

Dramatically historic

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think there could be any similar comparison. History beckoned and how this great fast bowler responded! He wrote this script and then performed with panache and aplomb. Give him an Oscar, quick.

Spare a thought also for Maha Jayawardena, an innocent victim of the vicissitudes of this game of cricket. A double hundred in a Test match barely two weeks ago, but now runs avoiding him like the plague. He has managed two ducks in a row, the second one of historic importance. Like Dhaka, he too can bask in some reflected glory, or should that read *refracted*?

It is said that history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as a farce. Dhaka, which last saw a Test match thirty years ago, by some strange twist and quirk of fate has got itself into the lime-light once again. Because one of the greatest bowlers of all time decided to rewrite history here.

What of the Test then? Well, what of it? Can it last the distance? These are the metaphysical questions.

Championship nuggets

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"Obviously I should have been proud of my performance. But what has happened at the end of the day?" said a frustrated Chandana before leaving the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Saqlain changing his line

Pakistan off spinner Saqlain Mushtaq seems to be more serious with his batting these days after having already proved himself to be one of the best off spinners in the cricketing arena.

The Lahore-based right hander was knocking the ball when the other members of his team went for lunch yesterday. Saqlain continued his solemn practice throughout the 30 minutes lunch break as if his team urgently expected century from the 23-year-old man. However, Saqlain would eventually score only four runs before being run out.

It may be mentioned that, Saqlain shares the Test record of 313 runs for the eighth wicket along with his skipper Wasim Akram. Their partnership came against Zimbabwe in Shekhpura in October 1996. Saqlain contributed a personal best of 79 runs to the joint effort while Wasim Akram was under on 257.

Spring Grand sumo starts

OSAKA, Mar 14: Yokozuna (grand champions) Takanohana and Wakanohana won, but ozekis (champions) Chiyotaikai and Musashimaru suffered upsets. Sunday, the opening day of the 15-day Spring Grand sumo tournament, reports AP.

Wrestling at the Osaka prefectoral Gymnasium, Takanohana sent out No. 1 maegashira (senior wrestler) Kotonishiki after the two were locked at mid-ring for one minute, 20 seconds. A sumo without ends within 5 to 10 seconds.

Wakanohana sidestepped komusubi (junior champion second class) Kaio's driving attempt and slapped him down.

Yokozuna Akebono, or Chad Rowan from Hawaii, is sitting out the tournament with a back injury for the third consecutive tournament.

In other major bouts, kohimushi Dejima dodged by Chiyotaikai's initial charge and slapped down the newly promoted ozeki.

The 22-year-old Chiyotaikai gained sumo's second highest rank after winning the New Zealand Grand tournament, beating yokozuna Wakanohana in a playoff.

Konishiki Akinoshima sent out Musashimaru, or Flamanu Penitani from Hawaii, after holding off the ozeki's driving attempts at ring's edge.

Ozeki Takanonami charged No 2 maegashira Tosanoumi with hand thrusts and quickly slapped him down.

Takanonami finished at 6-9 in the previous tournament and will be demoted if he loses a majority of bouts this time. Ozekis forfeit their "champion" ranking if they record two consecutive losing records.

Komusubi Tochizumou bulldozed out No 3 maegashira Kyokushuzan, or Mongolian Batbayar Davaa, Kyokushuzan was promoted from No 8 maegashira after winning up the last tourney at 9-6.

No 14-ranked Asanoshio slapped down No 1-ranked Kyokutehno, or Mongolian Tsevengnay Nyamjav, who belongs to the juryo division just below the senior makuuchi division.

In the juryo division, No 11-ranked Hoshitango, or Argentine Imach Marcelo Salomon, pulled down equally-ranked Tochinohana.

In makushita, the top junior division, No 11-ranked Kaishinjan, or American Henry Armstrong Miller, was pushed out by No 12-ranked Tomikaze.

No 46-ranked Kyokutehno, or Mongolian Enkhbat Batmunkha, was driven out by No 45-ranked Hisatsumi.

In sandanme, the second highest junior division, No 84-ranked Ryu, or Wang Yu from Shanghai, China, threw down No 83-ranked Denryu.

In jonidan, the third highest junior division, No 20-ranked Kunizumou, or Brazilian Vander Ramos, thrust out No 19-ranked Okoyama.

Wrestlers in junior divisions have only seven bouts during the 15-day tournament.



South African captain Hansie Cronje (L) greets the double centurion Herschelle Gibbs on the fourth day of the second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch yesterday.

— AFP photo

Gibbs, Kallis rewrite records



CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Mar 14 (AP/Reuters): Herschelle Gibbs hit a career-best unbeaten 211 and Jacques Kallis' 148 not out as they decimated New Zealand with a record stand in the second cricket Test at Lancaster Park on Sunday.

With little chance of forcing a result in the rain-marred test, South Africa hit up a mammoth 442 for one at stumps on the fourth and penultimate day.

After New Zealand was routed for 168 on the first day, the visitors have a 274-run lead going into the final day Monday.

The youthful combination of Gibbs and Kallis hammered a hapless New Zealand attack for 315 runs, an all-time second-wicket stand against any country — which is also the third-highest partnership for any wicket in South African Test history — in the 4 1/2 hours together.

The stand was just four runs behind the 319 added by Dudley Nourse and Alan Melville for the third wicket against England at Trent Bridge in 1947 and 26 runs behind the 341 posted by Eddie Barlow and Graeme Pollock against Australia in Adelaide in 1963-64.

With rain robbing a total of 11 hours and 167 overs, South Africa appears to have batted the test match out for a draw. The first test ended in a high-scoring draw on a sticky Eden Park pitch.

"We didn't see any point in declaring," said coach Bob Woolmer. "Even if we had, the batsmen would have come off for bad light."

Woolmer said if there was a possibility of a full day's play South Africa would declare first thing in the morning, leaving itself 105 overs to force a win.

"If the weather remains like this we will continue to bat," Woolmer said.

It was a dream come true for Gibbs and Kallis. The pair fig-

ured in a 200-plus stand for Western Province against Natal in a domestic first-class match.

"At that time we wanted to achieve the same in a Test. And when we neared the 200 stand, it made us more determined. It was a great feeling," Gibbs said.

Gibbs, who became the first non-white South African to score a Test century, now ranks sixth behind Darryl Cullinan's 275 not out in the first Test.

Graeme Pollock (274), Jackie MacGee (255 not out), Eric Rowan (236) and Dudley Nourse (231).

With a pitch offering no assistance whatsoever to the bowlers, Gibbs and Kallis went

score his fourth test century in his 26th test.

Gibbs' six hours and 59-minute innings which equalled Cullinan's for the longest by a South African, bettered his previous unbeaten 200 for South Africa against India A in Nagpur in November 1996.

The right-handed opener playing in his 13th Test hit three sixes and 23 boundaries off 468 balls.

He offered just one chance when Matthew Horne dropped a difficult catch at extra cover off skipper Dion Nash when the 25-year-old was 165.

The second-wicket stand also beat the 246 shared by Jackie McGee and Anton Murray in Wellington 46 years ago for any wicket against New Zealand.

Kallis, nursing a torn tendon on his left foot, hit 17 boundaries and a six in his 340-ball innings.

He also improved on his previous highest of 132 against England at Old Trafford in July 1998.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the close of play on the fourth day of the second Test between New Zealand and South Africa at Lancaster Park on Sunday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 168

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 247-1)

Kirsten c Astle b Vettori 65

Gibbs not out 211

Kallis not out 148

Extras: (lb-12, nb-6) 18

Total: (for one wkt in 162 overs) 442

Fall of wkt: 1-127

To bat: Darryl Cullinan, Hansie Cronje, Jonty Rhodes, Shaun Pollock, Mark Boucher, Lance Klusener, Allan Donald, Paul Adams.

Bowler: O M R W

Doull 25.5 9 48 0

Allott 43 11 109 0

Nash 22 5 46 0

Astle 18.1 2 76 0

Vettori 24 6 73 1

Stead 1 0 1 0

Harris 28 9 77 0

from record to record unbroken as New Zealand opted to defend then attack.

In the 43 minutes play possible before lunch, South Africa resuming the day on 247 for one progressed to 272 before rain forced an early lunch.

Gibbs, unbeaten on 131 at the break, reached his 150 in 10 minutes under six hours and then proceeded to score his second double century for South Africa.

Kallis came out of the shadows of his junior partner to

score five straight matches without a defeat since taking over the team in October.

I think the guys played pretty well. This is another step in our development. We got some good experience, playing in front of a big crowd with lots of atmosphere, and we did create a goal after falling behind early."

"I don't like losing," said US coach Bruce Areana who had

been a heavily partisan Mexico crowd of 50,324 at Qualcomm Stadium.

The decisive goal, six minutes after a Joel Sannchez header forced US goalkeeper Zach Thornton to make a diving deflection, only to have Abundis knock the rebound in from two meters.

"It was a good goal," said Abundis. "It came when we really needed it — right after they had scored."

Mexico improved to 26-5 in 40 matches overall against the United States.

In the consolation match, first half goals from Jorge Perez and Edgar Valencia pushed Guatemala past Bolivia 2-1 as the Guatemalans ended a four-game losing streak.

The Mexico-US match, like many meetings between the neighbouring rivals, was physical (39 fouls, three bookings) and played with a quick, end-to-end pace that saw neither team command possession for any extended period of time.

The US attacked from the start, but was denied by several strong saves by Mexico goalkeeper Oscar Perez.

Mexico got on the board first when Alberto Garcia Aspe pushed a pass to Abundis who made a run down the left flank before putting a low cross through the US box toward forward Francisco Palencia.

Palencia never got the ball, but did collide with goalkeeper Tony Meola while the ball glanced into the US net off defender Robin Fraser.

Meola, shaken on the play, left the game bleeding from the nose and lip and with a cracked tooth. Meola, who took 35 stitches inside his mouth, was replaced by Thornton.

The Americans nearly grabbed an equaliser on 36 minutes when a Jovan Kirovski free kick was headed on by

Malaysian Selvan Veerasingam in action on the concluding day of the Davis Cup tennis tournament at the National Tennis Complex yesterday.

Sport

Nat'l cricket

Madaripur beat Gopalganj

Madaripur defeated Gopalganj DSA by a convincing 82 run in the National Youth (Under-19) cricket championship at the Faridpur Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Madaripur DSA batted first after winning the toss and scored 265 for 6 in 39.4 overs with opener David scoring 71 off 55 deliveries.

Two-down Sajib with 58 in 75 balls and number seven Babu with 50 runs off 33 balls, were the other two notable batsmen for Madaripur.

Faruque Ahmed of Gopalganj captured three wickets for 47 in seven overs while Nafiqur Rahman and Saiful Hasan took two wickets each giving away 27 and 37 runs respectively.

In reply, Gopalganj were all out for 183 in 39 overs with opener Faruque Ahmed making match highest 79 off 105 balls.

Milton not out 20, Sabuj 20, Younis 16 and Billal 11 were the other Gopalganj batsmen, who reached the double figure.

Tawhid of Madaripur claimed three wickets conceding 29 runs while Sohel took two for 38.

Earlier, the match was reduced to 40 over-a-side match for a delay start.

Hosts become 5th Malaysia Davis Cup champs

Bangladesh finished fifth in the seven-nation Davis Cup Asia Oceania Zone Group-3 match beating Syria 2-1 in a play-off on the last day of the five-day meet at the Rama National Tennis Complex yesterday.

The hosts' main aim was to

Windies put on back foot

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Mar 14:

Australian pace pair Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie

left West Indies beleaguered cricketers reeling again after a four-wicket new ball burst in the second Test at Sabina Park on Saturday, reports Reuters.

McGrath seized three wickets and Gillespie took the other as West Indies slumped to 37 for four at the close on the first day in reply to Australia's 256, of which captain Steve Waugh made exactly 100.

West Indies, thrashed by 312 runs in the first Test of the four-match series at Port of Spain earlier this week, produced effective out-cricket at times, only to be undone by another brittle batting display.

McGrath bowled opener Sherwin Campbell (12) as he aimed an ambitious drive, had debutant Lincoln Roberts (0) caught off the top of his glove, and removed David Joseph (14) when the batsman sliced a slower ball to point.

That gave McGrath three for 28 from his opening spell while Gillespie had opener Suruj Ragoonath (0) lbw pushing forward, leaving captain Brian Lara (7 not out) once more as his team's main hope of a competitive total.

West Indies had started the day encouragingly as Courtney Walsh produced a magnificent opening spell of 10-4-19-3 on his home ground that reduced Australia to 46 for three after they won the toss.

The indefatigable Walsh posed problems from the outset with his relentlessly probing length and line on a pitch offering bounce and a degree of movement.

With Curtly Ambrose giving the batsmen no respite at the other end, Walsh struck his first blow when he went round the wicket to left-hander Matthew Elliott and got a delivery to straighten which the batsman edged to first slip before he had scored.

Australia, eight for one at