

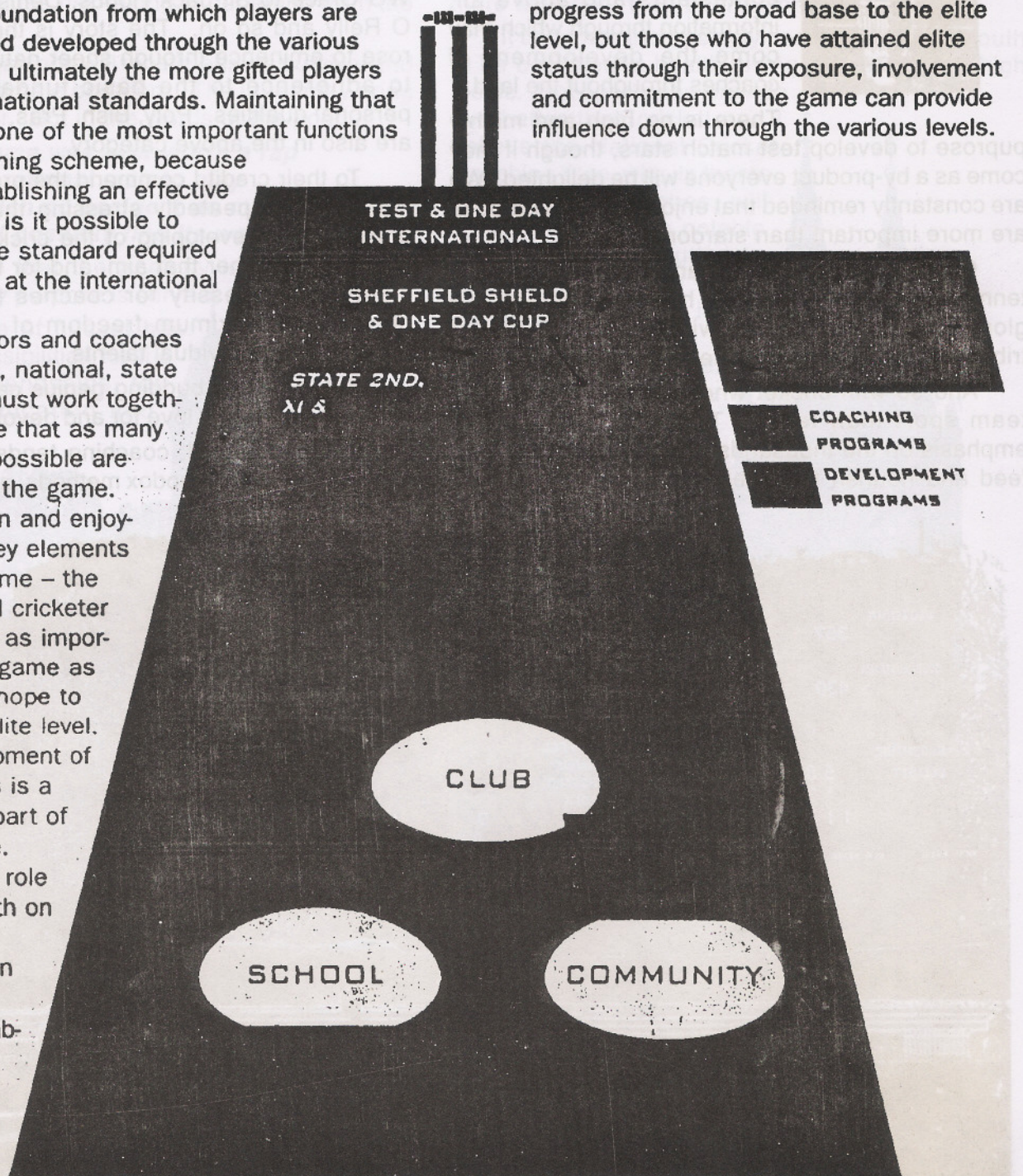
The Playing Field

Australian cricket relies on all its cricketers, from the broad base of junior and club cricket through to the national team. That balance provides the foundation from which players are nurtured and developed through the various stages until ultimately the more gifted players reach international standards. Maintaining that balance is one of the most important functions of the coaching scheme, because only by establishing an effective broad base is it possible to maintain the standard required to compete at the international level.

Administrators and coaches at all levels, national, state and club, must work together to ensure that as many people as possible are exposed to the game. Participation and enjoyment are key elements of the scheme – the recreational cricketer can be just as important to the game as those who hope to reach the elite level. The development of role models is a significant part of the scheme. Appropriate role models, both on and off the field, play an important part in establishing a positive image that makes

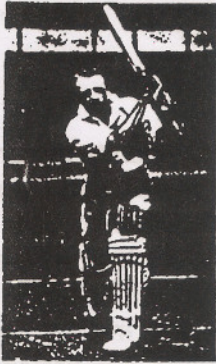
cricket more attractive to the community generally. We should all be aware that the scheme is a two way process – not only do players

progress from the broad base to the elite level, but those who have attained elite status through their exposure, involvement and commitment to the game can provide influence down through the various levels.



'Cricket Pitches at All Levels'

INTRODUCTION by Sir Donald Bradman, A. C.



This manual has, as its paramount objectives, the encouragement of the game of cricket, greater enjoyment for those who play, greater knowledge for the contestants and above all, information through which may come the development of coaches throughout the land.

There is no high and mighty purpose to develop test match stars, though if they come as a by-product everyone will be delighted. We are constantly reminded that enjoyment and purpose are more important than stardom.

Only one tennis player can win the Wimbledon tennis title each year and on him the accolade and glory are bestowed. But without the myriad of tributaries which feed Wimbledon, it would not exist.

And so with cricket where, it being more of a team sport than tennis. There is even greater emphasis on the thousands of ordinary people who feed and nourish this great game whose ultimate

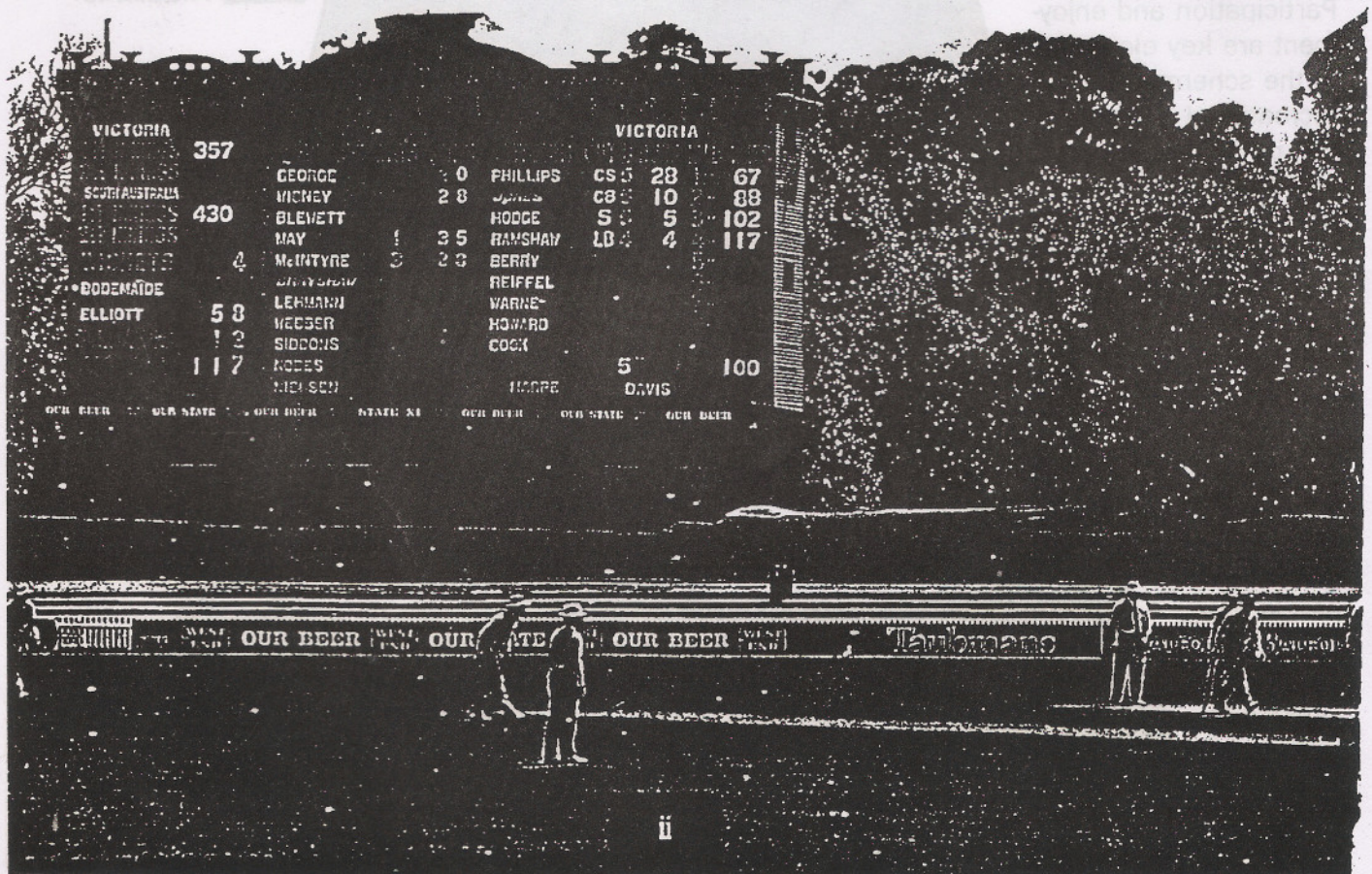
exposure comes through the international Test matches.

How important is coaching? Let us get this into proper perspective at once. The greatest Test match players in history were not made great by coaching. You may check the careers of the noblest from Dr. WG Grace to Sir Jack Hobbs, Denis Compton, Bill O'Reilly and so on. The story is the same. They rose to eminence through sheer natural skill, allied to adherence to the basic fundamentals, and personal qualities. Pollock, Bish, Prasanna, and Sachin are also in the above category.

To their credit I commend the producers of this Manual for repeatedly stressing that their aim is primarily the developing of the cricket art and the coaches to further that aim, and for taking pains to clarify the necessity for coaches to give young players the maximum freedom of expression to develop their individual talents.

But, before a budding genius can develop, he needs to possess a love for and devotion for cricket.

In the lay mind, coaching tends to be looked upon its teaching orthodox methods, and, to a certain



extent, that is what coaching does. But the intelligent coach must go further and perceive the dividing line between the straight jacket of orthodoxy and the freedom of initiative.

The hide-bound coach will teach his pupils always to play a straight bat to a ball pitched on the stumps.

The more venturesome and far seeing coach will not tear his protege to ribbons if, from a similar ball, he essays a successful pull shot to mid-wicket which necessitates risk-taking in departing from the straight bat.

The first instance will mostly ensure survival and no runs, but ultimate boredom. The latter may bring disaster or four. But in the words of the poet:

***No game was ever worth a rap
For a rational man to play
In which no accident no mishap
Could possibly find its way.***

I'm aware that the analogy is not precise, but my purpose is served.

The game of cricket has boundless possibilities for the creation of friendships, for travel, for education and

development of character.

One aspect which I constantly advocate is the necessity to read about the game through the unrivalled literature which is available in a score of directions.

A whole new world of enjoyment can be opened up to those fortunate enough to obtain these gems of literature which can be read and re-read and read again. We live in an age wherein the pressures of life are severe, the temptations many, and leisure more abundant than ever before.

It becomes increasingly necessary for our youth to be occupied in health giving relaxation with high ideals. Not sports can provide this better than cricket and I believe the National Cricket Coaching Plan, with its theme of producing coaches, will continue to make a notable and valuable contribution to the well being of a very large section of our people.

**Adelaide
April, 1995**

