

Yuvraj goes scot-free

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

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 second innings.

Aussies storm

FROM PAGE 17

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

Laxman battled for almost three hours and 12 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 off, 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, Jacques 66; Kumble 5-84, Zaheer 4-94)

INDIA: First innings 196 (Tendulkar 62, Ganguly 43; Clark 4-28, Lee 4-46)

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

INDIA: Second innings (overnight 6 for no 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 2

RP Singh b Johnson 0

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.



Khulna batswomen Tahera Shompa (L) and Sultana Yasmin run between the wickets during their match against Chittagong during the Meril 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 upshot 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 late 1950s and early 1960s, was watching in the MCC committee room and was pleased with Hogg's effort. Slow bowlers are generous to their own, but as Hogg's deliveries skidded and overspun the Indians upgraded their view of a bowler

they planned to exploit. Anil Kumble, who picked Hogg as the weak link 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 Matthew Hayden at first slip, as well as a couple of chances for Adam Gilchrist, whose major error was a missed stumping when Ganguly charged. It didn't matter for long as Hogg deceived the batsman again in his next over, adding the lbw dismissal to the one of Yuvraj Singh.

He bowled Ganguly in the first innings with a ball that skidded through, prompting Ponting to describe it as "one of the great flippers you'll ever see". Kline also boasted about owning the delivery after taking the second wicket of his hattrick against South Africa in 1957-58 - Hugh Tayfield was lbw - but 60 years later admits it was not in his repertoire. Sometimes legspinners just skid on and Kline felt that happened 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

Yuvraj with what Ponting called "another great flipper". At the table Kline, now 73, demonstrated the action, licking his fingers before rotating his wrist.

On the field Hogg was doing the same thing as well as wiping his face, hanging out his tongue and bouncing 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 his 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 McGill'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.

Gilchrist thanks bowlers

Cricket

AFP, 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 here 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 there with the world's best."

During his eight years at the elite level, Gilchrist, who has amassed 5,478 runs, the most by a

wicketkeeper, has stood behind the stumps to champion bowlers Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne and the current crop headed by Brett Lee.

"You just reflect back on everyone who's supported you along the way, and if there's been detractors or knockers, it's even more satisfying -- and there's been a few of those," he said.

Gilchrist reflected on the challenges he has had along the way to claim Healy's record.

"I had to move states (New South Wales to Western Australia) in pursuit of a game for Australia, which you never think you're going to do."

"You grow up in a spot and call that home and that's where you think you'll always be, so that's a pretty big decision."

"Here and there, there have been tough moments. The 2005 Ashes in England, I didn't keep at all well through that series."

"In any job we do in this team we walk out in front of millions and millions either at the ground or on TV, and you put yourself in a scenario where you could fail, and fail is pretty nasty word."

"We all go through those little waves of rolling emotions and hopefully, if you deal with it well, you'll come out on top."

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 where two top teams will meet in 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.

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 Meril Women's Divisional cricket tournament yesterday.

Khulna 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 Dhanmondi 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 Khulna after their five-wicket success in the first game.

In the day's match, Sohali Akhter 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 Dhanmondi Cricket Ground.

Panna Ghosh made 35 and Tithy 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 Ripa and Salma Akhter captured two wickets each.

At the Dhaka University Ground, Rumana Ahmed bowled Khulna 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 Khulna's 191 for 9 in 35 overs.

Semis set for v'ball meet

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal line-up of the 18th National Women 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.

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Win beckons

FROM PAGE 17

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

BRIEF SCORES

RAJSHAH: First innings 188 all out and second innings 284 all out in 90.4 overs (Jahurul 61, Shakil 14, Farhad 4, Saqlain 8, Rafiqul 28, Mashud 48, Naem 0, Mushfiqur 10, Anisur 64*, Delwar 18, Shaiful 7, Ziaur 5-39, Robul 2-63, Murad 2-67).

KHULNA: First innings 151-9 dec and second innings 56-2 in 15 overs (Nazmat 34, Imrul 19*, Murad 0, Mostafiz 3*, Farhad 1-11, Saqlain 1-14).

CHITTAGONG: First innings 98 all out and second innings 259-4 in 104 overs (Masum 100*, Mahubul 4, Mazhar 1, Yasin 1, Nazimuddin 80, Ehsanul 50*, Ararat 2-49, Mosharraf 1-66).

DHAKA: First innings 316 all out.

SYLHET: First innings 183 all out and second innings 4-2 in 6 overs (Imtiaz 1*, Rahman 3, Sadique 0, Nabil 0*, Ararat 2-3).

BARISAL: First innings 383-5 dec in 104 overs (Humayun 0, Hannan 70, Faruque 77, Robul 36, Imran 70, Bashir 82*, Raisul 16, Alok 2-97, Imtiaz 1-19, Nabil 1-62, Rashedur 1-76).

Bianchi set

FROM PAGE 20

He also has his doubts about English refereeing. "In Italy the referee whistles as soon as a defender brushes against you. In the Premier League you don't get a free-kick even if the defender runs you over with a tank."

Andreas Isaksson was on his way out of City last night after officials from the Turkish club Galatasaray visited Manchester to complete the £2m signing of the goalkeeper, who has recently lost his place to Joe Hart.

City take on Liverpool at Eastlands tomorrow and, with Michael Johnson missing, Eriksson is likely to turn to Dietmar Hamann in midfield. The former Germany international was tested for the 2-2 draw against Blackburn Rovers on Thursday but will be expected to nullify the threat from his former Anfield team-mates, and Steven Gerrard in particular.

Liverpool struggled to beat Derby County on Boxing Day and needed a late winner from Gerrard for a 2-1 victory but Eriksson expects a difficult match. "Of course it will be difficult, we know that. It can't be easy to beat Liverpool," he said.

Ricky being safe

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Captain Ricky Ponting on Saturday kept a lid on expectations as his all-conquering Australian team edge closer to a world record number of Test cricket victories.

The Australians had a comprehensive 337-run over India in the first of the four-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series here Saturday for their 15th straight win.

They enter next Wednesday's New Year's Test in Sydney needing a victory to equal their own world record of 16 wins set under Ponting's predecessor Steve Waugh from October 1999 to February 2001.

Such was the emphatic nature of their Melbourne victory that expectations are rising that Ponting's team will carry on their form in Sydney and equal the record ahead of the remaining Tests in Perth and Adelaide.

But the skipper is talking down the excitement. "It's getting closer by the game, but we didn't mention it at all going into this game and that's the way I prefer it as well,"

Ponting said Saturday.

"I think if we just go about our normal business, getting well prepared for games and playing good cricket then those sort of things will look after themselves."

"There's a lot of hard work and a lot of great play to go into winning any Test match and we played well here and hopefully we can go to Sydney and play even better, and if we do then that record will be even closer once again."

Ponting was delighted with the way his bowlers patiently went about their work on an unresponsive slow drop-in MCG pitch, suffocating the Indians who have one of the biggest batting reputations in world cricket.

"We played excellent cricket all the way through. I thought the discipline we have showed with the bat to grind out the runs and then to stick to our plans with the ball, which was foreign to us, was very pleasing," he said.

"We are more used to being able to blast teams out and have lots of slips and gulleys in place but this game we've had to do things differently and we've been able to do it very well."

"It's a very pleasing win,

because the wicket we played on was more suited to the subcontinental style of play and we've adapted really well."

Ponting declared his team's second innings late on Friday's third day, setting India a massive 499 runs to win the Test.

Only three teams in Test cricket history have scored 400 or more in the fourth innings for victory.

"I never thought we were going to lose the game when I declared last night. I must admit," he said.

"But saying that, I expected it to be really hard work. We knew today (Saturday) was going to be very hot so we were hoping we could get the game over and done with today (Saturday). It would have been hard for the guys to back up again on the fifth day."

"I felt, thinking about it last night, that ... Dravid, Laxman and those sorts of guys have been known to bat for long periods of time and particularly on wickets like this one, so I felt it might have been a tough day for us."

"But the way we bowled and fielded was outstanding and we took nearly every chance that came our way."

Choking to win

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

There was a time in the morning session, when Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman were in the middle, when Stuart Clark bowled with a short mid-on and two short midwickets, a semi-circle of three waiting for a chip in the air. Mitchell Johnson, bowling at the other end, operated with a staggered slip cordon containing five catchers and Andrew Symonds, brought on soon, was operating with a short midwicket, a lone third slip, and two short extra covers.

It was gimmicky but must have also been suffocating. India weren't blasted out of this Test, as a 337-run margin would suggest, but squeezed out of it. Ironically, in an innings where they went at a shade above two an over, five of their batsmen succumbed to the drive. They were choked with accurate bowling, tight field-settings and were trapped when trying to break out of jail. Even when India were seven down, there was just one slip in place. Often there were two points in place, prompting one back to joke, "one backward point and one awkward point." The plan

wasn't to intimidate but to cage.

Revised to the series opener in Bangalore three years ago and things weren't too different. Unlike in 2001 and 2003-04, when the approach was more upbeat, the 2004-05 series was more about slow-burn. Australia weren't going to come out with all guns firing; it was more about turning the screw gradually.

It was a similar kind of ploy in Bangalore: unresponsive for stroke-making and getting slower and lower as the game went on. The weather wasn't too different either. Australia had their plans in place and executed it perfectly. Take out Virender Sehwag and you had a set of Indian batsmen who didn't try too much to upset the strategy. Conventional wisdom tells you to stay there for the runs to come but India needed to break out of the mould. Three years later and they walked into the same trap yet again.

South Africa might claim the 'chokers' tag but Australia are mastering the art of choking India's batsmen.

The problem India have is their stay-and-the-runs-will-come approach has worked well in overseas Tests recently. They ground their way through the England series, with efficient and not spectacular performances,

and saw the same work for most part of the recent series against Pakistan as well. Opposition bowlers have not been able to maintain the same intensity for too long. Opposition captains haven't had that many strategies up their sleeve.

It's a fair assessment. The Tendulkar-Laxman and Laxman-Ganguly stand saw runs being scored at more than three an over. Australia, though, seemed to know means to get through. Just as Dravid and Laxman appeared to have settled into a groove, you had Symonds changing from medium-pace to offspin. Three balls later, Dravid was trapped in front. Sachin Tendulkar showed the right intent, trying to push the rate on, but Brett Lee had a trick up his sleeve: bounce, bounce, bounce and throw it short and wide. Trying to break the shackles, Tendulkar knicked.

Laxman was up against one that stopped him, saw his handle turn in his wrists, and popped one straight to extra cover. He was caught at a conventional field position but you would think it was the mind-games that might have put him off track. It's tough to adjust to a freakish field in one over and an orthodox one in the next.

WI conquer SA finally

FROM PAGE 17

Amla caught behind with the batsman getting a faint edge to wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin as he pushed at the ball outside off stump.

Edwards had Smith jumping when he bowled a bouncer. He repeated the delivery and Smith was caught by short leg fielder Daren Ganga as the ball looped off the handle of his bat, with Ganga making good ground to take the ball in front of the batsman.

Kallis, who was out without scoring in the first innings, made a shaky start but soon settled down to play some fine strokes, hitting seven boundaries in reaching his half-century off 70 balls.

He was unlucky to be given out after a 126-ball innings when an attempted hook against Edwards deflected off his shoulder to Ramdin.

De Villiers was eighth man out when he drove Taylor to mid-on.

When the final wicket fell, the West Indians gathered with arms linked and danced in the middle of

the field.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fourth day of the first Test between South Africa and the West Indies at St George's Park on Saturday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 408

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 195

WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight 146-8)

Gayle c Boucher b Ntini 29

Ganga run out 45

Morton lbw b Kallis 5

Samuels b Steyn 40

Chanderpaul c Kallis b Steyn 8

Bravo c Gibbs b Harris 10

Ramdin c Gibbs b Steyn 3

Sammy lbw b Harris 0

Taylor c Nel b Harris 22

Powell b Harris 6

Edwards not out 0

Extras: (b-1, nb-5, w-1) 7

Total: (All out in 57.4 overs) 175

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-57, 3-122, 4-123, 5-141, 6-141, 7-144, 8-144, 9-160.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	17	3	67	3
Ntini	11	3	35	1
Nel	7	1	21	0

Kallis	7	1	16	1
Harris	15.4	5	35	4
SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings				
Gibbs lbw b Powell	0			
Smith c Ganga b Edwards	11			
Amla c Ramdin b Edwards	8			
Kallis c Ramdin b Edwards	85			
Prince c Gayle b Taylor	10			
De Villiers c Samuels b Taylor	60			
Boucher b Taylor	13			
Harris b Bravo	0			
Nel c Ramdin b Sammy	34			
Steyn not out	33			
Ntini c Powell b Samuels	1			
Extras: (b-4, w-1)	5			
Total: (All out in 74.5 overs)	260			
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-17, 3-20, 4-45, 5-157, 6-183, 7-190, 8-192, 9-259, 10-260.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	14	2	47	1
Edwards	13	3	37	3
Taylor	18	1	66	3
Bravo	16	2	63	1
Sammy	7	0	29	1
Samuels	6.5	1	14	1

Result: West Indies won by 128 runs and lead 3-match series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match: Marlon Samuels.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Automatic advance-ments

5 More, to Manuel

8 Flavor enhancer

12 Lummox

13 Zsa Zsa's

14 Bread spread

15 Taj Mahal city

16 Aves word

17 Word often following "once"

18 Like Jalme

20 Inauguration

22 Inauguration

26 Assortment

29 Encouraged

30 Greet the villain

31 Trumpet

32 Auction

33 Appraisal

34 Clit-

35 Speck

DOWN

1 Spill the beans

2 Boo's the mentor

3 Modern-day money

4 Stunt double, e.g.

5 Gradias, across the

6 Actress Gardner

7 Siberian sled dog

8 Toward penguin territory

9 "Sesame Street" lesson

10 MGM mascot

11 Heavy weight

19 "the Walrus"

21 Pretense

23 Jones' partner

24 Tittle

25 Yule refrain

26 Butterfly-bait dangle

27 "Darin Yankess" vamp

28 Trick

32 Andy Vari-

33 papa's sport

34 Unnarily

35 Turn green?

36 Ex-GI

38 Auto style

39 Art supporter

42 Grooving on

43 Little lica

44 Location

45 Likely

46 Complete

48 Relatiner

Solution time: 25 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP

Q A V P Z J P G R O Y Y V W Q A J Y V B

J W V Z J R O P S B H I P X B

N H S V N A V W F H I Y X G H I B J G

N A J N B H W F J B N W J N O H P ?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: I SUPPOSE IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT ANNIE, ARSENIO AND MONTY SHOULD BE DUBBED "HALLS OF FAME."

Today's Cryptquip Clue: N equals T