

## MERCER, JOHN (Jack) (1893-1987), cricketer

**Name:** John Mercer  
**Date of birth:** 1893  
**Date of death:** 1987  
**Spouse:** Kathrine Mercer (née Kemish)  
**Spouse:** Santa Lorenzo Mercer (née Green)  
**Parent:** Mary Gwendolen Mercer (née Grey)  
**Parent:** Walter Ernest Mercer  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** cricketer  
**Area of activity:** Sports and Leisure Pursuits  
**Author:** D. Huw Owen

Jack Mercer was born on 22 April, 1893 at Southwick, Sussex, the second of six children of Walter Ernest Mercer, farrier, and his wife Mary. He married (1) Santa Lorenza Green in 1919, separated in 1932; (2) Kathrine (Kay) Kemish in 1973.

He joined the Sussex County Cricket Club as a swing bowler in 1913, having played club cricket for Southwick. He left the following year and travelled across Europe to Russia. He returned to Britain in 1914 and served with the Royal Sussex Regiment in World War One, and, having lain wounded in a crater for two days in 1916, was invalided home. He rejoined the Sussex Cricket Club staff in 1919, and played twelve matches for Sussex in the period 1919-21.

Aware of the challenge presented in Sussex by the presence of Maurice Tate he joined the Glamorgan Cricket Club in 1921, and qualified for his new county by playing for the Barry and Cardiff clubs. In 1923 he took four wickets for 41 runs when Glamorgan defeated the West Indies and became a regular member of the team the following year. From 1925 he was an extremely successful bowler, and captured more than 100 wickets on six occasions, with 1929 his most successful season when he captured 137 wickets at an average of 20.35 runs. In 1926 he was nominated as one of the five Cricketers of the Year in the *Wisden Almanack*, the first Glamorgan player to be awarded this honour. He played in 412 matches from 1922 until 1939, and in 1936 was awarded, at the age of 41, a Benefit Year, from which he received £729. In this season he took all ten wickets against Warwickshire, the first and only time for a Glamorgan bowler to achieve this feat. Other outstanding bowling achievements were eight wickets for 41 runs against Worcestershire in 1930, eight wickets for 42 runs against Warwickshire in 1931, and a hat-trick against Surrey in 1932.

He toured India, Burma and Ceylon with the MCC in 1926-7, was a member of Sir Julien Cahn's team which played in Jamaica in 1928-9, and was a regular member of the Players team in the annual fixture against the Gentlemen. An aggressive lower-order batsman, he scored 31 runs off an eight-ball over against Worcestershire in 1939.

Jack Mercer was the club's senior professional from 1932 until his retirement at the end of the 1939 season, but played for Glamorgan in war-time friendly matches in 1943. He was appointed coach to Northamptonshire in 1947 and in his first season played for the county. In his first-class career he took 1,591 wickets at an average of 23.38 runs, scored 6,076 runs and held 144 catches. He served as the Northamptonshire coach until 1963 when he became the club's scorer, and held this post until his retirement in 1981.

He was also renowned as a card player and magician, and was a member of the Magic Circle. His other interests included horse-racing.

Jack Mercer died in London at the age of 94 on 31 August 1987.

### Author

D. Huw Owen

### Sources

Andrew Hignell, *A Who's Who of Glamorgan County Cricket Club 1888-1991* (1992)

Andrew Hignell, *Jack Mercer, A bowler of magical spells, Lives in Cricket* (2011)

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Jack Mercer](#)

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