

Steve Waugh

Former Test Cricket Captain

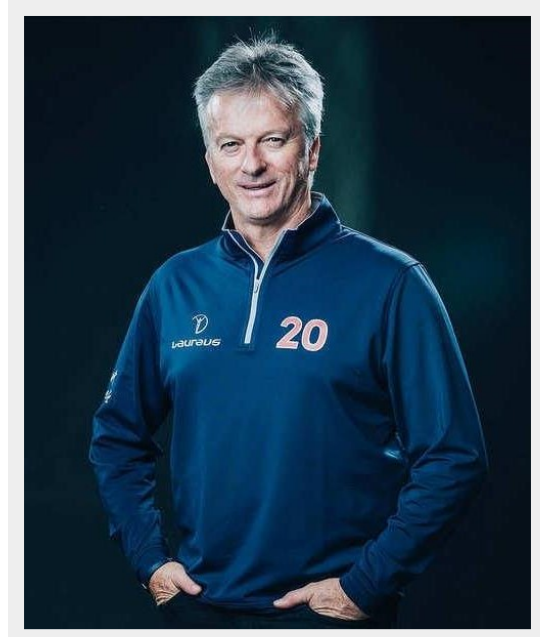
Steve Waugh was the ultimate evolved cricketer. Thrown to the wolves at 20, he flailed at bowling, sent down bouncers at Viv Richards, and tasted Ashes defeat. Then he helped win a World Cup and made 393 runs before losing his wicket in the 1989 Ashes - but admitted that he did not understand his own game, and 18 months later lost his place to his minutes-younger twin, Mark.

It was his catharsis. Upon his recall, Waugh minimalised his batsmanship, forgoing risk and waiting for the loose ball, which he still punished severely. He was all but forced to give up bowling by back problems.

A series of epic innings ensued, none better than his 200 in Jamaica in 1994-95 to speed Australia to a historic series win, or his twin hundreds at Old Trafford to turn the 1997 Ashes series.

He succeeded Mark Taylor as Test captain in 1999, and began with a torrid 2-2 draw in the Caribbean, but later led Australia in 15 of their world-record 16 successive Test victories. With Shane Warne, he turned Australia's form around so completely in the 1999 World Cup that they won it, and he and Tom Moody became the first Australians to win the trophy twice. But he was denied the opportunity to defend his title when he was unceremoniously axed from the one-day side, like Taylor before him, following Australia's poor showing in the 2001-02 VB Series.

Waugh continued as Test captain, though, winning yet another Ashes series in 2002-03, and continuing for the tour of the West Indies that followed Australia's 2003 World Cup win under Ricky Ponting. An inveterate sightseer, Waugh wrote a series of successful tour diaries, helped set up a charity for the daughters of lepers in Calcutta, and subscribed fervently to the power of the mind. At 36, he won the Allan Border Medal as Australia's best player of 2001. He finally retired at the end of the 2003-04 series against India, bowing out with 80, his last shot an untypical heave to backward square leg.



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