

Aussies widen lead

Salman gives Pak score respectability



CRICINFO, Hobart

Salman Butt's third Test century and Ricky Ponting's decision not to enforce the follow-on should ensure the Hobart Test goes for the full five days, although Australia remain in control with a 277-run advantage by stumps on the third day of the third Test in Hobart on Saturday.

After the second day's play, Ponting talked up the likelihood of making Pakistan bat again straight away, but his mind was changed when it took the bowlers 105.4 overs to dismiss them the first time.

Eventually, after a 60-minute last-wicket partnership between Umar Gul and Mohammad Asif that spanned both sides of the tea break, Nathan Hauritz finished off Pakistan for 301, leaving them 218 short of Australia's total. But Ponting wanted a break for his fast men and, despite the expected showers over the next two days, will set Pakistan a four-innings target.

Australia reached 1 for 59 at stumps with Simon Katich on 33 and Ponting on 25 after Shane Watson departed in the second over for 1. Watson skied a catch when he mis-cued Mohammad Aamer and it was the first time since the summer-opening Gabba Test match that he had failed to post a half-century in either innings.

Batting wasn't difficult on the good surface, as demonstrated by the inability of Australia's fast men to break through with the second new ball when they were trying to prise out Gul and Asif. Peter Siddle, Doug Bollinger and Mitchell Johnson didn't help their cause by abandoning the key principle of new-ball bowling -- pitching up to allow swing -- and banged it in far too short against the tailenders.

The pair added 53 for the final wicket and provided

some entertaining highlights, including three powerful sixes from Gul, who finished unbeaten on 38. Asif posted 29, his highest Test score, before he skied a catch to mid-on off Hauritz, who ended up with 3 for 96. The tail-end pluck only served to highlight how disappointing much of Pakistan's batting effort was,

a much-needed one after he was responsible for running out Mohammad Yousuf and Umar Akmal on the second afternoon. It was enough for Yousuf to brand Butt a "lazy" runner and although the captain wasn't spotted cheering Butt's century, he must surely have been pleased that his opener took on the extra responsibility after his lapses.

aerial drive that was taken at mid-on, and Hauritz followed with Danish Kaneria, caught at cover.

Then came the last-wicket stand, which was Pakistan's best in Tests for three years. Together with the efforts of Butt and Malik, it was enough to make Ponting think twice about the follow-on and the next two days will reveal if it was enough to save the match.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the third and final Test between Australia and Pakistan at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 519 decl in 142.5 overs (Ponting 209, Clarke 166; Asif 2-104, Aamer 2-97, Kaneria 3-189)

PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 94 for 4)

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Farhat, Butt, Manzoor, Yousuf, Akmal, Sarfraz, Malik, Aamer, Gul, Kaneria, Asif, Hussey, and Extras.

Total: (For 1 wkt in 18 overs) 59 To bat: Hussey, Clarke, North, Haddin, Johnson, Hauritz, Siddle, Bollinger.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Asif, Aamer, Gul, and Kaneria.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Pakistan opener Salman Butt gestures after scoring his century on the third day of the third Test against Australia in Hobart yesterday.

with the exception of Butt and Shoaib Malik.

Their fighting three-hour stand that lasted until after lunch was characterised by concentration and patience, two traits that Pakistan's batsmen have so often lacked on this trip. Butt was strong off the back foot through the off side and Malik put in a good audition to permanently return to the Test line-up before the part-time spin of Katich split the pair up.

Katich had Butt caught at slip for 102, which was his first Test century for four years and

The loss of Butt led to a collapse of 5 for 35 as Katich ran through the lower middle-order and finished with 3 for 34, his second-best Test figures. Katich tossed one up across the body of the right-hander Sarfraz Ahmed, who edged to slip for 1, and then drew Aamer into an exotic slog-sweep that flew high in the air and was swallowed by Watson at cover.

In between, Hauritz had chipped in with the key wicket of Malik, who by then was Pakistan's best hope of avoiding the follow-on. He threw his innings away with a lusty

School cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A brilliant century from Anik helped Harinsinga High School emerge zonal champions in the Standard Chartered National School Cricket Competition with a slim 12-run win over Mohimaganj High School in the final at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Mohimaganj School were all out for 207 in 38.5 overs in reply to Harinsinga School's 219 for nine, thanks to a 112-run knock from Anik.

Niaz of Mohimaganj also hammered 103, but his side fell short of 12 runs from the target.

Deputy commissioner of Gaibandha, Shahidul Islam, distributed prizes among the winners.

None is

bered his stint with the Australian cricket team.

"You get there by winning games. They [Australia] won enough games to put themselves on top. I'll stay in touch with the Australian cricket team to give me few points on the Indian cricket team. So hopefully we will use them to good effect."

Nobody however was not ready to comment on the pitch.

"We can't predict about the wicket. Last time we played a Test against South Africa here and we scored 500-plus runs and in the last one-day against Zimbabwe here, they were bowled out for 44," said Shakib when asked about the condition of pitch.

U-19s

Pakistan have beaten West Indies on the opening day by 40 runs.

In the other matches of the day, hosts New Zealand cruised to a nine-wicket victory over Canada, England beat Hong Kong by the same margin while Australia posted a 108-run win over USA.

BRIEF SCORE

PAPUA NEW GUINEA U-19: 191 for nine in 46 overs (TP Ura 70, J Kila 38; Abul Hasan 4-22, Shabbir Rahman 1-29)

BANGLADESH U-19: 190 for five in 27.2 overs (Shabbir Rahman 51 not out, Mahmudul Hasan 38, Anamul Haque 36; TH Mou 2-30)

Result: Bangladesh U-19 won by 5 wickets in D/L method

Man-of-the-match: Shabbir Rahman

Butt not losing sleep



CRICINFO, Hobart

Salman Butt atoned for some of the mistakes of the second day with a valuable third Test hundred for Pakistan at the Bellerive Oval on Saturday. Butt's ton couldn't take Pakistan past the follow-on, but it helped push Australia to bat again in any case, taking a little bit more time out of the Test and improving Pakistan's chances of escaping a 12th successive defeat to the hosts.

Butt was blamed by his captain Mohammad Yousuf in unusually candid sentiments for his "lazy running" which led to two critical run-outs on the second afternoon, of Yousuf himself, and Umar Akmal. Butt, however, played down both the dismissals and notions of a potentially strained relationship with his captain because of it or that his hundred made up for the mistakes.

"When a batsman makes runs in the shape of a century, it is always a good feeling," Butt said. "I don't think it has to do with the run-outs because they are part of the game and we have to carry on. It's not happened for the first time in the game. It happened in the first Test with [Simon] Katich and [Shane] Watson and both were in the 90s. This is part and parcel and you have to carry on and can't think about what has happened."

Butt said he hadn't read what Yousuf had said, ("I didn't ask you," he shot back when a reporter told him anyway) but that the captain -- "like an elder brother," Butt said --

would have been justified for expressing those sentiments. "I haven't heard anything and even if he has said so it maybe it is because he is the best player in the side and obviously the team needed him at the time," Butt said.

"Anybody in his place would've been like that so I don't mind even if he said something. We've played enough cricket not to think about these small things. Ok this happened, alright he is our best player no doubt and it would've been very good had he stayed on and scored a big hundred but if something has happened you can't keep on moaning about it."

Butt's hundred was his second in Australia, following his maiden one in Sydney five years ago, and two more fifties mean he is the rare modern Pakistani batsman who has done well against them, in this country. "We haven't played much Test cricket over the last two years," he said.

"Recently we have played about six, so it's like a comeback after a year's lay-off from Test cricket. It is the most difficult cricket that exists. Twenty20 and ODI are much easier formats because this is a Test of everything, your nerves and fitness and the pitch conditions change.

"Maybe the surfaces suit my game. Some of the shots that are my scoring shots are easier to play in Australia than they are in other places. But I haven't played much Test cricket around the world. Out of my 27 Tests, I have played about six here, 5-6 in Pakistan, one in England, five in India so it hasn't been all over the world."

Rajshahi, Dhaka

FROM PAGE 17

The match between Chittagong and Barisal can go either way. Chittagong resumed the day on 90 for two in their second innings lost their eight remaining wickets adding a further 179 runs, courtesy of a 67-run knock from left-hander Faisal Hossain. Sohag Gazi took five wickets for 63 for Barisal. Barisal were set a victory target of 230 runs with one and half days remaining. But they were reduced to 53 for 5 on the close of third day's play. Only the opener Asif Ahmed (27) was able to get to 20 digits as the others fell cheaply.

Result: Rajshahi won by an innings and 139 runs DHAKAVK HULNA KHULNA: First innings 132 and Second innings 220 all out in 58.1 overs (Bashar 69, Nazmus 60, Sahagir Hossain 29, Habibur 16, Nazimuddin 14, extras 12, Talha 7-59 and Sharif 2-57) DHAKA: First innings-120 and 236 for 2 in 58.5 overs (Uttam Sarkar 53, Rony Talukdar 64, Samshur Rahman 53 not out, Marshal Ayub 52 not out, extras 14, Ziaur Rahman 1-41 and Muraad Khan 1-50) Result: Dhaka won by eight wickets CHITTAGONG V BARISAL CHITTAGONG: First innings 200 and Second innings 269 all out in 92.5 overs (Gazi Salahuddin 35, Mahbulul Karim 32, Nafis Iqbal 39, Faisal Hossain 67, Kamrul Islam 35, extras 8, Sohag Gazi 5-63 and MAZIM 2-46) BARISAL: First innings 239 and 53 for five in 23 overs (Asif Ahmed 27, Faisal 2-8, Elias Sunny 1-0, Tareq Kamrul 1-14 and Aziz 1-27)

SCORES IN BRIEF

RAJSHAHIV SYLHET SYLHET: First innings 144 and 246 all out in 72.1 overs (Rajin Saleh 112, Golam Mabud 43, Rummon Ahmed 20, Syam 16, Nasir Ahmed 13, Saqlina Sajib 6-84 and Nasir Hossain 3-56)

RAJSHAHI: First innings 529 for 7 in 146 overs declared (Zahurul 139, Masud 56, Forhad Hossain 53, Nayeem 123, Nasir 42, Anisur 79, extras 25; Nasir 2-68, Jahid Rahi 2-75 and Nabil Samad 2-125)

WRESTLING SQUAD

Anisur Rahman, Sharat Chandra Roy, Shipon Mia, Billal Hossain and Nazmul Haq.

BASKETBALLSQUAD

Rasheduzzaman, Lutfar Rahman, Mithun Kumar Biswas, Amanat Ali, Bodiuzzaman, Mithun Sarkar, Animesh Baddya, Alamgir Kabir, Mahmudul Hasan, Morshed Alam, Shamsuzzaman Khan and Takbir-e-Islam Setu.

Wushu vows

FROM PAGE 17

"In a bid to giving them exposure as well as improving the temperament of the players, they were sent to Malaysia where they won two out of five matches and went narrowly down in the other three to a professional Malaysian club. Besides the boys have been training since February last year and this time the height of the players are better. That's why we are expecting to offer good fight against each and every team," said coach Wasif Ali.

WUSHU SQUAD

Mejbah Uddin, Abu Bakar, Siddiqui Islam and Ruma Akhter (Taolu); Rakib Hossain, Salman L Rahman, Gour Karmakar, Fahmida Yasmine Arju, Iti Islam and Bashona Khandakar (San Shou).

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Federer's Haiti relief effort

AFP, Melbourne

World number one Roger Federer has organised a charity tennis exhibition on Sunday ahead of the Australian Open to raise money for victims of the Haiti earthquake.

At least 50,000 people have been killed and 1.5 million left homeless in the Caribbean nation and Federer said he wanted to do something to help.

"I had the idea that we could do something to help Haiti after the tragic earthquake," he said here Saturday.

"So I spoke to some other top players. I got some connections, you know. They all said, 'Yes, we should do something'."

"So we're going to play doubles or mixed doubles on Sunday, also with top women's players, and try to fill the stadium (Rod Laver Arena).

"I think there will be a donation at the door of 10 dollars to come and see us play. It's something as a tennis family we're very happy to do."

UN chief Ban Ki-moon is set to visit Haiti on Sunday with the world body appealing for 562 million US dollars from donors.

Verdasco wins Kooyong Classic

AFP, Melbourne

Spain's Fernando Verdasco completed a perfect preparation for the Australian Open by defeating Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 7-5, 6-3 Saturday to win the Kooyong Classic.

Verdasco, who made a breakthrough at Melbourne Park a year ago when he took Rafael Nadal to a five-set marathon semifinal, spent 84 minutes in taming Tsonga, the 2008 Australian Open finalist.

The ninth-ranked Spaniard held his nerve in a tight ninth game of the first set, saving three set points for 5-4.

He then broke to seize momentum, winning the set and earning the straight-set win on a third match point after dominating in the second set.

Serena isn't bothered

AFP, Melbourne



Defending champion Serena Williams has played down concerns about her troublesome left knee after cancelling a practice session on Saturday ahead of the Australian Open.

The world number one lost in the semifinals of the Sydney International on Friday to Elena Dementieva and was inconvenienced by the injury with her knee troubled for the match.

She admitted it troubled her from the start, but said it now felt better.

"The knee is much better. It was good for me to get all those matches in," she insisted.

Asked if the injury had hampered her preparation for the opening Grand Slam of the season, she replied: "Absolutely not. If anything, it helped."

"I played a lot of matches in a row, back to back. I had a long three-set match (in the semis)."

"That was good preparation for me because I do plan on playing both singles and doubles here."

Nevertheless, concern remains after she pulled out of her scheduled practice session Saturday.

Williams said she had enough practice with the Sydney warm-up event.

"Well, I definitely had a lot of practice with Sydney, getting that far. I don't want to push it, go too far," she said.

"I definitely want to do the best I can, obviously, but I also want to pace myself. Hopefully I can play seven single rounds and six double rounds."

Williams is searching for her 12th Grand Slam singles title at the Australian Open next week

put herself alongside Billie Jean King as one of the all-time greats.

The four-time winner at Melbourne Park is clear favourite to lift the trophy again after a stellar 2009 but faces a tougher task this time with many top players making significant improvements over the past year.

But Williams -- the winner here in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009 -- has the motivation, knowing one more victory will draw her level with the legendary Billie Jean King with 12 Grand Slam titles.

She acknowledged that her task had been made harder by the return of Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin, but was excited by the new challenge they posed.

"What an amazing effort and quality for her (Justine) and Kim Clijsters. It's so good to see two such good players back," she said, commenting on the classic Brisbane International final this month that featured the two Belgians.

"It's good to be back and be a part of that strong field. Just being in the draw is awesome."

Williams opens her tournament against Poland's Urszula Radwanska, the younger sister of 10th seed Agnieszka Radwanska.

They have played each other before and Williams is not underestimating the challenge.

"I've played her before at Wimbledon. She's a tough cookie, a tough player. And she's definitely no push over," she said.

"She's a younger sister, and younger sisters always want to play really hard and really tough. I know that for a fact."

If she progresses, Williams faces a possible quarter-final against Belarus seventh seed Victoria Azarenka or Russian ninth seed Vera Zvonareva and is projected to meet sister Venus in the semis.

Rain halts SA

FROM PAGE 17

But De Villiers and Boucher restored South Africa's dominance before De Villiers mistimed a pull against Broad and was caught at midwicket.

With lightning flashing nearby and huge dark clouds hurrying in, the umpires took the players off the field, for the third successive day, shortly before a storm stopped play.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of South Africa's first innings on the third day of the fourth Test between South Africa and England at the Wanderers Stadium on Saturday:

ENGLAND: First innings 180 SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (overnight 215-2)

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Smith, Prince, Amla, Kallis, De Villiers, Duminy, Boucher, McLaren, Steyn, and Extras.

Total: (For 7 wks dec in 119 overs) 423 Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-201, 3-217, 4-217, 5-235, 6-355, 7-419. Did not bat: Morkel, Parnell.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Anderson, Sidebottom, Broad, Swann, and Collingwood.

Zoran calls

FROM PAGE 17

National Team Management Committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday.

Rezaul Karim Reza, Biplob, Pranotosh and Rokonzaman Kanchan are available while Mehdi Hasan Ujjal has been suffering from injury and defender Rajani Kanta Barman is outside the country, informed Bablu.

The former national footballer said the 20-member final squad for SA Games would be declared in a couple of days as the Bangladesh Olympic Association has been instigating the BFF to send their entries for the event.

Yousuf being realistic

PTI, Karachi

Em battled captain Mohammad Yousuf believes it is unfair to expect miracle results in Test cricket from an inexperienced and young Pakistan team.

The News quoted Yousuf as saying from Hobart that people had wrong expectations from the team and must face the reality now.

Yousuf on his first assignment as skipper led Pakistan to a drawn Test series in New Zealand last year. However, his side has already lost the ongoing three-match Test series against Australia.

"If you expect something of this side, then maybe that is a wrong expectation. You have to see where we are playing, which team we are playing. You should keep that in mind."

"Our team doesn't have many world class players. Most of the batsmen average below 30. Then how can you expect them to come here and beat top teams like Australia," Yousuf was quoted as saying in the report.

Baghdatis bags Sydney crown

AFP, Sydney

Former Australian Open finalist Marcos Baghdatis capitalised on a shaky tie-breaker from Frenchman Richard Gasquet to claim the Sydney International ATP title here on Saturday.

The 42nd-ranked Cypriot won a rain-interrupted final 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) in one hour 43 minutes to capture his fourth career title just days out from the Australian Open in Melbourne.

After recovering from the brink against Lleyton Hewitt and Mardy Fish just to reach the final, Baghdatis completed an ideal Australian Open build-up.



PHOTO: AFP

Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus (L) is congratulated by Richard Gasquet of France following their Sydney International final yesterday. Baghdatis won 6-4, 7-6.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 27 mins and a solution grid at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers for solving.

CRYPTOQUIP

TV LH LHXOAK ZKTAJ "T'D LIGFW WG JWLKW VTJYTHX TDDARTLWAOB!, " ZGFOR WYLW IA L ZLJWTHX ZLOO?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BEING THAT THE GUY CARRIES BOTH AN AMULET AND A GUN, YOU COULD SAY HE'S CHARMED AND DANGEROUS. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals T