

## Leading from the Front

**“Bert did a big thing for his side, a very big thing”:** *Percy Fender*

*Bert Oldfield, Australia v England, Fifth Test, Melbourne, March 1929*

Robertson-Glasgow judged William Albert Stanley Oldfield:

*“as near as any man may be the perfect wicketkeeper in style, demeanour and effect. Mr Turveydrop, that touchstone of deportment, if he had included wicket-keeping in his syllabus would have said ‘Yes, very elegant, my dear young man, very elegant indeed, but not quite as Mr Oldfield would have done it.’”*

His quiet, almost regretful, appeals - Neville Cardus claimed Oldfield stumped a batsman with the ball in one hand and an apology in the other - triggered the umpire's finger. He never appealed unless the batsman was out. Jack Hobbs walked, nine times in his Test career to Oldfield's glove-work, even when he was uncertain, such was his trust. As Harold Larwood said, “Bert was a real gentleman on and off the field.” Oldfield was also a fighter. Jack Hobbs remembered: “He was also a most useful bat: the man for a crisis. I remember occasions when things did not go well for Australian batsmen. Out would come Oldfield and there he would stay to make a useful score.” So it was in the final Test of the Ashes series at Melbourne in 1929.

After the Great War Australia had been ascendant, winning three series. England's revival started, contrary to the harsh score line, in the 1924-25 series and culminated at the Oval in 1926 when Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe masterfully defied a nasty turning pitch in the deciding Test. The 1928-29 tour saw England much the better team. Walter Hammond amassed 905 runs in his first Ashes series; a record aggregate. England won the first four Tests and started the fifth at Melbourne by batting to lunch on the third day, accumulating 519 in their first innings. Tests in Australia were then played to a finish. An England victory would give them all five Ashes Tests in a series for the first time, thus gaining revenge for Australia's clean sweep in 1920-21.

With centuries from Bill Woodfull and Don Bradman Australia neared parity and then dismissed England for 257. With twenty minutes left at the end of the sixth day, Australia sent in Oldfield and Percy Hornibrook as nightwatchmen. Oldfield recalled:

*“We were both pleased at playing time out at a critical juncture and being there to resume on the final day. Although we had been set 286 to gain victory, there was no telling what would happen on a wicket so long in use, and which might have crumbled ... Realizing that the wicket was definitely showing signs of wear, and would therefore be uncertain, Tate bowled like a demon ... Never at any time did he bowl off the line of the wicket, and, swinging a little both ways, was most difficult to score from.”*

Tate and his compatriots were to give Australia no rest on the seventh day. Beginning on seven without loss, batting was difficult on a very fast pitch with patches from which the ball would kick. Maurice Tate, reported the *Times*, bowled faster than he had previously on the tour, and the “play, in its great struggle between bat and ball, will always remain classic.” Tate had two leg-before appeals turned down in his first two overs. Only three runs had been added when Larwood induced Oldfield to edge knee-high to Hammond at second slip. The normally brilliant fielder snatched at the chance, and the ball fell safe off the base of his thumb. Soon afterwards, Oldfield survived another alarm off Larwood to gully.

Plucky batting took the score to 51 in 90 minutes then Hammond bowled Hornibrook. Hammond's bowling was awkward, hitting batsmen on the chest and George Duckworth, behind the stumps, on the shoulder, with balls that got up like lightning. Oldfield, combining occasional good strokes with stubborn defence, got to lunch with Woodfull with the score on 62 for two. Walking in, a voice could be heard; “Bertie, if we get the runs, you'll go to heaven.”

Uncharacteristically, Bertie's running between the wickets was far from angelic. In the preceding Test at Adelaide, Australia were set 349 to win and closed day six on 260 for six. On the morrow Australian captain Jack Ryder told Bradman, "Play your own game. I think you can pull this off for us." The young Bradman agreed, and justified hopes by moving the score to 320 for seven. Thereupon Oldfield ran him out, injudiciously calling for a single after pushing a ball firmly straight to the right hand of the ever-dangerous Hobbs at cover. Here at Melbourne after lunch, Oldfield contrived to appear at the same end as the unmoved Woodfull. The ball soon joined them after an errant throw by Maurice Leyland, which gave Oldfield the chance to scramble to safety.

Later in the afternoon session, after over two and a half hours of resistance and with the score on 80, Hammond forced him onto the back foot and plucked out the off stump. "His plucky and valuable 48" had given his side a great start. Percy Fender considered the innings vital to Australia's victory. After Oldfield had been dismissed, the fight for runs continued arduous, but Australia ended the day on 173 for four. The next day, with the score on 219 for five, Bradman established his jinx on English stumpers when Duckworth missed a clear chance off his captain Jack White. Thereafter, Bradman and Ryder saw Australia home, completing a remarkable turnabout in the match.

<b>England 519 &amp; 257 and Australia 491</b>		
<b>Australia 2<sup>nd</sup> Innings (overnight 7-0: Oldfield 6, Hornibrook 1)</b>		
WAS Oldfield	b Hammond	48
PM Hornibrook	b Hammond	18
WM Woodfull	b Hammond	35
A Jackson	b Geary	46
AF Kippax	run out	28
J Ryder	not out	57
DG Bradman	not out	37
Extras		18
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Total (5 wickets; 134.1 overs)		287
FOW: 1-51, 2-80, 3-129, 4-158, 5-204		

**“At Bombay their stand [Brinks and Bolus] averted the possibility of defeat”:** *John Arlott*

*Jimmy Binks, India v England, Second Test, Bombay, January 1964*

Sir Bhupendra Singh, the Maharajah of Patiala was considered by Anthony de Mello, the first secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), to be “the Father of Indian sport.” The Maharajah carried on the work of his father, bringing in prominent professionals (Wilfred Rhodes, George Hirst, Maurice Leyland and Harold Larwood among them) to play and coach, and encouraging the growth of the game. Patiala organised the Indian tour of England in 1911, helped fund the highly successful tour of India by the MCC in 1926-27<sup>1</sup>, from which came the idea of forming the BCCI, and funded the Australian tour of India in 1935-36.

<sup>1</sup> The MCC played two matches against an India XI on this tour. The first, at Bombay, saw the hosts – an exclusively Indian team – nearly win. The MCC finished the match on 97 for five in their second innings, only 22 runs ahead. Curiously, for the second match at Eden Gardens Calcutta, only four Indians were chosen for the India XI, being joined by seven Europeans. Partly balancing that, the Maharajah of Patiala played for the MCC in both matches (he was a member, after all). His Highness stopped the match at Calcutta when a £10,000 pearl ear-ring fell out when he was batting. While Maurice Tate, his batting partner, was on his hands and knees searching diligently, the Maharajah stood regally and stared accusingly at short-leg, who had been fielding suspiciously close to the crease. Eventually, the ear-ring was found in the Maharajah's hair net.

The Maharajah, as president of the Cricket Club of India (CCI) – set up in 1933 by the BCCI to oversee the domestic game - orchestrated the building of the Brabourne stadium at Bombay, scene of Jimmy Binks's heroics. He had first approached the Governor of India, Lord Brabourne, about a new ground and club-house in Bombay in May 1934. In February 1935 he and de Mello convinced the Governor to grant to the CCI 75,000 square yards of reclaimed land. In December 1937, Lord Tennyson's XI played the CCI to open the stadium. Edward Docker considered Brabourne Patiala's greatest gift to Indian cricket: "a magnificently green sward enclosed by an amphitheatre of stands and gracious pavilions." Patiala was not the only one to have made donations to the construction of the ground, but "his had been the directing intelligence behind the whole scheme."

The Maharajah of Patiala "walked among his people like a mediaeval emperor"(Ian Peebles) and was fabulously wealthy. The Baradari Ground he built on his estate was considered by Bill Edrich as the finest he had ever played on. Lionel Lord Tennyson recalled the visit of January 1938: "We had a large crowd here for the match, including Patiala's three hundred and sixty-seven wives who all came to the ground, but we never saw any of them, as they were brought in closed buses, and then made to sit behind thick green curtains." The Maharajah's enthusiasm for the fair sex was reflected in the saying: "Englishmen start the day with bacon and eggs, the French with coffee and rolls, his Highness with a virgin."

However Englishmen in India in 1963-64 under M.J.K. Smith started their day, the fare was evidently much less agreeable. Just before the first Test, the MCC Manager, David Clark, was marvelling how well the side had adjusted to the change in climate and diet. A day later, four of them had high temperatures, and England had to mount a holding action during the Test until they had recovered. Micky Stewart suffered from dysentery but batted even though he had largely been confined to bed for the three previous days. England escaped with a draw. In the next match, against West Zone, Ken Barrington broke his finger in the slips. This ruled him out for the second Test. The *Times* claimed "in a macabre sort of way this injury" solved one of the problems faced by the selection committee: how to fit three openers (Stewart, Brian Bolus and John Edrich), Phil Sharpe, Mike Smith and Barrington into the batting order.

The problem was moot by the time England arrived to play at the Brabourne a few days later. Sharpe and Edrich were confined to their beds, as was John Mortimore, and Stewart was in hospital; all suffering from stomach ailments. Thus, Barrington (first-class average 45.63) and Sharpe (30.73) were replaced by John Price (8.39) and reserve wicket-keeper Jimmy Binks (14.73). When Don Wilson, who had hurt his back in the first Test, decided to play, England were still short of a quorum. The prospect of a reporter being called to the colours from the press box sufficiently alarmed Stewart that he discharged himself from hospital and reported to the ground.

The *Times* Cricket Correspondent watched "the oddest England side ever to have played in an official Test match", take the field at Bombay. Despite the extremely hot day, England fielded magnificently, but the heat forced Stewart to return to hospital just after tea. AG Kripal Singh served as twelfth man for both teams, fielding for England. India were dismissed for 300 on the second day. The scorers perused the English batting order made up of two specialist batsmen (Bolus and M.J.K. Smith), Jim Parks playing as a batsman (as he had started his career), two all-rounders and the tail. At the end of the day they had reached 144 for six, having averted the follow-on, but "for England's makeshift side the hopes for survival were small" (*Times*). A marvellous innings by Fred Titmus prevented India gaining a large lead. England then balked India's progress with fine bowling, forcing the Nawab of Pataudi junior to postpone his declaration until late in the day. Nevertheless, India set England's "fragile batting side" (*Wisden*) 317 to win. Binks opened as nightwatchman.

Jimmy Binks had only himself to blame for getting the job. He had served as nightwatchman often for Yorkshire. Two of his first three first-class fifties came in the role – his 67 at Grace Road in August 1962 was then Jimmy's highest score. That season Yorkshire won the County Championship. One of the rewards was a date at Lord's in April 1963 for the opening fixture against the MCC. With impeccable timing Binks reprised his skills by scoring 88 after being sent in as a stop-gap when replying to MCC's 366 for two declared. Jimmy's innings prompted the *Times* headline: "Cricket's most superior nightwatchman". Evidently, Binks made a lasting impression on the MCC's skipper, M.J.K. Smith, who turned to him eight months later in a crisis at Brabourne.

With only three mainline batsmen, England could not afford even a minor collapse when they began the final day on 17 without loss. Some commentators believed the tourists might make an attempt to gain the runs, but *Wisden* noted the hourly run rate required was much higher than had been managed in any other innings in the series. Having worked so hard to stay in touch with India, losing the match through a dash for runs would have been reckless. In the event, India's spinners bowled throughout the day and sent down over a hundred overs. The pitch was slow but offered some turn. Binks was let off twice in the first hour of the day. He gave a sharp chance to Motganhalli Jaisimha at slip in the first over. Then, with the score on 44, he top-edged a sweep off Salim Durani: Rajindar Pal, running from backward square leg, could not quite take a difficult chance coming over his shoulder.



Jaisimha drops Jimmy Binks ending Borde's celebration in mid-air (*Mumbai Cricket Association*)

After these early scares, the fight for a draw became the over-riding ambition, especially as Bolus was in poor form. The remainder of the morning was spent in cautious batting. Jaisimha came on just before lunch and beat Bolus twice and then nicked the edge of his bat. Wicketkeeper Kunderan, whose "collections were hasty, untidy and kept one on edge all morning" (*Times of India*), spilled the chance. England reached lunch on 88 without loss.

"Binks was more at ease than Bolus" (*Times*) and the longer Bolus batted the worse his form became. This prompted Binks to even greater care. Babu Nadkarni's ten overs after lunch cost a mere eight runs, and only 32 came in the first hour of the afternoon from 23 overs. Binks and Bolus recorded the first century opening stand for England in 14 months and 14 Tests. The crowd, sensing England had virtually reached safety, greeted the achievement by throwing bottles, coconut shells and all manner of refuse onto the field. Local spectators were frustrated not just by English resolve, but a curiously defensive approach from their team. Soon after drinks, Jimmy Binks, pushing forward to Jaisimha, was caught at backward short leg. He had batted for three and a half hours, "helping save the match" (*Wisden Pen Picture*).

The *Times of India* considered; “the worth of their stand was emphasised” by the two quick wickets which followed. Don Wilson was promoted to throw the bat to show England were “theoretically interested” in a run chase. However Bolus soon departed to a simple catch to extra cover off an attempted drive: one of the first attacking strokes he had made all day. Wilson then went into his shell but was soon dismissed. Smith and Parks concentrated on keeping their wickets intact and exploiting the resilience of Jimmy Binks to gain a draw.

<b>India 300 &amp; 249-8 declared and England 1<sup>st</sup> Innings 233</b>		
<b>England 2<sup>nd</sup> Innings (overnight 17-0: Bolus 7, Binks 5)</b>		
JB Bolus	c Pataudi b Durani	57
JG Binks	c Borde b Jaisimha	55
D Wilson	c Pataudi b Chandrasekhar	2
MJK Smith	not out	31
JM Parks	not out	40
Extras		21
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Total (3 wickets; 134 overs)		206
FOW: 1-125, 2-127, 3-134		

“To be going to Calcutta [for the Third Test] without being one match down, after the party had been riddled with illness, is in itself an achievement” (*Times*). Stewart was so poorly he was flown home. Colin Cowdrey and Peter Parfitt were flown out as replacement batsmen. On arrival Cowdrey remembered only four players were fully fit: “a strange diet<sup>2</sup> evolved: hard-boiled eggs, bananas and whiskey from the British High Commission and brushing teeth with soda water to avoid contact with the hemlock that came out of the tap<sup>3</sup>.” *Wisden* reviewed the tour:

*“In the first two Tests when stricken by illness and injury [England] were in no position to strike for victory ... They quickly developed a degree of team spirit which is not common among English teams abroad and that spirit proved its sterling worth when illness laid low several of the leading players. It was proof against the crisis of Bombay, where the Second Test was played against a hospital background.”*

Jimmy Binks’s reward for his match-saving innings was to be pressed into service as an emergency opener for the Third Test at Eden Gardens. Opening in India was considered to be less of a specialist’s job than in England. That Calcutta Test was drawn. In the last two Tests, England fielded a full strength side (in all senses). Yet, the series ended with five draws. Fear of losing seemed to dominate the thinking of both teams, but slow and dull wickets did not help. Three months after the Second Test, the Brabourne pitch was dug up. A foundation of two layers of bricks, with six inches of rubble on top followed by binding material produced a faster and springier turf.

<sup>2</sup> The wisdom of dieting was summed up by Joe E Lewis, American comedian (portrayed in the 1957 film *The Joker is Wild* by Frank Sinatra); “I went on a diet, swore off drinking and heavy eating and in fourteen days I lost two weeks.”

<sup>3</sup> Colin Cowdrey was quick to appreciate that “many Indian and Pakistani players find it equally impossible to face the food that we serve up for them on our English grounds.” Yet the absence of water in the England dressing rooms for three days threatened the Third Test. Having complained fruitlessly David Clark discovered that the water authorities in Calcutta had not received their usual allocation of Test match tickets. He quickly rounded up a handful and visited the local water board. By the time he returned “every tap and shower was already running full bore.”

Pataudi's position as captain was insecure at the start of the series. Some selectors doubted him after he suffered an injury in a car accident which impaired his sight, so conservative tactics were understandable. Yet once his appointment was confirmed after the Bombay Test, he rarely showed sparks of enterprise. This was surprising. When England had toured in 1961-62, Pataudi single-handedly transformed the series after three drawn Tests. His aggressive batting galvanised India into winning the last two Tests of the series. Pataudi was to re-discover his attacking style in the later years of his captaincy. As for Jimmy Binks; he did not play for England again. Despite his success with the bat, Binks reckoned he kept wicket "worse than at any time in my life" in his two Tests. This lively, fresh-faced, merry cricketer returned to Yorkshire and continued a stalwart, being named *Wisden Cricketer of the Year* 1969. Alan Knott reckoned: "Jimmy Binks of Yorkshire was the best keeper I've ever seen. He had such marvellous hands the ball just seemed to melt into them."

**"A hero and toast of Trinidadians as he played a dour captain's innings to regain the initiative": *Jamaica Daily Gleaner***

*Gerry Alexander, West Indies v Pakistan, Second Test, Trinidad, February 1958*

John Goddard resigned the West Indies captaincy after the tour of England in 1957. Gerry Alexander was appointed to the post for the 1958 home series against Pakistan, continuing the practice of a white man skippering the West Indies. Conrad Hunte remembered rank-and-file cricket followers being shocked by the appointment. Hunte regarded Frank Worrell as the natural choice to succeed Goddard. However, Worrell was reading Economics at Manchester University and unavailable. Hunte recognised the selectors could not appoint Walcott, who had been vice-captain under Goddard, or Weekes as the West Indies Board of Control had reprimanded them for poor behaviour on the England tour. Rohan Kanhai, acknowledging that the selection of Worrell would have been a "master-stroke, if he had been available regularly", thought Collie Smith was the next obvious choice.

In fact, Frank Worrell had been offered the captaincy for the visit of Pakistan before Alexander was approached, but declined because his studies were reaching a critical stage. The Board then offered Worrell the captaincy for the following tours of India and Pakistan in 1958-59. C.L.R. James thought little of these offers and so apparently did Worrell. They both considered the Board would happily appoint a black captain against Pakistan or for a tour of India but shrink from doing so when the West Indies played a white country. The *Cricketer* reported in May 1958 that the Board appointed Alexander as an interim measure. In the event, Frank Worrell took a break from Test cricket after the 1957 series in England until after his graduation in 1959. He returned to play under Alexander in the home series against England from January to March 1960<sup>4</sup>. Frank Worrell was appointed West Indies captain for the tour of Australia later in 1960.

In 1958 Pakistan were touring the West Indies for the first time. The bat was expected to dominate the series and Hanif Mohammad's oppressed all others with 337 to salvage a draw in the First Test in Barbados. The Queen's Park Oval wicket at Trinidad had, until 1955, been jute matting, breaking the hearts of a succession of bowlers<sup>5</sup>. The matting was replaced with an easy turf wicket. All five Tests played at Queen's Park since the West Indies win over England in 1934-35 had been high-scoring draws. For the Second Test in 1958 more grass was left on the pitch, and less water applied. So while batsmen still fared well, there was encouragement for the quicker bowlers and later the drier wicket gave heart to the spinners. The match was exciting and hard-fought.

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<sup>4</sup> Frank Worrell played only three first-class games from September 1957 to the Test against England in January 1960. They were festival games for Arthur Gilligan's XI at Hastings (twice) and in the Commonwealth XI at Torquay. Nevertheless, despite the lack of top-class practice, in his return Test innings Worrell plundered 197 (unbeaten) from the English attack.

<sup>5</sup> Fred Trueman, recalling the England tour to the West Indies in 1953-54, described the conditions at Trinidad; "the wicket we played on was one of jute matting, a surface so unhelpful to touring bowlers it would bring a tear to a glass eye."

The West Indies reached a good position by the end of the first two days, compiling 325 and reducing Pakistan to 91 for four. The honours for the third day belonged to Pakistan, who fought back strongly from 116 for six to 282, and then had the West Indies batting nervously towards the close. The first West Indies wicket fell at 38 and Alexander decided to promote Rohan Kanhai to No. 3. Kanhai was never happy during his short stay and fell to a terrific catch by Wallis Mathias at fine leg mis-hooking Mahmood Hussain. At 51 for two Alexander went to the crease as nightwatchman. He got a rough reception from the crowd. Alexander had already been booed and jeered when the West Indies came off earlier in the day after dismissing Pakistan. The Port-of-Spain crowd disliked the selection of the Jamaican paceman Tom Dewdney over the islanders' local hero, Jaswick Taylor. The Pakistan fielders were rather more enthusiastic as Alexander walked in, rushing to their positions to get in another over. Alexander, however, saw his side safely to the close.

The next morning in a hazy atmosphere under an overcast sky, the West Indies were tied down by accurate bowling. Fourteen runs were added in the first half hour when the 16-year old Nasim-ul-Ghani was brought on. Future centurion Nasim in his second Test match had already, as nightwatchman, seen off Roy Gilchrist. Now he bowled to a tight attacking field and very soon had the West Indies in disarray. Hunte, frustrated in defence, drove at Nasim with his head in the air and was caught at short extra cover. Everton Weekes was immediately beaten by the young spinner and suffered a torrid time. Weekes was driven to several quite desperate attempts to hit Nasim out of the attack. After collecting some fortuitous boundaries, Weekes attempted a sweep off a leg break, but managed merely to balloon the ball over his head onto the wicket.

West Indies were now 105 for four. Pakistan's bowling was excellent. Alexander was beaten repeatedly by Fazal Mahmood and barely coped at times with Nasim, but did not get flustered and refrained from ill-disciplined shots. The West Indies struggled to lunch on 116 for four. With only Collie Smith as a batsman to come, their lead looked slender. Early in the afternoon Garry Sobers, who had joined Alexander, was given a life. With the score on 126, Fazal couldn't quite hang on to a return catch as he was falling over. Alexander continued to bat stoically as the score inched up during the afternoon. Some of the crowd started slow hand-clapping but "the impatient fans soon realised that runs were harder to get out there than perhaps an icicle in the tropics" (*Karachi Dawn*).

The new ball was taken when West Indies were 172 for four. Soon afterwards with a push to mid on which Saeed Ahmed mis-fielded, Alexander ran three to reach his half-century, attained in 212 minutes of determined batting. He and Sobers took their side to tea with the score on 194 for four; a much healthier position. Not long into the evening session, Alexander pushed a ball to Saeed at mid on. Perhaps he remembered the mis-field that brought up his fifty, but the attempted single was suicidal. Saeed this time made no mistake, rushing in and putting down the wicket, suffering a collision with Alexander in the process. Gerry Alexander's captain's knock converted the crowd. *The Jamaica Daily Gleaner*: "he had done his part so nobly and well, that the cheers of the crowd must have still been ringing in his ears when he left the ground tonight."

**West Indies 325 and Pakistan 282**

**West Indies 2<sup>nd</sup> Innings (overnight 56-2: Hunte 34, Alexander 0)**

CC Hunte	c Kardar b Nasim-ul-Ghani	37
EDAS McMorris	lbw b Fazal Mahmood	16
RB Kanhai	c Mathias b Mahmood Hussain	5
FCM Alexander	run out	57
ED Weekes	b Nasim-ul-Ghani	24
GS Sobers	lbw b Fazal Mahmood	80
OG Smith	c Waqar Hasan b Fazal Mahmood	51
IS Madray	lbw b Mahmood Hussain	0
LR Gibbs	b Nasim-ul-Ghani	22
R Gilchrist	b Fazal Mahmood	7
DT Dewdney	not out	5
Extras		8
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Total (130.2 overs)		312

FOW: 1-38, 2-51, 3-71, 4-105, 5-206, 6-255, 7-277, 8-277, 9-288

**Pakistan 2<sup>nd</sup> Innings 235**

Alexander's innings was proclaimed by the *Trinidad Guardian*: "a splendid, stubborn, quite surprising knock saved the day". Assessed by the *Karachi Dawn* as "likely to be the most important event in this remarkable game", Gerry had taken the West Indies to 206 for five, and put them on the high road to victory. Another hundred or so runs came and Pakistan were set 356 to win. Hanif Mohammad, threatening to repeat his heroics, added 130 for the second wicket with Saeed. Sobers broke the partnership and dismissed Imtiaz Ahmed just before the end of the fifth day, Pakistan closing on 161 for three, Hanif on 73. The following morning Roy Gilchrist burst through the batting order, taking 3 for 9 in five overs, and Pakistan slid to a 120-run defeat. After the match, Alexander, interviewed on radio, congratulated Pakistan for excellent and exemplary sportsmanship and emphasised that the West Indies had won only after a very grim struggle.

Later in the series at Georgetown, Alexander became the second Test wicketkeeper to brandish *Wisden* in front of the noses of the opposition and the umpires. During the fourth Test Kanhai pulled a groin muscle but Pakistan captain, Abdul Kardar, refused to let Hunte run for him saying that Hunte was the best West Indies runner. Kanhai recalled: "Gerry Alexander came striding onto the field with a *Wisden* in his hand, for all the world like a policeman about to lay down the law. He fished through the pages and triumphantly came up with the paragraph dealing with runners". Gerry pointed out that the fielding captain cannot name the runner he wants.

Despite the furore over his appointment, Alexander was popular. Joe Solomon, later lethal fielder in the tied Test at Brisbane, remembered: "He always encouraged the players on the field. He was a good captain and then Frank Worrell took over, but even after that [Alexander was named as vice-captain at Worrell's insistence] he was always a good leader and would give good advice to the players. He was a great friend of mine. He was a very likable person, the kind of man who you'd like to meet and be in his company." Alexander later served as manager and Clive Lloyd commented: "Gerry, to be straight to the point, was the best manager I have ever encountered in a West Indies team".



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