



LEGENDS TAKE CENTRE STAGE

TWO OF Australian cricket's living legends, Arthur Morris and Richie Benaud, took centre stage at a Newcastle Taverners' dinner recently.

It was meant to be an interview by Richie of Arthur, arguably our greatest opening batsman and the leading run scorer on the 1948 "Invincibles" tour with three centuries, but the two legends fed off one another so well that their "conversation" deserves a place in the nation's sporting archives.

The duo enthralled a big audience for more than an hour with their reminiscences and often had them roaring with laughter.

Here is an edited version of their repartee prepared by former branch chairman of the Newcastle branch Vic Levi:

RICHIE: (referring to a photograph of Arthur on the souvenir menu).

It never ceases to amaze me what people can do. Lord's Taverners Australia, Newcastle branch, the time it must have taken you to find that photograph of Arthur in his fifth year at high school. (Then turning to Arthur): By the way, why didn't you bowl me in my first Sheffield Shield match?

ARTHUR: I refuse to answer that on the grounds it might incriminate me.

RICHIE: I was making my debut and it was NSW against Queensland. It threw it down the night before the first day and there was no play. So there I was making my debut and I was sitting there as the rain was belting down. We were in a dicey situation and Arthur was skipping. So the first day was washed out and the second day Queensland batted and made 202 and they led on the first innings. Alan Walker, who

was a Rugby international, knocked over 6 for 20 in 14 overs. NSW still had to make 143 to win on the last day and there was still a bit in the pitch. Jimmy Burke and Arthur went out and Burkey did very well. He was 24 not out when Arthur hit the winning runs. Arthur made 108 in 82 minutes.

Keith Miller played in that match but he had conjunctivitis and had to bat in our first innings down at No. 7. He could hardly see and he made 52 not out and Ron Sagggers made 48. The wonderful thing about Arthur was that he never changed all the time he was captain. Stayed the same quiet, self effacing guy who absolutely carved hell out of the opposing bowlers. And that is a very good trait to have. Why didn't you bowl me that day?

ARTHUR: I am sorry Richie. You did play a very fine innings though. Didn't you?

RICHIE: Yes I did. I didn't make many but I stuck around for six balls.

ARTHUR: I thought your two was one of the best innings I've seen.

RICHIE: And what's more I agree with you.

Captaincy is a very interesting thing. Arthur was captain of NSW for a number of years and when Keith Miller came up from Victoria, the NSW Cricket Association made Miller captain over Arthur. But they did have the common sense to do it while Arthur was up in Hong Kong playing with a Jack Chegwin side, so he had to read about it in the paper.

ARTHUR: Actually Richie it was a Chinese journalist who told me.

RICHIE: Captaincy. I've always thought was 90% luck

and only 10% skill. But don't think of trying it without the 10%. I know you are all wanting to know why I didn't get a bowl in that first match. So, I'll tell you. I didn't ask Arthur because that wouldn't have been the done thing. He came to me. He said, son we both know you haven't had a bowl in this match.

I first met Arthur in 1946. I was with my dad out at the Sydney Cricket Ground and Arthur was walking past from the SCG No. 2 where they used to practice in those days.

Arthur and my dad had played grade cricket together so they knew one another and my dad introduced me as his son Richie. It was the thrill of a lifetime. That was the day I saw Bradman get 234 and Barnes get 234.

ARTHUR: I saw it too. I got five and sat on the hill and watched it. You know Richie, I thought the other day about when I first played for the State in 1940-41. We did the southern tour to Adelaide which was our first match. You know it took more time for us to get to Adelaide then than it does to get to England today. You got the train to Albury where you got out at about

10.30 or 11 o'clock at night. Then you got into another train which was a different gauge. Then you got to Melbourne early in the morning and had to spend half the day wandering around and then you got on to another train with a different gauge to go to Adelaide. Extraordinary isn't it when you think of those days. Then the time it took to go to England on a ship. That would take two series. Sitting there drinking grog and putting on the black tie for the cocktail parties at night. It was tough going wasn't it.

RICHIE: It was. You traveled with a trunk. Not suitcases, a great big trunk. When we got into London in 1953, we landed in Tilbury and I remember all these trunks arriving at the hotel. I roomed with Graham Hole and it was sort of a ritual the way we traveled. In fact we broke the record on the Orcades in 1953 when we did the trip in four weeks and one day.

ARTHUR: I would have preferred five weeks. We played cricket at Colombo didn't we?

RICHIE: You did. I wasn't chosen.

ARTHUR: Sorry. I was doing my best. I was vice captain. But it did make you work hard for the rest of the season.

RICHIE: When Keith Miller was playing for Victoria, there was a move in NSW to get him to play here, and in the match NSW v Victoria, Miller decided he was going to take to Arthur Morris. I think you got 120 and I can still see the hook shots. He was bowling bouncer after bouncer from the northern end and you belted hell out of him.

ARTHUR: He did give me the works. I think as a kid when you grow up in the country and you play on concrete wickets you are at an advantage because you play a lot of hook shots.

Newcastle

JUST FOR THE RECORD

FORMER TEST opening batsman Rick McCosker introduced Arthur and gave this summary of the great man's record:

Arthur Robert Morris was born on January 19, 1922. At the age of five his family moved to Dungog and then to Newcastle. At the age of 12 he gained a place as a slow bowler in the Newcastle Boys' High first eleven.

Arthur excelled at rugby as well as cricket. He represented combined high schools in rugby and cricket and later played rugby for St George at the age of 19.

He developed as a batsman during his teens and during the 1940-41 season, he became the first player in the world to score a century in each innings of his first class debut (playing for NSW).

His career was interrupted by World War Two during which he served in the army. He represented the Army and the Combined Services at rugby in 1942-43.

In November, 1946, he made his Test debut at the age of 24 against England and holds baggy green Number 171. He made a century in his first match and made two centuries in the following Test, becoming only the second Australian to do so in an Ashes Test.

He scored eight test centuries against England, second only to Bradman in the first 100 years of Ashes Tests.

He captained Australia twice and was vice captain 25 times and captained NSW 26 times. Following the Invincibles tour in 1948, he was named as one of the five Wisden cricketers of the year.

He was inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, Sports Hall of Fame and NSW Cricket Hall of Fame. He was also named in Cricket Australia's first Team of the Century and was also named as an opening batsman in Bradman's selection of the best team in test history.

GOLD, GOLD, GOLD FOR TIM

ONE OF THE winners of a Newcastle Taverners' sport scholarship this year, Tim Reis, has just been named the City of Lake Macquarie's Disabled Sports Person of the Year.

The award caps a remarkable year for Tim who won gold in the Open Disabled State basketball championships and was then selected in the Australian team to play in the international series in Auckland.

Tim was selected as the outstanding sportsman in that carnival for both skill and attitude.

Last October he also won gold in the Lake Macquarie Disabled Games.

Tim, who lives in the Lake Macquarie suburb of Windale, is also a talented cricketer and every Saturday, he helps train and coach other athletes with an intellectual disability.

He received his Taverners' scholarship with our two Junior Taverners, cricket all-rounders Jake Montgomery and Dion Marsh, at the branch's annual dinner which followed the golf



Newcastle President Rick McCosker with Judy and Arthur Morris.



Ex-cricketers at the golf day (1 to r) Robert Holland, Robert Wilkinson, Rick McCosker, Ted Atchison and John McLaughlin



A pic from the past---Taverners Barry and Jeanette Beuzeville, Vic Levi, the late Dick Stokoe, Meg Levi, Prince Edward and the late Ann Stokoe at a Taverners lunch for the Prince at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1993.



Behind the scenes: Golf Day workers (1 to r) Irona Webb, Meg Levi and Cathy Black.

day at Newcastle Golf Club in February.

Jake, 17, who comes from Bolwarra Heights near Maitland is already a first grader with the Wallsend club.

Dion captained this year's Hunter CHS Open Girls cricket team and performed well with bat and ball in the state carnival in Sutherland.

She is a member of the Cricket NSW Academy and played for the Hunter in the Bradman Invitation Under 14 Carnival at Bowral last year.

The Newcastle Taverners also awarded a scholarship to Hunter Academy of Sport athlete with a disability, Wayne Hurley, of Merewether. Wayne suffers from muscular paralysis but excels in athletics, basketball and ten pin bowling.

A fifth scholarship was awarded to 12-year-old cricketing all-rounder, Tyla Binnie, who comes from Kanwal on the NSW Central Coast and who plays for Wyong.

The dinner and the golf day were resounding successes with the help of sponsors, Tyrrells and Sobels Wines, Garry Dowling Real Estate and the Newcastle Golf Club.

Once again there was a big contingent from the Lewis family, the relatives of the Newcastle branch's founding father and former National Taverners CEO, the late Keith Lewis. Our Junior Taverner awards are named in Keith's honour.

The Arthur Morris - Richie Benaud Conversations dinner and the golf day were the highlights of the Newcastle Taverners year. - VIC LEVI.



(1 to r) Junior Taverner Dion Marsh, Tim Reis, Jake Montgomery, Mrs Baith Lewis, Chairman John McLaughlin and CEO of the Hunter Academy of Sport, Ken Clifford



Members of the Newcastle Taverners cricket team Ian Hodge, Robert Holland, Arun Muckagee, Roger Black and Paul Clark



The Lewis Family at the golf day.