

Veteran opener departs on high

BEN HORNE

AUSTRALIAN opener Chris Rogers is preparing for his 25th and final Test with no regrets, but the selectors and coaches who turned their back on him until he was 35 should have a few.

A couple of months ago legendary Test batsman Greg Chappell came to Rogers and told the retiring opener he was wrong about him.

The former Test captain might as well have been speaking for all of Australian cricket.

The classy left-hander's brilliant two-year cameo in the baggy green could have, and should have, been so much more. But Rogers isn't complaining.

Ranked No.9 on the ICC batting charts is, for a 37-year-old veteran, going out on top.

"I think I'm ahead of Davey Warner as well – you can write that one," Rogers grinned.

"It's pretty special. Someone said to me not many people go out when they're scoring runs or taking wickets, it's generally not how it happens.

"So that's something to be proud of. It would have been perfect to have won this series, but it's not to be. I think I can be proud. I've played quite well and stood up and made a little bit of a difference.

"Greg Chappell said to me that he was wrong about me and I was quite proud of that. I think a few people had a certain impression of me, particularly with my age, and to be able to change that was quite satisfying."

"It's time for Australian cricket to make a few changes"

Rogers says he didn't see any tears from the captain, coach and national selector when he informed them that The Oval would be his final Test.

However, there's every chance they will be weeping in Bangladesh with a dearth of standout candidates out there to replace Rogers at the top of the order.

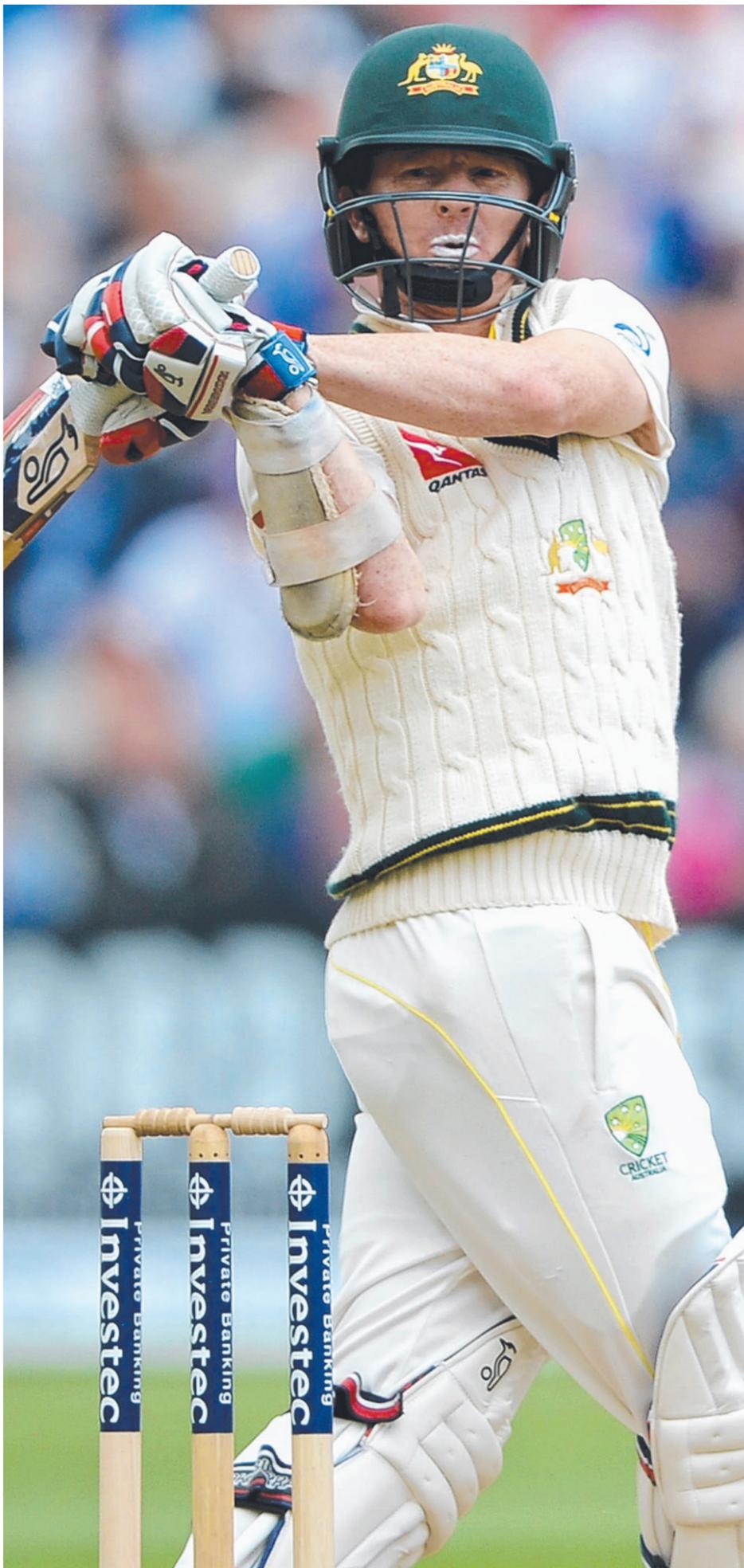
Rogers says his late-blooming story should be an example to selectors that they can put faith in the likes of Adam Voges and Michael Klinger to do a job in Test cricket and help young players through.

However, he admits it's time for new blood and just called on selectors to be patient because there are some rocky roads ahead.

"It's time for Australian cricket to make a few changes and bring a few new guys in, a few fresh faces," he said.

"There's always going to be players, that's not going to be an issue. It's about them learning and learning on the job.

"There's going to be a few young guys picked I imagine and then it's about having patience with them. They are going to go through tough times because international cricket is very difficult so it's whether the selectors can be patient enough and stick with them."



Veteran Australian opening batsman Chris Rogers has confirmed that he will retire after the fifth Test against England which starts tomorrow at The Oval in London

Picture: GARETH COPLEY

Benteke's shift pays dividends

CHRISTIAN Benteke scored his first EPL goal for Liverpool yesterday to give his new team a 1-0 win over promoted Bournemouth in a game that was marked by two disputed refereeing decisions.

Benteke met a cross at the far post for an easy tap-in in the 26th minute, although the goal was questionable as Philippe Coutinho had tried to reach the ball first from what was a clear offside position.

Benteke was bought from Aston Villa in the off-season to provide more of a presence up front for Liverpool and the Belgium striker also hit the bar from close range in the 90th minute.

"It's a good debut for myself and for the team," Benteke said. "It's a great feeling, it's important for the confidence."

Bournemouth fell to their second straight 1-0 loss to start the season after having an early goal ruled out, when Tommy Elphick was adjudged to have fouled Dejan Lovren before heading the ball into the net.

"For me it's a goal," said Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe.

"He's competing and wrestling, but if that's a free kick we're going to be seeing a free kick given every time there's a corner."

The Liverpool goal, meanwhile, was allowed to stand despite Coutinho seemingly interfering with play from an offside position.

Aussie duo up there with elite

MATILDAS duo Lisa De Vanna and Elise Kellond-Knight have been named in the FIFA Women's World Cup All-Star squad.

The pair were standouts as Australia produced their best-ever performance at a World Cup, earning a maiden quarter-final berth in Canada.

De Vanna starred as Australia's primary attacking weapon up front, while tireless midfielder Kellond-Knight was central to Australia's stunning round-of-16 upset of Brazil, after which she was named player of the match.

The victory over Brazil was Australia's first-ever knockout win from a senior team at a soccer World Cup.

The Matildas would ultimately lose 1-0 to Japan in the quarter-final, but not before capturing the imagination of the Australian public.

The squad, announced yesterday, is made up of 23 players who impressed FIFA's Technical Study Group experts during the June tournament.

Also included were five players from the winning US side, with Ballon D'or winner Carli Lloyd and Golden Glove Hope Solo obvious selections, while Germany's Golden Boot winner Celia Sasic was also named.

Kyrgios and Kokkinakis may be on collision course

FRENCHMAN Richard Gasquet stands between Nick Kyrgios and a potentially spicy showdown with Australian Davis Cup teammate Thanasi Kokkinakis at the Cincinnati Masters.

Kokkinakis fought off a spirited challenge from Italian Fabio Fognini before advancing to the second round on Monday with a 4-6 6-2 6-3 win over Italy's world No.31.

Kyrgios plays Gasquet on Tuesday, with victory to set up a second-round meeting with Kokkinakis a week after he dragged his friend and former doubles partner into an on-court verbal stoush with

French Open champion Stan Wawrinka. While Kyrgios has been universally condemned – and fined \$A13,560 – for telling Wawrinka

"Kokkinakis banged your girlfriend", Kokkinakis has also suffered.

The chair umpire had to separate Kokkinakis and Ryan Harrison after the American began sledging the South Australian teenager during a weekend qualifying match in Cincinnati.

"I made it pretty clear that he can't be doing that. If he's got a problem, he's got to say it in private," Kokkinakis told foxsports.com.au.

"The way he went about it

definitely wasn't the right thing." Should the former Australian Open and Wimbledon junior doubles winners square off, the match would be a fascinating sequel to last week's controversy in Montreal.

Kyrgios, who reportedly opted to watch American Jack Sock's Cincinnati opener rather than Kokkinakis' on Monday, first must avenge his fourth-round Wimbledon loss to Gasquet.

Fellow Australian Bernard Tomic joined Kokkinakis in reaching the second round with a straight-sets win over Sergiy Stakhovsky. World No.24 Tomic beat Stakhovsky

6-4 6-3 to set up a meeting with another Ukrainian, qualifier Alexandr Dolgoplov.

Meanwhile, Sam Stosur's poor form in the build-up to the US Open continues as she crashed out of the Cincinnati Masters in the first round yesterday.

The 2011 US Open champion was beaten 7-6 (8-6) 4-6 7-5 by Hungary's Tímea Babos, the world No.83, despite leading 2-0 in the final set of a rain-interrupted match.

World No.18 Stosur was also beaten in the opening round of the Rogers Cup in Montreal by compatriot Daria Gavrilova in her last tournament.

Earlier, veteran Venus Williams and young compatriot Coco Vandeweghe both notched wins over Kazakh opposition to advance to the next round.

The 35-year-old Williams came back after the rain interruption to finish off Zarina Diyas 7-6 (8-6) 6-4, while Vandeweghe beat Yulia Putintseva 6-3 6-2.

Vandeweghe met Putintseva for the first time since May 2013, when Vandeweghe claimed on Twitter that Putintseva and her father had insulted her after the match.

"The win speaks for itself," Vandeweghe said.