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On this day, 1950, a bizarre Test match on a ridiculous pitch got over at The Gabba.

The match lasted only 129.2 eight-ball overs (172.2 six-ball overs), and involved two of the most extraordinary declarations, on 68 and 32.

Here is what happened.
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Hassett won the all-important toss.

Australia were 66/1 at lunch. 166/6 at tea, and bowled out for 228 just before stumps.

Nothing spectacular so far.

To provide stability to the frail middle-order, England had decided to push Hutton – their best batsman – down the order.
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Simpson walked out with Washbrook and appealed for bad light before a ball were bowled. It was accepted.

It rained that night. And then for the next day and the rest day.

And for part of Day 3.

Then, against all expectations, play started at 1 PM.

But first, some context.
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We know that pitches used to remain uncovered back in the 1950s and play began when rain stopped.

So the matches were played on sticky wickets.

Every footmark, every spot where the ball pitched, left an imprint.

These dried in the sun. A drying wicket could be dangerous.
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And The Gabba had probably the worst of these "gluepots".

The roller tried its best, but not enough.

The first over, from Lindwall, was eventless.

Johnston bowled from the other end. By now the sun was already out.
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The first ball hit Simpson on the shoulder, the second went over his head, the third hit him on his hand.

It was evident that a farcical Test match was on the cards.

The match continued.

Hassett quickly adapted and replaced Lindwall.
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Miller, one of the greatest fast bowlers in history, was asked to bowl off-breaks from round the wicket.

He and Johnson made the ball move off the pitch at improbable angles.

Every now and then a ball rose almost vertically. Some shot along the ground.
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The openers waited for as long as possible, playing with loose hands, leaving decisively, or driving whenever they could.

Washbrook went immediately after lunch. 28/1.

Promoted to hit out, Evans got "getting legs, body, anything but his face in the way of the rising balls."
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He was dropped by Moroney and Hassett.

Miller felt the pressure despite no sign of a Messerschmitt (he often did).

He increased his pace and hit Evans all over *on this pitch*.

Then England lost 3 for 3 in 4 balls.

Brown declared at 68/7 (Johnston 5/35) at 3.22 PM.
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Batting at 5, Hutton stayed put (for only 8*).

England were 160 behind, but this was their only hope. They wanted to get Australia all out before stumps.

Bailey's first then flew past Moroney's head.

In no time, Australia lost three wickets before a run was scored.
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No team had been reduced to 3/0 in Test cricket until this point.

Then, at 32/7, Hassett called the batsmen in. A confused Brown met him.
- What's happening, old boy?
- I'm declaring.
- Oh, I see, you want us in on that again.
- It's your move, old chap!
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Brown realised he had declared too soon. He did not expect Australia to turn the tables.

England now had to bat for over an hour on that day.

They needed 193. Under the circumstances it was possibly the equivalent of a thousand.
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Brown decided to hold back Hutton and Compton for the next day, in case the conditions improved.

But Lindwall yorked Simpson first ball and soon resorted to bouncers.

Washbrook and Dewes took the score to 22/1, but England found themselves reeling at 30/6.
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Hutton finally walked out, but he did not get to face a ball.

Evans' string of bad light appeals finally worked. The day's play was called off three minutes before scheduled time.

130 runs were scored in the day, for 20 wickets.
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After the day's play, Larwood, Mailey, and pitch curator Jack Farquhar all thought that the pitch would improve the next day.

Brown made sure he did his bit.

He reached the ground early next morning to ensure he got the full ten minutes of heavy rolling done.
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The roller used to be pulled by a horse, which refused to move every now and then.

Brown kept time, ensuring every second of this inaction was recorded.

This continued for 28 minutes including 18 minutes of stoppage.

But England did not start well.
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Evans and Compton fell off consecutive balls. 46/8.

Now Hutton played one of the finest innings of his career – and that is saying something.

Brown hit two fours but eventually fell on 77.

Hutton now had only Wright as partner.
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Wright was no Bradman, but he hung on, presenting a dead bat to virtually everything.

Hutton launched himself into the Australian attack.

Seldom has any batsman demonstrated such batsmanship on a wicket like that.
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Journalist John Kay wrote: "The head-high bouncer was safely ignored. The chest-high deliveries of both the pace men and the spinners were played safely to the ground, out of the way of the many grasping hands in the leg-trap."
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Likewise, O'Reilly: “Hutton's tremendous performance ranks him, in my opinion, as the greatest batsman known in the world today. "I know no other who could have been capable of collaring the Australian attack on a helping pitch, and making it look like a second-rate force."

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Even Wisden did not bother to stick to its characteristic restrain: "Hutton thrashed the fast bowlers majestically and played the turning or lifting ball with the ease of a master craftsman."

But the miracle did not happen.
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Hutton left Wright – by then well set – to deal with the last four balls before lunch.

Wright dutifully kept out three. Then, for some reason, he went for an inexplicable hoick off Iverson and spooned the ball to Lindwall at square-leg.

Australia won the Test by 70 runs.
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They took 17 English wickets for 190 runs and lost 17 for 260.

But nobody could get Hutton (8* and 62*).