

NZ V AUS FIRST TEST, DAY 1

Clarke seals satisfying century

Cricket CRICINFO, undated

Michael Clarke has had to display a lot of patience over the past fortnight and he applied an unflappable, measured approach as his century steered Australia into a strong position.

His timing was so good he brought up his hundred in the last over of the day as he swung his side to 316 for 4.

Only 70 runs came in 28 overs between lunch and tea as the tourists were restricted and Clarke needed 32 deliveries for his first two singles.

The speed at which Clarke improved the situation from delicate to in control was impressive. For a couple of hours he had defended and clipped, playing a nice cut for four off Daryl Tuffey, but also being struck in the helmet attempting a pull off Chris Martin.

Four overs later, having added three fours and launched Vettori over the sightscreen, he was 68 and Australia were suddenly purring.

boundary, with two fours off Brent Arnel taking him to 98 with a dozen balls remaining.

The century came with a tight single from the first ball of the last over and he ran with his bat in the air as he accepted the applause.

The upbeat partnership with North of 140 at almost five an over sent the day Australia's way.

His place is under pressure from Steven Smith, the batsman-legspinner, but if he goes on the spot will be his until he has to negotiate his next elongated slump.

Australia knew life against New Zealand was going to be harder than their home summer of success and they were forced to battle for much of the day.

Four overs later, having added three fours and launched Vettori over the sightscreen, he was 68 and Australia were suddenly purring.

chipped and glanced.

His reward was a 191-ball stay that gave him more batting time but not a century. While New Zealand missed him twice in the lead-up to tea, Katich did not last long after the break and was lbw shuffling across the crease to Arnel, who was operating around the wicket.

Arnel, a 31-year-old right armer, was brought in for his debut in a four-man seam attack and he delivered a tricky opening spell of seven overs.

The ball swung throughout to disrupt the batsmen's rhythm and Martin was a problem when he curled it into the right-handers and away from the lefties.

New Zealand's major problem was they couldn't sustain the effort until the end. Vettori was attacked before the second new ball was taken but Tuffey, who gave up 13 runs from his first 11 overs, regained some control to finish with 0 for 35 from 15.

SCORES IN BRIEF AUSTRALIA: First innings 316 for 4 (Hughes 20, Katich 79, Ponting 41, Clarke 100 batting, North 52 batting; Arnel 2-70) To bat: Haddin, Johnson, Hauritz, Bollinger, Harri.



Australia's Michael Clarke pulls the ball during his century against New Zealand on the first day of the first Test in Wellington yesterday.

Div II Cricket Biltu thrash Anirban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Biltu Club got 74 runs victory over Anirban Cricket Club in the inaugural day in the Khan Real Estate Second Division Cricket League at Shahid Miraj-Tapan Stadium in Manikganj yesterday.

Biltu Club batted first and made 153 runs for nine wickets in the 25 overs with Rasel scoring highest 64 runs while Moni added 21 runs.

In reply, Anirban Cricket Club scored only 79 runs in 25 overs expending nine wickets.

Rasel of Biltu Club was adjudged man-of-the-match for scoring 64 runs.

Deccan sneak

FROM PAGE 17 and ultimately fell just short of the target.

SCORES IN BRIEF DECCAN CHARGERS: 170 for 7 (Symonds 53, Gilchrist 33, Suman 26; Yuvraj 2-21) KINGS XI PUNJAB: 164 for 8 (Pathan, Bopara 38; Vaas 2-27) Result: Deccan Chargers won by six runs

PLAYER PROFILE

FROM PAGE 17 The Test match. "The national team environment has been amazing and everyone, starting from the players to the coaching staff and management, have welcomed me and have supported me."

What they said about him: "He is going through a process with the Academy and the A team. He is a man in form with four hundreds this year. He also played well for Bangladesh Biman in the Premier League"

Another step

FROM PAGE 17 need to do back to them if we want to be successful," he added.

Siddons said that he has no expectations rather he wants his boys playing good cricket in the second Test.

"For me as usual it's about us playing our game as well as we can. No expectations, I just want our players to play well. Each day is different, expectations change every day, according to the situation of the game.

On a flat track in Chittagong, the Bangladesh bowling was terrible especially the performance of their two pace bowlers--Rubel Hossain and Shahadat Hossain--was nowhere near expectation.

"We bowled, I think, nine maidens in 145 overs. It's ridiculous, and it's not good enough. Test cricket should be

a game where you have to work a lot harder for your runs, but we couldn't bowl on one side of the wicket, and when we wanted to bowl at the wickets we couldn't do that either."

Siddons also made it clear that they will not make the same mistake that they did in Chittagong if they win the toss with another spin-friendly surface in prospect.

"If the wicket plays the way we expect it to, and day one should be flat, if we win the toss we will bat. And if we do bowl I hope we put the ball in better areas and make them work a little harder for their runs. I expect it to turn a bit more towards the end of the game, because the footmarks play a bigger part on this wicket. Hopefully it will turn from day one, but we won't be taking that risk," he said.

BANGLADESH Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Junaed Siddiqui, Jahurul Islam, Mahmudullah Riyad, Shakib Al Hasan (captain), Mushfiqur Rahim (wicketkeeper), Naeem Islam, Abdur Razzak, Shaiful Islam and Rubel Hossain.

Jankovic, Stosur in semifinal showdown

AFP, Indian Wells

Former world number one Jelena Jankovic reached the semifinals of the BNP Paribas Open Thursday with a battling straight-sets victory over Alisa Kleybanova.

Serbia's Jankovic, the sixth seed, dunned the Russian 6-4, 6-4 to set up a semi-final clash with eighth-seeded Australian Samantha Stosur.

Stosur defeated Spain's Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez 6-3, 7-6 (9/7).

By reaching the semifinals, Stosur is projected to move from her current career high of 11th in the world rankings into the top 10 next week.

Stosur wrapped up the victory amid some confusion on her fourth match point, when Martinez Sanchez finished with a double fault.

The Spaniard's first serve had been called good and but was ruled wide on a replay after Stosur challenged -- but not before swiping a return that landed out.

Hayden blazes

FROM PAGE 17

With 7.3 overs still to go, there was time enough for either side to win or lose. Although balance was retained, the 78 that Karthik, Mithun Manhas and Rajat Bhatia added proved to be inadequate when put up against Hayden.

SCORES IN BRIEF DELHI DAREDEVILS: 185 for 6 in 20 overs (Sehwag 74, Manhas 32 not out, Bhatia 21; Balaji 2-21, Muralidaran 2-25) CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 190 for 5 in 19.1 overs (Hayden 93, Raina 49 not out; Nannes 1-18, Mishra 1-25) Result: Chennai Super Kings won by five wickets Man-of-the-match: Matthew Hayden

Malik, Naved

FROM PAGE 17

Akmal and Umer Akmal were also fined heavily and put on probation for six months. The players have 30 days to appeal.

The banned players are eligible, however, to compete in domestic cricket in Pakistan and in competitions abroad, like county cricket in England and private leagues in other countries.

But the PCB stipulated that no player could play abroad without prior permission.

Besides Malik and Naved some other players also applied for permission and we have an open mind on that," said Bari, PCB chief operating officer and himself a former captain.

Yousuf was cleared to play in Bangladesh earlier this week. The Twenty20 league starts later this month. Openers Imran Farhat and Taufeeq Umer have also been cleared to play in Bangladesh.

BCB punishes

FROM PAGE 17

In his instant reaction, Rokibul said he had hoped it would be a lighter punishment and now realises how difficult it would be to restart his cricket career.

"The board did what it thought was best for me but you must understand that it (punishment) is a big blow to any cricketer," said Rokibul.

"I did well against a team like England but now I have to take a long route to the national team," he added.

However BCB considered his behaviour as 'disruptive to the preparation of the Bangladesh team ahead of a highly important Test match' against England in Chittagong.

It was predicted that he could be banned for up to two years but the board went for only three months. But it still means Rokibul will have to renege his cricket career from next season's domestic competitions.

The cricket board took the lighter stance as the player is young but maintained the punishment it delivered was enough for the situation.

Ljubicic books Nadal clash

Tennis AFP, Indian Wells

Defending champion Rafael Nadal, trying to reignite his injury-disrupted season, will face a rejuvenated Ivan Ljubicic in the semifinals of the Indian Wells ATP Masters 1000.

Nadal looked sharp in overcoming Czech Tomas Berdych 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) on Thursday, while Ljubicic gave himself an early birthday present with a 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 victory over Juan Monaco.

In a tight match, Berdych gave Nadal the only opening he needed, double-faulting to fall behind 5-4 in the tiebreaker. Nadal gave himself a match point with a forehand winner, and when Berdych hit a backhand into the net the Spaniard leapt in celebration.

"I played aggressive when I had the chance," Nadal said of the tiebreaker, adding that there was little he could do as Berdych built a 3-1 as Nadal was playing into the wind.

The Spaniard had managed to level the tiebreaker at 3-3 when they changed ends.

"Playing with the wind in that moment is almost decisive, and I played really well," Nadal said. I had one, two forehand winners down the line. That was the key of the match."

Nadal, 23, is playing his first tournament since retiring with a knee injury while trailing Andy Murray in the quarterfinals of the Australian Open.

Now the number three is the highest seed left in the draw after the early exits of Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

"Very good news for me to be in semi-finals," said Nadal. "I am really happy how I am playing. Coming back from an injury, it's never easy the first tournament."

In Ljubicic, who celebrates his 31st birthday on Friday, Nadal will face a player he has beaten in five of six prior encounters.

The Croatian, a former world number three who is now ranked 26th, showed no sign of a letdown as he rallied to beat Monaco a day after toppling world number two Djokovic.

Tiger betrayed his family, says Obama

INTERNET, undated

US President Barack Obama is sure Tiger Woods will still be a "terrific golfer" when he returns to competition, but acknowledged that he had "betrayed his family".

In an interview with Fox News, Obama was asked his thoughts on Woods's decision to return to golf at next month's Masters, the first Major of the season.

Woods has not played in a tournament since November last year after disappearing from public view following tabloid revelations about his marital infidelities.

"I think that Tiger has acknowledged that he betrayed his family; that is a personal issue that he has got to work out," said Obama, himself a keen golfer.

"I hope they've worked it out and I am sure he is still going to be a terrific golfer."

At the US Tour event in Tampa, Kenny Perry, who lost in a play-off at last year's Masters, agreed that Woods would still be a great player and urged the public to forgive him.

England to go for spin?

FROM PAGE 17

out with fewer than three seamers. But these are the selection decisions that do come up in the subcontinent, and if we want to do expand our game on turning wickets, we're going to have to get used to it," said the England captain.

Cook though rued the fact that they didn't have a good bat who could fill in for the fifth bowler position too.

"Historically four bowlers tend to do very well. In an ideal world you'd love to find that fifth bowler who can bat to find the perfect balance, and obviously that's what great allrounders like Jacques Kallis bring to the side, but they are few and far between," said

Cook. "There's always a chance this pitch might suit a different attack or it might spin more, so you have to go with whatever side you think will win the game."

And if they do think its going to turn much, then off-spinner James Tredwell may earn his first Test cap for England having being on the sidelines for the last few series at the cost of young pacer Steven Finn who had a hard time in Chittagong returning with only two wickets.

There was good news for the England side as the senior pacerman Stuart Broad had made a timely recovery from back-spasm for the second Test.

"Broady is taking a full part

in training, so he is expected to be fully fit," said Cook.

"He had a little illness but we think he'll be fine. The medical team have seen him and he's up and about now, which he wasn't on Thursday. Hopefully the bug is gone and he'll be fine."

The young skipper was bent on ending the tour on a high, even if that meant making a few less friends over here, as he was drawn into the issue of the untoward behaviour from some of his team members.

"They (Graeme Swann and Stuart Broad) were probably very close to the mark (of being reported) and Swanny has apologised, but we want to play hard, aggressive cricket."



Major General Abu Belal Muhammad Safiul Huq, vice president of Kurmitola Golf Club, inaugurates the two-day long Nokia Independence Cup golf tournament at Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

Champs get Gunners

FROM PAGE 17

"It's a tough but also very exciting draw," said Bayern president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

"Manchester United are at the summit of European football and we will have to play at our best level, and even higher, to make it to the semifinals.

"Manchester are the favourites for this tie, but that's what makes it exciting: to go and beat the favourites."

United secretary Ken Ramsden, mindful of either Lyon or Bordeaux waiting in the last four, was upbeat, saying: "If we chose the draw this would be a good draw - but there will be no complacency at Old Trafford."

This season's final is being staged at Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium on May 22, the first time the final is being held on a Saturday.

Real's dream of lifting a tenth trophy on home turf were dashed by Lyon this week, with the former French champions' reward a date with Laurent Blanc's Bordeaux.

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas commented: "It's very special. At least it means there will be a French club in the semi-finals. It will also be a clash between the reigning (French) champions and the champions of the

season before."

Jose Mourinho's Inter Milan, who ended Chelsea's European hopes, face a trip to first time quarterfinalists CSKA Moscow before the return leg at the San Siro.

Friday's draw was made by UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino and the ambassador for the Madrid final, Emilio Butragueno.

DRAW Lyon (FRA) v Bordeaux (FRA) Bayern Munich (GER) v Manchester United (ENG) Arsenal (ENG) v Barcelona (ESP) Inter Milan (ITA) v CSKA Moscow (RUS) 1st leg - March 30/31 2nd leg - April 6/7