

Top Australian Test award named after Shane Warne

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Australia's men's Test Player of the Year award will be renamed in Shane Warne's honour, officials said Monday, as tributes were paid to the late spin-king at the Boxing Day Test against South Africa. Warne, considered by many as second in stature only to Donald Bradman in sports-mad Australia, died unexpectedly aged just 52 in March.

The Shane Warne Men's Test Player of the Year award will be presented annually, second only to the prestigious Allan Border Medal for the most outstanding player across all formats. "As one of Australia's all-time greats, it is fitting we acknowledge Shane's extraordinary contribution to Test cricket by naming this award in his honour in perpetuity," said Cricket Australia chief Nick Hockley. The announcement came on the opening day of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Warne's home venue where he achieved many memorable feats, including an Ashes hat-trick and his 700th Test wicket.

Warne's Test cap number 350 has been painted square of the wicket for the duration of the match, while both the Australian and South African teams wore floppy white hats in his memory during the national anthem ceremony. "His place as a legend of Australian and world sport is assured," added Hockley. "Whilst we continue to mourn his passing, it is fitting that we honour Shane at his beloved Boxing Day Test at the MCG." A stand at the venue has already been named in his honour. Credited with reviving the art of leg-spin, Warne took 708 Test wickets as part of a dominant Australian team in the 1990s and 2000s before becoming a respected commentator.