and their demands to be included in an increasing range of activities could not go unheeded. During the 1930s women comprised 30-40 percent of grandstand crowds. During this period the conflict between players and administrators continued unabated.

The 1932-33 England tour of Australia, most often referred to as the Bodyline Series, resulted in such hostility at the international level that the enmity it created has only been surpassed by the creation of WSC. In essence the leg-side theory the English utilized during the tour was conceived as a means to dim the brilliance of Australia’s newest batting star Donald Bradman. Ironically the more it incensed the Australian cricket public the larger ground attendances became. Undoubtedly the Depression in part facilitated Bradman’s hero status. Whilst his batting skills were unequalled, cricket crowds who were painfully aware of the gloom of everyday existence needed something to cheer about. Bradman provided that momentary escape from reality.

Bradman’s success was not limited to the playing field
as he capitalised on his skills for commercial gain. While on tour in 1930 he wrote a book which later was serialised in the newspapers and the following year he signed contracts with a radio station, a newspaper and a sporting goods company. Needless to say the Board was much chagrined by these developments. Bradman had translated his sporting success to commercial gain in direct defiance of the Board’s expressed stance on commercial involvement in cricket and its professed value structure. In the process he directly challenged the Australian amateur view of cricket.

This was neither the first nor the last time that the Board was challenged. In the short space of two decades it had been involved in major confrontations with Australian players in times of relative success on the field. The reason for the Board’s authoritarian air has been attributed to its desire to "preserve tradition against commercialism and revolutionary tactics which smacked of the undesirable changes it perceived in society more generally." Yet Board members and their attitudes were not representative of the Australian players or the community at large. Two brief examples illustrates its high handed attitude when dealing with the players. In 1932 an Australian team toured North America playing 51 matches in 100 days. The Board stipulated that each player was to
receive 100 pounds only from the tour profits with it receiving any excess. Similarly in 1946 an Australian team toured New Zealand and were paid 21 pounds for twenty one days. As the games were extremely well attended the New Zealand Cricket Council wished to double the player payment to express its gratitude but the Australian Cricket Board of Control refused saying the players were contracted for one pound per day and that is what they would get. It appears that the players were somewhat in awe of the officials and hence the governance of the game continued in this vein for another fifty years.

Cricket in the Post World War II Era

In the early 1950s Australian cricket suffered a sharp decline in team performance and popular support. While the retirement of many of the leading players, including Bradman, resulted in the limited on-field success, it was the newly emerging cultural trends which turned crowds away from the sport. With popular music and television occupying much of the leisure time of teenagers, advertisers directly targeted such groups in a concerted effort to create important new consumer markets. Conversely in an age of expanding recreational opportunities cricket authorities refused to become involved in promoting their product. The prevalent attitude was that cricket had historically been presented
in the manner deemed appropriate and that contemporary society could 'take it or leave it.' The growth in a variety of alternative sports during this decade highlighted the stagnation of cricket. A host of factors contributed to such expansion not the least of which was the exciting advancements in technology. However cricket officials waited for a cyclical upswing in cricket performances and hoped that it would inevitably lead to increased ground attendances. The Australian Cricket Board of Control exhibited a total lack of desire to be proactive in the resurrection of cricket's dwindling audience although in one state cricket officials recognised that they needed to woo certain groups, particularly children, and provide them with incentives to attend matches. Queensland delegate Q. F. Rice asserted "that children constituted about 10% of cricket crowds." Rice believed that not only should cricket attract more children but that they should also be admitted free to the games. Although the idea was not taken up by Queensland, South Australia adopted the practice between 1952 and 1962, and this policy has continued on and off at various grounds ever since.

This was the attack WSC promoters took between 1977 and 1979 when they directed marketing towards the youth segment in an attempt to encourage their attendance at matches. The reticence on the part of the cricket
officials during the 1950s to aggressively compete for growing leisure markets stemmed from their part-time amateur status and their inherent conservatism. Moreover in an age of dwindling economic prosperity the players were forced to bear the brunt of the decline in the form of player payments, which since the 1930s had declined markedly in real terms.

The Changing Nature of Society and its Effect on Cricket

The early 1960s gave rise to a new cricket era and prior concerns as to the status of the game were alleviated in the short term. Although the Board had failed to find a solution to the 1950s decline of the sport in Australia, cricket had resurrected itself. However its new found interest was a product of on-field, rather than off-field performances. The revival was player led as the 1960–62 touring team from the West Indies injected new life into the sport via their cavalier style of play.

At the more fundamental level it was the beginning of the end for cricket as a game where spectators were removed from the conduct of the game. Cricket had placed the entertainment factor at centre stage and crowds were no longer content to simply observe the masters at work. In one short summer cricket began its movement towards a game for the crowds rather than a game for the players. To
maintain this level of spectator interest in the future, cricket needed to replicate this level of excitement.

While the expectations from cricket may have been a barometer as to the changing expectations of society in general, especially in regard to entertainment and leisure pursuits, the shift was as much a product of factors internal to the cricket world as it was of those of society at large. Although cricket officialdom could affect changes within the game and hence control internal forces, there was little they could do about the latter. Yet their actions throughout the decade indicate that they were totally unaware of the inextricable link between the two.

This was not the case in England during this time. Cricket officials there had for some time been sensitive to the dwindling appeal of the sport and instituted a number of measures to boost flagging attendances. During the 1960s the Gillette Company sponsored a "one day - knockout" competition between first class counties. The ensuing result was that spectators who did not have the time to attend to three-day county game, or who were not inclined to watch it in part, came back to the grounds in large numbers. The development of one-day cricket has been largely due to the willingness of sponsors to inject money into this style of cricket in return for television advertising. Moreover, organisations such as the Marylebone Cricket Club were forced to accepted
one-day/limited over cricket as they had been unsuccessful in all their attempts to return spectators to the game.

The Australian Cricket Board of Control had some success with its initial forays into limited over cricket but its obvious lack of desire to fully explore all the potentialities of this new style of cricket was indicative of its extreme reticence in bridging the gap between consumer expectations and its traditionalist ideology. It had no vision as to the place of cricket in contemporary society and its administration of the game was anachronistic and dependent upon player servitude.

**Player Frustration Increases**

Although player frustration with their treatment by the game's administrators had a long history, by the late 1960s and early 1970s it was almost intolerable. In fact both a cricket historian and several past players have argued that during this era the Board treated the players with absolute disdain. As the players' options were extremely limited the only real avenues to them were to begrudgingly accept the dictates of the Board or to drop out of first class cricket. During this period a number of top class players did decide to prematurely retire from the game as they could no longer justify the inadequate fiscal returns of their cricketing commitment. Ross Edwards relates how he was selected to play for Australia against
England when he was thirty years old. At that stage he was a practicing accountant, married and had one child. He played in England from April to September 1972, came back to Australia and played a full Shield season and a three Test Match series against Pakistan during the summer and in March 1973 went to the West Indies were he played until July. For fifteen months of representing Australia at the elite level of his sport he had at the end of that time $10,350 in his bank.

In 1969 Australian captain Bill Lawry approached the Board after a tour to India in an attempt to highlight the players' grievances. These athletes had been concerned about their second-class hotel accommodations, that if they became ill the Board would only help with medical expenses and if a player died during the tour the payout to his family would be 400 dollars. The players' requests for extra payments, more expenses and the provision of a retirement fund fell on deaf ears. Moreover this episode marked the decline of Bill Lawry's tenure as a test player for Australia. "In a most unprofessional and unpleasant manner, Lawry heard of his dismissal from the captaincy and the side from a friend who heard it on the radio." Yet Bill Lawry's replacement, Ian Chappell was the spark that ignited the fire of Australian cricket both on and off the field.
The Australian Test sides of the early 1970s were young, brash, aggressive, stylish and extremely successful on the field. This combination of success and charismatic characters resulted in a heightening of cricket's popularity with the Australian public which profoundly affected attendances at cricket matches. The tremendous popular appeal of Ian Chappell's side did not go unnoticed by non-traditional cricket interests and a number of commercial overtures were made to cricket authorities in an attempt to capitalize on the sport's current appeal. Two approaches were made to Chappell to play cricket professionally prior to WSC. One was from Jack Neary and another was an Indian promotor. In both cases the financial backing was in place, but ACB approval had to be gained in order to access the grounds and to organise schedules that would not conflict. Similarly Greg Chappell alleged that the D. J. Foyne organisation from Perth put forward a proposal in 1976 for five days of cricket at the MCG, an Australia XI versus a Rest of the World XI. The players would be given $100,000 with 10% of the gate receipts going to the ACB. In all cases the ACB ignored such requests from outside agencies even though the anticipated increased promotional activity would offer greater returns to the players and the game.

As the Board continued to display a thoroughly non-
professional attitude the disenchchantment of the Australian players mounted. Former WSC and Test player Max Walker argues that their concerns continued to be rebuffed as the ACB held what it thought to be an "unassailable monopoly on the game." Sports journalist Phil Wilkins maintains that the ACB, like most cricket boards at the time, lived in a dream world and were not in pace with the whole profession of cricket. Walker admits that in the years just prior to WSC some concessions had been made to the players in terms of increased match payments and the right of players to accept advertising contracts, but it was too little too late.

To establish a line of communication with the Board the players asked former Test player and successful businessmen Bob Cowper to be their intermediary. The ACB rejected this proposal but a Cricket Sub-Committee was formed with the idea of facilitating the flow of dialogue between the two groups. Whilst in theory this was conceptually sound, in practice it did not achieve its stated aim. The mandate of the Sub-Committee was to take player concerns and grievances directly to the ACB but it was extremely difficult to get such issues placed on the ACB’s meeting agenda. Moreover the ACB maintained a code of silence as to any financial matters concerning Australian cricket. It was entirely at its discretion
whether or not the players were told of sponsorship packages. Walker contends that the players were never informed of Kerry Packer's original approach to the ACB, a view supported by Greg Chappell. He argues that the players were always kept at arms' length and that more often than not they felt like second class citizens.

Such feelings are perhaps best exemplified by alleged statements by former Australian players Dennis Lillee and Kim Hughes. Lillee is purported to have commented after the March 1977 Centenary Test Match at Melbourne that the workmen cleaning up the grounds after each day's play made more money than he did for the match. A similar type of statement has been attributed to Hughes. Given the weekend penalty rates in place for the Australian labor force this is quite probable.

Whether both men actually made the statements or the two have grown out of one is difficult to assess. What is noteworthy is the players' articulation of their worth relative to the general workforce at a time. They were convinced that their remuneration should be comparable to other elite athletes, especially those in golf and tennis. Their conviction was shared by Austin Robertson and John Cornell who formed Saccade Pty. Ltd., to manage Lillee, Rod Marsh and David Hookes. Also included in the stable was the Australian advertising contracts for international golfer
Graham Marsh (Rod's brother) and John Newcombe.

The disparity between the incomes of the Marsh brothers, both elite international performers, brought sharply into focus the plight of the Australian Test Player. Whilst it is doubtful that Cornell and Robertson had any clear vision of where their action on behalf of the Australian cricketers would take them, they were aware that they were onto something that had explosive potential. The time was ripe for the ACB to be challenged on a number of fronts. When the opposition to the ACB united, international cricket would never be the same again.

While the internal dynamics of cricket were becoming more tense and volatile, the increasing use of television slowly began to bridge the gulf between cricket for the cognoscente and cricket as entertainment. The fact that the players involved in the game had such popular appeal only enhanced its attractiveness and televised cricket rapidly expanded the base of fan support. Moreover the amount of time devoted to the telecasting of cricket also grew. During the 1971-72 Test Series television coverage of the final session of a day's play was allowed in the state where the match was being played, and the complete day's cricket was carried live in all other states. Australians were now able to watch a full summer of Test cricket live. The television audience during the latter
stages of the series was estimated to be in excess of one 42 million people per day.

Even with cricket's outstanding appeal during the early 1970s and the huge television markets that it was able to capture, commercial networks only dabbled in the area at this stage. The Australian Broadcasting Commission's (ABC) cozy relationship with the Australian Cricket Board of Control, and the Board's granting to the former of non-commercial television rights for nominal sums of money, seriously hindered the ability of cricket to become a serious commercial venture. Faced with the choice of watching the game uninterrupted or punctuated with commercial advertising the cricketing public would choose ABC everytime. Fully aware of the relationship between ABC and the Board, commercial networks were reluctant to commit to Australian cricket on a non-exclusive long term basis. Whilst the Nine Network did some experimental work in 1962-63, it was not until 1974-75 that Channel Seven televised cricket on a non-exclusive rights basis, but it withdrew after the 1976 season and the Ten Network took it over. Basically the history of cricket on Australian television has ostensibly been the ABC from the dawn of television through to this era. Hence, as long as the ACB refused to offer exclusive broadcasting rights cricket would not realise its commercial potential.
By the mid 1970s a number of factors coalesced which permanently altered this relationship. These include the quota system for Australian television content, the eventual introduction of color, the banning of cigarette advertising and, specifically to cricket, the live telecast from England of the Prudential Cup Final between Australia and the West Indies. After televising the event the ABC suggested that there had been unprecedented interest in the final game and in all probability had been the most popular sporting telecast ever. The fact that the ABC had unwittingly created an enormous untapped market segment did not go unnoticed by the networks. The ABC's success made them vulnerable.

When the next three year package for the television rights to Test cricket in Australia was up for negotiation in 1976 the Channel Nine network made a bold bid for the exclusive rights. It initially offered 2.5 million dollars for a five year package and then 1.5 million dollars for three years. The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) was stunned by the amount offered, but felt traditionally bound to the ABC and accepted its offer of $207,000 over three years. As a result, the return to Australian cricket coffers was less than $70,000 per annum instead of a potential $500,000 per year.

At an ACB meeting in Melbourne on March 11, 1977
which representatives of international cricket bodies attended, Warwick Hadlee of New Zealand commented that commercial interests could only interfere with the playing of cricket as traditionally intended. Current executive officer of the ACB, David Richards, justified this decision. He argued that the ACB was not looking for a commercial operation but rather was seeking continued support, something the ABC had demonstrated over twenty years. However he readily admits that the ACB more than likely "looked at commercial operators through a jaundiced eye" and that the administrators "were not concerned with where sport was going or what the world was taking us into." Both Chris Harte and Ross Edwards contend that the ACB mentality survived even in the aftermath of the WSC takeover. Furthermore they assert that the ACB’s attitude towards its product has not radically altered in the days since WSC and that any significant change is unlikely as long as Board delegates continue to be drawn from the same sources.

Former Pakistani captain Imran Khan retrospectively commented that "the various [international cricket] boards never stopped to think they were largely responsible for creating Packer [cricket]." His assertion is absolutely correct. The history of the administration and control of Australian cricket is marked by tension between authorities
and the athletes and a commercial undercurrent that whilst it was initially approved of, was then ignored and finally only in the second half of the twentieth century begrudgingly attended to. On no occasion did the ACB enthusiastically exploit cricket’s commercial potential in an attempt to adequately reward the game’s elite athletes. Khan argues that the "modernisation of cricket was in the hands of administrators from another age, with neither the temperament or the financial acumen for the job." In the process such officials denied cricket at the grass roots level the opportunity to financially benefit from the international game and the commercial networks desire to televise the sport.

The ACB were able to control the mechanics of Australian cricket during the early 1970s but were unable to manipulate the tone. Rebellion against authority was part of the social upheaval of the previous decade and this only gave the young Australians of the period impetus in their attempted dealing with the cricket authorities. The latter’s unwillingness to deal with both the player disenchantment and the rising sport-commercial television nexus directly facilitated WSC’s intrusion into Australian cricket.
ENDNOTES

1. A. G. ("Johnie") Moyes, Australian Cricket: A History (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1959), 2; Rowland Bowen, Cricket: A History of its Growth and Development Throughout the World (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970), 73–75; Ian Brayshaw, "Bailed Up," This Australia 2: 1 (Melbourne: Greenhouse Publications, 1983), 86. These three authors date Australian cricket to the late eighteenth century. Brayshaw suggests it was played where the southern foundations of Sydney Harbour now stand. He further contends that the first participants would have been soldiers who formed the main part of the first British settlers.

2. Brayshaw, "Bailed Up," 87. The author suggests that the growth in cricket during this period was probably fanned by the interest of Governor Macquarie who ordered a dozen bats and as many balls from His Majesty's Lumber Yard for his son Lachlan. Also see, Jack Egan, The Story of Cricket in Australia (Melbourne: Mcmillan, 1987), 6–10.

3. Egan, Cricket, 13. Egan contends that the Australian Club emerged as the driving force in the colony's cricket during the 1840s and was probably the first Sydney club to play in country towns.

4. Ibid., 18.

5. Brayshaw, "Bailed Up," 87. This contest was the result of a proposal by the Melbourne Cricket Club to organise a game to celebrate the independence of the Port Phillip settlement from New South Wales. Also see, Egan, Cricket, 27, 36–41.


8. Sandercock and Turner, *Up Where Cazaly?*, 9. The structure of cricket was decidedly different in Australia than it was in England. For a thorough examination of the amateur-professional dichotomy in England see, Sissons *Players*, 164-71.


10. C. P. Moody, *Australian Cricket and Cricketers, 1856 - 1894* (Melbourne: Thomson, 1894) 71-72, as cited in K. S. Inglis, "Test Matches," 174-76. Inglis states that for Test standing alone, without match, the Oxford English Dictionary cites 1908 as the earliest known usage. Like the Ashes, journalists nurtured and propagated the ideas.

12. Egan, *Cricket*, 81, 92; Brayshaw, "Bailed Up," 88. The obituary notice said:

... In affectionate rememberance of English cricket, which died at the Oval, 29 August 1882. Deeply lamented by a large circle of sorrowing friends and acquaintances. RIP.

nb: The body will be cremated and the Ashes taken to Australia.


14. Egan, *Cricket*, 2. William Mandle contends that "the money grabbing behaviours of many of its members, who brought cricket equipment with them to sell, were avid for gifts or cheap purchases of gold and jewellery, and who also showed a decided predilection for champagne lunches, free dinners and first class hotels resulted in some unfavourable comment." See his "Cricket," 50.


Unemployment was widespread, immigration was halted and there was a desperate need for a federal system of economic management. For the effect of the Depression on cricket see, Egan, *Cricket*, 102; Cashman, *'Ave a Go*, 39; Mandle, "Cricket," 63.


21. Cashman, *'Ave A Go*, 11-21. Cashman argues that cricket in Australia as in England had a fashionable and social side which it never quite lost and further contends that anyone who attended cricket grounds in England and Australia would not have noticed a great deal of difference in the ground arrangements. Such an observation is significant as it suggests the like-minded groups in both countries established both the tone and the structure of the game. Also see, Sharp, "Metaphor," 331-34.

22. The Australian Cricket Board of Control for International Cricket changed its name to the Australian Cricket Board in 1973. In a submission to the Trade Practices Commission in 1979 it was defined as "an unincorporated association constituted by State Associations each of which sends delegates to the board. The ACB balance sheets show that its only a small administrative body with little property or funds of its own." During the WSC period the representatives of the ACB were all volunteers. The Chairman and the Treasurer were unpaid and donated their time in the interests of cricket. The Imperial Cricket Conference became the International Cricket Conference in 1965. The ICC has six full member and seventeen associate member countries. Submission, 4-10. Also see, Brayshaw, "Bailed Up," 89.


26. Cashman, *Ave a Go*, 69. Sharp comments that women’s attendance at cricket matches was also strong in the later part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century. See his, "'A Degenerate Race': Cricket and Rugby Crowds in Sydney, 1890-1912," *Sporting Traditions*, 4 (May 1988), 134-49.

27. For a very thorough treatment of the 1932-3 series see Brian Stoddart, "Cricket’s Imperial Crisis: The 1932-3 MCC Tour of Australia," *Sport in History*, 124-47. Stoddart contends that the Bodyline Series spread beyond the sporting arena to create enmity between England and Australia in a variety of social circles: governments, cricket administrators, players, the cricketing public and the general public. Also see, Cashman, *Ave a Go*, 90.

28. Sandercock and Turner, *Up Where Cazaly?*, 103. The authors comment that the standing joke amongst the players on the 1930 tour was that Bradman was so busy fulfilling his commercial obligations that they only saw him when it was his turn to bat. Stoddart states that prior to the Bodyline Series the Australian Board of Control instructed Bradman that he could not play and write and for a while it seemed that he would not be available to play against Jardine’s English team. The fact that he was faced with such a dilemma suggests that "cricket’s new commercial aspect was a powerful one in the age of economic stress and that a new state had been reached in player administration relationships." See his, "Cricket’s" 131. Ironically the man who encouraged Bradman to forget about writing in the short term and concentrate on playing cricket was R. C. Packer, Kerry Packer’s grandfather. Egan, *Cricket*, 149.

29. Stoddart, "Cricket’s" 131. Stoddart contends that for the people who administered Australian cricket, success in running such a British institution as cricket determined their social status as much as success in economic and political spheres. The author also cites a New South Wales politician who was reported in the Australian dailies in 1933 as suggesting that "since its inception the Board has assumed powers incompatible with the prosperity of Australian cricket and players." See, *Ibid.*, 137. Also see Egan, *Cricket*, 147, 166.

31. Ibid., 108.

32. Ibid., 109-110.


35. Interview with Cris Harte, Editor of the *Australian Cricket Journal*, July 7, 1989. Interview with Ross Edwards, former WSC player and head of Sports Marketing at Channel Nine, August 8, 1989. Greg Chappell commented that having played five or six years of Test cricket it was hard to justify continuing to playing only for the glory, from a family point of view. Even though the economic climate was changing rapidly, with rising inflation and the cost of living going up steadily, there was little change in player match payments or little interest from the Board in addressing these concerns. Interview, with Greg Chappell, Australian Test Captain pre and post WSC, July 14, 1989.


37. Egan, *Cricket*, 111; Adrian McGregor, *Greg Chappell* (Sydney: William Collins, 1985), 138. In 1973 Barry Knight suggested conducting a tour through capital cities using first-class and aspiring athletes. Show business personalities were also to be involved in a supportive role. Channel Nine in Sydney agreed to televise the event and spent a considerable amount of time in the planning process. The NSW Cricket Committee immediately rejected the project because the idea was too commercial. As the players were to be paid $100 per day instead of the customary $7 they would earn playing for NSW, the committee argued that future NSW matches would appear unattractive by comparison. Christopher Forsyth, *The Great Cricket Hijack* (Melbourne: Widescope Publishers, 1978), 20-21.

39. Interview with Chappell; Interview with Harte; Walker, Cricketer, 33.

40. Interview with Harte.


42. Cashman, 'Ave a Go, 121.

43. Interview with David Richards, Executive Officer of the Australian Cricket Board, September 8, 1989.

44. Cashman, 'Ave a Go, 132.


46. Interview with Edwards; Interview with Harte; Interview with Salter. Interview with PBL representative Bruce McDonald. David Salter suggested that the ACB was the usual bunch of amateur dopes and incompetent managers with cigarette ash down the front of their blazers. Chris Harte labels the ACB the "pink gin mob," and Bruce McDonald refers to those involved with the ACB as the cheese and cracker type personalities.

CHAPTER III

CONFLICT AND CONTINUITY: THE WARRING YEARS

During the two years of World Series Cricket's (WSC) as an on-field operation, the changes in the game of cricket, as witnessed by the fans, were more of style than substance. Admittedly colored uniforms, white balls, night contests and limited over games changed in part the ways the viewing public perceived cricket, but it was essentially the same sport utilizing the same rules and the same skills. However off the field cricket underwent such a metamorphosis that it was permanently and radically altered. Even when the control of Australian cricket for all intents and purposes returned to the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) in 1979, the changes produced by the increased commercialisation and professionalisation of the sport during the intervening years dictated the direction cricket would take during the 1980s.

The major factor in this process was the gradual acceptance of cricket both as popular entertainment and as a commercial television sport. The WSC operation was the major contributing force to the new mentality of sports spectatorship. To fully comprehend the arrival of cricket
in this new dimension a variety of intricately woven relationships that existed during this period need to be examined. WSC, the ACB, commercial television, the fan and the spectator all directly influenced the eventual outcome of the conflict. Yet each in their own way were limited in their contributions by existing cultural forces, pre-existing mentalities and business practices. Australian cricket in the 1980s was as much a product of these limitations as it was one of pre-conception on the part of the game's administrators.

The Growth and Development of World Series Cricket

It is unclear when the idea of a 'WSC-type' of event was first proposed or who were its instigators. Whilst John Cornell and Austin Robertson have traditionally been given credit for the birth of WSC, the concept appears to have existed amorphously for some time prior to 1977 with the final product emerging from a number of disparate sources. David Salter, head of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) sport, contends that the era began from a rather frivolous idea in the offices of Channel Nine in 1976, when a "cavaliers" side, comprised of recent retirees and other great cricketing names, was suggested. It was felt that by capitalizing on cricket's existing popularity sufficient advertising could be sold to make the event a commercially viable proposition for the Nine Network. This
event did not eventuate but it is clear that Channel Nine was looking toward cricket as an addition to its sporting stable of golf, auto racing and grand slam tennis.

Much to the chagrin of ABC, Channel Nine was successful in early 1977 in its bid to secure the exclusive television rights to the Australia - England Jubilee Test series which was to be played in England later that summer. While the representatives of ABC arrived in London to finalise details of its on-going arrangement to satellite back edited highlights for national replay the following evening, Packer offered the Town and County Cricket Board (TCCB) live coverage of the entire series. The TCCB awarded Packer the rights with the understanding that he would give ABC use of the coverage for all areas not covered by his network. However the TCCB failed to inform ABC of this provision and as a result ABC was duped into buying the rights it could have had for free. The selling price was 40 percent of all delivery costs which was just enough of a 'subsidy' to make the operation profitable. From the perspective of commercial television ratings the operation was a disappointment. A number of major sponsors were displeased with the manner in which Channel Nine handled their advertisements during the Jubilee Test Series, and were more than concerned about the lack lustre ratings in Sydney. In a three commercial network market,
peak time cricket came in second or third on most nights. Such problems would greatly decreased the ability of Channel Nine to sell sponsorship packages for the first 2 season of WSC.

However overseas cricket was not the game that Packer coveted. He was after Australian summer cricket which was played during non-ratings periods and could successfully fill quantity quotas for Australian content on television. Yet in the short term he was being stymied in his attempts to secure such for his television station.

In an unrelated move, John Cornell approached Packer late in 1976 to enlist his aid in an effort to improve the lot of Australian cricketers. Independently Cornell had concluded that this could be best achieved by their exposure on television. At this stage he was unaware that ABC had rebuffed Packer earlier that year in his attempt to gain exclusive rights to telecast Australian cricket. Still chastened by the experience, Packer was instantly receptive to Cornell’s ideas. Cornell decision to approach Packer was based on the fact that "he knew him, he was in television and he had money."

Even though Packer had the financial resources to take over Australian cricket and John Cornell could supply the players, this constituted only part of what was required for WSC to be a success. The key person Packer acquired
was former Australian test captain Richie Benaud whose reforming opinions were widely known, if not respected by all. Furthermore his commitment to the basics of cricket were above suspicion. Following his playing days he created a consultancy firm which specialised in sports consultancy, public relations and free-lance media operations. His acquisition provided a vital component of the WSC operation and his importance to its operation cannot be understated.

Packer contacted Benaud on April 5, 1977, requesting a meeting the following day at which time he offered him the consultancy position with WSC. Challenged by the concept, Benaud accepted after considering the implications on the players, the administrators and his own business. His acceptance provided Packer with the cricket mentality necessary to ensure that the game remained essentially true to its roots. Benaud gave Packer extremely astute advice and was one of the rare individuals to recognise the changes underway in public attitudes towards cricket during the 1970s. In an interview with The Australian, Benaud maintained that the establishment had failed to recognise the changes in cricket viewing brought about by the advent of color television, the growing cult of personality and the fact that sports spectators were replacing cricket watchers. Yet Benaud understood cricket's conventions and
protocols and although he was essentially a players' and a cricket publics' man, his ability to read the game from both perspectives made him invaluable in an organisation with limited ability in terms of cricket administration.

During the summer of 1976-77 Cornell and Robertson worked diligently and in complete secrecy to gauge the potential receptivity of the leading Australian and international cricketers to their proposal. They were aided in their cause by a number of senior Australian and international players who acted as intermediaries on their behalf. In the four months between Dennis Lillee signing the first contract and the story publicly breaking, leading Australian and international cricketers were contracted in an extremely successful clandestine operation. Although upon approach players were sworn to complete secrecy it was only a matter of time before the story broke. This occurred on May 9, 1977.

At this time the Australian cricket team was in England preparing to defend the Ashes in the Jubilee Test Series. Fresh from the Centenary Test win, the Australians arrived in London on April 22 with the usual press entourage in tow. There is no consistent story as to the unfolding nature of the discovery of the WSC operation and a number journalists have claimed credit for its exposure. Writing for The Age in October 1976, Peter McFarline
suggested that a series of matches, using some of the game's great players, was in the pipeline for the Nine Network. He further commented that Channel Nine had quickly denied that this was the case. When the WSC operation finally broke McFarline believed that the two events were the same, but it is more likely that he was writing about the suggested cavaliers matches and not WSC in 1976.

Although the story broke simultaneously in England and Australia, the first hint of what was happening appeared in the South African *Sunday Times* on April 24, 1977. As a result of lack of confirmation the story did not appear in either English or Australian newspapers at that time. However, by early May journalists in both countries positioned themselves to break the story. Alan Shiell from *The Australian* and McFarline from *The Age* pooled their resources as they were convinced that their English counterparts were ready to go to press. In fact some have credited Ian Wooldridge of the London *Daily Mail* for breaking the story rather than the two Australians. The speculated sources of the various journalists information have varied from troubled players to close confidantes.

In their haste to publish a good story, journalists and editors asked few questions as to the reasons behind
the player defections to the WSC camp, or its potential for
good in the world of cricket. It immediately became a
moral issue and this was the establishment's battleground.
Various newspaper editorials in both the United Kingdom and
Australia quickly condemned Packer's move into the sport.
The Melbourne Age declared that Packer's expectations were
"arrogant," and that an every man for himself philosophy
had never inspired the game of cricket. Similarly the
Melbourne Herald asserted that the ICC was completely
correct in challenging Packer with all the "authority and
support" it could muster. Condemnation of the Packer venture
was even more harsh in England. The Sunday Times suggested
that Packer had turned cricket, "hitherto and open society,
tolerant and without basic malice" into one of "suspicion
and conspiracy" while The Times argued that cricket at the
top level "needed to be played not as as a daily exhibition
for the benefit of television," but between two sides with
"some honour and pride at stake."

As long as traditional cricket could play the part
of the aggrieved entity, public support would be on its
side and WSC would be seen purely as a mercenary operation.
The Australian press propagated this line for twin
purposes. Australian dailies had traditionally adopted a
conservative editorial policy and had a tendency to support
incumbent institutions. Hence they viewed the challenge to
the ACB as an attack on a traditional and paternal ideology that not only underpinned cricket but also the dominant culture in Australia. Given that Australian press ownership is extremely limited, and owners have a tendency to dictate editorial policy, the attack on Packer was widespread. Although Rupert Murdoch responded to Packer’s request for fair newspaper coverage he was definitely in the minority. According to David Salter, Packer and his family had never been shy in coming forward and criticizing other media barons, or anybody else for that matter. He contends "their editorial sword had always had a pretty hard edge." As a result Packer’s major competitors at this time quickly availed themselves of the opportunity presented and attacked him relentlessly.

The response of the ACB was swift and predictable. Len Maddox, the Australian team manager on tour with the side in England, reportedly told the players that the ACB was the sole promoter of international and domestic cricket in Australia and that any player who took part in a non-ACB approved match was placing his cricket future at serious risk.

This was not a revelation to the players that had signed with Packer. They were fully aware of the potential problems linked to their decision but they were firmly convinced of the long term benefits to both themselves and
Australian cricket by their choice. WSC Australian captain, Ian Chappell, stated in *The Age* on May 10, 1977 that it was not an attempt to wrestle control of cricket from the ACB, but rather emerged from a desire to place cricket on a professional and businesslike footing. Furthermore the exercise would raise the overall ability of the players and cricket's appeal to the spectators. Conversely, McFarline exemplified the traditionalist rhetoric. He argued that the long term effect was likely to be the slow strangulation of the game, "a proposition seemingly ignored by young men more intent on a quick kill than a noble heritage." Jack Fingleton echoed McFarline's thoughts. He stated that sponsorship had dictated the direction of contemporary cricket and had "bred wealthy traitors."

English journalists John Arlott and Ian Woolridge recognised the ACB's partial responsibility for the imbroglio. Arlott suggested that the ACB had "always been extremely inflexible in the handling of internal matters" and that the "confrontation between players and officials had been looming for some time." Woolridge even more forthrightly stated that the cricket administrators were ultimately responsible for the player insurrection. *The Age* editorial on May 16 suggested that the ACB should overcome its reluctance to speak to Packer and cogently
argued that his money was as good as that from a cigarette company. The editorial's concluding comment encapsulated simply the existing problem and articulated the need for a quick resolution. It argued that some sort of compromise was required and that Packer and the international controllers of cricket "must try to negotiate a formula aimed at reconciling his commercial ambitions, the legitimate wish of top cricketers to be better rewarded for the entertainment they provided, and the interests of the public which supports and loves the game."

The wounds suffered in the initial skirmish between the warring factions had not even begun to heal and such logic escaped the major combatants. The potential suffering of both the players and traditional fans was inconsequential in the fight between 'noble tradition' and wealth. On the surface both the ACB and the Packer organisation feigned affrontedness at each other's behaviour, and appeared somewhat piqued that their initial propositions had been resisted. Yet privately both groups were convinced of the correctness of their stance and firmly believed that only the capitulation of the other to their demands would result in an early conciliation. As neither side had any intention of diluting their position the longevity of the dispute was assured. As the month of May drew to a close a number of significant international
events took place. English captain Tony Greig, a leading figure in recruiting international cricketers to the Packer series, was relieved of his position of authority in the English team by the TCCB. Conversely the West Indies Cricket Board came out firmly in support of Packer, with board member Alan Roe reported to have said that if a man like Packer wanted to put up $2.5 million for a Super cricket series in the West Indies he would be welcomed with open arms.

The West Indies support of Packer was hardly surprising given its pragmatic approach to international cricket. Australian Cricket Journal editor Chris Harte contends that the West Indies Board of Control is permanently strapped for funds and would jump at any series, WSC or traditional, that would put money in its coffers. Whilst Roe did not comment this bluntly he acknowledged that the West Indies was in need of money and that the players had been earning a pittance for their services for too long. The West Indies Board of Control was one organisation who saw the inextricable link between the increased income available to the game and improved player benefits. Initially it was a voice in the wilderness in the international cricket scene.

Whilst the concept of an alternative cricket series as an athletic contest proceeded rather smoothly during
these early days, the series as a potential television spectacle did not share the same success. It was this latter aspect of the operation that most concerned Packer. When the story first broke in May 1977 he pointed out to The National Times that sport made cheap profitable television, and that was what it was all about. It was neither the gamble nor the indulgence that his critics suggested. Furthermore he openly admitted that he was promoting cricket because the ACB had not allowed him to bid for exclusive rights to televise established first class matches. Unfortunately for Packer, the anticipated sponsorship was not readily forthcoming as sponsors were reluctant to commit themselves to the concept whilst his relationship with the international boards was in doubt. Until fixtures, playing dates and the scope of the television coverage was finalised, potential sponsors had no idea as to the future of WSC and they trod very warily.

Indeed it was not certain at this stage whether Packer had a definite vision of where WSC was heading given a number of contradictions evident in statements attributed to him at the time. In an interview with The Age on May 18 he stated that the contests were designed to make people show up at the grounds. He suggested that "while television is obviously a must, the promotion is actually
designed to make our money out of the gate." However the
gate money was merely 'icing on the cake' for Packer as the
amount of revenue he saved in productions costs to meet
Australian content requirements for television was
enormous. Furthermore, Packer may have been looking beyond
the limited duration of WSC. Although precise figures as
to Packer's WSC losses have never been made public, $25
million is a figure often mentioned. Yet in the eight
years after the rapprochement between the ACB and WSC,
Packer companies made approximately $175 million out of
their association with international cricket. Yet even in
the short term all was not bleak for Packer. Whilst WSC
may not have recouped initial expenses, between May 1977
and January 1978, shares in Consolidated Press and
Television Corporation (which subsequently became
Publishing and Broadcasting), grew steadily from $2 per
share to $2.52 per share. If the WSC experience is
isolated it is easy to argue that it was a financial
failure, but when placed in context, as a part of Packer's
both immediate and long term portfolio, its spinoff benefit
is immeasurable.

By mid-June 1977 Packer had signed 51 of the world's
leading cricketers which prompted the International Cricket
Conference (ICC) to hold an emergency meeting at Lords.
The meeting voted unanimously to ask Packer for detailed
plans as to both the short and long term future of his players. As expected the conference between Packer and the ICC broke down after more than two hours of talks. Packer reiterated that he had no real wish to be involved in the promotion of cricket. He told the assembled press after the meeting, "I am only in this arena because of my disagreement with the ACB. Had I got the television rights I was prepared to withdraw from the scene and leave the running of cricket to the Board." The ICC feigned surprise at Packer’s request but it had been obvious since the story broke that whilst the concerns of the players may have been increased match payments, retirement benefits and greater input into the organisation of cricket, Packer’s quest was television exclusivity. The ICC asserted it was not in a position to influence such decision making processes and informed Packer there could be no compromise. The ICC apparently hoped that by adopting such a firm initial stance, Packer would simply go away. In the process it discounted the resolve of the players and Packer’s financial power.

On July 26, 1977 World Series Cricket Pty. Ltd. was formally named by the directors of JP Sport, the company which held the contracts of the players signed to play in the Packer series. JP Sport had paid up capital of $98 and five shareholders. The breakdown of the shareholding at a
$1 per share basis was, 16 shares held by actor Paul Hogan, 16 by his manager and partner John Cornell, 15 shares by Austin Robertson, 2 shares by Kerry Packer and 49 held by TCN 9 in Sydney. Hence directly and indirectly Packer controlled 51 shares which made him the majority shareholder in the company.

The forces of WSC were not the only ones to organise and go on the offensive during the winter of 1977. Responding to public opinion, Federal MPs campaigned against Packer calling on all cricket lovers to boycott the proposed series. The trustees of the Sydney Cricket Ground rejected the Packer application to hire the ground and the ICC imposed bans on all players who signed with him. The stage was now set for a bitter and protracted struggle, the length of which would depend primarily upon the reaction of the public.

In August the warring factions shifted their battle from the popular press to the High Court in London. Such measures commenced in the wake of actions adopted by both governing bodies and individuals. Two were by JP Sports, one against the ICC and one against David Lord. Tony Greig, John Snow and Mike Proctor adopted another against the ICC and the TCCB. The ICC and the TCCB were being sued on the basis of a restraint of trade and the action against Lord was brought about due to his 'avowed intention' to
have all players break their contracts with JP Sports. Similar writs were issued in Australia against ACB members Alan Barnes, Bob Parrish and Tim Cardwell. JP Sport claimed that the ACB acted in contravention of section 45D of the Australian Trades Practices Act which covered organisations or individuals acting singularly or in concert to retard the supplying of goods or services to corporations which would result in damage or loss to its business. Hence Packer sought an injunction "restraining the defendants from engaging in conduct that hindered or prevented the supply of services by a third person to the plaintiff company," and an interim injunction "restraining the defendants from giving effect or implementing certain resolutions." Not only did JP Sport want unlimited access to any Australian cricketer, it declared that it also required WSC players to have access to district and state facilities which were to be denied them as a result of an international ban by the ICC.21

On September 23 the ACB similarly sought an injunction in the Federal Court in Sydney restraining WSC Pty. Ltd. from using the term 'Test' in any of its advertising for a match or a series. Furthermore it sought to forbid the use of the term 'Australia' or 'Australian teams' for any group of players. The temporary injunction was granted seven days later. On October 13 the New South
Wales Cricket Association was given leave to serve a summons on the SCG Trust and on WSC Pty. Ltd. It sought an injunction preventing WSC's use of the ground. The basis of its claim was that it held a contract with the trust which gave it first use of the ground during summer. This challenge was upheld on November 20, 1977.

While WSC have lost the minor skirmishes in the Australian courts, on November 25 Justice Slade brought down his decision in favour of WSC on all nine points. His decision stunned the cricket establishment. He acknowledged the difficulty and insecurity of the professional cricketer and argued that the cricketer needed to make his living like any other professional man. Furthermore he rejected the establishment argument of the moral deficiency in the actions of those contracted to play for WSC. In summing up Justice Slade articulated the belief that it was somewhat surprising that it wasn't until 1977 that a private promoter challenged the conventional structure of first-class cricket.

The fact that the ICC and the TCCB believed that they held the moral high ground going into this battle was of little consolation in the outcome. Both cricket organisations had not entertained the idea of failure in the courts and hence had not been fully prepared for the consequences of a loss. In their attempts to thwart Packer
at every turn the ICC and the TCCB not only became embroiled in an altercation that was not of their making but they also failed to acknowledge the potentially severe financial losses they might incur. Packer had made two cogent points during the height of the court action which the establishment did not heed but in the cold reality of Justice Slade's decision were quite prophetic. When queried as to his lack of concern regarding the potential cost of the litigation Packer simply responded," I've got more money than they have." In addition, he correctly pointed out that the conflict was essentially one between him and the ACB and that the ICC and the TCCB were going to be left "carrying the can." In the aftermath of the court case the international cricket hierarchy and the TCCB were responsible for costs, which were in the vicinity of $322,000. In a game always short of funds such costs were extremely hard to absorb. Under advisement from its legal people the cricket establishment decided not to appeal the decision. If it had been correctly advised in the first instance, this action would never have come about. Yet the governing bodies, like the popular press and cricket followers, were carried along on a wave of emotion that could not be sustained.

Whilst the future of World Series Cricket was being fought in courts of law, plans for WSC's inaugural season
proceeded and in August Packer revealed his revolutionary plans for telecasting the game. Eight cameras rather than four would be used, each over would be viewed from behind the bowler, on-ground microphones would be strategically placed and there were to be interviews with players returning from the crease. Although not all these ideas were successful, they were indicative of the types of innovations that WSC were prepared to try in order to capture the television market. In response to questions regarding the wider television coverage of the game, Packer stated "I believe that people are interested in the expression on a man's face as the ball has just whizzed past his head." Such pronouncements quickly led *The Age* to reply through its editorial column that Packer's plans not only touched an extremely sore point with the cricket purists but that 'Packer style' cricket was "shaping up with all the stage managed razzamatazz applied to that other sporting mock up harboured by Channel Nine - World Championship Wrestling."

While on the surface WSC appeared to be devoid of support outside its own structure, a limited amount of approval for the concept came forth from a variety of places. In England, Liberal MP John Pardoe backed WSC and accused the establishment of hypocrisy in its reaction to Packer. In the United States both Mark McCormack and Jack Kramer
praised Packer for his involvement in cricket. The *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial argued that the athletes of the cricket world could not be blamed for what transpired given that in a world of increasingly commercialized sport, they had been "scurvily treated" by comparison with other sporting personalities.

Yet support for WSC at this stage was decidedly small in comparison with that for the cricket establishment. WSC players in Australian were barred from playing at the Shield and in many cases at the club level, and in England the county players overwhelmingly voted in favour of a ban on county players involved with the Packer organisation, the final tally being 139 - 36. However the English players also voted 91 - 77 in favour of a motion calling on the TCCB and the ICC to reopen talks aimed at a compromise with the media mogul. Hence the English Players Association gave the appearance of united support for the game's authorities but they were obviously aware that cricket could not flourish under the present circumstances and that a reconciliation was required. This stance by the English players had implications at the international level given that WSC athletes were only required to play during the Australian summer and were eligible to return to their own countries and counties to play cricket during the northern summer. The nations most affected by this were
the West Indies and Pakistan. In both cases touring teams to these countries refused to play against teams which included Packer players and non-WSC players refused to be part of a team which included WSC players. Both on and off the field the lines of demarcation had been firmly placed with both sides aggressive in their rhetoric and convinced of the correctness of their position.

The First Season

By the commencement of the cricket season in November WSC was an isolated entity. Although it was to have its High Court success that month, support for it was limited and it proved to be a difficult concept to sell to both potential advertisers and the public. The ACB remained convinced of its position and placed its faith in the hands of cricketing fans. At the ACB’s Fourth Annual General meeting in September, the chairman suggested that the public and the people of Australia would be the final arbiters and he concluded by stating "let’s hope that our friends stay with us." For that first season of head-to-head competition between WSC and the establishment good fortune was on the side of the latter as the public supported traditional cricket.

The fixture for WSC’s first year of operation included three competitions. Six Supertests, a one-day International Cup series and a Country Championship were
played between four sides. The contracted players created two Australian teams, one West indies side and a World XI, comprised of English, Pakistani and South African players. The showpiece of the season was to be the six Supertests which pitted Australia against the West Indies on three occasions and against the World on the other three with two matches played in Melbourne and Sydney and one each in Perth and Adelaide. Attendances at all the matches were extremely disappointing with a season total of 119,510, which averaged to 19,918 per match. The Australian team lost both series 2-1.

The International Cup was a series of fifteen one-day competitions held in the same capital cities as the Supertests during December and January. At the conclusion of these preliminary matches a knock out finals competition was conducted in February to determine the overall winner. As Australia fielded only one side in this competition all three sides made it through to the finals. West Indies beat both the World and Australian sides to be declared the international champion. These matches were slightly more popular with the public as the total attendance for all matches was 138,192, which averaged out to 8,129 per day.

The WSC Country Cup Championship was devised for two reasons. Not only did it take international cricket to areas within Australia that traditionally had been starved
of such first class entertainment, but it allowed for players who had not been selected for Supertests and one-day international sides to continue to play cricket. In essence it was an international farm system. Sixteen matches were played between December and February in country Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and in Canberra and given that the majority were played mid-week attendances were satisfactory. In Lismore NSW, 6,442 people turned up over Monday and Tuesday to watch Australia play the World. In a small country town such a figure was outstanding. However the cost involved in transporting two international sides around the country far outweighed any pecuniary benefits available from a live gate. For WSC to succeed spectators needed to turn out in the capital cities in large numbers. This did not eventuate.

Even though WSC had an inordinate amount of publicity between May, when the story first broke, and December, when the first WSC Supertest was played in Melbourne, it did not translate to success at the venues even though the blackout rule had been implemented and the contest was not televised in the city where it was being played. Packer had confidently predicted in early November that it was "all going to be a whopping success," and that the market research his magazine, The Bulletin, conducted had conclusively showed that "the WSC matches were going to be
big sellers." Packer was not alone in this optimism. The great Australian athlete Ron Clarke argued in *The Age* that throughout the world the best in the business attract the top crowds and that Packer had ensured this by signing the best cricketers and television personnel available. Clarke concluded that when an organisation as professional as WSC presents the best there is, success comes automatically, no matter how emotional the side issues. However this scenario did not eventuate and it proved to be a long hot summer for WSC, both on and off the field.

Using the marketing slogan of 'Fair Dinkum Test Cricket' the ACB opened the Test season in Brisbane against India on December 2, 1977 whilst WSC played its first Supertest in Melbourne. The ACB had achieved the lesser status in the ensuing head-to-head battle by virtue of its High Court loss and the Australian sports fan traditionally displays unabashed support for the underdog. Crowd comparisons between establishment cricket and WSC for the first major matches are telling. While establishment cricket attracted 21,028 patrons for a four day event the attendance for the three day WSC event was only 13,885. These figures are even more remarkable considering that Melbourne is reputedly the sports capital of Australia and has a population approximately three times that of Brisbane. In the post match aftermath Packer suggested
that the Australian television audiences were "mightily satisfied," by the first match and they were the ones who would ultimately decide the success or failure of the mission. However the McNair Anderson ratings published in mid-December for the first weekend of the month showed a rating of only four percent for WSC compared with five percent for establishment cricket and eight to ten percent for Davis Cup tennis.

Packer's pronouncement that the television audience would determine the success of his venture contradicted his earlier statements regarding the paramount importance of the live gate. As no reason was given for this apparent turnabout it can only be surmised that WSC very quickly realised that it was unable to compete against over one hundred years of tradition in its initial attempt to win the conservative cricket fan, a fact that was borne out by the entire WSC supertest series.

In the summer of 1977/78 WSC played six supertests as opposed to five by the establishment. Moreover while the Australia vs India Series was carried out in every mainland state capital, WSC opted to return to both Melbourne and Sydney for a second supertest and ignore Brisbane completely. The Australia-India series produced in total 25 days of cricket, a combined series attendance of 256,594 and an average daily crowd of 10,264. By contrast the WSC
supertests produced 26 days of cricket which resulted in a daily average of only 4,597. If the WSC hierarchy had been solely dependent on the supertests for its success the first year of WSC may have been its last.

Unquestionably WSC supertest matches as a vehicle for the transfer of public support and affiliation were an abject failure, even though they undoubtedly contained a much higher standard of cricket than that of its establishment counterpart. A number of factors attributed to its apparent lesser stature. WSC could not access any of the major cricket grounds in Australia and was forced to play its contests on converted football fields, showgrounds or trotting tracks. Cricket pitches for such matches were grown in concrete tubs in hot houses and then craned into excavated holes in the respective grounds prior to the commencement of the series. While such an approach to wicket preparation was initially universally scorned, WSC curator John Maley and his assistants produced a series of wickets that were fast and true. However the acceptance of these venues as major cricket grounds was not forthcoming and this was a significant factor in the dismal attendances.

Concurrently and fortuitously for the ACB the series between India and Australia proved to be rather compelling. India had lost the first Test by 16 runs and was
comprehensively beaten in the second but came back to tie the series 2-2. Although Australia won the Fifth Test and hence the series 3-2, the result was in doubt until the final day. It made little difference to the Australian cricket fan that the top eighteen players in Australia were involved in WSC and that they were in fact supporting a 3rd XI. What was significant was that they represented Australia, the series had been gripping and they had won. In regard to the latter two components of this combination, the same could not be said for the WSC Australians.

Despite its many problems WSC did have some initial success with certain facets of its operation. On December 14, 1977 WSC played their first day-night match under lights at the Victorian Football League (VFL) Park in front of 6442 patrons. Day-night cricket was a limited over game that instead of being played entirely during the day commenced in the late afternoon and was completed at night under lights. Tea was taken between the innings which usually meant one side batted during the daylight hours, the other at night. The rationale behind the move was to draw to the game more than simply cricket devotees.

The minor success of the first day-night match elicited guarded support from The Age which up until this stage had been loud in its condemnation of the WSC venture.
The newspaper quite significantly gave the event front page coverage under headings such as "The Atmosphere was Electric," and "Night Cricket Switches on the Crowd," and acknowledged that "even though WSC did not get out of the blocks as its starter would have liked, under the power of some 1000 lux the revolution took on some meaning." It further admitted that even though the ball was white, the wicket green and the sightscreens black - it was still cricket. The newspaper also took important note of the fact that those in attendance were not necessarily traditional cricket fans but "the family element surrounding VFL Park." Furthermore Packer had endeared himself to this group by allowing the young to invade the field during adjournments. WSC had begun to tap a new audience with this foray into day - night cricket. This initial success was repeated late in January when crowds of 10,272, 24,636 and 17,932 respectively turned up on three consecutive days to watch day - night matches at the same venue. By the end of WSC's first domestic season it was obvious where its future success lay; with a different style of cricket and a different breed of fan.

While day - night cricket provided a much needed boost to attendances at WSC matches, the concept proved difficult to sell to advertising agencies. At the surface level the reluctance of advertising agencies to become
involved with WSC was due to its late arrival onto the sporting scene and its lack of success with its supertest format. However the Financial Review viewed the problem from a more global perspective. It noted that the previous year had been extremely difficult one for the marketing community with "new product activity down, advertising budget cuts for the third consecutive year and the approaching Federal election." By January 1978, WSC and Channel Nine executives were pushing discounted rates and guaranteeing companies "indefinite good placement for their print advertisements in magazines published by Channel Nine's sister company, the Australian Consolidated Press." Although major sponsorship packages were reduced from the initial price of $400,000 to $250,000 or $125,000 Channel Nine was still unable to negotiate any more than three major sponsorship packages, McDonalds, Berger Paints and Samuel Taylor. Companies such as Hertz Rent-A-Car, GM-H, Quantas and Ardmonoa all had arrangements with WSC but they usually involved the use of services rather than direct contributions or purchases. Moreover such sponsors already had a long association with Consolidated Press. Similarly during WSC matches in excess of ten percent of all advertisements were 'house commercials' for Channel Nine or other Packer products or companies. Although Packer stated that total advertising revenue from all sources was $2.5
million, industry sources believed that $1.5 million was a far more realistic figure. Both sums are somewhat removed from WSC originally stated intention of gaining main media advertising of $3.8 million.

Yet the success of day-night cricket began to spark the interest of a number of advertising agencies who regarded these matches as "really interesting advertising propositions," and as having a "wonderful future." The managing director of Monahan Dayman Adams, Brian Monahan, predicted that Channel Nine would have little difficulty selling its series to sponsors for the following season as it "provided excellent alternative viewing for night-time television."

By the end of the 1977-78 international cricket season in Australia, the ACB had valid reason to feel secure in its position. It maintained the faithful, witnessed an extremely exciting series against India, and, apart from the High Court action in London, had withstood the WSC assault. While all of this would change in the next twelve months, for the moment it had every right to feel content with its position.

**Behind the Scenes**

Minutes of the ACB - Sub Committee meetings between November 1977 and May 1978 reveal very little with respect to WSC. In most cases a brief agenda item referred the
activities of 'private promoters' although Mr. Steele informed members of the committee at the November 16, 1977 meeting that the "current year was of vital importance and the [establishment] players should be aware that they are fighting for the survival of cricket." Not only were such pronouncements a touch dramatic, they were also incorrect. What the establishment was fighting for was its long held monopoly of traditional cricket, not the game's survival. At the next meeting in January only passing remarks to the private promotion of cricket in general were made and at the May meeting the Sub-committee was presented with the ACB's policy regarding private promotion.

While it appears that the sub-committee, which included player representation from each state, was provided with limited information and minimal input into this facet of Australian cricket, ACB minutes reveal an organisation concerned with its survival. At its September 1977 meeting the Board passed a resolution to adopt the principle of having team sponsorship contracts signed by players. This resolution was obviously proposed to stop the further defection of Australian players to the WSC ranks. Although the creation of a list of options to counter private promotion was temporarily shelved the seriousness with which the ACB viewed the threat is obvious.

By the time of the ACB's next meeting in January
1978, offers of assistance had come forward from Federal MP for the district of Adelaide, Mr. Chris Hurford. The Chairman of the ACB indicated that the government may be considering legislation concerning the televising of national events which would probably include cricket. Whilst this situation never arose it probably would have been doomed from the inception given the alleged friendship between the then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and Packer. David Richards, Victorian Cricket Association Secretary and eventual Executive Officer of the ACB, reflected at the meeting on the gains in the popularity of one-day cricket. He pointed out that "a new audience had developed through television exposure of cricket and that this audience would look at cricket whether it was played in one day matches or at night." Such comments suggest that some members of the Board were fully cognizant of the commercial potential not only of cricket but also of televised sport. However Richards, like Packer, had been influenced by the sport-television nexus in the United States and it appears that his suggestions were only reluctantly acknowledged.

Although by February WSC had gained a foothold in cricket by virtue of its limited success in the one-day and day-night competitions, Test Cricket was still firmly the purview of the establishment. Fresh from its victory over
India the establishment believed its faith in its judgement vindicated. The WSC organisation was the first to admit that mistakes had been made and that changes in the program would be required for the coming season. Furthermore, while it had not been the box-office success that its creators had predicted, it had been both quality cricket and innovative. Its inception had also prompted the ACB to become actively involved in the marketing of the game and to improve its public image. Richards coordinated the promotions for the ACB in the first year of head-to-head competition with WSC and was responsible for the quantum leap by ACB in selling fence advertising. In addition, the ACB played on the sympathy of the Australian public and campaigned under the slogan of "The Indians Are Coming," in a successful attempt to attract increased interest in the series. Unfortunately for ACB, establishment cricket would take severe body blows with successive series debacles against the West Indies and England. These contests provided a much clearer picture of the relative skill level of the establishment team.

Although the popular press sought compromise between the two groups, the attitudes of both left no doubt that it would be a war of attrition with the public heavily influencing the victor. Indications of public leaning were published in The Age on May 31, 1978. A public opinion
poll conducted in six states indicated that slightly more than half of those queried (54%) believed that WSC had improved cricket for the general public whilst only slightly more than a quarter (27%) felt it had had a damaging effect. Significant support for WSC came from the baby boomers of the post World War II era, especially, 21-24 and 25-34 year old males and from 25-34 year old females. The poll also showed that the influences of political affiliations and occupations on people's perception of WSC were negligible. The definitive conclusion of the survey was that the younger the fan, the more predisposed they were toward WSC. Furthermore WSC relentlessly pursued the youth element with promotional giveaways, the cricketers club and cricket camps. The marketing strategy was based on the premise that if the youth market could be captured, the spillover into parental involvement was inevitable. Children would not only urge their parents to take them to matches, they would also encourage purchases of WSC related merchandise. In a four-part February interview with The Age, Packer acknowledged the importance of the youth market to the success of the venture. Tentative plans for the upcoming season included the finishing of the day-night matches by 10.30pm instead of 11.30pm and the cessation of the season before children went back to school in early February.
The split of the day-matches conveniently catered for target markets whether at the ground or on television. Televising the day portion of the game was designed to attract the afternoon viewing audience with the intended spin-off effect being to encourage families to attend the night portion of the game. Similarly young adults were encouraged to witness matches at night as an alternative form of entertainment. Moreover whereas establishment cricket believed that the crowd should distantly observe the action and soak in the game's ambience, WSC encouraged crowd excitement and participation in the creation of the spectacle. Hence while the establishment aimed its product mainly toward the conservative cricketing fan, WSC went after multiple market segments.

The Second Season and the Move Towards Reconciliation

During 1978 a number of factors emerged which in retrospect were conciliatory in their effects, although on the surface the battle still raged. WSC finally gained access to the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) and assisted in the installation of nearly one million dollars worth of flood lights which enabled the majority of its games there to be partially played at night. WSC players were permitted back into the ranks of grade cricket after Dennis Lillee won a court action allowing him the right to play in club competitions and to practice and play on turf wickets.
controlled or used by any Western Australia Cricket Association club. Talks between the ICC and WSC, although far from problem solving, were instigated and continued. The international body was pressured by both Pakistan and West Indies to make peace with Packer as the latter had lost 18 of its top players to WSC. English captain Mike Brearly called for a compromise arguing that Test cricket needed the best players in the world and that traditional cricket could learn from the experiences of WSC. All of the above slowly and progressively weakened the establishment's position of power.

In September the ACB accepted a two million dollar sponsorship package from Benson and Hedges which dramatically improved payments for Test players and the following month agreed to an exclusive rights telecast by Channel 0/10 network of the national Gillette Cup. This was the first time a commercial television network in Australia had exclusive rights contract to domestic cricket. Furthermore McFarline predicted that given that the ACB's agreement with ABC was up at the end of the forthcoming summer, the Board was bound to ask for tenders for future seasons. Almost certainly the result would be that a commercial station would gain exclusivity for international cricket in Australia for the first time. The minutes of the ACB Fifth Annual General Meeting in
September reveal that the 0/10 Network saw its involvement with the Gillette Cup as a prelude to obtaining exclusive rights to televise cricket generally. Yet to provide 0/10 with exclusive coverage of the Gillette Cup the ACB had to buy back the television rights from the ABC. An answer as to why this was not possible in late 1976 when Packer initially approached the ACB has not been forthcoming. Yet it is obvious that his attempts to gain television exclusivity were treated far more seriously given the growing success of WSC. The ACB slowly came to the realisation that the future of Australian cricket lay in the hands of commercial television.

During the 1978/79 season attendance at one-day internationals almost trebled from 136,954 to 360,912. Significant inroads were made in Melbourne and WSC also gained access to the 'Gabba in Brisbane. While Test matches still attracted more spectators than the Supertests the margin was decreasing. Average crowd size at the latter grew from 20,755 to 31,372. In their second year of operation WSC crowds nearly doubled. By late November the future direction of Australian cricket was assured. As the light switch was thrown at the SCG for a day-night match between Australia and the West Indies, in excess of 50,000 patrons were at the ground. Stunned by the size of the crowd, it had expected in the vicinity of 20,000, WSC
officials eventually threw open the gates after more than 44,000 had paid at the gate as unobstructed views could not be guaranteed for any more paying fans. Phil Wilkins, sports writer for the *Sun Herald* and a staunch supporter of establishment cricket at this stage, unequivocally contends that from this moment the ACB knew that it was beaten. The ACB responded to the success of this night through its Chairman Bob Parrish who suggested his organisation was "considering introducing night establishment cricket next season." WSC duplicated this success in Melbourne on January 9, 1979 when 39,252 people turned up at VFL Park for a day-night game between the West Indies and Australia.

In less than a year WSC had altered the style and tone of cricket and this was reflected in what was happening both on and off the field. Although many patrons were unfamiliar with the nuances of cricket, the bright lights, white balls and colored clothing created such a festive atmosphere that only the barest of understandings of the game was necessary to ensure enjoyment from the contest. The game was seen purely as a combative activity. Short pitched bowling had many batsmen defending life and limb and bowlers were not immune to such treatment from their opposition number. Such tactics resulted in the growth of a number of protective devices including helmets. The use
of such resulted in batsmen coming to the crease looking more like goalies for ice-hockey teams than traditional cricketers. Furthermore spectators regularly voiced their opinions regarding apparent states of play. This cricket was being sold as mass entertainment and the crowds expected value for their money. Such expectations usually included an Australian win. For those fans not in attendance but watching the proceedings on television, the cavalier play on the part of the players, the carnival like atmosphere in the stands, and the new technology WSC utilised all combined to create an exciting visual experience for the home viewer.

On December 9, 1978 an Age journalist heralded the arrival of cricket as televised sport. He contended that cricket was no longer an "eccentric and revitalised form of rain dance, it was television - television that was maniacally active." He further declared that the commercial promoting WSC was "a brilliant piece of work - dramatic, funny with the driving backing of 'Come On Aussie Come On.'" WSC not only directly appealed to Australian nationalism through the use of such catchy slogans, it also promoted a machismo element in cricket through the use of a number of physically imposing athletes in its advertising. In the process the rhythms of cricket had changed from a pastoral activity to an urban spectacle. Cricket was no longer
merely a game for the participants it now involved and indeed courted interaction between those on the field and those in the stands. The parameters of the cricket now extended beyond the boundary ropes and included as an integral part of the game spectators in attendance at the ground and those viewing the game on television. The debatable contention by those allied to the establishment at the time was that the organically grown game would be destroyed if altered to fit television. Yet in their anxiety traditional supporters of cricket could not differentiate between changes in substance and style. WSC altered the way the spectator viewed the game not the game itself. Rather than breaking down this association WSC forged a stronger link between the fan and the past.

The Road to Rapprochement

Although the ACB had optimistically approached the 1978-79 season, by the new year on field performances by the Australian XI and the gate success of WSC's one day cricket had placed them firmly on the defensive. United Kingdom correspondent Robin Marlar claimed that the Board was losing contact daily with the reality of the situation and egregiously regarded those who attempted to help them. At the ACB's first meeting in 1979 the Secretary reported that an unusually large volume of public mail had arrived
since the previous meeting concerning its relationship with WSC. Finally the Board acknowledged both the popularity of WSC and the decline of its own product. It attributed the latter to the large amount of cricket being played, division of public interest, the absence of personality players and an Australian team of indifferent strength. Yet the ability of WSC to market and sell its product to both fans at the gate and television was also agreed upon.

Faced with possible financial ruin and showing a complete lack of desire to drag the confrontation out, the ACB began to make conciliatory gestures. These were readily received by WSC who had its own reasons for resolving the conflict at the earliest possible date. WSC had signed players, who although the best in the world, were approaching the twilight of their career. Most had been contracted for a three year period which would be up at the end of the 1979-80 season. Packer would eventually have been forced to restock his teams. The ACB and other international bodies, mindful of this, had signed the current crop of young athletes to sponsorship contracts which prohibited their involvement with groups or organisations with conflicting interests to the ACB. While Packer may have been able to poach such players ongoing litigation would have been assured. Another limitation Packer and WSC
confronted was that they could never have supported the national cricket infrastructure even if they forced the ACB out of existence. Packer's foray into cricket, and televised sport, could only grow and prosper with a healthy and solvent ACB firmly in place. The downfall of the ACB would result in the demise of WSC and Australian cricket in general. Hence it was hardly surprising when conciliatory overtones appeared through the press early in 1979.

As early as January 1979 WSC and ICC officials met on several occasions. Although the ACB remained firm in its resolve against WSC, the ICC rightly perceived ACB intransigence as a stumbling block to the reunification of international cricket. To have any realistic chance of winning the World Cup to be played in England in June 1979, it was imperative that competing cricket nations be able to select full-strength teams, and this meant the inclusion of WSC athletes. While nations such as Pakistan and the West Indies would more than likely include the WSC players, Australia was adamant in its refusal to even acknowledge such an eventuality. Yet even though the ACB's rhetoric was unchanged, it clearly recognised the diminishing hold it had on cricket. With the gradual loss of its popular support and the press calling for compromise, the ACB's isolated position was glaringly evident. The major thorny issue which had to be resolved
was the television rights question. This was the ACB's only bargaining chip, but it was a substantial one.

After much discussion at its January meeting the ACB authorised the Television and Radio Committee on "the principle of non-exclusive and/or total exclusive television rights." Within days of the meeting the Melbourne press reported that two networks and the ABC were expected to be contenders for the television rights. The announcement of a 0/10 network bid came as somewhat of a surprise but in retrospect can be regarded as a manoeuvre by network owners to give the tender process a sense of fair and equitable competition and hence legitimacy. Even though the press noted that Reg Ansett, the network's owner/founder, had given his permission to bid as much as required to secure the rights, obviously only a successful tender by the Nine Network would heal the schism in Australian cricket. The ACB acceptance of any other bid would result in a continuation of WSC and the woeful state of establishment cricket.

Within the coming weeks the frequency of conciliatory statements increased. ACB Treasurer Ray Steele conceded that Packer "had built new markets and helped create tremendous interest in cricket," and Chairman Bob Parrish similarly maintained that "there was no one in the cricket world who did not want to see a solution." Packer also
declared that he "did not want to appear opposed to reconciliation" and that he approved of efforts to work out a solution. Packer's comments took on importance given WSC's relative strength during this period. For all concerned the problem remained the tendering of exclusive television rights for the upcoming contract period, a probability far removed from reality three years prior.

An Agreement's Announced

On April 25 1979, the press declared that the battle for cricket was over and a state of truce existed as a result of the awarding of television rights to the Nine Network. Publically both the ACB and WSC stated throughout March and April that an agreement was not imminent but the ACB minutes of the April meeting indicate that formalised talks had been on going for some time. The minutes drew attention to the discussions that had been held on a number of occasions with the principals of Consolidated Press Holdings Pty. Ltd. (CPH) in which the guidelines for the television contract were clearly defined. Furthermore they noted that an emergency committee meeting had taken place with Messers Taylor and Chester of CPH and the ACB's solicitors to ensure that all legal requirements were observed.

Although the exact time frame for these talks is not available two dates stand out as instrumental in leading to
the rapprochement. On February 9, Packer announced the appointment of Lynton Taylor, vice-president of live programming at the Nine Network, as managing director of WSC. This can be seen as the precursory move towards the eventual relocation of WSC under the umbrella of Channel Nine's sport programming rather than leaving it as a free standing entity with its own support structure. Taylor, who had been intimately involved with the WSC operation since its inception, was a pivotal figure in the settlement negotiations with the cricket establishment. On March 15 The Age reported that Packer met with both ACB Chairman Bob Parrish and Victorian Cricket Association president Ray Steele at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Although the meeting was described as a "nice social lunch," unsubstantiated rumours abound in Australian cricket and journalist circles as to what transpired. Suffice to say discussions must have revolved around cricket, television and the cessation of hostilities between the warring factions. Given the initial meetings between ICC and WSC officials during January, the February appointment of Lynton Taylor, the meeting between Packer, Parrish and Steele in March and reports in the minutes of the April ACB meeting, it strongly appears that painstaking negotiations to arrive at a settlement had been well underway since the start of the new year.
Although the immediate post rapprochement period resulted in animosity from certain quarters towards both the officials involved and the agreement itself, in reality neither side had any other option but to negotiate. WSC was allegedly poised to become financially viable and threatened to permanently capture the hearts and minds of the young cricket public. However, the problem of aging players, lack of adequate replacement material and the inability, or lack of desire, to see cricket as anything more than a marketable product would have severely limited its longevity. Similarly the ACB was in danger of becoming permanently incapacitated by its lack of onfield strength, business acumen and its inability to return a profit at the gate. It was a matter of much conjecture as to who would survive the coming season and in the final analysis neither side was prepared to find out.

Although the cricket war finally ended, memories were long and acrimonious debate as to any perceived benefits of WSC's intrusion into the world of traditional cricket continued well into the 1980s. In the short term the rapprochement did not sit well with the international cricket community or a number of those involved in broadcasting in Australia. Such groups ignored the technological advancements of WSC and decried the game's stylistic changes and naked commercialisation orientation.
Yet WSC had attracted additional fans and increased the support base of cricket in general. Cricket had become far less elitist and began to appeal to groups purely for its entertainment value. However structurally the game had not altered and as a result while conflict was the order of the day in the cricket world between 1977 and 1979 on the field there was a game to be played. The same game that was played in the past and the same one that would be played in the future.
ENDNOTES

1. Interview, with David Salter, Head of ABC Sport, August 9, 1989. Salter’s thought echoed those of Bruce Gyngell of the Nation Review. Gyngell, then a $500 per day consultant to the Nine Network, allegedly came up with the idea of the Cavaliers team. They used Bob Simpson as their "enthusiastic agent" but the idea floundered due to potential questionable standards of play. However, the Cavaliers concept sparked Packer’s interest and prompted him to study the financial realities of Australian cricket. "How Kerry Screwed the ABC," Nation Review, 30 June – 6 July, 1977, 3.

2. Elisabeth Wynhausen, "Why Kerry Packer Needs the Publicity but Hasn’t Got the Ratings," The National Time, August 1-6, 1977, 7.


4. John Phillips, "Wednesday Conference," The Australian, July 27, 1977, 9. Also see, Beecher, Cricket, 11-12; Blofeld, Packer, 51-53; Forsyth, Cricket, 33-34, 41-2, 159. Upon his appointment Benaud immediately argued from the public relations point of view that it was imperative that the ACB be informed of WSC before an official announcement was made and he drafted a lengthy memo to that effect. Although Packer had the memo for a number of weeks, and eventually sent it word for word to the ACB, an airstrike delayed the letter’s arrival and the story broke in the media before the ACB were apprised of the WSC operation.


6. The secrecy with which approached players were sworn to during the summer, a short tour of New Zealand and the Centenary Test in March 1977 was regarded as essential to the success of WSC. Max Walker deals with it at length in Cricketer at the Crossroads, (Melbourne: Gary Sparke and Assoc., 1978), 57-60.

8. Peter McFarline, "Nine plans greatest cricket show on earth," *The Age*, May 9, 1977, 35. Also see, Blofeld Packer, 18-23; Caro, *Straight Bat*, 41-42; Forsyth, *Cricket*, Beecher, *Cricket*, 16-19. It is rumoured that Alan Shiel obtained his information from David Hookes, the youngest member of the Australian WSC team. It is alleged that Hookes had doubted the correctness of the decision he had made, although he was one of the first to sign. Woolridge's source is said to have been his close friend Richie Benaud.


10. Interview with Salter.


13. "Mercenaries Declare Cricket War," *ibid.*, May 11, 1977, 29; Editorial, *ibid.*, May 16, 1977, 9. On May 26, McFarline suggested that a conciliatory agreement was likely before the start of the coming season as there was a private feeling among a number of senior Australian officials that some sort of compromise could be worked out with Packer. See his, "Compromise is likely," *ibid.*, May 26, 1977, 34. However, the majority of people interviewed contend that a compromise was neither possible nor was it desired by either of the warring factions.


20. "End of the 100 Year Era? Boycott Packer 'Circus' - MP," The Age, July, 19, 1977, 34; "Setback for Packer," ibid., July 26, 1977, 32; "Ban on Rebels Complete - Full Support of the ICC," ibid., July 28, 1977, 28. The day following the decision by the Sydney Cricket Ground Trustees the New South Wales government sacked the entire 13-man board. "The government claimed it was purely coincidental that the trustees had been given their marching orders a day after Packer had been given his." Beecher, Cricket, 41-43.


23. "Judge Defends Player's Rights," The Age, November 26, 1977, 40, 35; For Justice Slade's Nine Point Response see, Appendix A.

25. "Packer Reveals Startling New Plans to Revolutionize Cricket," The Age, August 8, 1977, 32; Editorial - "Jolly Well Not Cricket Chaps," ibid., August 9, 1977, 31. Channel Nine eventually had to abandon the use of microphones in the field to pick up the players conversations and remarks due to the habit of many cricketers to express themselves rather explicitly.


31. Ibid., 43-47; Cashman, Cricket Crowds, 292-93.


33. Cashman, Cricket Crowds, 63, 292.

34. Ibid., 292.

35. Cricket Alive, 50; Blofeld, Packer, 128-29, 174; Forsyth, Hijack, 147-56.

36. Peter McFarline, "Decade: Caught and Bowled Packer," Age Sport, November 8, 1979, 35.

37. Cashman, Cricket Crowds, 292.


41. Minutes ACB Cricket Sub-Committee Meeting, November 16, 1977. For the ACB's policy on private promotion see, Appendix B.

42. Minutes of the Australian Cricket Board - Fourth Annual General Meeting, September 6-9, 1977.

43. Ibid., Meeting No. 11, January 25-27, 1978; Interview with Richards.

44. Mike Sheahan, "WSC On Its Toes For the Next Round," The Age, February 15, 1978, 30; Interview with Richards.

45. Michael Davie, "A View from the Top," (part one of a four part part series: Packer's First Hundred Days), The Age, February 18, 1978, 15-6. Packer's concern with the 10.30 cessation of night games may have been prompted as much by his failure to adhere to previously agreed upon arrangements with local councils as it was with the attendance of children.


53. Minutes of the Meeting of the Cricket Sub-Committee of the ACB, January 24, 1979; "WSC Bid for TV Rights," *The Age*, January 31, 1979, 32; Ansett vs Packer for TV Cricket," *ibid.*, February 3, 1979, 40;

54. Minutes of the Meeting of the ACB, April 23-24, 1979. Robert Milliken and Adrian McGregor, "Cricket War; The Big Guns Go Quiet," *The National Times*, March 10, 1979, 18; Mike Sheahan, "A Swinging Summer for Packer and WSC," *The Age*, February 6, 1979, 34. The Television and Radio committee informed the ACB at the April Meeting that Channels 7 and 0/10 had advised them that they would not be submitting a tender.


CHAPTER IV

THE POST AGREEMENT ERA: WHO GAINED WHAT!

In the period following the rapprochement between the various companies of WSC and the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) a number of groups and individuals scrambled to either take advantage of the agreement or at the very least not be excluded from potential spin-off benefits. The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) was the most seriously disadvantaged as they were virtually excluded from association with first class cricket by the new accord. Only court action which found in its favour allowed it to maintain some semblance of its former relationship. The International Cricket Conference (ICC) quickly ratified the agreement although it was chagrined by its lack of input into the negotiation process and reimbursement for the expenses incurred in the initial waging of the war against WSC. The Town and County Cricket Board (TCCB) was disturbed at the new direction cricket was heading and stonewalled many of the ACB/PBL plans for the future. Generally the players’ lot improved after the compromise but they still had minimal input into the game they played.
The real winners in the new association between the ACB and PBL were the fans, television and Kerry Packer. Spectators were provided with greater opportunities to view cricket given the expanded number of matches played. Furthermore the rise of the exciting one day cricket made the sport far more accessible given the increasing time constraints placed upon society in the 1980s. As such cricket readily positioned itself in the market place as a competitor for the entertainment dollar.

Similarly commercial television radically altered the style of cricket presented to the televised audience which in turn attracted increased revenue from advertisers anxious to access the growing market. Finally WSC more than adequately satisfied Kerry Packer’s short and long term agenda. The links he forged between sport and television directly benefitted his empire and in the process commercial television became the vehicle for the presentation of professional and commercial sport.

The ABC Reacts

The immediate post rapprochement period resulted in animosity from a variety of quarters towards both the ACB/PBL agreement and the officials involved in their negotiation. ABC had been neither involved nor consulted during the negotiation process and was the most displeased at the news. The station indignantly stated that it had
"supported the cricket board for twenty-three years through thick and thin, and now look what they have done to us."

In light of the agreement, ABC refused to relay future coverage of cricket to remote areas not serviced by the Nine Network. Senator Susan Ryan took up the lament of ABC. She argued that government funds should have been made available to allow the ABC to competitively bid against the Packer organisation for the rights to televise cricket. However such an intrusion by the government, and the use of public money to prop up an institution that the general public had already abandoned, would have only protracted the conflict and further delayed the negotiation process.

ABC refused to meekly accept the agreement and during the remainder of 1979 made its position clear on a number of occasions. In August it rejected a move for it to take on the exclusive coverage of Sheffield Shield cricket. It had been generally believed that PBL's interest in cricket was so great it would televise all major forms of cricket in the country and Lynton Taylor's announcement that Channel Nine would provide "very little" coverage of the national competition came as a surprise. As ABC had traditionally televised Shield cricket its failure to do so now was presumably a reaction to the events of the previous months.

In October 1979, ABC took its arguments to the Trade
Practices Commission (TPC). To prevent the exclusive coverage of Test cricket by the Nine Network it lodged a submission with the TPC opposing the granting of exclusive rights by the ACB to the Packer companies. The submission argued the case of deprivation of national coverage and suggested that ACB had two sets of negotiable rights. Those that could be sold to the three commercial networks, termed exclusive commercial rights, and those that could be sold to ABC, which were exclusive non-commercial rights. The ABC reiterated its concern in its 47th Annual Report to the Federal Government in November 1979 and recommended the adoption of the British practice which declared that events of national importance, such as major sporting contests, should only be sold on a non-exclusive rights basis. However, the WSC years had resulted in part from Packer's desire for total exclusivity as he had wanted sole rights to televised cricket. He had already been offered exclusive commercial rights but this permitted ABC to televise cricket through its non-commercial exclusivity. The arguments of the ABC were weak on two fronts. First, the issue of deprivation of national coverage could easily be resolved by relay transmission by country stations or ABC itself. Second, the ABC contention that the ACB had two sets of rights available for sale had already proved
inoperable and had directly led to the establishment of WSC.

ABC was not the only government instrumentality to object to the agreement. The Postal and Telecommunications Department also criticized the deal between the ACB and PBL, echoing ABC's concern that exclusive rights did not guarantee complete coverage of top cricket. While government bodies attacked the arrangement, commercial television networks in competition with the Channel Nine supported the concept of exclusive rights at the hearings of the TPC. Obviously any decision the TPC made would have direct implications for the other commercial networks and their support for the PBL/ACB agreement was designed to guarantee similar rights for themselves in the future. Their concern related to possible restrictions that could be placed upon their operation by a TPC decision in favour of ABC. In that light the concerns of the remote, non-commercially accessible television market were immaterial.

On December 4, 1979 the Trade Practices Commission announced that it allowed the contract between the ACB and the companies of PBL. In defending its position the TPC stated the belief that no Australian organisation was better equipped to develop cricket sponsorship, publications, match promotions and the merchandising of the sport than PBL. Furthermore it concluded that "the
ability of the ABC to gain the rights in the future was not so much an anti-competitive factor of the exclusivity but a financial one that the TPC cannot solve." Simply put the ABC did not have enough money to match the Channel Nine offer.

ABC deemed the findings of the TPC totally inappropriate and on December 22 1979 initiated legal action in an attempt to salvage its perceived rights. The injunction sought to stop the ACB and the companies of PBL from continuing the agreement alleging that it was in violation of the Trade Practices Act. While the courts found in favour of the ABC there was little consolation in the victory. The legality of the agreement between the ACB and PBL was recognised and ABC was required to negotiate with Packer for the relay coverage of cricket. Consequently commercial television swept cricket into the 1980s.

The Response of the Cricket Establishment

ABC was not the only group piqued at the ACB/PBL agreement. The international cricket community quickly voiced its displeasure at the terms of the agreement and its lack of input into the process. Even though the ICC was frustrated that it neither participated in the final negotiation process nor was able to ratify the agreement it promptly rubber-stamped the accord. However the TCCB was
not so easily placated and immediately placed restrictions on its involvement in the cricket organised under the terms of the agreement. For the English tour of Australia in the summer of 1979/80, the TCCB insisted on a reduced number of one-day international matches which had grown to be television's premier cricket attraction. It also refused to sanction games where there were restrictions on field placings, to allow its players to wear anything other than traditional cricket creams and it expressed resentment at playing at night. Moreover the TCCB refused to put up "The Ashes" for a three test series and asserted that future tours should provide not only a full complement of Test matches but that only one country should tour Australia at any given time. Such a stand had serious ramifications for PBL who believed that the triangular series between Australia, England and the West Indies to be played the following summer was optimal in terms of marketing the new style of cricket.

The churlishness of the TCCB continued until the eve of the 1979/80 season and resulted in a great deal of confusion as to the rules under which the games would be played. In the process the TCCB managed to secure itself a better financial package for the tour than the ACB originally offered. In retrospect the stubbornness of the TCCB is understandable. It unwittingly became involved in
an Australian problem that was not of its making and in the process suffered serious financial losses. Yet when the agreement was reached it was a domestic arrangement between WSC and the ACB and even partial reimbursement of the ICC and TCCB expenses by the ACB was not even considered.

The TCCB also believed that the Indian Board, which had stood by traditional cricket during the WSC era, was treated very shabbily after the truce. In response to the wishes of PBL the ACB cancelled the upcoming summer tour by India. Unlike England and Australia which profits from matches they play at home, India, Pakistan and the West Indies makes its money from touring rather than hosting internationals in its own country. The cancellation of the Australian tour resulted in a serious dent to the Indian cricket coffers.

On the surface the ACB appeared to be satisfied with the contract it had reached with PBL and once again seemed to be in control of Australian cricket. However in reality it was now only an administrative body as PBL dominated the direction of Australian cricket, at least as it was played at the highest level. Aggregate attendance figures produced in the submission to the TPC indicate that only once between 1977 and 1979 did an aggregate crowd exceed 100,000 for an establishment Test
match. This was for the Third Test against England in Melbourne in 1978. Even this figure was a significant drop from previous matches at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). An examination of attendances at the MCG between Christmas and the New Year each cricket season before WSC gives credence to this assertion. The second Test against Pakistan in 1977 resulted in 165,000 attending, 226,690 witnessed the third Test versus the West Indies in 1975 and the third Test against England in 1975 was watched by 250,750. In March 1977, the immediate pre-WSC era, 248,260 attended the Centenary Test.

Comparisons between series that took place in the immediate pre- and post-WSC era (1977-79), quickly reveal the precarious situation the ACB faced. When England toured Australia in 1974/5 the series was attended by 777,243 patrons who paid $869,488. The following season 742,246 people paid $1,132,491 to watch Australia battle the West Indies. In 1977 a shortened tour by Pakistan resulted in an aggregate attendance figure of 324,657 and gross takings of $445,294. The 248,260 attending the Centenary Test paid $262,860 for the privilege. However the five Test tour by India in 1977 returned only $394,262 to the ACB coffers and gross takings of the series against England the following summer were $803,565. Increased attendance prices reduced the financial shortfall to only
$65,923; however, a comparison of attendance figures clearly indicates cricket's waning popularity. The decrease reflects the cricket fan's disenchantment with the establishment sides and WSC concurrent matches.

The ACB's financial deprivation during this period had devastating effects on domestic cricket in general. In the late 1970s in excess of 500,000 junior and senior cricketers played competitive cricket in Australia. Cricket is played principally through organised clubs and the ACB reported in the submission to the TPC that although it was not sure of the exact number it believed there was in excess of 5000 clubs in existence, each running a number of teams. The majority of funding for these clubs comes from the ACB as Australian cricket is funded from the top down. The ACB makes this money from attendances at Tests, the selling of various rights and limited sponsorship packages. After it deducts a small amount for administrative purposes the rest is divided amongst the respective associations who further allocate funds to the clubs. The state associations are small organisations running on tight budgets. They use the funds to further all levels of cricket from the Shield to grass roots.

The split between the establishment and WSC caused severe hardship for the State cricket associations because of the reduced funding levels from the ACB. Although the
cricket war devastated all State associations, an examination of the New South Wales Cricket Association (NSWCA) financial position during this period illustrates the seriousness of the situation. In 1977/78 and 1978/79 the association showed losses of $164,913 and $158,943 respectively. Grants to affiliated organisations were funded by selling assets and by increasing the bank overdraft. The fact that Sheffield Shield matches during the 1970s had only barely broken even further compounded the situation. With the onset of WSC, the NSWCA net position on Shield matches fell from $65,738 in 1976 to a loss of $21,186 in 1978. This condition was repeated in all states. The TPC was informed via the ACB/PBL submission that if the agreement had not been reached a number of State associations would have been forced to declare bankruptcy.

Conversely, even though establishment cricket had been financially crippled by WSC’s intrusion into the marketplace the Packer organisation was incapable of supporting cricket at the district and club level. Although WSC organised a number of cricket clinics, cricket fans cynically viewed them as more a promotional exercise that a genuine attempt at grass roots involvement. Similarly if WSC had attempted to replace the ACB there was no guarantee that the thousands of volunteers who
collectively formed cricket's infrastructure and who ensured the survival and growth of the game at its base level would continue to do so under commercial management. The WSC organisation could not have replaced such volunteers with paid staff. A war of total attrition would have seen neither side victorious.

To maintain its public personna in the post rapprochement era the ACB endeavoured to shroud the agreement in as much secrecy as possible. At its August 10, 1979 meeting the chairman reported that copies of the agreement, with financial clauses deleted, had been distributed to members of the ICC and that similar copies would be given to secretaries of State Associations. It was up to ACB members what information in regard to financial matters would be passed on to State Associations. At the Sixth Annual General Meeting during September 1979 the ACB declared that an injunction had been obtained against the TPC to prevent the publication of the submission. PBL met all costs involved with the submission and those to be assumed in fighting the ABC action on violation of the Trade Practices Act. The ACB Chairman repeatedly stressed the confidentiality of all the above matters at both meetings.

Financially the ACB was more secure in the post-WSC era although its agreement with PBL was not as
enticing in the second half of its ten-year period since it had not been indexed for inflation. ACB Executive Officer David Richards contends his organisation gained a healthy administrative and marketing arm as a result of the association with PBL. However cricket writers and sports journalists maintain that no significant change has occurred in the overarching mentality of those who govern the game. One cricket writer argues that in the past decade the ACB has become more cynical and secretive with the positive aspects of Australian cricket emanating from the state rather than the national level. He further contends that powerful administrators within the ACB have endeavoured to dictate policy to state delegates which has earned them a loathing similar to that bestowed upon Packer between 1977 and 79. Although not as harsh in his condemnation, Ross Edwards astutely notes that such attitudes will always exist as long as administrators are drawn from the same conservative sources. He also maintains that the ACB’s pre-WSC attitude towards the 15 players resurfaced often in the post-WSC era.

During the mid-1980s falling crowd attendances, a persistent problem that has bedevilled the ACB since its inception, once again reared its head. Consequently it can be asserted that problems that have beset the administrators of cricket for the greater part of this
century continued in a subdued but unresolved fashion. While WSC resulted in a number of changes at the presentation level of cricket, other issues such as ACB-player rapport and the attendance cycle have remained problematic.

The Players' Lot Improves

Cricket players in the post-WSC era undoubtedly profitted from the stance taken by the WSC athletes and the game's new commercial orientation. Although limited sponsorship of Australian cricket was in place prior to 1977, after the agreement its presence accelerated significantly. For the 1979/80 triangular series played in Australia between England, the West Indies and the host country, Benson and Hedges allocated $114,000 for the six Test matches and $110,000 to the one-day competition. This money was divided into win-loss pools and equally shared amongst the players. At the domestic level $50,000 was allocated to the Sheffield Shield competition and $34,000 to the MacDonalds Cup. The total sponsorship package for this summer of cricket in Australia was $308,000, nearly three times the $350,000 three-year sponsorship package the ACB had negotiated with Benson and Hedges prior to the 1977 season. For the total 1979/80 season which included both domestic cricket as well as Australian tours to Pakistan, India and a brief appearance in England for the World Cup,
the Benson and Hedges Company provided Australian cricket with $600,000. While the marketing personnel at PBL knew very little about cricket, their ability to market a product, as reflected by the new arrangement with Benson and Hedges, was unquestioned. The results of its sponsorship packages merely attested to the enhanced commercial viability of cricket and that it had long been undervalued in the marketplace.

A key clause in the PBL - ACB agreement related to a fixed amount of money to be set aside and paid to a number of "key" players to enable them to dedicate themselves to cricket for the 1979-80 season. The amount of the retainer was over and above any other monies the players earned through cricket or selected promotions. Fifteen players nominated by the ACB and approved by PBL were each the recipients of an additional $10,000. In reality PBL was buying itself insurance if anything went awry between it and the ACB since it was virtually guaranteed an Australian team. Packer further repeated the above undertaking in 1985 when a rebel tour of South Africa was organised. Four players who were committed to going to South Africa were offered contracts from Packer interests which were too good to be refused. While the ACB stated that it had no proof that the players were under contract to PBL or Packer companies, when Packer was asked for
confirmation no comment was his only reply. Furthermore, given the reticence on the part of normally voluble players to comment on this, there appears to be a certain validity in the presumption. At a time when the 1979 renegotiation process between PBL and the ACB was looming large on the not-too-distant horizon Packer had eight current test players owing allegiance to him. Packer had firmly entrenched himself in power position for the eventual discussions.

While the financial lot of the Australian cricketer improved dramatically as a result of the large infusions of cash from the corporate sector there was a price to be paid. The athlete's lack of input into the reconciliation maintained a situation that had existed since the formation of cricket's governing bodies. They continued to be little more than salaried employees, albeit adequately paid ones at last. Leading cricketers attempts to get the players' association recognised by the ACB were perfunctorily treated at meetings of the sub-committee on cricket in November 1977 and again in February 1980. At those meetings the Australian captain expressed the belief that the players' association would eventually take the place of the cricket sub-committee. ACB Chairman Bob Parrish advised the sub-committee that any proposal regarding the acceptance or liason of the players' association would be
the subject of a formal submission to the ACB. The reluctance of the administrative organisation to allow the players an active voice in the decision making processes of the ACB was as obvious in 1980 as it was 1977. Apparently two years of WSC had produced little headway in respect to player input into Australian cricket.19

The amount of cricket being played expanded in the post WSC period. A major condition of the agreement was the provision for a maximum of 20 limited over internationals each season. Such matches had proved extremely successful for WSC and Packer had no intention of losing his latest television product following the rapprochement. Greg Chappell argues that the ACB, prompted by PBL and Channel Nine, produced "intineries of madness" in the post-Packer era. Players were not only asked to participate in a complete traditional test series but were also required to engage in one-day games which could increase their total on-field time for the summer by more than 50 percent. Although David Richards refutes Chappell's assertion, the involvement of commercial forces in the running of Australian cricket caused considerable tension in the country's teams of the early 1980s. Australian cricket players readily accepted the principles of capitalism into their arena in terms of adequate compensation for the display of their skill and the
promotion of both themselves as stars and the game generally, but it can only be speculated whether or not they fully realised the product maximisation involved, that is they had to play increased number of contests. It is doubtful that they did.

The Rise in Fandom

Undoubtedly one of the major winners in the aftermath of WSC was the sport fan. Whilst the traditionalists bemoaned the fate that had befallen the game they were in the minority and represented only a small percentage of the number of people that viewed the game from the boundary or on television. Larger numbers of people listened to cricket on the radio, phoned in for sports results and scoured newspaper columns searching for cricket information. The net effect being that millions of Australians maintained an interest in cricket during the summer months.

The advent of WSC one-day matches sparked an increased public interest in cricket that carried over to the establishment in the post-agreement era. The popularity of one-day cricket stems from a variety of factors. Given its limited time span it is far more accessible to a general audience, there is a guaranteed result, exciting skills are displayed, and the majority of players both bat and bowl. Hence it is more like the
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game that Australians remember from the school yard and as such it creates a bond with their past. Only Australians lucky enough to make a Test team have experienced the nuances of a five-day match and in any given year that number is unlikely to exceed twenty. For the cricket going public one-day cricket had an immediate connection with familiar cricket. Furthermore it was a well staged spectacle that excited the crowd. David Salter drew parallels between the unfolding drama of a day-night match and the fate of the christians against the lions. Moreover the spectacle was accessible whether at the ground or in front of the television. Day-night cricket in the 1980s was convenient, exciting and entertaining. Such excitement is rarely, if ever, reached in a Test match. The difference between the two can be likened to the difference between the pop song and the symphony and as such derives its support from different segments of the community.

David Richards suggests that there are people who will only go the one-day game and are not interested in the longer form. In addition, it is the entertainment factor, not cricket, which draws them to the ground.

While Salter and Richards comments are little more than educated speculation, a comparison between 1978-79 and 1979-80 attendance figures indicate that cricket had developed a new appeal for the sporting public during this
period. Between December 1978 and February 1979 the Australian establishment side played a six Test series against England which resulted in a series attendance of 370,574 and an average daily attendance of 12,778. This was followed by a two Test series against Pakistan in March which was watched by 59,272 people. The average daily attendance was 5,927. The cumulative total for the 1978-79 test cricket season was 429,846. This translated to 11,022 per day for 39 days.

The following season a full strength Australia side was involved in a three test series with England and a similar one with the West Indies. The three match England series was watched by 210,454, an average of 16,189 patrons per day. Similarly the matches involving the West Indies were viewed by 277,937 at an average of 16,281 per day. Cumulatively 438,391 attended a test cricket match in 1979-80 which averaged 16,237 per day over 27 days.

The 1979-80 season resulted in a crowd increase of nearly 10,000 over the previous summer season despite twelve less days of play. Furthermore while the gate return for the 1978-79 season was $807,043, in 1979-80 it was $1,307,200. Even though attendance prices increased from one season to the next the financial upswing is considerable. Moreover such figures tell only a partial story. The ACB tried to capitalise on the popularity of
limited over cricket during the WSC years by introducing four one day internationals to the Australian public in January and February 1979. Attendance at these games was only 40,448. Conversely in 1979-80, 257,333 people attended thirteen one-day internationals which resulted in an additional $803,042 taken at the gate. The final analysis shows that in 1978-79 473,294 patrons spent $894,901 to attend all games under the ageis of the ACB. In 1979-80, 695,725 customers paid $2,137,621 to watch international cricket.

Speaking for the ACB, Richards also contends that as the 1980s progressed one of the successes of his organisation was that it built a bridge between one-day cricket and test cricket and introduced younger fans to the latter. There is evidence to support this thesis. However, the new fans brought with them their own expectations to both the test and the limited over series which on occasions has produced consternation among cricket authorities. Greg Chappell compares the new crowds to those that normally attended football matches. He claims that while they were not as erudite about cricket as the crowds of the pre-WSC era they were far more volatile and provided the players with considerably more feedback. The new breed of fans had more in common with English soccer fans than with traditional cricket followers. One scholar
speculates that the majority of such fans are young working class men who are devoid of possessions in a society where possessions are revered. They have developed a strong sense of affiliation with the Australian team and regard it as a possession to be defended. As a result they are vocal, even hostile, in their support of 'their team.' This was a direct flow on from the WSC era which actively encouraged the team and fan association.

The television fan gained a totally new view of cricket with the innovations Channel Nine introduced. Cameras at a variety of angles, superimposed boxes in the corner, scores on the screen and microphones at the base of the stumps have all enhanced the visual experience. Yet the audio aspect of the telecasts has proved wanting as the viewing is constantly interrupted by the frequent placement of television commercials and the new cricket commentators are far less erudite than their ABC counterparts. Hence the alleged numbers of fans who watch the game on commercial television while listening to it on ABC radio are legendary and are causing concerns for advertisers who rightly fear that their products are being ignored.

World Series Cricket on Television

Perhaps appropriately the agreement between PBL and the ACB appeared in the marketing section of the May 31, 1979 edition of the Australian Financial Review. It
suggested that commercialism had won the day in Australia and that the thrust the Packer organisation adopted would be the approach of the new era. WSC in its second year, and especially its day-night matches, had proved to be successful television and the intent of all involved in cricket in the post rapprochement era was to assist in the continuation of this success. Under the terms of the agreement it is obvious that the Packer organisation was placed in a most favourable position to not only dictate the path of cricket’s future but also to derive maximum benefit from its growth. It held this position until the selling of its media concerns to the Bond Corporation in 1987.

When PBL presented the case for total television exclusivity to TPC it argued that such a policy was an essential element of competition between television stations and that it had been universal in the Australian commercial television industry since its inception. Moreover it asserted that both the major aspects of marketing a package of television programs to advertisers, namely viewer ratings and program mix, depended to a large extent on exclusivity. In conclusion its major contention was that there was nothing about the televising of cricket which changed the general rule that exclusivity is an essential ingredient in competition in the industry.
PBL's submission to the TPC considerably downplayed the potential value of cricket exclusivity to commercial television. Instead it extensively elaborated on issues such as summer "down" time, a period when advertisers traditionally do not commit a great deal of advertising expenditure to television; the high cost of live coverage of cricket and sporting programs in general; cricket's lack of regular, natural breaks which reduces its suitability to carry television advertising; and the game's poor ratings. Similarly, the request for a minimum three-year television contract centred around the contention that the decision to televise cricket was highly speculative, expensive and unlikely to generate profit before a third year.

While PBL's assertions regarding the linkage between sport and commercial television were essentially correct, the TPC was presented with a narrow view of the relationship based solely on the Nine network's two-year association with WSC. There was no allusion to potential trends or the television-advertising expectations of a full strength national team. During the WSC era, establishment cricket occurred concurrently and although support for the latter dwindled it still had its following. Yet the possible cumulative affect of the two sides coming together was not referred to at any stage.

In the post rapprochement era rating figures would be
presented to potential sponsors of cricket which were at variance with those presented to the TPC. Neither set of figures were necessarily false. They merely indicate the ways statistics were manipulated to give credence to an argument.

The rating figures the McNair Anderson Pty. Ltd. prepared for the ACB/PBL submission indicate that in Melbourne 13 percent of homes watched Test cricket while 14 percent watched WSC. In Sydney the comparable figures were 9 percent for both types of cricket. If these figures are combined to indicate total cricket viewing the result would be a 27 percent viewing share for Melbourne and an 18 percent share for Sydney. This would have made cricket the fourth highest rating show in Melbourne and sixth highest in Sydney during the summer rating period. All higher rated shows, with the exception of one, were Australian produced dramas or current affairs and consequently involved considerable production costs. Packer's concern with reducing the cost of domestic production has already been alluded to. More significantly in terms of program profiles the ratings chart indicates that both styles of cricket had a higher percentage of males over 18 plus than any other show or series.

In 1980, a little over twelve months after the agreement was reached the promotional package for cricket
on. Channel Nine, titled "The Media Catch of the Season," was presented to prospective clients. The data contained within the package was appreciably different to that presented to the TPC. New figures suggested that 65 percent and 80 percent of adults in TV homes in Sydney and Melbourne respectively watched cricket at some stage that summer. The average combined viewing audience was said to be 402,000 over all live telecasts. Furthermore Channel Nine asserted that cricket outrated tennis, the major competitor in terms of televised summer sport, by approximately 40 percent and that cricket's commercial share averaged 66 percent.

Since Channel Nine's sport marketing arm presented the above figures they are both debateable and raise interesting questions. Channel Nine did not explicate why cricket became such a ratings winner in the period between the agreement and the first series thereafter. It also submitted different rating figures to the TPC and its potential clients. In its submission to the government agency its analysis of television ratings was for all cricket presented on this media. However when Channel Nine presented the ratings figures to prospective customers they separated the game into international and domestic contests. Obviously if Channel Nine had only presented the ratings for international matches to the TPC the ratings
would have been appreciably higher and undercut their claim that commercial exclusivity did not confer a competitive advantage over other networks. Yet while the TPC discussed the contract in the latter part of 1979 PBL publicly acknowledged that it had little intention of televising Shield cricket, a perennial ratings loser. While PBL strongly downplayed the sport-television relationship to the TPC, it glamourised this association to prospective clients. Both scenarios are potentially true depending on how the figures are manipulated.

PBL’s other alleged “downsides” of televised cricket, argued before the TPC are also open to interpretation. PBL acknowledged that although the revenue from broadcasting WSC had improved over the two year period, the general downward trend in summer advertising revenue had not been halted, but rather had merely decreased. It further suggested that the cost of programming had been extremely high and produced figures to show that the Nine Network expended $2,649,976 in 1977/78 for a return of $471,430 and $1,937,902 in 1978/79 for a $1,236,000 return. Once again the marketing potential of a united Australian side was not referred to and the fact that the majority of costs in the first year were non-repeating capitalisation expenses was also ignored.

The argument that summer was an inappropriate time to
sell television advertising was as much a result of the networks inferior programming during this period as it was a reluctance on the part of advertisers to buy. Although Channel Nine never fully divulged exact sponsorship packages for the two years of WSC's operation there is little doubt that sponsorship increased during the second season. Furthermore graphs of advertising revenue for Channel Nine reveals that while the downward trend in acquiring revenue was only marginally lessened by WSC's presence on commercial television, the recovery rate was far more rapid in 1978/79 than it had been in any of the prior four-year periods, even though a slight trend had emerged the previous summer.

For the summer of 1979/80 potential cricket sponsors were offered a vast array of benefits. Exclusivity of product category, magazine backup, even rotation through time zones, solus placement of advertising, identification of sponsors by pull throughs, free tickets, VIP areas for entertaining in capital cities, sponsorships involving single or multiple cities, and day or night or day/night combinations were all offered in an effort to lure advertising dollars. Benson and Hedges was obviously impressed by the sponsorship packages. By 1981/82 its commitment to televised cricket had risen to nearly one million dollars, a substantial increase from the $350,000
negotiated in 1977. Although the exact sponsorship figures and advertising revenue for cricket after the agreement are a well kept secret it is certain that PBL and the Nine Network made large sums of money.

After the first three-year broadcast period, which had been granted to Channel Nine under the terms of the agreement, PBL was obligated to sell the television rights to the highest offer in each consecutive three-year period. This was to ensure an open and competitive bidding system. The submission stated that there was no conflict of interest in such an arrangement and that the Nine Network would not be placed in a preferential bidding position because of the relationship between it and PBL. While such an argument may have satisfied the Trade Practices Commission there is no doubt that the Nine Network would always have the first right of refusal. Ten years after the agreement the Head of ABC Sport maintains that the ACB still had "a reflex position on anything that comes up with PBL/9."

When tenders were called in 1982 for the television rights for the next three-year period Channel Nine was the only bidder. This lack of interest was not a reflection of cricket on television but more the result of the tendering process. The Financial Review reported that one senior television executive suggested that the process was "off
putting” and looked a little like one hand of the Packer organisation giving to another. While this may have appeared to be the case it is extremely unlikely, even given its preferred customer status, that PBL and the network would do anything to subvert the conditions the TPC laid down. Packer had battled long and hard to obtain the pre-eminent position and it is most unlikely that he would have done anything to jeopardise his future accessibility to the sport. Cricket was the flagship in the Packer plan to make Nine the major sporting network in the country.

By 1982 cricket was extremely profitable for Consolidated Press. Not only did it own the television rights which had generated large sponsorship and advertising monies, it had also established a host of merchandising and marketing activities. Promotional and "give-away" days were held at the grounds, WSC approved articles were available for purchase at venues and in department stores, competitions were organised in conjunction with major sponsors and players made in-store promotional appearances. This resulted in a two-way financial feeder system for the organisation. Consequently even if Channel Nine had lost the television rights to cricket, the Packer organisation, through PBL, would have still controlled all the marketing and merchandising of the
game due to the ten-year agreement between the ACB and PBL. Lynton Taylor, PBL Managing Director at the time, articulated the belief that the investment in cricket was long term and the full benefits would not be seen for a decade, but it may be asserted that given increased television ratings, rising attendances and growing sponsorship that short term returns had proved exciting as well. By 1982 cricket was an established and proven success as Channel Nine’s focal point during the summer months. The upsurge in the sport’s popularity only accentuated PBL’s financial growth.

The Real Revolution

Unquestionably the real revolution during the WSC era occurred in television not cricket. It was what happened in television that made sport interesting. Salter, head of ABC sport, contends that there was a widely held belief in media circles that the American Broadcasting Corporation had struck a blow for television generally by hyping its sport coverage during the 1970s. As a result the assumption was made in the Australian television industry that factual television, — — sports, news and current affairs — — would be the dominant form of the 1980s. Cognizant of what was happening in the United States, Packer envisaged that programming of television in Australia would develop along similar lines in the not-too-
distant future. Moreover, he not only adhered to such a philosophy, but also pioneered its development in the Australian setting.

This is not to suggest that Packer initiated the sport-television relationship in Australia. Such an association had been quite healthy since the early 1960s. Cricket, tennis, golf, cricket, rugby league, rugby union and surf-lifesaving were all on ABC television at the time but not the commercial networks. However, it was the combination of a host of socio-cultural forces during the 1970s and the various developments directly related to the television industry that resulted in large scale commercial interest in sport.

Packer's acceptance the American model of television is well chronicled. In 1983 he was likened in the American television industry to Leonard Goldstein, the president of the American Broadcasting Corporation. Packer was fascinated by Goldstein and described him as "astute, innovative, smart, aware and understanding." He also greatly admired William S. Paley, the founder of Columbia Broadcasting System, referring to him as "genius". Conversely Packer envisioned English television as "atrocious, not just indifferent but bad." He firmly believed that Australia had one of the best television services in the world, but he recognised that in terms of
production it could not compete with the American product because of the constraints of limited population which translated to limited amounts of funds available for local production and limited distribution potential. Packer commented in a 1977 interview with The Age that if it would be a viable economic proposition he would recruit the best American writers and producers and endeavour to produce six hours of quality product that could be sold on the world market. However local content requirements that insisted on quantity rather than quality mitigated against such an occurrence. As a result Packer looked for something local in content and cheap to produce. Cricket readily met this criteria.

During the mid-1970s Packer was also involved in discussions surrounding the launching of a domestic satellite which may shed light on the reasons for his vigorous and persistent efforts to gain the exclusive television rights to cricket. The examination of this issue reveals Packer as an astute businessman and places the WSC operation in its true light as a vehicle to access the public.

In 1976 Packer had concluded that there was a need for a signal distribution system in Australia that was not terrestrial. Looking at Canadian and Alaskan models, he was fascinated by the capability of domestic satellites to
access vast, desolate areas, similar to those in Australia. As a result of domestic satellite communication in those countries, mainstream television and radio programming was available to every home irrespective of location. He presented his ideas to then Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser who readily latched onto the concept. Fraser believed that this type of system would slow the drift of people from remote locations into the urban areas by keeping them informed and giving them a feeling of participation in what was happening in the country. Packer commissioned Donald Bond from the Radio Corporation of America to report on the establishment of a domestic satellite communications system and presented the report to the Prime Minister. Fraser endorsed the report and named a committee to get an Australian domestic satellite into space.

Whilst the project immediately came under attack from a variety of government departments and interest groups, it is worthwhile to explore the potential short term benefits of this operation to Packer given his concurrent involvement with cricket. At the first organised and major public debate on the intended satellite system in Canberra during March 1979, Packer was accused of trying to "bankrupt existing regional television stations and replacing them with monopoly programming from the networks." Indeed Packer conceded at the "Domsat Conference" that one of the
primary motives in his push to have the system operationalised was the potential advertising revenue presently unavailable due to the inability of ground networks to access such markets. While the government argued along the lines of the social importance of improved communication to remote areas, Packer's concerns were purely fiscal. This is understandable given there had been an 81 percent increase in advertising growth in country areas in the previous two years and indications were that a similar rate of expansion was likely in the future.

The potential accessibility of the commercial networks to a national system of communication not only threatened the regional stations, it would also directly challenge the national monopoly of the ABC. Hence if a satellite was launched and Packer simultaneously gained the exclusive rights for Australia's only truly national game, cricket, he would not only open up previously untapped markets but would also have an extremely marketable commodity to sell to potential advertisers. In the process he would eliminate a major competitor, the ABC, from mainstream sports coverage.

While such a scenario did not eventuate at this time, under the terms of the ACB/PBL agreement the ACB appointed the Packer organisation to promote the program of cricket it organised in Australia for a ten-year period. Included
in the rights package was the mandate to arrange the television coverage of all test and one day internationals as well as other agreed upon matches. Hence if the Domsat Satellite was launched at any time during the 1980s a Packer company PBL would have been in a position to supply another Packer enterprise Channel Nine with a national event for national broadcast.

By the time the news of the rapprochement broke in 1979, Kerry Packer's agenda for televised cricket had been fulfilled and he had already publicly distanced himself from the game. Lynton Taylor supplied all major comment on the event while Packer engaged in a golfing session on the Australian course with Jack Nicklaus. However between 1979 and 1987, when Packer sold his electronic media interests including PBL marketing to the Bond Corporation, the persona of the media mogul had a huge influence on the public's perception of the game and its athletes.

While it is unquestioned that Packer had a genuine feeling for the game of cricket, his decisions between 1977 and 1987 were based on business acumen not passion, and his enterprises profitted considerably by their association with cricket. Furthermore his often stated contention that sport made cheap profitable television proved correct during the early part of the 1980s if television ratings and expanding demographics presented by the Nine Network to
prospective sponsors are any indication. The combined 1979/80 Sydney - Melbourne ratings and demographics indicate that the average cricket rating for the season was 16.4 with a peak of 26 percent. This realised a commercial share of 66 percent. Demographically cricket was watched in 234,000 homes by 378,000 persons. Major categories were males 18+ (193,000), females 18+ (112,000), housewives (110,000) and those under 18 (73,000). Increases the following summer were 10,000 in homes, 15,000 people, 8000 males and 9000 females. That year the youth category was divided into children 5-12 and teens 13-17 with the numbers in such categories being 29,000 and 37,000 respectively. Average ratings for this 1980/81 were 15 for the mornings which often increased to 20 in the afternoon. The ratings peak for the season was 43. Demographic profiles for 1981/82 suggest a further 10 percent increase in the number of people watching cricket with major gains in the categories of women (15 percent), housewives (13 percent), teens (20 percent) and children (16 percent). By the following season the upward surge began to slow with the only major rise in viewership occurring in the housewife category. Ratings remained constant both in terms of averages and peaks from the preceding year. Although 1983/84 resulted once again in an increase in the numbers of people watching the game on television the following
season there was a substantial drop in all demographic profiles to the 1982/83 levels. Such levels continued to fall across the board in 1985/86 and 1986/87.

The rise and fall of cricket viewership during this period can be attributed to a number of factors although individually they are not causal. In the early 1980s the Australian cricket team was once again at full strength and a number of its players achieved superstar status through PBL's marketing machinery. Such individuals were powerful hooks to both the sporting and business community. The peak of this era occurred in 1983/84 with the "Thunder Downunder" tour by Pakistan and the West Indies. However during this season a number of great Australian players such as Dennis Lillee, Greg Chappell and Rod Marsh retired which not only resulted in a decline in on-field performances it also reduced the "star" quality of the Australian team. In addition, successive rebel tours to South Africa were organised in 1985/86 and 1986/87. They were undertaken by players who were either on the fringe of national selection, coming to the end of their careers and regarded South Africa as the pot at the end of the rainbow, and/or who felt they had been treated badly in the rapprochement between the ACB and PBL. A number of players who had stood by the ACB during the WSC era believed that such loyalty should have been rewarded in the post
rapprochement period. However, in their minds this was not the case. Feeling that the ACB had ignored and rejected them, they looked elsewhere to further both their careers and the rewards from the game. The South Africa issue reopened many of the freshly healed wounds in Australian cricket that had taken such a long time to repair in the aftermath of WSC. To preserve the future of Australian cricket Kerry Packer made the financial offers to a number of potential rebels. While this ensured such players remained with official cricket and subsequently on Channel Nine, the ACB did not sanction such contracts and it caused a rift in the player ranks. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1980s, the historical cyclical pattern of cricket had turned around and Australia was once again at the top of the game. International victories were won by new Australian heroes for whom WSC was but a page in the history books.

In the decade following the ACB-WSC agreement Australian cricket exhibited many new traits as well as continuing to replicate those which had historically impacted on the ebbs and flows of the game. The ACB continued to organise the program of Australian cricket but the concerns of the Nine Network and PBL were readily acquiesced to in terms of the placement of Test and one-day cricket within the season. While various combinations of fixtures initially emerged, the scheduling of international
cricket quickly reverted to traditional patterns with the Test cricket being the showpiece of the season and the one-day international's played en masse at the end of summer. In the process the ACB earned more from cricket in Australia than it had in any previous era, as it was guaranteed $1.8 million dollars per annum as a result of the agreement. In 1987 the ACB renegotiated the arrangement for a further five years.

Benefits to the players increased immeasurably during this period. Individual contracts were more lucrative and players had greater opportunities to share in the spoils of their victories on the field and to capitalise on their status off it. Furthermore their post-cricket life was partially provided for by the creation of substantial provident funds. Despite such improved conditions antagonism persisted in the Australian cricket camp. While initial rapport between WSC and establishment players was strained the eventual retirement from the Australian team of the leading Packer players should have resulted in a new bond between the Australian players. Yet just as the healing process was complete the spectre of rebel tours to South Africa split the team and it was not until the end of the decade that the camaraderie essential for international success was realised.

Off the field cricket's new marketing arm, PBL,
introduced merchandising in such a big way that by 1982 in excess of one hundred cricket related and endorsed items were for sale. Furthermore televised cricket revolutionised the summer viewing habits of the Australian population as evidenced by excellent viewer ratings and sizeable demographic profiles across all major categories. While actual sponsorship and advertising details from the period are unavailable, it is hard to believe that such groups would not have endeavoured to access cricket’s new fans.

For the expanded cricketing public the game of the 1980s was entertaining, spectacular and well placed to fit in with the demands of contemporary society. While the traditionalists could still embrace the nuances of the longer form of the game, one-day cricket catered for both those who wanted to be associated with the ‘Australianness’ of the game but had limited understanding of its conventions, and for those who wanted the immediacy of the drama. While both styles of cricket maintained their faithful the line of demarcation between such groups became increasingly blurred.

For Kerry Packer the takeover of Australian cricket was a small part of a much larger agenda which had its antecedants in the decade prior to WSC and its projections in the decade after. As the fortunes of Australian cricket
soared and stumbled in the post-WSC era the deal he had forged with Australia's national sport stands out like a beacon in the relationship between sport and commercial television in Australia. Moreover WSC was the trigger mechanism that launched this relationship to previously unseen heights and forever altered the Australian's viewing perception of sport.
ENDNOTES


3. "Cricket Cover Deal Opposed," _ibid._, October 6, 1979, 1; "A Test Case Riles the ABC," _ibid._, November 15, 1979, 23.


11. _Ibid._

12. Interview with Chris Harte, Editor of _The Australian Cricket Journal_, July 7, 1989; _Submission_, 4-5.

13 _Submission_, 25-27.

15. Interview with David Richards, Executive Officer of the Australian Cricket Board, September 8, 1989; Interview with Harte; Interview with Ross Edwards, Head of Sport Marketing: Channel Nine, August 8, 1989.


17. Minutes of the Meeting of the Cricket Sub-Committee of the ACB, January 24, 1979; ibid., August 20, 1979; Minutes of the Australian Cricket Board, January 12-13, 1977.


21. Submission, 10. For an example of the type of argument used to deprecate the popular appeal of cricket on commercial television see, Geoff Lawrence, "It's Not Cricket," Arena, 16 (1983): 131-45.

22. Interview with David Salter - Head of ABC Sport, August 9, 1989; Interview with Richards.


25. **Interview with Harte.**


30. Cricket Promotion Booklet, ACB/Nine Network. ACB Chairman Bob Parrish penned the introduction to this promotion. In it he commends the association between Channel Nine and the ACB asserting that cricket has never looked better. He also states that "we have shown that properly presented, cricket is not only great sport it is great entertainment." Such a statement was a remarkable turnaround in a short space of time.


32. **Submission.**

33. **Ibid.**, Appendix 7: TCN Channel 9 Pty. Ltd., Graph of Advertising Revenue, 1975-79.


35. **Submission; Interview with Salter.**


37. **Ibid.**
38. Interview with David Salter - Head of ABC Sport, August 9, 1989; Interview with Ross Edwards - Head of Sport Marketing: Channel Nine, August 8, 1989. For an examination of the rise of the American Broadcasting Corporation sport see, Randy Roberts and James Olson, Winning is the Only Thing: Sport in America since 1945 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1989), 113-31.

39. Interview with Salter.


47. Interview with Richards.

48. For an examination of the rebel tours to South Africa see, Chris Harte and Warwick Hadfield, Cricket Rebels (Sydney: Horwitz Grahame, 1985); Chris Harte, Two Tours and Pollock: The Australian Cricketers in South Africa (Adelaide: Sportsplan Marketing, 1988).

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS ON WORLD SERIES CRICKET, TELEVISION AND AUSTRALIAN CULTURE

The World Series Cricket era was intimately related to the expanding nature of Australian culture and the burgeoning presence of television in Australian society. As such it readily exemplified the tensions that exist when the forces of change are challenged by historical traditions. In such a conflict neither side could be totally victorious and the final outcome was the product of the amalgamation of the past and the present. Such a bond is not necessarily comprised of equal parts yet the mere fact that there is a grafting of the old onto the new is illustrative of both change and continuity. During the late 1970s and the 1980s Australian cricket clearly exemplified this belief.

While WSC reflected tensions in the sporting environment it was equally indicative of the evolving nexus between sport and television in Australia and how this linkage was related to society at large. On one level WSC was a commercial and professional response to the valid concerns of subjugated athletes and at a more pervasive level it was an attempt to adjust to and accommodate the
changing leisure patterns and entertainment expectations of society at large. Once the bell cover over the era as a sporting incident is removed, and the event is examined in its historical and contemporary cultural context, it is clear that the era was one of progression rather a radical revolution with television the vehicle for change rather than its cause. Put simply, WSC was a product of its times.

**World Series Cricket as Cricket**

While WSC was clearly the singular most disruptive force to invade the world of establishment cricket it was hardly an isolated incident. Although WSC was essentially played out as an Australian issue the fact that over fifty of the world's premier cricket athletes said yes to its approach indicates that the issues under contention were not unique to this nation. However it is unquestioned that the changing demographics and societal expectations within Australia established the context for the shake up of establishment cricket. It is for this reason that WSC may be regarded as a indigenous issue.

The history of Australian cricket has long been riddled with tension between players and administrators as well as having an ongoing commercial overtone. During the nineteenth century cricket emerged as a game that encouraged entrepreneurial and player involvement in its
production, but the eventual creation of a governing body led to continual player disenchantment as they lacked any input into the governance of the sport and failed to receive adequate reimbursement for their time and skills. While conflict between players and administrators facilitated change within the cricket world a path of continuity underpinned cricket's evolving nature as participation in the game expanded at the national and international level.

The establishment of WSC as well as the eventual agreement between the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) and the various companies of Publishers and Broadcasting Ltd. (PBL) only partially addressed one of the players concerns, albeit the most significant one, financial recompense. WSC has rightfully been credited for drawing attention to the inadequate financial returns to the players from the game, yet even now Australian cricket players are only adequately paid. Elite Australian cricketers earn only a fraction of the astronomical player payments that are a regular feature of North American team sport yet they are on a par in terms of the appropriate skill level. Similarly Australian cricketers still have limited input into the controlling mechanisms of the game. Initial attempts by concerned players in the pre-Packer era to establish the Cricket Players' Association were met with
only perfunctory approval by the ACB. However in an effort to give the players a sense of involvement in their sport the ACB established the Sub-Committee on Cricket in 1976. This committee consisted of representation from both ACB delegates and players. Although this sub-committee supposedly provided a forum for the airing of player concerns, many legitimate grievances raised at the meetings were not dealt with immediately but were referred to the ACB and placed on their agenda for a future meeting. Issues of a promotional or commercial nature were never discussed and the dissemination of plans of action generally flowed from the administration to the players rather than the other way around.

Packer alleged responsiveness to the players' concerns has been referred to, and he readily utilised the talents of both past and present athletes in the creation and organisation of his televised cricket series. Yet player involvement was glaringly absent during the rapprochement process and athletes from both the WSC and establishment camps were displeased at the lack of consideration shown to them by the negotiating bodies. Arguably the lack of player consultation in the post-Packer period led to a continued lack of rapport between the game's administrators and the players and resulted in rebel tours to South Africa. In the final analysis, players,
whether contracted to the establishment or Packer, were still chattels in the service of others whose first concern was always their own survival.

In the post-WSC era player input into the conditions of their performing environment did not appreciably improve yet player dissent was not as pronounced as it was during the 1970s. A possible reason for this scenario is that Australian cricket did not elevate to the national level the type of anti-authoritarian figures in the 1980s it did in the previous decade. The explanation for this is three-fold. First, the ACB made a conscious attempt to select athletes who were more team than individually oriented even if this meant the overall reduction of team talent. Second, society generally lacked the same anti-authority and rebellious overtones in the the 1980s that it had in the 1979s. Finally, and probably the most influential was that the increased benefits available to the players dulled their sense of injustice over their lack of control and reduced their levels of agitation.

Australian cricket during the 1980s split into dual camps with some fan movement between the two. One-day cricket proved to be the financial and spectatorial success with test cricket continuing to be organised along traditional lines. While one-day cricket mirrored the frenetic pace of the 1980s and reflected spectators'
entertainment expectations, test cricket provided fans with a link to their past. Hence while the continuity of a cricket mentality provided a focus for contemporary disgruntledness the mere fact that it exists creates the reference point from which change can be negotiated. WSC did not, and could not have if it had tried to, eradicate cricket's historical mindset. For as much as WSC informed the Australian sports fan how far they had come, establishment cricket was a poignant reminder of where they had come from.

**World Series Cricket as Television**

While terms such as 'catalyst' or 'trigger mechanism' can be used to describe the effect of WCS in the sport-television nexus it clearly was the watershed in the relationship between these two cultural institutions. Not only did WSC change the tone of sport on television it provided a new and exciting vehicle for the conveyance of advertising information to a national audience. In both instances it was eminently successful.

In the pre-WSC era cricket was presented on television in a very prosaic and unadventurous way. It was produced and transmitted through the eyes of the expert and unless the viewer's had some experience with the game at the advanced level it was exceedingly difficult for them to follow the ebbs and flows of the contest. To the great
majority of viewers the term "exciting draw" was little more than an oxymoron. To attract a wider and more diverse audience to cricket as well as have a valid product to present to potential advertisers and sponsors, television producers had to do three things: it had to make the game comprehensible to the lay viewer; it had to lift the game's perceived excitement level; and, it had to keep the viewer captivated. WSC did all three.

Channel Nine through WSC brought revolutionary innovations to the viewing of sport on commercial television in Australia and replicated the success that Roone Arledge had with the American Broadcasting Corporation Sports in the United States. The increased number of television cameras in use at the games provided home viewers with shots of the game that were barely discernible at the ground. Indeed television gave the viewer privileged access to the event. Replays of the action from a variety of angles enhanced the viewers association with the cricketers on the field as they were now able to adopt the player's perspective in critical situations. Split screen imagery enabled the television viewer to observe two facets of the game simultaneously, which previously was only possible through actual attendance at the match. Television showed the batsmen running between the wickets and the fielders converging on
the struck ball at the same time. This allowed the audience at home to geographically coordinate two distinct pieces of action. The use of a host of on-screen graphics to give current scores, show clips from past performances or to illustrate the types of balls being bowled served multiple purposes. Such techniques were not only genuinely informative for the cricket neophyte, but they raised the perceived excitement level of the game. Cricket on commercial television exhibited a different tone than cricket on ABC. While the latter could allow for moments of quiet reflection due to the nature of its broadcasting format and its adopted cultured tone, this luxury was not possible on the commercial network. A low key approach by commentators was not desirable if their commentary was to be punctuated by loud vibrant advertisements for hamburgers and soft drinks. As a result producers and commentators were required to elevate the excitement level of the game to make it more compatible with its commercial orientation. For cricket to be a viable economic proposition on commercial television both the game and the commentary had to be entertaining. The greater the entertainment factor, the more likely cricket was to be a popular commercial television program. The greater the popularity the more desirable the product would be to the advertising community.
While the business community was cautious in its initial support of the venture the eventual ratings success of cricket on commercial television was a springboard to the increasing interconnection between sport and this medium. In the process advertisers initial reluctance to strongly involve themselves in this association quickly waned. WSC instigated this situation by adopting the marketing procedures used in North American to present and sell sporting products to the fan both at the game and in the home. Packer believed the game's commercial potential had not been seriously tapped and he brought to its production the hard edge of business. While he did not know that much about sport he knew how to run a business and a host of people profitted by the connection he made.

In the post WSC era the technical quality of the cricket coverage by Channel Nine has been excellent. Moreover this excellence has been transferred to other sports such as rugby and horseracing with equal skill and varying success. The fact that vast numbers of television viewers readily accepted and enjoyed the growth of the symbiotic relationship between sport and television is indicative of not only the entertainment power of such an association but also the entertainment expectations of the home audience. Largely due to the advent and success of WSC live sport became a hot property for commercial
television.

**Sport and Television**

The rapid popular acceptance of the relationship between sport and commercial television in Australia is not surprising. The model for success already existed through the North American experience and the similarities between the societies at this time resulted in the replication of that association in Australia. In the 1960s and 1970s Roone Arledge of the American Broadcasting Corporation initiated a revolution in television sport. He recognised that sport had become a universal currency crossing class and racial lines and that if presented in an appropriate manner could attract a much wider audience than the sport's devotees. Arledge endeavoured to take the casual viewer or fan to the game through the medium of television and Packer replicated this approach directly during the WSC era.

Arledge viewed sport as commercial entertainment. His major concern in its production was to create a larger than life experience for the viewer and in the process capture significant audience ratings. He also discovered that pre-packaged sport had popular appeal and this led to the creation of shows such as Wide World of Sports. By the 1980s this also was replicated in Australia.

The parallels between Arledge and Packer are obvious and the attention the Australian gave to the practices of
the American is clearly evidenced by one significant example. Randy Roberts and James Olson point out that during the televising of the 1976 Summer Olympics from Montreal, the American Broadcasting Corporation network devoted hundreds of commercial minutes to the promotion of its upcoming fall television shows. In the fall of 1976 the Neilson ratings indicated that it had surpassed Columbia Broadcasting System for all shows. Packer adopted a similar practice during his summer coverage of WSC and whilst it was generally believed that such was the result of his inability to find sponsors to fill all commercial spots, the ratings success of Channel Nine during the 1980s attests to the astuteness of this practice.

For all the similarities between the Australia and the North America experience one major difference existed. Sport in Australia was organised and governed by non-paid elected officials yet in North America it was often administered by groups with vested financial interests. Moreover the major concern of such groups in regard to the transmission of sport on television was its perceived impact on the financial success of the live gate. Australia cricket officials, unlike their American sport counterparts, did not readily covet the growth of this relationship. Cricket's administrators were unwilling to adopt a leadership role in establishing positive growth in
the nexus between sport and television. They were content
to keep this medium at arms length and merely dictate the
direction any ensuing relationship would take. The advent
of WSC not only changed the face of cricket on commercial
television, and eventually all commercial sport, it altered
the relationship that existed between this media and
sporting officials. Eventually individual concerns were
acknowledged, compromises reached and guidelines
established for future sporting presentations. However
this stage was only reached after much dissension, debate
and acrimony concerning the symbiotic relationship between
sport and television. Moreover this was reflective of
historical rather than future uncertainties.

Australian television is essentially a conservative
institution born in a conservative era. Given the
conservative mind set of cricket administrators it is
hardly surprising that the initial arrangements between the
two were cordial. This relationship was eventually
disturbed by a number of significant factors which directly
impacted on the growth of television in Australia. The
advent of color, the banning of tobacco advertising and
rapidly developing technology rapidly accelerated the
sport-television relationship. Such influences, along with
changing leisure patterns, caused a revolution in the
viewing habits of the Australian public and as a result
programmers and schedulers quickly searched for an advantage in color. Sport was accessed for a variety of reasons. Not only was it cheap to produce and made exciting visual television it also satisfied indigenous content requirement regulations.

In the process a new era was created in Australian television which was not only young, but brash and aggressive and in direct conflict with traditionally held values and expectations for sport on television. After an uncertain infancy, the new era of television sport grew rapidly by emphasizing the entertainment component of the event rather than its comprehension.

As the relationship between sport and commercial television developed the type of sport available to the viewing public diversified considerably. In the pre-WSC era Packer and the Nine Network brought to the Australian television audience tennis tournaments, golf tournaments, the League Championships and the World Series of American baseball, American football, Irish football, Formula One Grand Prix racing and World Cup skiing. While the eventual movement into cricket was a reflection of, and capitalised on, overseas trends in the relationship between sport and television, it was also fueled by contemporary socio-cultural changes which were also international in scope. Such influences impacted separately on sport and television
yet directly forged the bond between the two.

**World Series Cricket, Television and Australian Society**

The 1970s were a turbulent period in Australian history. It was a decade of disenchantment with the old certainties of the past and one of hope for the future. It was buffeted by youthful rebellion and disdain for authority, yet anchored by a conservative pragmatism. Similarly while an implied republicanism manifested itself through a renewal of patriotic pronouncements and displays, cultural grafting from North America still occurred and was utilised to the full when deemed appropriate. Cognizant of such juxtaposing ideology but mindful of its applied interconnection World Series Cricket was created and developed by the forces of the 1970s and by entrepreneurs bright enough to exploit them.

In the early 1970s the 'baby boomers' from the post World War II era began to rebel against established authority in large numbers. The anti-authority movement eventually permeated conservative sporting institutions both at the playing and spectatorial level. As cricket was among the most conservative of all Australian sports institutions this movement was delayed in reaching this sport. Yet when it did its effect was shattering.

The history of the relationship between Australian cricket authorities and players has been one of conflict and
the wielding of administrative power. In the immediate pre-WSC era this association reached an advanced state of volatility as players were vocal in their condemnation at the system of servitude that had been perpetuated throughout the twentieth century. Although the players were responding to their own grievances they were also a product of an era that openly questioned traditional values and practices in a variety of forums.

Similarly new fans expressed their support for WSC and post rapprochement cricket as well as articulating their expectations. Cricket in the new era had to be entertaining, visually exciting and interactive. Fans no longer passively observed the unfolding nature of the game before them. Instead they voiced their opinions and questioned decisions relating to the game on a regular basis. Furthermore WSC fostered a mateship and larrikanism within Australian cricket which the fan not only could relate to through their own social situation, it also made the Australian team more accessible to the Australian public by promoting fan involvement in the game. While WSC spawned a uniquely Australian product which readily found a place in a developing Australian cultural mentality, sport fans in general rapidly accepted the commercialisation and professionalisation of sport, especially if it resulted in good television.
By the 1980s, the value for the entertainment dollar became a high priority. To attract increased gate receipts and advertising dollars, cricket marketing personnel sold entertainment, not cricket. The star quality of players became the selling point that promoters used to entice spectators to both the ground and to television. The metamorphosis of cricket from a sport for the aficionado to popular entertainment was accomplished through a number of avenues. Games were played under lights in colored uniforms; contests were aggressively promoted; giveaways were used to encourage children, and by extension their parents, to the grounds; and a number of entertainment devices were employed to amuse the patrons between innings. Cricket at night was purposely like theatre to compete for all entertainment dollars not just those the public allocates to its sporting preferences. Using this plan, WSC and PBL tapped vast audiences.

Cricket during this decade also captured large television audiences for many of the same reasons that it attracted live crowds. In a brief period of time, the home viewer had readily accepted cricket's commercial orientation and now expected nothing less than the technological innovations that WSC had introduced to sport. Although the sport's diehards were displeased at the placement of advertising during appropriate breaks in the
game this was the price to be paid for the enormous improvements in the live telecasts of sport.

The inspiration for the development of cricket as live entertainment as well as its appeal to both the advertisers and viewers of commercial television lay in the North American experience. There is a certain irony in the acceptance of this model of sporting presentation as it occurred at a time when the United States was experiencing sagging prestige in Australia and when the latter was aggressively claiming its own national identity. Yet while philosophically opposed to not only American foreign policy but also to the mindless 'Americanisation' of Australian society, especially in regard to popular culture, the Australian public were quick to accept the benefits associated with the commercialisation of sport. Rhetoric was fine as long as it did not interfere with everyday existence. Furthermore it is possible that Australians did not even view such positions as contradictory but rather as pragmatic responses that were not only inevitable but potentially life enhancing.

World Series Cricket was the product of an amalgamation of a numbers of factors that impacted on Australian society during the 1970s. It was much more than a simple sporting altercation between heroes and villains. Similarly the influence of television on Australian cricket
during this era was not directly causal in the path cricket took but mainly a response to the opportunities presented to it by the upheaval that had not only permeated cricket from society at large but that had been ongoing in its own institution. While the medium may have shaped the style of the change through the presentation of sport on television it was only the vehicle for the change not its cause. Australian commercial television, like all commercial television has a tendency to be responsive in that it is sensitive to the pressures from society at large. Television's ability to instigate change is usually confined to public broadcasting and state sponsored institutions. While WSC as televised sport was the watershed in the sport-television nexus in Australia such status was only possible through its cultural acceptability. For even though it provided the benchmark for future presentations of sport on commercial television only public acceptance of the new approaches guaranteed its success.

WSC and the growth of commercially televised sport in Australian society is endemic with conflict and as such is indicative of the forces of the era. However it is also illustrative of continuity and growth and the ability of an Australian society to be pragmatic, to utilise and replicate the success of others and to merge the new with
the old to facilitate cultural progression. WSC is not only informative in regard to the growth of sport and the increasing symbiotic relationship between sport and television, it also demonstrates how these two institutions provide the link between the past and future and how conflict is responded to and incorporated within society to provide continuity. WSC is about Australian cultural development. Sport and television merely exemplify such.
ENDNOTES

1. Interview with David Richards, Chief Executive of the Australian Cricket Board, September 8, 1989. Richards asserted that Australian team captain Alan Border was likely to make $100,000 from cricket in 1989. Border is unquestionably the best Australian cricketer of the decade. On December 11, 1989 Peter Gammons stated that baseball was becoming a rich man's game when Mark Langston signed a five-year, 15 million dollar contract with the California Angels. Moreover he was not alone. Four other baseball stars had signed contracts that were individually worth between 2.5 and 3 million dollars per year. Peter Gammons, "Rich Man's Game," Sports Illustrated, 71 (December 11, 1989): 60-62. On April 29, 1990 the Indianapolis Colts made rookie Jeff George the number one pick in the NFL draft and signed him to a six-year 15 million dollar contract. Douglas Looney, "Suddenly No. 1," ibid., 72 (April 30, 1990): 50-54. For a more general examination of the rise in professional sport salaries see, Paul D. Staudohar, The Sport's Industry and Collective Bargaining (Ithaca, N.Y.: Industrial and Labour Relations Press, 1986), 28-42; 73-77; 99-101; 123-25.


3. Interview with David Richards, Executive Officer of the Australian Cricket Board, September 8, 1989.

4. For an examination of Roone Arledge and the growth of ABC Sports see, Randy Roberts and James Olson, Winning is the Only Thing: Sport in America since 1945 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 113-31.

5. For a brief examination of the influence of the North American experience on Packer see, David Marr, "The Heir to the Packer Dynasty," The National Times, Week ending May 28, 1977, 2-5.


12. Ibid., 238–50.


Nine Principal Questions

1. Are the contracts between WSC and its players void?

2. Has WSC established, as at August 3, and subject to any statutory conferred by the 1974 Act, it has a good cause of action in tort against the ICC based on inducement of breach of contract?

3. Has WSC established as at August 3, and subject as foresaid, it has good cause of action against the TCCB based on the same grounds?

4. Subject to the provisions of the 1974 Act, are the new ICC rules void as being in restraint of trade?

5. Subject to aforesaid, are the proposed new TCCB rules void as being in restraint of trade?

6. Is the ICC and "employers' association" within the 1974 Act?

7. Is the TCCB and "employers' association"?

8. If either the ICC or the TCCB or both be "employers' association" does this itself bar any cause of action that would otherwise exist?

9. In the light of the answers, what relief (if any) should be given to (i) the individual plaintiffs and (ii) WSC?

ACB Policy Re Private Promotion

1. The Board believes that it is the cherished ambition of most cricketers to represent their State and Country.

2. The Board and the State Associations accept the responsibility to adequately reward players at International and State levels.

3. To obtain such rewards players selected to represent their States and/or their Country must be prepared to sign sponsorship contracts and accept the consequent responsibilities.

4. The Board notes that there are private promoters who are competitors in the promotion of international cricket.

5. The Board accepts that the player, as an individual, has the right of choice.

6. As cricket is a team game, Australian and State Selectors also have the right to choose who will be members of teams to represent their State and Country.

7. The Board believes that any player who clearly indicates by the signing of a sponsorship contract that he is or would be available to play for his State when required and does so play when selected should be considered for selection.

8. Only those players that represent their State will be considered for National teams.

Source: Minutes of the Australian Cricket Board Cricket Sub-Committee, January 24, 1979.
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Appendix 2: Australian Cricket Board Balance Sheets, 1975-78.

Appendix 3: Australian Cricket Board Statement of Receipts and Payments, 1974-78.

Appendix 4: Extract from State Accounts Demonstrating the Burden of Sheffield Shield and the Offsetting Effect of International Cricket.


Appendix 7: TCN Channel 9 Pty. Ltd., Graph of Advertising Revenue, 1975-79.

Appendix 8: Television Costs for Major Sporting Events.

Appendix 9: Commercial Content Regulations.

Appendix 10: Requirement for Australian Content of Television Programs.

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