

Warne's hattrick initiates England collapse

Australians go two up

MELBOURNE. Dec 29: Master spinner Shane Warne grabbed his first hattrick as Australia thrashed England by 295 runs in the second Ashes Test today. reports Reuter.

The leg-spinner dismissed Phil DeFreitas, Darren Gough and Devon Malcolm as the home side wrapped up a stunning victory at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

England, who trial 2-0 in the five-Test series, lost their last six wickets for the addition of a paltry 13 runs to be all out for a miserable 92.

Resuming on 79 for four, their capitulation on the fifth and final day took a mere 56 minutes.

England captain Mike Atherton was dismayed by his side's collapse, saying: "I've been some through lows this year but this is one of the lowest."

It was the lowest England total in an Ashes Test since 1958-59 when they made 87 on the same ground and followed their capitulation for 46 against the West Indies in March.

England's gloom was in sharp contrast to the jubilation which followed Warne's hattrick, his first in first-class cricket.

Warne, whose haul took his tally for the series to 20, bowled six overs today at a cost of just three runs.

The Victorian bowler brought the small crowd on his home ground to their feet during his 13th over from the southern stand end.

With the score on 91 for six, Warne's fourth ball of the over trapped DeFreitas leg before wicket and Gough edged his fifth ball to wicketkeeper Ian Healy.

After a delay of three minutes as Malcolm walked slowly to the wicket, Warne found the fast bowler's glove with a full-length ball and leapt with joy as David Boon took a fine catch diving low to his right.

Warne was immediately swamped by his teammates after recording the first hattrick in an Ashes Test since compatriot and fellow spinner Hugh Trumble achieved the feat in Melbourne in 1903-04.

"It was a fantastic moment," Warne said afterwards. "I've never run as fast as that in my life but I wanted to get to Boonie to congratulate and thank him."

Australia captain Mark Taylor described himself as very satisfied afterwards.

"You cannot do better than win the first two Tests and we just have to keep going like this," he added.

Fast bowler Craig McDermott, the man-of-the-match, was equally destructive, taking five for 42 in the second innings and fittingly wrapped up the match by removing spinner Phil Tufnell.

Resuming on 79 for four, England faced a winning target of 388 but a more realistic challenge of batting for 90 overs to save the Test.

When Gatting edged the second ball of the day to Australia captain Mark Taylor at slip, the outcome was assured although the speed and meekness of England's collapse stunned spectators.

The outcome was a severe blow for England captain Mike Atherton whose bold decision to put Australia in to bat on the first day backfired badly.

"As it turned out it was the

right decision," he said. "England's reply of 121 left the tourists 67 in arrears on first innings, an advantage which Australia extended by 320 for seven before Taylor declared at tea on Wednesday.

ASHES ACHIEVERS

Hattricks in Ashes Tests be-

tween England and Australia after Shane Warne's achievement during the second Test here today.

F R Spofforth (Australia)

McLaren 16.5 2 42 5

Fleming 9 1 24 2

Warne 13 6 16 3

May 4 1 8 0

Result: Australia won by 295 runs.

Australia lead the five-match series 2-0.

The Third Test will take place in Sydney between January 1-5 followed by the fourth Test in Adelaide between January 26-30. The fifth Test is in Perth between February 3-7.

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