

Joel Garner

'Big Bird' was capable of ripping through the heart of opposing batting line-ups. At 203cm, the ball would appear to come from the clouds and then either rear sharply up to the batsman's chin from a good length, or thud into his boot, crushing a few toes on the way. He was a batter's nightmare!

Almost from the time he could walk, Garner and his mates were hitting a ball about with an improvised bat - in the road, on the beach, anywhere with a bit of room. But he was born to bowl.

Big Bird had the ability to unleash a devastating yorker, as well as generate menacing bounce from a seemingly casual run-up and deceptively gentle action. Off the field he seemed gangling and awkward. With legs like stilts and a slight stoop in his walk, he didn't always look the athlete. Yet he was a brilliant fielder and superb bowler.

His 5 for 39 in the 1979 World Cup Final against England remains the best ever performance by a bowler in a final; it included a spell of 5 wickets for 4 runs, and he was on a hat-trick twice.

When he retired from the game, he left huge shoes to fill.



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