

STEVE JAMES

Stephen Peter James was born in Lydney, Gloucestershire on 07 September 1967. His father, Peter, was a sports shop owner. Steve went to Monmouth School where Graham “Budgie” Burgess, ex Somerset C.C.C., was coach. He was a talented schoolboy rugby player and cricketer who, as a 17 year old, was offered a cricket contract by both Glamorgan and Gloucestershire.

Steve was a bright scholar who read classics at Swansea University before being a postgraduate at Cambridge University where he met Mike Atherton. Steve scored a hundred in 1988 for Combined Universities against New Zealand and earned a cricket Blue in 1989 and 1990 whilst being close to a second Blue through the rugby XV.

A right hand opening bat with a sound technique, Steve played for Glamorgan from 1985 to 2003, making his first-class debut alongside Matthew Maynard, who he succeeded to become captain in 2001. In his first season, Glamorgan won the National League Division Two title and in 2002 they won the Division One crown in the same competition.

Steve's fitness levels – helped early in his career by playing rugby at fullback for Lydney – made him quick between the wickets and a strong contributor with the bat, making over 7,000 runs in one day cricket with 49 fifties and 7 hundreds, with a best score of 135.

His first class record is equally impressive. In 245 first-class games, James scored 15,890 runs at 40.63 with 47 hundreds and 58 fifties – an excellent conversion rate. He was a man who valued his wicket highly. In 1997, when Glamorgan won the County Championship for the third time, Steve opened the batting with Hugh Morris, making 1,775 runs with 7 hundreds (including 3 in a row in August) at an average of almost 70. Unsurprisingly, he was voted PCA's Player of the Year. His best score was 309*, in around 10 hours, against Sussex at Colwyn Bay in 2000.

Given his consistency and volume of runs it was surprising that James only played 2 Tests for England, one against South Africa and one against Sri Lanka in 1998.

In 2003, a long-standing knee injury forced a premature retirement. Following his playing days he moved into journalism where he worked for the Sunday Telegraph and Daily Telegraph. Due to cuts, he was released at the end of 2016. He now writes for the Times covering both cricket and rugby. His pieces on batting methods are fascinating.

He now passes on his sound batting technique by coaching youngsters at Glamorgan and at Monmouth School on a part-time basis. It will be a pleasure to welcome back a Gloucestershire man who first visited us back in 2003.

Ken Burney