

## Openers in stand of 374no

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By TIM DUNBAR

Canterbury openers Keryn Ambler and Todd Astle have had cricket buffs scouring their memories after their remarkable unbroken triple-century stand at the national under-19 tournament.

The two Canterbury 18-year-olds had taken their partnership to a mind-boggling 374 before captain Brent Findlay declared 11 overs into the second day's play at Lincoln yesterday.

It was widely believed to be a record stand for under-age representative cricket in New Zealand.

Ambler was unbeaten on 200 in a 305-ball stay which brought 21 fours and two sixes, while vice-captain Astle had accumulated 157 not out off 375 balls with 16 fours.

Unfortunately for Canterbury, it was not able to finish the job in the field. The red-and-blacks had to settle for a draw with Auckland holding on for 286 for nine at stumps.



YOUNG GUNS: Canterbury under-19 openers Keryn Ambler, left, and Todd Astle walk off after their 374-run opening wicket stand.

DON SCOTT/The Press

"It was a bit disappointing, but that's cricket," Ambler said.

A Lincoln University student, Ambler agreed that the Bert Sutcliffe Oval pitch was extremely batsman-friendly. "It was a fantastic batting track, just flat as really."

The two Canterbury opening batsmen frustrated the Auckland bowlers through 100 overs on the first day to reach 324-0 and they quickly added another 50 runs yesterday.

Ambler said that his partner had provided plenty of encouragement during the marathon partnership.

"Todd was great. Between overs we'd get together and chat how we were going to play the next few overs and make small targets."

He had not been too concerned when the double century was in sight. "I was probably more nervous when I was in the 90s. We had a job to do in the morning so I wasn't focusing on the 200.

"When you start the day you don't really think of scoring 200 or anything like that."

Ambler made his first-grade debut for East-Shirley last season and has been playing again for the side this summer, but at No. 5 or No.6 and was not getting a bat. "Tim Papps and Michael Papps (Canterbury players) have been scoring all

the runs."

Astle is a cousin of Black Cap Nathan and son of national coaching and development manager Alec Astle, a former Central Districts representative.

At New Zealand first class level Ambler and Astle's opening partnership has been beaten only twice, the record of 387 being set by Glenn Turner and Terry Jarvis at Georgetown in the 1971-72 test series against West Indies.