

Aussies' consolation win

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Australia dismissed South Africa for 272 with only 10 balls remaining to win an entertaining third and final Test and avoid a series whitewash.

Graeme Smith, returning to bat with a broken finger, fell to Mitchell Johnson to hand the hosts victory on the fifth and final day of the match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday, although the tourists won the series 2-1.

The tourists started the day needing 314 to pull off an unlikely result but lost quick wickets.

Peter Siddle was man-of-the-match with Smith named man-of-the-series.

Australia's victory meant that they retained their position at the top of the International Cricket Council's official Test rankings.

The South Africans had already clinched the three-match series after winning the first two Tests in Perth and Melbourne and began the fifth day on 62 having lost Morne Morkel on Tuesday.

The first session did not go as planned for the tourists with Neil McKenzie falling with the total only moving forward by six runs. Jacques Kallis then fell for just four and Hashim Amla went for 59.

AB de Villiers showed some resistance with a solid 56 but

was eventually bowled by Siddle, leaving his side on a precarious 193-7 at the tea interval.

Makhaya Ntini held out for over 17 overs, adding a fabulous 50 runs for the ninth wicket, before Dale Steyn was removed lbw by Andrew McDonald for 28.

This set up a dramatic finale as South Africa tried to cling on for the draw with Smith, not having played since retiring hurt with a broken finger and troublesome left elbow in the first innings, deciding to bat.

Smith entered the arena with 7.2 overs left to a standing ovation from the SCG crowd and survived for 17 balls before falling for three to Mitchell.

Man-of-the-match pacer Siddle ended with match figures of 8-113.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the third and final Test between Australia and South Africa at Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 445

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 327

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 257 for 4 decl.

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings (overnight 62 for 1)

Hayden b Morkel 39

Katich lbw b Steyn 61

Ponting b Morkel 53

Hayden b Morkel 39

Katich lbw b Steyn 61

Ponting b Morkel 53

Hayden b Morkel 39

Katich lbw b Steyn 61

Ponting b Morkel 53

Hayden b Morkel 39

Katich lbw b Steyn 61

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Hayden b Morkel 39

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Ponting b Morkel 53

Hayden b Morkel 39

Katich lbw b Steyn 61

Ponting b Morkel 53

Extras: (b-8, lb-9, nb-1) 18 Total: (For 4 wks decl) 67.3 (overs) 257 Did not bat: Haddin, McDonald, Hauritz, Johnson, Siddle, Bollinger. Fall of wickets: 1-62, 2-134, 3-181, 4-257.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows: McKenzie c Hussey b Bollinger, Morkel c Johnson b Bollinger, Amla c Katich b Hauritz, Kallis c b McDonald, De Villiers b Siddle, Duminy lbw b Johnson, Boucher lbw b Siddle, Harris lbw b Siddle, Steyn lbw b McDonald, Ntini not out, Smith b Johnson.

McKenzie c Hussey b Bollinger 27 Morkel c Johnson b Bollinger 0 Amla c Katich b Hauritz 59 Kallis c b McDonald 4 De Villiers b Siddle 56 Duminy lbw b Johnson 16 Boucher lbw b Siddle 4 Harris lbw b Siddle 6 Steyn lbw b McDonald 28 Ntini not out 28 Smith b Johnson 3

Extras: (b-12, lb-18, w-4, nb-2, pen-5) 41 Total: (All out in 114.2 overs) 272 Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-68, 3-91, 4-110, 5-166, 6-172, 7-190, 8-202, 9-257, 10-272.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Rows: Siddle 27, 12, 54, 3; Bollinger 21, 5, 53, 2; Johnson 23, 7, 49, 2; McDonald 13, 6, 32, 2; Hauritz 28, 10, 47, 1; Clarke 2, 1, 2, 0.

Result: Australia won by 103 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Peter Siddle.

Man-of-the-series: Graeme Smith.

Captain courageous

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa skipper Graeme Smith revealed why he changed his mind and decided to bat with a broken hand in the final Test defeat against Australia Wednesday.

The tourists came within 10 balls of drawing the third Test in Sydney but Smith's wicket sealed Australia's win.

"I decided I was going to give it a go and give it my best shot and if I got a first-baller or whatever at least I tried," the captain said.

"It was about getting out there and doing the best you can."

Smith, who broke his left hand in the first innings and was also nursing an injured right elbow, batted at number 11 as the Proteas went close to achieving a memorable result.

South Africa had already won the series and the captain, along with tail-ender Makhaya Ntini (28 not out), held Australia at bay for 29 minutes in Sydney before being bowled by Mitchell Johnson.

The wicket gave Australia the 103-run win and Smith added: "I didn't really expect to go out. Deep inside I didn't really want to get out there."

"I probably decided 25 overs out, 26 overs out I was going to bat. I arrived here without any kit and had some pants I'd shoved into my cricket bag to protect my bats."

"I stole a shirt off Jacques (Kallis) and a

pullover off Harry (Paul Harris) that still had his hamburger stain on the front left side of it. I had Morne (Morkel) dressing me and putting my shoes on and pads.

"Obviously there's a lot of pain. Once one ball hit the bat I thought 'OK, that's one out the way'. I told myself 'just keep watching the ball and hoping that it hits the bat the whole time'."

Following their wins in Perth and Melbourne, South Africa took the series 2-1 and Smith admitted they could have sealed the cleansweep.

"We had our opportunities in the game early on," he said. "We dropped our catches for the first time in a long time and it probably cost us the game."

"It was part of a great series, this finish, and it sets up a terrific home series in South Africa." Australia captain Ricky Ponting believed his team deserved the victory and reflected on the positives despite the series defeat.

"It's been a really rewarding period for the young guys in particular," said Ponting. "I'm very proud of the way we bounced back."

"It's always hard coming back in a series when you're 2-0 down and have probably been in positions in the first two games that you could have won Test matches as well."

"It says a lot about the character of the side to get back up off the canvas and put up a performance like we have this week."

"But you've got to give South Africa some credit for the way they did it in Perth with the run chase and the way they turned things around in Melbourne as well."

Nadal thrashes Santoro

Tennis

AFP, Doha

Rafael Nadal needed little more than three-quarters of an hour to score his first victory on the 2009 ATP World Tour, his crushing success appearing like an omen of yet further triumphs to come.

The Wimbledon, French Open and Olympic champion won 6-0, 6-1 against Fabrice Santoro in the first round of the Qatar Open, overwhelming the oldest man on the tour with his heavy hitting and relentless energy.

Santoro, a 36-year-old former Davis Cup hero who is playing his last, and a reduced,

season, made his first appearance on Wimbledon's centre court only six months ago, and was now playing his first match against the mighty Nadal.

He may have wished he wasn't.

It was not till the ninth game that the clever Frenchman won one, and all his slices, variations of pace and tactical subtleties created little distraction for the muscular Spaniard. Fully 51 of the 66 points in the match were won by Nadal.

"It was really impressive being on the other side of the net against Nadal," said Santoro generously.

"Now I understand why Roger Federer missed volleys

playing against him, something I previously couldn't understand," he added, referring to the deceptive weight of shot which Nadal creates, rather than the speed of hitting.

Nadal was pleased to win so quickly. "I hope to do that," he said, unconcerned at the brevity of the match practice.

"With my topspin, his ball is not the worst one for me. When he plays slice, that's a good ball for me."

Nadal felt pleased to have played such a close match in the exhibition final against Andy Murray in Abu Dhabi on Sunday, even though he lost it, believing that his preparation for the Australian Open in 12 days time is now further advanced.

Akhtar awarded Pak contract

AFP, Lahore

Pakistani fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar won back his central contract on Tuesday, returning to the international fold a year after a bitter row threatened to end his troubled career.

Akhtar, 33, who played just three Twenty20 internationals last year, was among 26 players awarded annual contracts and will receive 250,000 rupees (3,500 dollars) a month plus match fees.

CATEGORY A Shoaib Akhtar, Younis Khan, Danish Kaneria, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Misbahul Haq, Salman Butt, Umar Gul.

CATEGORY B Yasir Hameed, Faisal Iqbal, Mohammad Hafeez, Sohail Tanvir.

CATEGORY C Rao Iftikhar Anjum, Abdur Rehman, Yasir Arafat, Fawad Alam, Khurram Manzoor, Saad Ajmal, Sohail Khan, Wahab Riaz, Samiullah Khan, Niaz, Sarfraz Ahmad, Nasir Jamshed, Umar Amin, Azhar Ali.

Riyad, Enamul recalled

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who has recovered from a finger injury. While Shakib will be a regular feature, the other all-rounders' slot will be fought between Mehrab, Nayeem and Riyad.

"Nayeem is fit as he is playing in Bogra and Mehrab has been doing well. He has scored against New Zealand and South Africa. He didn't get a fifty here (against Sri Lanka) but he looked good," added the former national cricketer.

Among the four fast men, Rubel is the new face. The youngster who hails from Bagerhat is renowned in the cricketing circle for his slinging action, much like Sri Lanka's sensation Lasith Malinga. He was picked up from nowhere after topping the speed gun in a pacer hunt programme and quickly climbed through the ranks.

After playing a season of club cricket, he was in the under-19 World Cup team and also made it into the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy and

the Bangladesh A sides mainly due to the surprise factor and his raw pace.

"Rubel has performed well for the under-19, Academy and Bangladesh A side and been impressive in the domestic first-class level also."

"He has extra pace and a deceptive slingshot action. He is an attacking bowler and comes in for Sajidul Islam who was in the Test squad and is more of a longer version bowler," said Rafiq. Nazmul did not play any matches in the last one-day series played by the Tigers (in South Africa last year). According to the chief selector, the steady paceman takes the place of the fiery Shahadat Hossain.

"Shahadat had been rather expensive in the ODIs he played last year. The coaching staff wanted a steady and accurate bowler and Nazmul fitted the bill."

"He (Shahadat) is by no means out of our plans and we believe that returning to

AFC to help

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the activities of the BFF's 8-month old new executive committee.

"So far we are satisfied with the BFF activities. I have come to see their 2009 planning and what we can do to help them achieve their goal. That is the purpose of my visit."

"We are intending helping Bangladesh little more than we have done before. We'll discuss about further help to BFF, and it depends on what they want. Definitely we like to see Bangladesh succeed and we will help them achieve it."

"Manil will visit BKSP tomorrow to see how the youth training is going on and also take ideas as Sri Lanka is likely to build a sports institution following this model."

With the prospect of a third 'Goal project' coming to Bangladesh in the future, BFF president Kazi Salahuddin said he was interested in increasing facilities, not buildings.

"Basically all we need is academy, institution or school type training grounds. We don't need buildings, we need grounds and proper training facilities," he said.

"We have discussed about the next project but the problem is the FIFA will give one by one. So, I have placed a request for the third goal project after the Barisal centre is done. They have made commitment -- direct or indirectly -- that we will get it. They are happy that football has started in Bangladesh and appreciate that."

"The cost to build the turf has increased by 90,000 to 1 lakh dollars and now we have to find our sources."

NSC receives

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coaches will arrive soon. Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin and other officials were also present.

"I believe that giving these footballs to the NSC will serve the purpose of the game. If the BFF had these, we would have done the same to spread the game into the far corners of the country," said Salahuddin.

Emily on fire

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Emeka was unfortunate, once again failing to get a touch to Ibrahim's pass from the left, but Emily provided a chance for the Nigerian who weaved through the left side and drilled in a low drive to stun Nahid at his near post in the 48th minute.

Five minutes later, Emeka snatched possession from an opponent, exchanged a pass with Ibrahim, dribbled past a defender and the outstriking goalkeeper to make it 6-0. Waly Faisal rattled the sidebar in the very next minute but the hosts lost their appetite. Emeka was substituted on the hour and the others did not press for any more.

Run ragged by their mighty opponents, Khulna Abahani came close to a consolation goal midway through the second half but their promising striker Pashbon, who raced past two defenders to get inside the Abahani area, saw his placing shot blocked by Biplab.

Abahani had won their first-leg match 3-0 in Dhaka. Although that match was supposed to be held in Khulna, the venue was shifted due to the interest of the national team for their Merdeka Cup preparation.

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplab, Siraji, Nazrul, Samad, Waly, Abul, Joy (Pranotosh), Mamun, Emeka (Tipu), Ibrahim (Pradip) and Emily.

KHULNA ABAHANI: Nahid, Hamid, Hadiuzzaman, Shahin, Milton, Shahidul, Ashiqul, Selim, Saifullah (Ranjit), Manjurul (Tariqul) and Pashbon.

Kiwis level with Windies

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Skipper Daniel Vettori took four cheap scalps as New Zealand crushed the West Indies by seven wickets to level the one-day series 1-1 on Wednesday.

Vettori finished with 4-20 from 10 overs in the third of the five-match series after the hosts skittled the West Indies for 128 in 41.4 overs at Westpac Stadium here.

"It was set up by the bowlers first and foremost and the wicket obviously had a little bit in it but in the end it was a very comfortable victory and a very happy dressing room," Vettori said.

New Zealand initially stuttered in the run-chase, losing the wickets of Brendon McCullum, Jesse Ryder and Jamie How in the space of six runs to be 40 for three after 7.2 overs.

But Ross Taylor made an unbeaten 51 off 50 balls including five fours and three sixes, supported by Daniel Flynn's 23 not out in an 89-run partnership that propelled New Zealand to 129 in just 20.3 overs.

The pair started shakily with two difficult catching chances missed and an unsuccessful caught-behind appeal off Taylor, where replays suggested the ball may have brushed his glove on the way through to wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin.

But they settled into a solid partnership which stood in contrast to the rash shot-making of the first three batsmen and most of the West Indies lineup.

Only batting star Shivnarine Chanderpaul showed any serious resistance with 45 in the West Indies innings.

At one stage the visitors looked unlikely even to break 100 when they collapsed to 74 for eight but number 10 Nikita Miller, unbeaten on 25, combined with Chanderpaul and Fidel Edwards to avoid total humiliation.

Vettori did the damage to the lower half of the West

Indies order and he was complemented by Kyle Mills, who removed the openers and finished with two for 31 from his 10 overs.

Fellow opening bowler Tim Southee also chipped in with two for 36 in his 10 overs.

"It always helps when you bowl to the middle order as opposed to the top and the platform they set up allowed me to attack a bit more and take those wickets," Vettori said, praising Mills and Southee.

Vettori won the toss and chose to bowl first in overcast conditions, and his decision was vindicated by the speedy departure of the top of the West Indies order.

Opener Xavier Marshall departed for a duck in the first over, edging Mills to Jamie

How at second slip. He was soon followed back to the dressing room by Ramnaresh Sarwan, who edged Southee to How for five.

Chanderpaul and captain Chris Gayle looked to be the best hope of getting the tourists back on track but Gayle became Mills's second victim, edging a slower ball onto the stumps on 18 to leave his team struggling at 35 for three.

Vettori claimed two wickets in his first two overs, although the second, an lbw decision against Kieron Pollard, appeared lucky with replays showing the batsman nicked the ball onto his pads.

An angry Pollard broke a window pane and dented a door in the players' tunnel with his bat as he returned to

the dressing room, but escaped any punishment from match officials.

Jerome Taylor and Daren Powell also fell quickly to Vettori, who dismissively pointed to his head after Powell was bowled taking a wild swing at a ball which kept low and straight.

Powell later made some amends with the ball, taking all three New Zealand wickets to finish with three for 25 off his seven overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the third one-day international between New Zealand and the West Indies at Westpac Stadium on Wednesday:

WEST INDIES

Gayle b Mills 18

Marshall c How b Mills 0

Sarwan c How b Southee 5

Chanderpaul lbw b Ryder 45

Findlay b Southee 8

Ramdin lbw Vettori 1

Pollard lbw Vettori 1

Taylor c Taylor b Vettori 4

Powell b Vettori 1

Miller not out 25

Edwards c How b Patel 13

Extras: (lb-3, w-3, nb-1) 7

Total: (All out in 41.4 overs) 128

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-15, 3-35, 4-55, 5-56, 6-58, 7-70, 8-74, 9-101, 10-128.

Bowler O M R W

Mills 10 2 31 2

Southee 10 2 36 2

Oram 2 0 4 0

Elliott 2 0 9 0

Vettori 10 3 20 4

Patel 3 4 0 8 1

Ryder 4 0 17 1

NEW ZEALAND