

"Cricket was my early passion though and I'd gone over to England for the first time in 1984 to play league cricket in Oldham and that's when I first played golf properly.

"I returned to Barbados after that summer with two sets of golf clubs, a practice net and with the intention to work hard at it, but back then golf was a very expensive game here on the island, on certain courses it still is, so I decided to stick with cricket for a while and then, once cricket was done, get so good at golf that the game actually paid me.

"I was already playing off scratch by then and represented Barbados at golf in 1986 and 1987 Caribbean Championships. My performances were good enough to attract a sponsor which, unbeknown to me, contravened the rules. It was an honest mistake, but they took my pro status away for six months because of it."

Riled by the decision, Stephenson contacted the European branch of the Professional Golfers Association, flew to their headquarters at the Belfry near Birmingham, formulated a

"As a fast bowler you're always going to be hampered by injury but thinking about it now I think I did fantastically well to stay on the park as long as I did."

constitution and returned home to found the PGA of Barbados.

He added: "From 1988 I had my PGAB playing card and travelled around the world playing cricket and golf. Then, when cricket was over for me, I returned home and took up a job as resident professional at Sandy Lane.

"I don't earn a fortune, but I love my golf and it is a very relaxing way of life."

Banned from Test cricket after taking part in rebel tours to South Africa in the early 1980s, Stephenson reserved his best for the county arena and for Nottinghamshire in particular - he achieved the double for the east Midlands' side in 1988.

However, he also looks back fondly on his three seasons at Hove, and playing through the pain barrier for Sussex.

"As a fast bowler you're always going to be hampered by injury but thinking about it now I think I did fantastically well to stay on the park as long as I did," said Stephenson, the undisputed king of the slower ball.

"I think only Courtney Walsh could match me in that regard, we both found a way of bowling through it and staying out there through thick and thin.

"I remember a game against Leicestershire when I had to strap up my right shoulder to bowl. David Gower and Peter Willey were

batting and as I ran in Willey backed away all of a sudden. The strapping had come loose and was flapping around under my shirt and jumper. I pulled it all off, gave it to the umpire, carried on bowling and took five wickets.

"The game was never dead for me. There was always something to get out of a match, which was the beauty of being an all-rounder I guess."

As for his three summers in Hove, where he was twice named cricketer of the year by the Sussex branch of the Cricket Society, Stephenson added: "It was always so dry down on the south coast that it seemed like the flattest pitch in England, as a consequence, we had a problem getting positive results there.

"I could never get between Norman Gifford and Alan Wells and get them to try and open up the home games. We beat Surrey at The Oval inside two days when they had seven batters in the top 20 of the averages. The pitch there had some life and a little movement.

"Then we went to Northampton and beat them in two days when Allan Lamb told his team-mates that he reckoned I was trying to kill him. Later on, we beat Leicestershire in two days at Grace Road as well.

"I turned to the management at Sussex and said this is what happens if we play on wickets with a bit of life and bounce, but Alan (Wells) didn't want that. He wanted flat pitches at Hove and I felt that held us back from winning things.

"The highlight was beating the West Indies inside two days and half-a-session, but we didn't realise all that we should as a team. I still enjoyed my time there though, we bought youngsters through like James Kirtley and Danny Law and I got on really well with Peter Moores.

"I can't say I was big mates with David Smith though, there was a clash of two strong minds if ever there was one, and there were times when people had to get between us but, when I reflect on it, I played some of my best cricket there."

In this era of covered pitches, and Twenty20 overkill it seems unlikely that any cricketer will ever emulate Stephenson's achievement of completing the first-class double. Maybe that's why his smile remains as broad as ever.