

# Warner on the road to redemption



**Leonardo da Vinci was history's greatest switch-thinker. He drew with his left hand while simultaneously mirror-writing with his right.**

He found mathematics essential to his art and art essential to his mathematics and became proficient in every human endeavour but one: Golf.

David Andrew Warner, on the other hand, does play golf, extremely well, with either hand.

He actually hits the ball with both hands, but it wouldn't surprise anybody if his golf bag was full of left-handed woods and right-handed irons.

Davey is cricket's switch-thinker.

Last weekend, on the big stage of the second Test against Pakistan in Adelaide, he slugged, carved and with delicate reverse swept himself into cricket's history books.

He amassed a record-breaking 335 not out, admittedly against a second-rate attack, confirming his utter dominance of all forms of the game at home in the Australian summer (his record overseas is not as good).

But that innings is not going to define him like former skipper Mark Taylor's 334 not out in 1998, also against Pakistan, or Matthew Hayden's monster 380 against Zimbabwe here at the WACA in 2003.

We all know what will define Davey Warner, no matter how many runs he scored, even if he were to go past the all-time record Test innings of 400 not out against England in 2004.

The crime and the punishment are the asterisk that will always sit after Davey's name in the annals of cricket, along with those of Steve Smith and Cam Bancroft.

In Warner's case the stain is worse, because, while Smith stands accused of weak leadership and Bancroft was caught red-handed doing the dirty deed, Warner won himself a special place in cricket's Hall of Shame as the leader of the



*He's baaack! ... David Warner celebrates his runathon against Pakistan.*

pincer movement.

The hating began as soon as Davey set foot on English soil this northern summer, and it continued unabated through what could only be described as his Ashes Horribilus.

When he limped off the Oval in the last Ashes Test, Broad-beaten and dragging his tail behind him with an average of diddly-squat, I wondered how in hell he'd come back from here?

You could see it in his look of resignation as the fickle finger of cricket fate was raised once again, confirming again and again his inability to cope with being Broad's bunny.

He was like Sisyphus in the old Greek myths, forced to endlessly push a rock up a hill (or was it the slope at Lords?) only to see it roll back to the bottom each time, crushing him as it went.

And you couldn't help but think this was the cricket gods at work, punishing him for his crime for all eternity.

But come back he has. This summer he's pushed that rock over the top of the mountain and sent it hurtling down on his opponents - mainly Pakistan - on

the other side.

His one-day and T20 international form was masterful.

And when he reached the Gabba, and the first Test, he was ready for an almost unprecedented assault on the enemy.

So much so that he's distorted the natural order of things in the hierarchy of Australian batting that says Steve Smith is alpha male and the rest, including Davey, are bit players.

The arrangement that seemed to be set in stone was that numbers one and two would depart the scene briskly, leaving Smith at number four, supported by the rest of the batting order, to right the ship.

Obviously there's an exception to every rule, and Next Big Thing Manus Labuchagne is it, but there's no doubt that Smith is feeling the Warner pressure.

He's always been an Eveready bunny, but this series he's looked like someone has hooked him up to one of Elon Musk's super solar batteries and over-charged him.

There are times you think he might explode - and it's making the steel of his determination

look surprisingly brittle.

He's a bloke in need of a top order collapse.

Davey Warner will never be a player you can take to your heart. He will never be that cute cuddly little koala.

But you have to be conscious

**‘He's pushed that rock over the top of the mountain and sent it hurtling down on his opponents’**

## Liam's big impression



*Role model ... Freo draft pick Liam Henry.*

from whence he came.

He lived in a Housing Commission home and worked stacking up groceries at Woolies for 12 bucks an hour. Even as an elite cricketer he could still remember on what shelf in which aisle you'd find the seedless olives.

No private-school blazers for our Davey.

And his path to Test glory was equally unlikely - he's the only cricketer in the entire history of our summer game to make a national team without any first-class experience, a T20 International against South Africa on January 11, 2009, and it took him three more years to convince the selectors, and the public, that he could be a genuine Test player.

You might not yet "love" Davey Warner but it's impossible not to respect what he has achieved from the depths of human despair that would have taken any of us to the brink.

It goes to show that the Australian sporting public will forgive almost anything if you can show them something pure.

And there's nothing purer than the 500-plus runs, out only once, that he's scored in the first two Tests this summer.

**Since the AFL decided to make the National Draft a big event, complete with interviews, photo opportunities and highlight reels, it's been, let's face it, not the most exciting of spectacles.**

I'm tempted to say drab. Nervous young blokes fresh out of school with nervous smiles answering stock questions with stock answers.

And then along came Liam Henry.

There was already a fair bit of chatter about the youngster from Tammin via Derby after his sparkling U18 Carnival performances, and it was pretty obvious that Freo wanted their Academy kid at pretty much any cost.

But then when you saw the genuine emotion from mum and dad when his name was called at pick nine, his tousle-haired head dominated by bright eyes and a huge grin, you got an inkling that the world was meeting someone special.

And then when he spoke, shy but still confident, about doing the best he could off the field as on it, about wanting to be a role model for non-indigenous as well as indigenous kids from the Kimberley, I sat up straight and paid close attention.

There's his gratitude for the sponsors of his scholarship to Christchurch Grammar, my old school foes in Claremont.

There's the indigenous tie business he's started while still at school with his two close mates, fellow Freo draftee Isaiah Butters and Dontay Bolton, called Tied to Culture, with a portion of the money made going to charity.

The hard work's only just beginning for Liam and his fellow draftees.

There's years of grind, building the strength and endurance and honing the skills and game plan you need to survive in the big time.

There's the shock of getting belted around by battle-hardened men who aren't going to give a stripling like Liam any leave passes.

There's the media focus, the temptations of the flesh, the psychological pressures to deal with.

But after what we all saw on draft night, I, and thousands of others, really hope this kid becomes something special.

## WA's Robbo sets record at Sunset

### SURFING

By CAMERON BEDFORD-BROWN

**WA surfer Jack Robinson has defied the odds and heavy pressure to qualify for the World Championship Tour by winning the Vans World Cup of Surfing at Sunset Beach.**

Robinson got tubed and carved power turns taking over the line-up with a dominant performance despite almost being cleaved in half by fellow finalist Hawaiian Ezekiel Lau who ran him over.

The WA lad may well be the best surfer to grace the Sunset Peak and writes his name into the history books with another incredible performance at the break.

Robbo, as he is affectionately known, couldn't have timed his last-ditch run better, taking the final available qualification spot for the WCT.

"Finally boy, finally," he cried out while being triumphantly chaired up the beach knowing he'd qualified for the championship tour.

"I wanted to claim it and stamp it," he said.

"Sunset threw me a lucky charm and I did what I needed

to do at the time.

"There was a big buildup and so many things go into this.

"It's what you think about every day."

Robinson's wave selection and peak positioning is unmatched in the modern era at fabled Sunset.

"He's a bit of a savant, in the matrix," said WSL commentator Ross Williams.

Robinson said he had been working hard and getting things clear in his mind about his quest to join the elite ranks.

Long-drawn-out bottom turns with lots of rail in the water and snapping into rifling barrels is what Robinson does best.

On fire in the final with two nines and a 19.07 heat total out of 20, it was the highest score in the long illustrious history of the event.

"It's the Jack Robinson show," chimed in another WSL commentator, Chris Cote.

Robbo keeps it pretty low-pro, as the kids say, and he's popular in the surfing world for being a hard-core tube pig.

Arguably the best tube rider in the world, he will be one tough "rookie" at the hollow breaks on the WCT tour, such as Pipeline, Chopes and G-Land.



*WA's Jack Robinson on his way to victory at Sunset Beach and a spot on the World Championship Tour. Photo: WSL/Heff*