

WATKINS, ALBERT JOHN (ALLAN) (1922-2011), cricketer

Name: Albert John Watkins
Date of birth: 1922
Date of death: 2011
Spouse: Molly Watkins
Gender: Male
Occupation: cricketer
Area of activity: Sports and Leisure Pursuits
Author: D. Huw Owen

Allan Watkins was born on 21 April, 1922 at Usk, the son of a policeman. He married Molly, and they had three children.

Allan Watkins had a 23-year career with the Glamorgan Cricket club, in which as a left-arm batsmen he played in 484 matches, scored 20,361 runs and took 833 wickets with left-arm seam or cutters, and 464 catches. He was one of the finest short-leg fielders to play for the county, and was described by Jack Fingleton, the Australian batsman and commentator, as 'the best close-wicket catcher in the world'. He played 15 Test matches for England between 1948 and 1952 and toured South Africa, India and Pakistan with the MCC.

He made his debut in first-class cricket with Glamorgan in 1939 and resumed his cricketing career after the Second World War, during which he had also played football for Plymouth Argyle and Cardiff City and rugby for Pontypool. He scored his maiden first-class century in 1946 and in 1948 became the first Welshman to play in an Ashes Test. This match, at the Oval, was the final Test match of Don Bradman, the legendary Australian batsman. Bradman was bowled for a duck on the second ball of his innings, and Watkins ensured for himself a place in cricket folklore as being the last man in a Test match to field a shot from Bradman, struck on the first ball.

He toured South Africa with the MCC team in the winter of 1948-9, and became the first Welshman to score a Test hundred when he scored 111 in the fourth Test at Ellis Park in February 1949. He surpassed this score in November 1951 when he scored 137 not out in the match against India at Delhi: his contribution was acclaimed by *Wisden*, the cricketing 'Bible', which referred to the 'heroic rearguard action led by Watkins, who batted for nine hours, [which] enabled England to draw a match which India should have won.' His career-best performances were achieved in 1954, an unbeaten 170 against Leicestershire at Swansea and seven wickets for 28 runs against Derbyshire at Chesterfield. His final tour with the MCC was to Pakistan in 1955-56.

He retired from county cricket midway through the 1962 season. He initially served as a warden at Usk Borstal before securing coaching positions at Framlingham School and subsequently at Oundle School, Northamptonshire where he served for four decades.

Allan Watkins died at Kidderminster on 3 August 2011.

Author

D. Huw Owen

Sources

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

Peter Jackson, *Triumph and Tragedy, Welsh sporting legends* (2011)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Allan Watkins](#)

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