

Captain's pick not always a task to relish

ROBERT CRADDOCK

IT'S a dangerous gamble for selectors not to give a Test captain the team he wants.

He is the one who pilots the ship. His reputation is the one most squarely on the line.

But Michael Clarke must have known days like this were coming when he resigned as a Test selector in the belief that — for all of the endless meetings and emails — he was not getting enough say.

Reports from Abu Dhabi that Clarke wanted Alex Doolan in the Test team — he even tipped him to make a century —

before being overruled by the selectors, have fanned the flames of the ageless issue of whether the captain should have a vote on team selections.

Australia has got it right taking the selection burden off the captain, but on this issue Clarke's point is a fair one.

Australia has played 10 batsmen at No. 3 since Ricky Ponting vacated the position.

Clarke is trying to stop the merry-go-round and batten down the spot and feels Doolan, for all of his current struggles against spin, can be the long-term solution.

In the old days, the captain

often didn't get a vote in home Tests but did get one on tour.

The start of the end of that system came in 1997 when captain Mark Taylor lapsed into a form slump and vice-captain and fellow Ashes touring selector Steve Waugh just didn't feel comfortable casting a vote on whether his captain should be sacked.

When Waugh led Australia on the 2001 Ashes tour, it broke his heart to drop Justin Langer (later recalled).

It also did his head in when he had to tell Michael Slater he had been dropped — as it turned out, for good. The friend-

ship between Slater and Waugh never recovered.

Waugh felt it was all too much and was later given permission to stand down as a selector.

It surprised everyone when the Argus Review into Australian cricket recommended the captain should again be a selector, ushering Clarke into a role he did not relish.

Despite denials by both parties, there were always rumours that former chairman John Inverarity and Clarke had several major philosophical differences.

Clarke tried to resign as a selector after Australia lost 4-0

in India last year, but Cricket Australia refused to accept it.

But the day Darren Lehmann became Australian coach, it all changed.

One of the conditions of Lehmann accepting the deal was that the captain would not be part of the selection panel and Clarke quit that day.

He could not resign quick enough, but the trade-off was that there would be regrettable weeks like this — when he would boldly tip a player to score a century, then days later had to explain why that same batsman wasn't good enough to make the team.

Bowler's hat-trick fails to spark SA

STEVE LARKIN

SOUTH Australian quick Chadd Sayers reckons his hat-trick was a novelty later tarnished by two young Bulls.

Sayers' triple treat cracked Queensland's top order on yesterday's opening day of the Sheffield Shield match in Adelaide.

But novice Bulls batsmen Nick Stevens and Marnus Labuschagne, helped by older hand Chris Hartley, then rescued Queensland, which was 4-314 at stumps.

Stevens posted an unbeaten 134 — his maiden first-class century — and fellow 20-year-old Labuschagne made 83 in his debut first-class knock.

The pair, and a resolute 80 not out from stalwart Hartley, reinvigorated the Bulls after Sayers bagged his first hat-trick in any cricket — and just the 10th by a South Australian in first-class history.

"When you get three in a row it's pretty exciting," Sayers said.

"It's a novelty to get one. They're hard to come by. But the team comes first — and we're struggling a bit."

With three sublime deliveries, Sayers achieved the rare feat on a day when SA could muster just one wicket with the other 576 balls it bowled.

First, he produced a looping in-swing that ripped through the defence of Joe Burns (14) and bowled the opener.

Then Sayers sent down another in-dipper that struck the 19-year-old Ben McDermott on the front pad, plumb lbw.

With his hat-trick ball, Sayers delivered a "perfect" peach — another in-swing that moved slightly off the pitch to catch a feathery edge from Peter Forrest's bat.

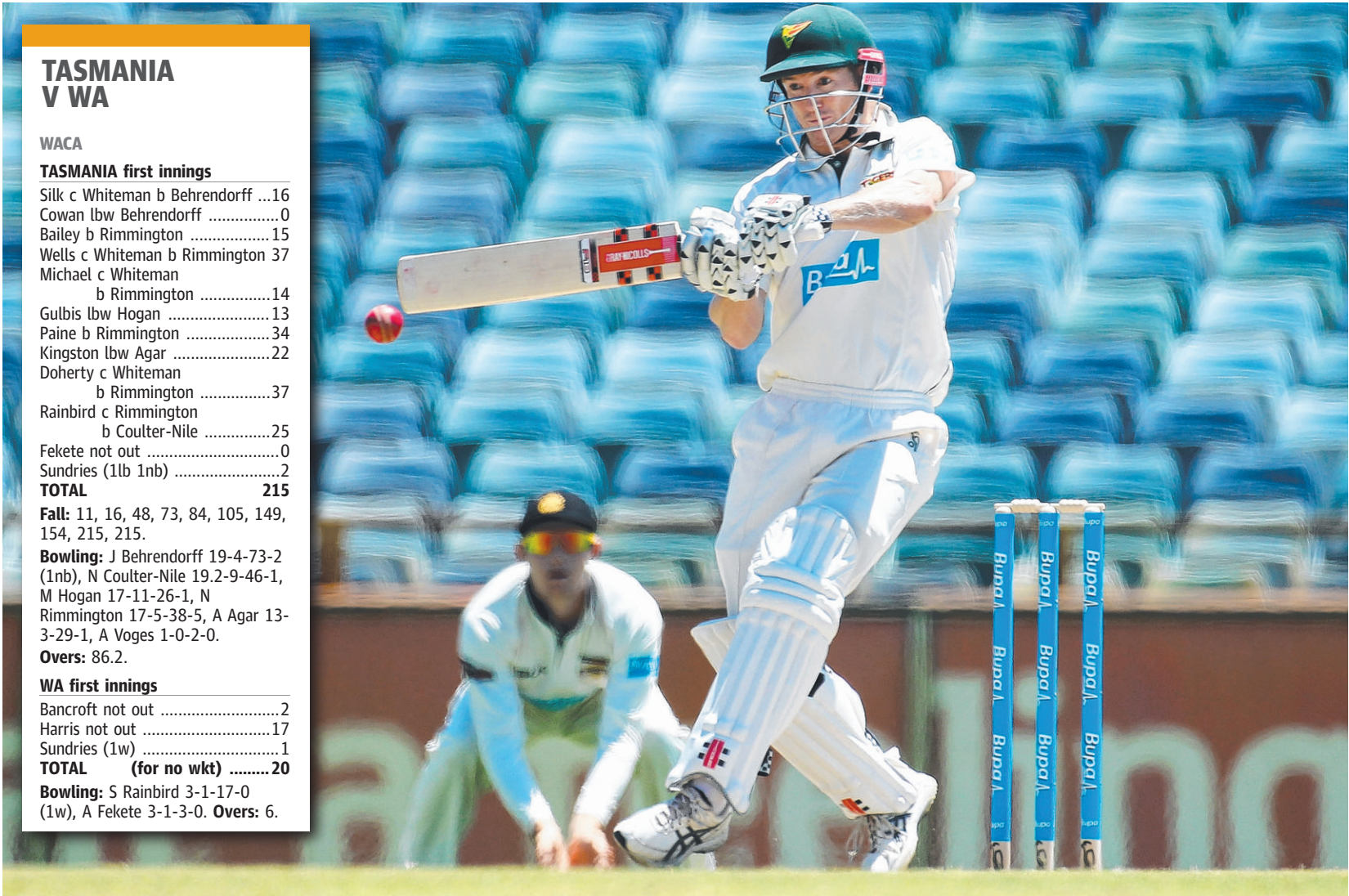
Boland rips into Blues

A TOP order unable to cash in and Scott Boland's career-best figures meant NSW finished 8-266 on day one of their season-opening Sheffield Shield clash with Victoria.

Boland took 6-49 from 22 overs at the MCG — the 25-year-old's maiden Shield five-wicket haul. Boland was most destructive with the second new ball when he snared 4-15 in a five-over spell.

Kurtis Patterson and Scott Henry shared a fluent 99-run stand, while Ben Rohrer top-scored with 70 for the visitors.

But the half-centurions were unable to convert their starts into tons, much to the pleasure of Bushrangers captain Matthew Wade who sent the visitors in.



TASMANIA V WA	
WACA	
TASMANIA first innings	
Silk c Whiteman b Behrendorff	16
Cowan lbw Behrendorff	0
Bailey b Rimmington	15
Wells c Whiteman b Rimmington	37
Michael c Whiteman	
b Rimmington	14
Gulbis lbw Hogan	13
Paine b Rimmington	34
Kingston lbw Agar	22
Doherty c Whiteman	
b Rimmington	37
Rainbird c Rimmington	
b Coulter-Nile	25
Fekete not out	0
Sundries (1lb 1nb)	2
TOTAL	215
Fall: 11, 16, 48, 73, 84, 105, 149, 154, 215, 215.	
Bowling: J Behrendorff 19-4-73-2 (1nb), N Coulter-Nile 19.2-9-46-1, M Hogan 17-11-26-1, N Rimmington 17-5-38-5, A Agar 13-3-29-1, A Voges 1-0-2-0.	
Overs: 86.2.	
WA first innings	
Bancroft not out	2
Harris not out	17
Sundries (1w)	1
TOTAL (for no wkt)	20
Bowling: S Rainbird 3-1-17-0 (1w), A Fekete 3-1-3-0.	Overs: 6.

EARLY LOSS: George Bailey could only make 15 for Tasmania against WA at the WACA yesterday.

Picture: GETTY

Tasmania digs itself out of a hole in Perth

CHRIS PIKE

TASMANIA fought hard to make 215 in its first innings in the Sheffield Shield match against Western Australia at the WACA with WA 0-20 in reply at stumps.

Tasmania was bowled out for a competitive 215 after struggling on the opening day of the Shield season.

The home side then faced six overs before stumps, with Marcus Harris on 17 and Cameron Bancroft two.

After George Bailey won the toss, Tasmania looked

unlikely to get near 200 when WA's quartet of pace bowlers took control of the match early on, leaving the Tigers at 6-105.

But Tim Paine (34) and debutant Hamish Kingston (22) fought hard to make WA work for its wickets. Then a counter-attack from Xavier Doherty (37) and Sam Rainbird (25) took the Tigers to 215.

Nathan Rimmington was the pick of WA's bowlers with 5-38, while Jason Behrendorff took two wickets, with one each to Michael Hogan and Nathan Coulter-Nile.

Rimmington has had

limited Shield chances with WA the last two years but the former Queenslander hopes his five-wicket haul is the start of his resurrection in four-day cricket.

"I have tried to make the most of every opportunity and hopefully this is the start of me doing that this season," Rimmington said.

"I just wanted to get the opportunity to play first-class cricket again, even though I played the pink ball game last year, but I didn't play at the WACA. Luckily I was able to get a few wickets."

WA's bowlers got on top early with left-armer Behrendorff trapping former Test batsman Ed Cowan (0) in front and then having Jordan Silk (16) caught behind by Sam Whiteman.

After Tasmania stumbled to 2-16, Bailey and Jon Wells tried to resurrect things, but the skipper was bowled by Rimmington for 15 as the visitors went into lunch at 3-48.

Wells fought hard for 37 before being caught behind off Rimmington and when Evan Gulbis copped a rough leg before call for 13 off Michael

Hogan, Tasmania was in trouble at 6-105.

However, Paine and Kingston put on 44 runs in 139 balls to steady before Paine was bowled by Rimmington.

Kingston soon joined him, adjudged leg before off Ashton Agar, but Doherty showed his experience with a late attacking knock.

He made 37, including seven boundaries, until being caught behind by Whiteman with a terrific catch to give Rimmington a fifth wicket, and then Rainbird fell in the deep for 25 with the score 215.