

BRIAN CHALES LARA - WEST INDIAN CRICKETING GENIUS.

Brian Lara was - and still remains to this day - one of my all time cricket heroes from the first time I ever saw him play in 1992. A left handed batting genius whose multiple records & style made him a legend well within his own playing career for the West Indies - the expectations and hopes of the whole Caribbean nation would often rest upon his shoulders in his 131 Tests and 290 ODI's.

On my holiday to Barbados in 2004 to see the 3rd Test Match between West Indies and England , I fulfilled at least two of my own, long held personal ambitions - witness an England Team win a Series in the Caribbean (The 1960's were the last time since this had happened) and meet Brian Lara , popularly nicknamed " The Prince".

England won by 8 wickets inside 3 days with a powerful performance at a packed (old) Kensington Oval led by Graham Thorpe - with a magnificent match turning 119 not out in the first Innings (England were 119 for 6) ; Andy Flintoff with his first ever five wicket haul for England and Matthew Hoggard with a devastating bowling spell (4 for 35), including a "hat trick" in the West Indies second innings - seeing this unusual feat live in a Test was another ambition achieved by myself ! You don't often see the hat trick performed anywhere. This was only the second occasion since 1935 that England, had recorded a Test victory at the Kensington.(1935 ; 1994 & 2004).

With the match won amid euphoric scenes of celebration by the visiting English fans myself included and the Series now standing at 3-0 to England , this was indeed a famous & historic Series win and the mounting pressure from the home supporters on Brian Lara as the beleaguered West Indian Captain had now almost reached breaking point.

On the scheduled Fourth Day with no play , I decided to wonder down to the now empty stadium to just take in the sights of England's dramatic triumph - imagine my total surprise when I entered what I thought would be a deserted pavilion to see the Barbadian Prime Minister , the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur MP surrounded by a police security guard , intently watching an enforced net practice by a chastened West Indian team, including Lara himself. I was virtually the only non West Indian in the ground and I was allowed to stay because I was so obviously just a cricket fan enjoying his holiday in the sun.

Brian batted most of the two hour net session - it looked like a master class in shot making and then when he had finished , he started to walk across the sacred turf toward the Pavilion , I thought it was my

moment . He was very polite and charming and signed my West Indies cap and also the book " Cricket's Greatest Battles ", which features his epic match winning 153 not out - again in Barbados - against Australia in 1999 as the W.I. won by just one wicket to go ahead 2-1 in the Series - an innings that has been subsequently rated by "Wisden" as the second greatest Test innings in the history of the game.

Brian stopped and began to read this chapter about his match winning performance in the middle of the very ground where this had indeed actually happened some 5 years ago and we talked about the match and his thoughts on the game. I then wished him personal " good luck " for the final match in the current Series . Wow ! - another of my cricket ambitions achieved.

Brian of course then went and re established the World Record highest Test match innings by scoring 400 not out against England in the fourth and last Test at St. Johns, Antigua . Obviously I claim a degree of the credit , having helped boost his confidence during our impromptu meeting back on the outfield in Barbados!

In 2007, I attended the "ICC World Cup Final" staged in Barbados and met up with local artist Mr."Art" Edwards ,who was launching a series of 9" West Indian "Legends" statues, the first being of Brian who had announced his retirement from all International cricket after the last of the group matches in the tournament which was against England on April 21st . Art donated SIX of these to myself - at no cost - to promote his work back in the UK and build up his reputation. The remarkable statue accurately illustrated Brian's 400 not out, complete with a tiny removable bat.

When I got them home, a good contact of mine in "memorabilia" confirmed he was due to arrange a dinner with Brian as the chief guest and that he would ask Brian if he would sign the six mini bats that could be removed from the statues.

I agreed that if he could get this done , my friend could keep one , give Brian another and I'd take back the remaining four - he achieved this and of the four returned to myself , I sold three at Auction for charity fund raising purposes and kept one for myself which I have to this day.

In August 2009 , I returned to my favourite destination for a holiday with my partner Christine and we again saw Brian from a distance - this time with Barbadian pop star Rihanna no less - dancing in the streets at the Annual "Crop Over" Festival and can they both dance ! That evening we attended a huge outdoor music concert or "Cohoblopot" at the Kensington Oval cricket ground and whilst hoping

we might catch another glimpse of the great man , the crowds meant this was impossible even in the reserved seating area.

Upon leaving the famous "Worrall , Weekes and Walcott" stand at around 1am 'ish , we were both amazed to come face to face with Mr. Lara who was making his way back in , his reputation as a "night owl" fully justified ! Again he was charming and chatted to us on the main staircase of the new ground with no one else in sight - he told us that he remembered the statute of his greatest moment in the game and had auctioned it for the benefit of his Foundation, set up in the memory of his parents (Pearl and Bunty) - he then thanked us and went back to another party in the ground - What a night !

I've never met Brian again since that hot evening in Barbados , but my ambitions had been well and truly achieved by the time I arrived back in the UK.

Thank you Mr.Lara (and I still claim a degree of influence for his World Record performance in Antigua !)

Chris Hall. 19th May 2020



Brian Lara - Stats from Ron Pearce

Brian Charles Lara, [TC](#), [OCC](#), [AM](#) (born 2 May 1969) is a [Trinidadian](#) former international [cricketer](#),^[4]^[2] widely acknowledged as one of the greatest batsmen of all time.^{[3][4][5]} He topped the [Test](#) batting [rankings](#) on several occasions and holds several cricketing records, including the record for the highest individual score in [first-class cricket](#), with 501 not out for [Warwickshire](#) against [Durham](#) at [Edgbaston](#) in 1994,^[6] which is the only quintuple-hundred in first-class cricket history.^[7] Lara also holds the record for the highest individual score in a Test innings after scoring 400 not out against England at [Antigua](#) in 2004.^[8] Lara also shares the test record of scoring the highest number of runs in a single over in a Test match, when he scored 28 runs off an over by [Robin Peterson](#) of South Africa in 2003 (matched in 2013 by Australia's [George Bailey](#) and in 2020 by South Africa's [Keshav Maharaj](#)).^[9]

National side	• West Indies (1990–2007)
Test debut (cap 196)	6 December 1990 v Pakistan
Last Test	27 November 2006 v Pakistan
ODI debut (cap 59)	9 November 1990 v Pakistan
Last ODI	21 April 2007 v England
ODI shirt no.	9

Years	Team
1987–2008	Trinidad and Tobago
1992–1993	Transvaal
1994–1998	Warwickshire
2010	Southern Rocks

Competition	Test	ODI	FC	LA
Matches	131	299	261	429
Runs scored	11,953	10,405	22,156	14,602
Batting average	52.88	40.48	51.88	39.67
100s/50s	34/48	19/63	65/88	27/86
Top score	400*	169	501*	169
Balls bowled	60	49	514	130
Wickets	–	4	4	5
Bowling average	–	15.25	104.00	29.80
5 wickets in innings	–	0	0	0
10 wickets in match	–	0	0	0
Best bowling	–	2/5	1/1	2/5

Catches/stumpings 164/– 120/– 320/– 177/

Lara's results in international matches ^[25]						
	Matches	Won	Lost	Drawn	Tied	No result
Test ^[26]	131	32	63	36	0	–
ODI ^[27]	299	139	144	–	3	13

Lara holds several world records for high scoring. He has the highest individual score in both **first-class cricket** (501 **not out** for **Warwickshire** against **Durham** in 1994) and Test cricket (400 not out for the West Indies against **England** in 2004). Lara amassed his world record 501 in 474 minutes off only 427 balls. He hit 308 in boundaries (10 sixes and 62 fours). His partners were **Roger Twose** (115 partnership – 2nd wicket), **Trevor Penney** (314 – 3rd), **Paul Smith** (51 – 4th) and **Keith Piper** (322 unbroken – 5th). Earlier in that season Lara scored six centuries in seven innings while playing for Warwickshire

He is the only man to have reclaimed the Test record score, having scored 375 against England in 1994, a record that stood until **Matthew Hayden's** 380 against **Zimbabwe** in 2003. His 400 not out also made him the second player (after **Donald Bradman**) to score two Test triple-centuries, and the second (after **Bill Ponsford**) to score two first-class quadruple-centuries. He has scored nine double-centuries in Test cricket, third after Bradman's twelve and **Kumar Sangakkara's** eleven. As a captain, he scored five double-centuries, which is the highest by any one who is in charge. In 1995 Lara in the Test match away series against England, scored 3 hundreds in three consecutive Matches which earned him the Man of the Series award. The Test Series was eventually drawn 2–2. He also held the record for the highest total number of runs in a Test career, after overtaking **Allan Border** in an innings of 226 played at **Adelaide Oval**, Australia in November 2005. This was later broken by **Sachin Tendulkar** of **India** on 17 October 2008 whilst playing against Australia at Mohali in the 2nd Test of the **Border–Gavaskar Trophy** 2008.

Records^[edit]

See also: *List of international cricket centuries by Brian Lara*



Brian Lara's career performance graph

- Lara struck 277 runs against **Australia** in **Sydney**, his **maiden Test century**, the fourth-highest maiden Test century by any batsman,^[61] the highest individual score in all Tests