

Yuvraj goes scot-free

APP, Melbourne

Indian batsman Yuvraj Singh was found not guilty of dissent during the first Test against Australia, lingering at the crease out of shock not protest, match referee Mike Procter said Saturday.

Umpire Billy Bowden ruled Yuvraj had been caught behind for a duck off the bowling of Brett Lee on the second day of the Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Yuvraj lingered at the crease before slowly walking back to the pavilion, but Procter said the left-handed batsman had stood his ground not in protest but because he was shocked at being given out.

"It was evident that Yuvraj took more time than normal to leave the crease but it was due to the fact that he was shocked at the decision," Procter said.

"At no stage he showed displeasure or dissent at the umpire's decision."

Yuvraj, Indian captain Anil Kumble and team manager Chetan Chauhan argued the batsman's defence at a hearing chaired by Procter after Friday's play.

Browne to join WI squad

APP, Port Elizabeth

The West Indies called up uncapped wicket-keeper/batsman Patrick Browne on Friday to join the squad on the tour of South Africa.

The 25-year-old is scheduled to arrive in Cape Town ahead of the second Test, which starts on January 2 at Newlands.

"The call-up came as a total surprise but I'm delighted. I have been waiting for this opportunity for a long time and I'm looking forward to it," Browne said.

Browne has been called up after the team management decided that a second wicketkeeper was needed to share the workload with Denesh Ramdin.

He has played 44 first-class matches since his debut in 2001 and is a former West Indies Under-19 and West Indies A player.

West Indies are in a pretty strong position in the first Test as they hold an overall lead of 359 going into the fourth day but with just two wickets remaining in their secondinnings.

Aussies storm

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Test at the MCG, where he averaged 43 in his eight innings.

Laxman battled for almost three hours and 112 balls before he perished, driving Stuart Clark to Michael Clarke in the covers for 42 in the 54th over.

Yuvraj Singh, who forced the switch of Rahul Dravid to open the innings to fit him into the Test lineup, failed for a second time, lasting just 16 minutes before he was bamboozled by wrist-spinner Brad Hogg's flipper and was leg before wicket.

Wicketkeeper Mahendra Dhoni was the first to go after tea, caught by Gilchrist off Johnson for 11.

But it was skipper Anil Kumble's dismissal for eight, also caught behind off Johnson, that triggered three wickets in four balls to hasten India's defeat.

Harbhajan Singh was run out for a duck by Mike Hussey, Sourav Ganguly fell next ball, lbw to Brad Hogg for 40 and RP Singh was last man out, playing on to his stumps off Johnson for two.

Andrew Symonds grabbed Dravid's wicket before lunch, trapping him lbw for 16 with one that kept low.

Dravid, who scored five off 66 balls in the first innings, again stonewalled the Australian bowlers, facing 114 balls in 150 minutes with two boundaries.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fourth day of the first Test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 343 (Hayden 124, Jaques 66; Kumble 5-84, Zaheer 4-94)

INDIA: First innings 196 (Tendulkar 62, Ganguly 43; Clark 4-28, Lee 4-16)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 351 for 7 declared (Clarke 73, Jaques 51; Harbhajan 3-101)

INDIA: Second innings (overnight 6 for loss)

Dravid lbw b Symonds 16

Jaffer c Gilchrist b Lee 15

Laxman c Clarke b Clark 42

Tendulkar c Gilchrist b Lee 15

Ganguly lbw b Hogg 40

Yuvraj lbw b Hogg 5

Dhoni c Gilchrist b Johnson 11

Kumble c Gilchrist b Johnson 8

Harbhajan run out 0

Zaheer not out 0

RP Singh b Johnson 2

Extras: (b-1, nb-6) 7

Total: (All out in 74 overs) 161

Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-54, 3-77, 4-118, 5-125, 6-144, 7-157, 8-157, 9-157, 10-161.

Bowler O M R W

Lee 14 3 43 2

Johnson 15 6 21 3

Clark 15 9 20 1

Hogg 17 3 51 2

Symonds 13 5 25 1

Result: Australia won by 337 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Matthew Hayden.



PHOTO: STAR

Kulna batswomen Tahera Shompa (L) and Sultana Yasmin run between the wickets during their match at Chittagong during the Merit Women's Divisional Cricket Tournament at the Dhaka University Ground yesterday.

Hogg upstages India

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

A specialist spinner's greatest fear is being out-bowled by a part-timer on the final day. It happened in Brad Hogg's previous Test, when Simon Katich grabbed six wickets in the second innings to his one, and the upset was a four-year wait for a fifth cap.

Hogg's déjà vu began as soon as Andrew Symonds trapped Rahul Dravid with a sharp offspinner in the first session, but with the faith of his captain, Hogg was able to banish the vision and secure another trial in the second Test from Wednesday. The Australians are desperate for Hogg to succeed.

Ricky Ponting persevered with him through the harsh early treatment from Sachin Tendulkar on day two -- and he was rewarded with the trophy wicket of Sourav Ganguly twice in his match collection of four.

In the second innings he was able to block an end, a role which will also be essential at the SCG.

Lindsay Kline, the left-arm wrist spinner who played 13 Tests in the 1950s and early 1960s, was watching in the MCC committee room and was pleased with Hogg's removal of Ganguly.

Richie Benaud taught Kline the ball and no amount of practice could make it perfect. Three nets were cleared when he worked on it and he eventually decided the standard offerings were tricky enough to master. Hogg has the variation and used it well, taking

they planned to exploit. Anil Kumble, who picked Hogg as the weaklink before the match, praised his performance and was disappointed his batsmen were unable to control him.

On the final day Hogg manufactured a handful of edges, which fell short, wide and on the shoe of his bat, and bouncers like a child filled with raspberry cordial. In the first over of the day he jumped high when a ball turned a couple of meters from short-leg, so when he tricked Yuvraj's celebration was as enthusiastic as Shane Warne's for his 700th wicket here 12 months ago. Hogg now owns 13 victims and they have all been cherished.

After lunch Symonds was preferred ahead of the specialist, but the greater danger came from Hogg and he returned 2 for 51 from 17 overs. His four wickets dilute some of the worries Australia had over filling Stuart MacGill's spot, but he will be examined thoroughly again in Sydney. Spin in Australia post-Shane Warne is again a match-to-match proposition.

It was at the SCG where Katich trumped Hogg in 2003 and Ponting expects more this time. "You'll see him get a lot of confidence out of this game," Ponting said, "and you'll see a better and different bowler in Sydney." Currently he is Australia's best option and can be satisfied that he out-performed Symonds and troubled one of the game's most accomplished players of spin.

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Gilchrist thanks bowlers

Cricket

APP, Melbourne

Adam Gilchrist praised the quality of bowlers he has kept to as he became Australia's record-breaking wicketkeeper during his team's 337-run first Test win over India on Saturday.

The 36-year-old star, who has revolutionised the role of wicketkeeper-batsman in world cricket, passed Ian Healy's record of most dismissals when he caught opener Wasim Jaffer for 15 off Brett Lee.

The regulation catch was Gilchrist's 396th dismissal in his 93rd Test, passing his predecessor Healy's 395 from 119 Tests. He went on to make a further three catches to have 399 dismissals heading into next week's second Sydney Test.

"I'm just thrilled, really thrilled," he said after Saturday's play.

"It's not something I thought would happen. You don't naturally feel your name sits alongside those of (Australian greats) Rod Marsh and Ian Healy."

"To have done it in 93 Tests is a testament to the quality of fast bowling and spin bowling that I've had. I've had both bases covered with the world's best."

South Africa's Mark Boucher, currently playing in the first Test against the West Indies in Port Elizabeth, holds the wicketkeeping record with 406 dismissals.

V-Day hockey from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army take on Bangladesh Navy in the opening day fixture of the Dhaka Bank Victory Day Hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium today.

A total of six teams will take part in the league-basis meet from the final on January 12.

BKSP, Sonali Bank, Bangladesh Air Force and Barnak Samaj are the other teams in the competition.

Sponsors Dhaka Bank will bear all expenses of Tk 1.2 lakh.

"We have come forward to help the country's hockey after responding the appeal of the National Sports Council Chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed," said Dhaka Bank deputy managerial director Tanvir Rahim at a press conference yesterday.

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) general secretary Sajed Adel also spoke on the occasion at the federation's conference room.

Dravid call

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Test runs, would rediscover his form, no matter where he batted in the rest of the series.

"He is too good a player to worry about his batting," said Kumble.

"He just needs to go out there and enjoy his batting. I'm positive that he can do that."

"He has played more than 100 Test matches and scored more than 9,000 runs... I am really confident he will be able to come out and bat the way he does."

Dhaka ride on Sohali

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka won their second successive game with an exciting two-run victory over Rajshahi to all but confirm the title of the first-ever Merit Women's Divisional cricket tournament yesterday.

Kulna also secured their second win when they defeated Chittagong by 51 runs but it was not good enough to challenge Dhaka, who will play the last league match against Chittagong at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium today.

The result in the last game would hardly matter as Dhaka are in an advantageous position through their head-to-head against Kulna after their five-wicket success in the first game.

In the day's match, Sohali Akther made 30 after a 53-run opening partnership between Farzana Rahman (17) and Papiya Haq (26) as Dhaka scored 144-7 in their stipulated 35 overs at the Dhamondi Cricket Ground.

Purna Ghosh made 35 and Tithi Tani added 34 but it was not good enough for Rajshahi to overtake the total as they were bundled out for 142 with four balls to spare.

Lily Rani, Yamin Rupa and Salma Akther captured two wickets each.

At the Dhaka University Ground, Rumana Ahmed bowled Kulna to a 51-run victory against Chittagong.

Rumana claimed four wickets as Chittagong were all out for 140 in 32.5 overs in reply to Kulna's 191 for 9 in 35 overs.

Semis set for v'ball meet

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal line-up of the 18th National Women's Volleyball competition was complete after Bangladesh Ansar, Rajshahi, Pabna and Gazipur winning their respective matches at the Volleyball Stadium in the city yesterday.

Rajshahi and Gazipur defeated Rangpur 3-0 while Ansar and Pabna outplayed Panchagarh also by the same margin.

Ansar take on Gazipur and Rajshahi meet Pabna in the semifinals today.

Kumble orders

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runs and take wickets and we didn't score runs, that's what we are more worried about.

"Overall our catching was good, but our ground fielding we need to up our intensity so we will focus on that."

Kumble said it will be a matter of scoring more runs to put pressure back on to Australia in the New Year's Test in Sydney.

"We should have backed up on the second day here, which we didn't do," he said.

Win beckons

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99 for the unbroken fifth wicket as the Chittagong skipper struck a half-century.

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