



PHOTO: AFP

Rafael Nadal (C) and his Spain teammates celebrate with the Davis Cup after beating Argentina at La Cartuja Olympic Stadium in Sevilla on Sunday.

Spain's 5th Davis Cup

Tennis

AFP, Seville

Rafael Nadal battled back from a set down to defeat brave Argentine Juan Martin del Potro and hand Spain a fifth Davis Cup title on Sunday.

In the same Olympic stadium where the world number two became the youngest Davis Cup winner in 2004, Nadal saw off Del Potro 1-6, 6-4, 6-1, 7-6 (7/0) in a little over four hours to give the hosts an unassailable 3-1 lead.

"It was a very emotional match and I am happy for the team," said Nadal, who has now won 20 of his 21 singles rubbers for Spain, but had never before claimed the winning point.

His only loss came to Czech Jiri Novak on his debut -- as a 17-year-old -- in February 2004.

"It was the most amazing atmosphere I have ever played in. The crowd were crazy. Everything was perfect," added the French Open champion of the electric atmosphere generated by 25,000 fans.

"It was complicated at the start of the

match, but the beginning of the second set was very important and at 1-0 and 40-0 that was the turning point for me.

"Delpo was playing amazingly today, especially the flat shots, it was really hard."

Sunday's win followed titles for Spain in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2009, meaning all of their wins have come in the space of 11 years.

"It was an unbelievable match. These guys are great and that's why we were in the final," said Spanish captain Albert Costa.

"Rafa tried to play deeper and harder because at the start Del Potro was inside the line and hitting so hard. He fought hard so that's why we won."

Nadal and David Ferrer had won Friday's opening singles before David Nalbandian and Eduardo Schwank kept Argentina's hopes alive by beating Feliciano Lopez and Fernando Verdasco in Saturday's doubles.

It was more heartbreak for Argentina who became the first nation to lose four finals -- they also lost to Spain in the final three years ago at home.

"Spain, playing on clay, as a home team -- this is one of the best teams in

history," admitted Argentina captain Tito Vazquez.

Del Potro, who lost a marathon five-setter to Ferrer on Friday, had gotten off to a strong start leading 6-1, 1-0 and 40-0 on his service against Nadal.

But Nadal hung on to get back into the match as Del Potro began to show signs of the fatigue from Friday's five-hour marathon playing with both of his thighs bandaged.

Despite looking dead and buried after losing his serve early in the fourth set, Del Potro managed to claw his way back into the tie with some magical shots which saw him serve for the set at 5-3.

Nadal dug deep however and the momentum swung his way again and once into the tie-break there was no looking back as he sealed victory with a winning forehand.

The victory capped the season for Nadal after a difficult six months since winning Roland Garros in June.

Spain still has some way to go to match the leading winners in Davis Cup history. The United States lead the way with 32 wins with Australia in second place with 28.

Sammy

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before both fell in the space of four runs.

Pollard felled to a superb catch by Ravindra Jadeja, who ran in from long-off to hold the ball at deep extra cover.

SCOREBOARD
WEST INDIES

	O	M	R	W
Kumar	8	1	39	2
Yadav	9	1	75	1
Mithun	7	0	47	1
Jadeja	10	1	37	0
Ashwin	10	0	33	1
Raina	6	0	27	0
INDIA				
Patel b Samuels	39			
Sehwag v Ramdin b Rampaul	0			
Gambhir lbw b Rampaul	0			
Kohli lbw b Narine	20			
Sharma run out (Sammy)	95			
Raina c Ramdin b Rampaul	2			
Jadeja run out	11			
Ashwin lbw b Narine	31			
Vinay b Roach	3			
Mithun lbw b Rampaul	23			
Yadav not out	11			
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-3, nb-3)	7			
Total: (All in 46.5 overs)	260			
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-42, 3-122, 4-177, 5-181.				

Not out: Roach, Rampaul, Narine.

Total: (All in 46.5 overs)

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-42, 3-122, 4-177, 5-181.

Bowler

O M R W

Kumar 8 1 39 2

Yadav 9 1 75 1

Mithun 7 0 47 1

Jadeja 10 1 37 0

Ashwin 10 0 33 1

Raina 6 0 27 0

INDIA

Patel b Samuels 39

Sehwag v Ramdin b Rampaul 0

Gambhir lbw b Rampaul 0

Kohli lbw b Narine 20

Sharma run out (Sammy) 95

Raina c Ramdin b Rampaul 2

Jadeja run out 11

Ashwin lbw b Narine 31

Vinay b Roach 3

Mithun lbw b Rampaul 23

Yadav not out 11

Extras: (b-1, lb-2, w-3, nb-3) 7

Total: (All in 46.5 overs) 244

Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-8, 3-43, 4-79, 5-84, 6-105, 7-196, 8-200, 9-216, 10-224.

Bowler

O M R W

Pollard 10 0 54 1

Rampaul 8.5 1 57 4

Narine 10 0 34 2

Samuels 10 0 50 1

Russell 4 0 25 0

Sammy 1 0 7 0

Simmons 2 0 10 0

Pollard 1 0 4 0

Result: West Indies won by 16 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Ravi Rampaul.

Afghanistan

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Mohammed Zain put Sri Lanka ahead in the 16th minute but the lead lasted only five minutes as Sanjar Ahmadi levelled the margin for Afghanistan in the 21st minute and then made it 2-1 in the 25th minute. Mohammed Yamir Ali sealed the 3-1 victory in the dying minutes of the game.

Hussey bucks Hughes up

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Senior batsman Mike Hussey on Monday urged besieged opener Phillip Hughes to back his natural game after being retained in Australia's Test squad.

Despite failing with just 10 and seven runs in the first Gabba Test, Hughes looks set to get another chance in the second Test against New Zealand, starting on Friday in Hobart.

Australia's selection panel on Monday made just one injury-enforced change to their 12-man squad from the first Test with the inclusion of Dan Christian.

Christian replaces 12th man Ben Cutting (side strain) which means a batsman would make way if the South Australian all-rounder was chosen to make his Test debut.

Hussey has passed 36 just twice in his past 17 Test innings and with all-rounder Shane Watson (hamstring) and Shaun Marsh (back) on track to return from injuries in the Boxing Day Test against India, the opener's Test position appears vulnerable.

His six-ball failure on Sunday as Australia romped to a nine-wicket win, highlighted the New South Wales left-hander's technical

weakness as his average has dived from 69 after three Tests in 2009 to 36.

Hughes was dropped fifth ball at second slip off Chris Martin before cutting the next ball to gully where he was caught by Martin Guptill.

But Hussey said he doesn't believe the 23-year-old opener should be singled out for continuing an unhappy knack of falling to catches behind the wicket.

"I just think it's important for him to keep a real clear mind and to keep playing his way," Hussey told reporters.

"He's had success playing his way. He's still put together some really good scores for us in difficult conditions in Sri Lanka (126) and South Africa (88). While Watson and Marsh have been given extra time to recover, Australia are also keeping teenage pace sensation Patrick Cummins (heel) in cotton wool ahead of the four-Test India series.

Cummins, man of the match on his debut against South Africa in Johannesburg last month, is one of five pacemen sidelined along with Ryan Harris (hip), Mitchell Johnson (foot surgery), Doug Bollinger (hamstring) and Cutting.

In their absence, James Pattinson gave a man-of-the-match performance at the Gabba, taking 5-27 to rout the Black Caps for 150 in their second innings.

Bangladesh need

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With that end in view, Ilievski is set to start with Mithun Chowdhury upfront leaving fellow striker Zahid Hasan Emily on the bench. Defender Mohammad Sujan is also set to be back in the starting eleven while Atiqur Rahman Meshu will go back on the bench.

According to the coach's plan, Sujan, Mamun Mia, Rezaul Karim and Ariful Islam will defend the backline while Pranotosh Kumar, Imon Babu and Nasirul Islam will build up the game from midfield. Mithun will play upfront, while Abdul Baten Komol and Alamgir Rana will attack from the wings.

Ilievski has also chalked out a plan to stop Maldives attack's spearhead Ali Ashfaq and the Macedonian hinted that he might designate a player to mark Ashfaq closely throughout the game.

For statistics' sake, Bangladesh never lost to Maldives in three previous meetings in the SAFF Championship and lost to them only once in overall eight matches since 1984. However, despite all that planning, Bangladesh may very well be on their way out of the competition even before they take to the field, if Pakistan beat Nepal in the first match of the day.

Nepal are currently on top of Group B with four points followed by Maldives and Pakistan who have two points each while Bangladesh are at the bottom with a single point. If that is the case, Pakistan will emerge group champions and Nepal will finish second, ahead of Bangladesh on head-to-head count despite having equal four points, according to the tournament bylaws where the goal difference comes in second.

Havelange was FIFA president between 1974-98 before he was replaced by Sepp Blatter. Havelange was FIFA president between 1974-98 before he was replaced by Sepp Blatter.

Australia include Christian

AFP, Brisbane

Daniel Christian was added Monday to the Australian squad for this week's second and final Test against New Zealand in Hobart as the home side look to wrap up a series win.

The South Australian all-rounder, yet to make his Test debut, was included following a side strain injury to paceman Ben Cutting while injured Shane Watson, Pat Cummins, Ryan Harris and Shaun Marsh were not considered.

Australia go into the match starting on Friday leading the series 1-0 after Sunday's emphatic nine-wicket victory over the Black Caps in the Gabba Test inside four days.

SQUAD

Michael Clarke (captain), David Warner, Phillip Hughes, Usman Khawaja, Ricky Ponting, Michael Hussey, Brad Haddin, Peter Siddle, James Pattinson, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Dan Christian.

Players grimly

against Nepal, I believe Bangladesh will win the game," said Sohel, who initially looked very dejected about his mistake.

Striker Mithun Chowdhury also believes that not all is lost yet.

"We all just need the will power we showed against Lebanon and everyone has to believe that we can perform better than we have so far," said Mithun who has played the first two matches as substitute is all set to play the game from the beginning.

"If we think alike and play together, than our dream can come true by winning the game," he said.

Some life

matches so we are just focusing on that. Everybody is ready for the next game and we want to win every game and I think it's our main goal and all are looking forward to the coming matches," said the successful Pakistan skipper when asked about how he will motivate his side for the dead rubber.

The Pakistan captain was also not ready to focus on Bangladesh's track record at this ground where they are going to play their first match.

Misbah also explained the reasons behind his side's recent discipline performance in the all forms of the game.

"We are working on it for the last one and a half years. The management, the coaches, the supporting staff and the players are working very hard. Some of the youngsters came into the side and have worked hard to make their spot worthy. All of us have set a goal that we will now need to raise the bar which is being understood by every member of the side," he said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer