



Aussies regain the Ashes



AFP, Perth

Australia regained the Ashes when they won the third cricket Test against England by 206 runs at the WACA Ground here Monday.

The Australians bowled England out for 350 in their second innings to take an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the best of five series following wins in the first two Tests in Brisbane and Adelaide.

The series now moves on to the fourth and fifth Tests in Melbourne and Sydney where the only interest will be whether England can avoid a demoralising clean sweep.

England fought hard to salvage the third Test and were led by defiant second innings by Alastair Cook (116), Ian Bell (87) and Kevin Pietersen with 60 not out. But the task of batting for just over two days proved too much.

Cook was superb in his first Test century against Australia but when he was dismissed in the third last over of the fourth day, the writing was on the wall.

The loss here adds to a wretched series for the English, who went into the first Test in Brisbane underdone and carrying players who were obviously out of form.

They offered more resistance in

Adelaide until a spectacular batting collapse on the final day handed Australia a completely unexpected victory.

Leg-spinner Shane Warne said Adelaide was the turning point. "To win that game there was something special," he said. "It showed we can do special things like that."

Following sustained criticism of team selection the English finally included spinner Monty Panesar for the Perth Test, and he took eight wickets in the match.

But the brutal assault on the English bowling by Adam Gilchrist and Michael Clarke after tea on the third day made the tourists' task of saving this Test and staying in the series almost impossible.

The loss will certainly lead to increased pressure on England coach Duncan Fletcher and skipper Andrew Flintoff while Australia have the luxury of taking to Melbourne a squad of players who are injury-free, in form and settled.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the third Ashes Test between Australia and England at the WACA Ground on Monday:
AUSTRALIA: First innings 244 (Hussey 74 n.o.; Panesar 5-92, Harmison 4-48)
ENGLAND: First innings 215

(Pietersen 70)
AUSTRALIA: Second innings 527 for five declared (Clarke 135 not out, Hussey 103, Gilchrist 102 not out).
ENGLAND: Second innings (265 for 5 overnight)
Strauss lbw b McGrath 0
Bell c Langer b Warne 87
Collingwood c Gilchrist b Clark 5
Pietersen not out 60
Hoggard b McGrath 0
Flintoff b Warne 51
Jones run out 0
Mahmood lbw b Clark 4
Harmison lbw b Warne 0
Panesar b Warne 1
Extras: (nb-5, w-6, lb-8, b-7) 26
Total: (All out in 122.2 overs) 350
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-170, 3-185, 4-261, 5-261, 6-336, 7-336, 8-345, 9-346, 10-350

Bowler O M R W
Lee 22 3 75 1
McGrath 27 9 61 2
Clark 25 7 56 2
Warne 39.2 6 115 4
Symonds 9 1 28 0

Result: Australia won by 206 runs to lead series 3-0.
Man-of-the-match: Mike Hussey.
Toss: Australia
Umpires: Aleem Dar (PAK) Rudi Koertzen (RSA)
Match referee: Jeff Crowe (NZL)

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: The jubilant Australians are all smiles as they pose with a replica of the Ashes urn after winning the third Ashes Test against England at Perth to reclaim the oldest title in the game on Monday.

England defeat inspired 'em



AFP, Perth

Ricky Ponting said on Monday that meticulous planning and more support for the players had been the major reason Australia had regained the Ashes after just three Tests.

The Australians wrapped up the Ashes series when they beat England by 206 runs in the third Test at the WACA Ground here to take an unbeatable 3-0 lead.

The Australian skipper said that after England won the Ashes back in 2005 there was a great deal of soul searching in the Australian dressing room.

Ten days after returning from England Ponting called a meeting of

all the contracted Australian players and cricket authorities to discuss changes.

The players wanted more coaches and support staff, and they wanted England's Australian bowling coach Troy Cooley in particular.

Cricket Australia responded positively to their demands, with Cooley leaving the England set-up soon after and fielding coach Mike Young appointed to spend more time with the Australian players.

"The planning (for this series) started the moment we arrived back from England," Ponting said.

"We had a very short break and addressed the whole Ashes series and where we went wrong and what was holding us back through that last series."

Ponting said the coaching staff had listened to the players' con-

cerns and had changed the way they approached each match.

"I know now that we are going into Test matches as well prepared as we possibly can be," he said.

Ponting said the trials of pace bowler Jason Gillespie on the last Ashes tour made him realise more needed to be done to help players who lose form.

"Looking back at the last series I think it is one of the great shames that we've had since I've been playing that we had some fast bowlers in that last series who were struggling - you know world class fast bowlers that were struggling through that series and we had no-one to help them out," he said.

"Since then we've now got more assistant coaches and we've got our fielding coach with us a lot more often, and Troy's around and we've

got more people on hand to help some of these players out when things aren't going right."

Ponting said that the Ashes loss was a turning point for him in that from that point on he wanted to "be the best player I can be".

"We've probably set new standards for ourselves now, as individuals and as a team, on the way to prepare and the way to play and it's up to the players to keep toing that line," he said.

He said the Australians had made too many mistakes in the last Ashes series and he was always confident the mistake rate would be much lower this time around.

"(Last series) we bowled lots of no-balls, our fielding was very sloppy, whenever we had batting partnerships going we managed to

Cannavaro wins FIFA award?

AFP, Madrid

Italy's World Cup winning captain Fabio Cannavaro is set to be named the FIFA World Player of the Year, reported Spanish radio station Cadena SER on Sunday.

Cadena SER even went so far as to publish details of the poll, ahead of the award ceremony in the Swiss city of Zurich on Monday, with the Real Madrid defender getting 498 votes.

Cannavaro claimed on Sunday that he was still in the dark about the destination of the award.

"I don't know anything about the FIFA Player of the Year. On Monday, I'll be going to the gala but I don't know if I'll be winning. I knew about the Ballon d'Or (the European Footballer of the Year which is awarded by France Football magazine) a few days before. But this time, no," said Cannavaro.

"If it's confirmed it will be incredible. A spectacular year: winning the World Cup, the Italian league, being sold to Real Madrid," he added after Real's 1-0 win at Espanyol on Sunday.

Cadena SER did not reveal their source of the voting details although they have strong links with the Spanish giants and have been ahead of their opposition with big stories concerning Real.

Normally the FIFA World Player of the Year voting is only revealed to the media an hour or so before the televised announcement, and then only on a strictly embargoed basis.

According to the radio station, France's retired three-time winner Zinedine Zidane, who finished his career in controversy by getting

Inter juggernaut rolls on

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan notched up their ninth successive win with a 2-0 defeat of Messina at the San Siro on Sunday to tighten their grip on Serie A.

Inter moved on to 42 points but their 10-point lead on Roma was cut to seven when a brace apiece from Mancini and team skipper Francesco Totti helped the capital side to a 4-0 drubbing of Palermo.

Roma, still smarting from last week's 3-0 whitewash by city rivals Lazio, more than made up for that setback to keep Palermo at bay in third.

Palermo are now 11 points behind Inter, and four behind Roma.

Despite their push for a

Champions League place, the Sicilian club's president, Maurizio Zamparini, gave short shrift to coach Francesco Guidolin.

"I'm ashamed of this team," said Zamparini.

"I watched Roma's four goals and they reminded me of the team Udinese beat us 5-1. Then, as tonight, the (rival) coach was Luciano Spalletti.

"Obviously the difference between Guidolin and Spalletti is four goals worth."

"Guidolin has an excellent squad, but he doesn't manage it well. I think the rest he'll get in the Christmas period will do him well."

Roma's win was particularly enjoyed by Totti, who, after scoring from the penalty spot in the 56th minute and in added-on injury time, became the league's sole top scorer on 11 goals.

However Roma coach Luciano Spalletti will be concerned at the possibility of losing midfielder Simone Perrotta, who was forced off clutching his ankle after a nasty tackle near the end of the first half.

Inter, however, are still the team to beat.

Roberto Mancini's men thoroughly deserved the three points having dominated the Sicilians from start to finish.

If they keep up their winning ways

in their next two games before the winter recess then Inter will equal Roma's record-breaking 11-match winning run in Serie A last season.

Defender Marco Materazzi set Inter on their way after meeting the Zlatan Ibrahimovic's header with a spectacular overhead bicycle kick which found the net in the 49th minute.

Swedish striker Ibrahimovic ten minutes later produced Inter's second.

"It's Inter's year because we want the title," Materazzi, the victim of Zinedine Zidane's infamous headbutt in the World Cup final, said in an interview with Sky television.

He added: "We're playing as a unit, we're not conceding goals and we're looking to strike at crucial moments."

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Inter Milan	16	13	3	0	34	14	42
Roma	16	11	2	3	36	14	35
Palermo	16	10	1	5	30	22	31
Catania	15	6	5	4	21	26	23
Lazio	16	7	4	5	26	14	22
Atalanta	16	5	6	5	25	25	21



Inter Milan forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic celebrates his goal in front of home fans during their Serie A match against Messina at the San Siro in Milan on Sunday.

Brazil finish year on top

INTERNET, undated

Brazil have finished top of the FIFA rankings for a fifth year in succession with world champions Italy close behind in second, FIFA announced on Monday.

Italy were only a couple of better results from taking top spot but claim the title of best mover of the year after gaining almost 500 extra points and leaping to second from 12th.

Nigeria remain in ninth spot and are among the other notable movers of the year, along with World Cup runners-up France and semifinalists Germany.

There are no changes to the positions in the rankings from November.

FIFA'S TOP 10	Points
1. Brazil	1,588
2. Italy	1,560
3. Argentina	1,551
4. France	1,523
5. England	1,359
6. Germany	1,350
7. Netherlands	1,305
8. Portugal	1,258
9. Nigeria	1,244
10. Czech Republic	1,190

Sevilla grab top spot

AFP, Madrid

Spanish league title contenders Sevilla added to the pain of Barcelona's World Club Cup final defeat on Sunday by knocking them off top spot with a 3-1 defeat of local rivals Recreativo Huelva.

Sevilla, last season's UEFA Cup winners, now have a one-point advantage over Barcelona although the Catalans have a game in hand due to their trip halfway around the world to Japan.

Real Madrid stay third after their 1-0 win at Espanyol later on Sunday but closed the gap on their bitter rivals to one point.

Luis Fabiano opened the scoring from the penalty spot for Sevilla after 10 minutes, following a controversial foul by Juan Merino on Antonio Puerta.

"Perhaps the penalty wasn't obvious," conceded Sevilla coach Juande Ramos. "But in the end it didn't matter as we dominated and were far better."

Recreativo got back on level terms shortly afterwards from a header by Jesus Vazquez but the visitors were determined not to squander their big chance to grab pole position.

Federic Kanoute put Sevilla back in front again after 34 minutes, the Malian striker's 12th goal of the season coming from close range after Recreativo keeper Javier Lopez Vallejo could only parry away a Renato header.

Jesus Navas then added

Sevilla's third just seven minutes after the break.

Sevilla then shut up shop after the dismissal of defender Aitor Ocio, following his second yellow card on 64 minutes, to ensure that they took three points with them on the short 60-kilometre trip back home.

After a tepid first half, sparks started to fly after the break between Espanyol and Real Madrid.

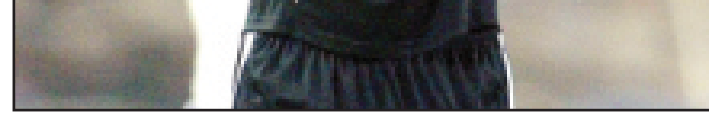
Ruud van Nistelrooy got his ninth goal of the season after 51 minutes, finishing off an inch-

perfect pass from Jose Maria 'Guti' Gutierrez from 10 metres out for the only goal of the game.

"I'm very satisfied because because we had a very good game. I liked everything I saw from my team. We never panicked, we dominated with quality and we were worthy winners," said Real Madrid coach Fabio Capello.

Two minutes later, Real were down to 10 men when Italy's World Cup winning captain Fabio Cannavaro got his marching orders

TOP SIX	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Sevilla	15	11	1	3	31	15	34
Barcelona	14	10	3	1	33	11	33
Real Madrid	15	10	2	3	26	11	32
Atletico	15	8	3	4	20	11	27
Zaragoza	15	8	2	5	28	18	26
Valencia	15	7	3	5	20	14	24



Real Madrid striker Ruud van Nistelrooy applauds fans after his goal secured victory in their Primera Liga clash against Espanyol at the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona on Sunday.