

Siddle in the Middle

With 29 scalps at an impressive 27.65 in seven Tests, it could be 24-year-old paceman **PETER SIDDLER** standing out there for the first Ashes match

Pete or Peter?

Pete, Peter, whatever you like, mate.

Apparently you and Phillip Hughes spent a fair bit of time together in South Africa.

Yeah, it was good to have another young face [around] who's a similar sort of age. We got along real well and went out a few times.

You're a formidable woodchopper, in the family tradition. Does it help your cricket at all?

No, I don't think so. Well, maybe a bit

of hand-eye coordination. You've got to watch the axe pretty closely when you woodchop.

You chopped a fair bit of timber when Australia beat South Africa in the Sydney Test. Five-for in the first dig.

It's definitely great to see the timber rattle and always exciting to see the balls off. The boys get more pumped if the stumps are cartwheeling out of the ground and rattling towards the keeper – it excites you as a bowler, too.

Did you really feel you'd arrived?

Definitely. I was under pressure and copped a lot of flak after Perth (match figures 1-128), then bounced back a little bit in Melbourne (4-115). I was pleased to get to the SCG because I feel comfortable in that arena. I had success there in the 2007-08 Shield final (match figures 9-167, in a match his Victorian team lost). The crowd was very supportive and the ball came out well. Ever since that match, I've been a lot more relaxed in the baggy green.



play with a bit of aggression. It's just the will to win and succeed, and when I get a bit fired up, it excites the boys.

Do players still get "the call" to tell them they're in the Ashes squad?

Once you're in the Test team, you assume you're still in until you're told you're not. So you switch your phone off because you actually don't want to hear it ringing.

What are your Ashes goals?

To win it, and it doesn't matter how or what the score is. If we play some exciting and competitive cricket, we'll be very pleased.

Only two of the three

commentators we interviewed this month picked you in their first Test XI (see previous page). Will you be there?

I've got to bowl well in the tour games, but that doesn't mean I have to take big bags of wickets. As long as I've got good rhythm and I'm looking good through the crease, I'll be happy. Then it's back to the selectors, but I'll feel hard done by if I'm not there. It's a five-Test series unlike any other series.

Mitchell Johnson made a ton. What are your batting goals?

I made three ducks in my last three Test innings. My highest score is 23 and I'd be happy to start off with a 30.



Sid Vicious: The Victorian claims the scalp of Saffer AB de Villiers at the MCG.

BUZZWORD BINGO

Words and phrases you'll hear all winter, over and over again. Hear 'em all and win a prize!*

CONDITIONS

The weather. As in, "He's really exploited the conditions" and "His natural game just doesn't suit these conditions" and other lazy nonsense.

UNFAMILIAR BALL

England uses the Duke ball. Australia uses the Kookaburra. It's still round and red, though, last we looked.

SWING

"Some of these Australian players haven't mastered swing yet." Is it a dance or a cricket ball deviation?

DARK ARTS

Something commentators don't understand, as though Harry Potter is running in from the Pavilion End bowling reverse swing out of his wand.

BARMY ARMY

Used to be a rag-tag travelling bunch of happy chanting Poms. Now Flight Centre with printed lyric sheets and a membership waiting list.

THAT FIRST DELIVERY

Initial delivery of the series, once owned, then thrown away by Steve Harmison, and now assuming gigantic importance.

DANGERMAN

Someone a commentator thinks looked pretty good on the last tour and now deserves a superhero title. As in "Graham Onions could be a real dangerman here."

REPEAT

Shorthand for an entire series that happened several years ago with different players. "Can we really expect a repeat of 2005?" Answer: no, it'll be different.

OLD ENEMY

Attempt to turn a cricket series into global *Braveheart*. No one is fighting for freedom here. Just a small sporting trophy.

TRANSITION

A commentator tries to find his notes on Graham Onions and Ravi Bopara underneath his doughnut and coffee. As in, "This is very much a team in transition."

BIG NAMES

Could mean anyone. Actually refers directly to Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne. "A lot of the big names are missing this time around."

NO SHANE WARNE

Always followed by "of course" when things look a bit shaky for the Aussies.

KEY FIGURE

The player relied on to pull the team out of a deep hole, despite utter lack of recent form. If the team loses, it's because the key figure failed.

SELECTORS

Never mind blaming the players or the conditions, the selectors have either "got it right" or "got it wrong".

URN

The point of the whole thing. Often dubbed "famous old" and referred to bitterly as "kept permanently at Lord's" (subtext: the Poms are cheating bastards).

SHORTER FORMS

The tiny, yet evil monsters ruining players, Test cricket and sport in general. "Can Test cricket possibly survive the shorter forms of the game?"

WEAPON

An effort to overdramatise something a player does. No, it's not a broadsword or a .45 Magnum, it's Peter Siddle's slightly fuller-length delivery.

PRESSURE

Whether it's from opening the bowling, the crowd, the situation or history, there's always pressure.

*You won't win a prize.