

3-0 sweep for Aussies

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Mike Hussey bowed out of Test cricket with a win when he guided Australia to a five-wicket victory over Sri Lanka Sunday, giving the home side a clean sweep of the three-match series.

Left-hander Hussey, playing in his 79th and final Test after announcing his international retirement, got his team over the line after the loss of five wickets on a tense fourth day at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The 37-year-old provided the steadying hand as Australia made hard work of running down 141 runs for victory on a turning pitch.

At the close Hussey was unbeaten on 27, while Mitchell Johnson hit the winning run to end on one not out.

Left-arm spinner Rangana Herath had earlier threatened to bowl the Sri Lankans to their first-ever Test victory in Australia at the 13th attempt. He finished with three wickets for 47.

Young Australian fast bowler Jackson Bird was named man of the match with seven wickets and skipper Michael Clarke

was picked as man of the series.

Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene had his best match of the series with scores of 72 and 60 but rued his side's failure to put the Australians under pressure.

The umpires stunned the crowd when they absurdly took tea with just five runs left to decide the Test, leaving onlookers with a sense of anticlimax.

The tourists were all out for 278 in their second innings earlier in the day as Dinesh Chandimal prolonged the resistance, batting with the tail in a defiant unbeaten knock of 62 off 106 balls with 11 fours.

Chandimal shared in a fighting 41-run last-wicket stand with Nuwan Pradeep off 74 balls to give the tourists some vital extra runs and make things uncomfortable for the Australian batsmen on a turning pitch.

Herath was bowled by Bird for 10 and Suranga Lakmal swung wildly and was cleaned up by Johnson for a duck.

Johnson finished with three for 34 and Bird captured three for 76.

Sri Lanka got an early reward when the threatening David Warner

was out first ball. He was caught in the slips by Jayawardene off paceman Lakmal's first delivery for a duck, with the Australians going to lunch on 13 for one.

Phil Hughes hit four boundaries but never looked set, and was next out leg before wicket on review to Herath for 34 off 49 balls.

Clarke used his feet and crease well against the wily Sri Lanka spinners as Australia's score crept along.

Herath and Tillakaratne Dilshan tied down the batsmen, although a big lbw shout from Herath was turned down on review when Clarke was on 13.

But Dilshan got the skipper's prized wicket when he was caught off bat and pad for 29, bringing Hussey to the wicket in his final Test innings to a standing ovation.

Ed Cowan was out in the next over, lbw to Herath for 36 with 33 needed for victory.

First-innings centurion Matthew Wade was bowled by Herath for nine, setting up a fairytale finish for Hussey to be there for the win.

SCOREBOARD SRI LANKA: First innings 294 (Thirimanne 91, M Jayawardene 72; Bird 4-41)

AUSTRALIA: First innings 432 for 9 declared (Wade 102 not out, Hughes 87; Herath 4-95)

SRI LANKA: Second innings (overnight 225 for 7)

Table with columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes Karunaratne, Dilshan, M Jayawardene, Thirimanne, Samaraweera, Mathews, Chandimal, Prasad, Herath, Lakmal, Pradeep, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets.

AUSTRALIA: Second innings

Table with columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes Cowan, Warner, Hughes, Clarke, Hussey, Wade, Johnson, Extras, Total, Did not bat, Fall of wickets.

England ODIs Sehwaq out, Pujara in

CRICINFO, New Delhi

India on Sunday dropped Virender Sehwaq for the five-ODI series against England, which begins on January 11 in Rajkot.

This was a double-blow for Sehwaq, who was left out of the XI that beat Pakistan in an ODI earlier in the day. India gave a maiden limited-overs call-up to Cheteshwar Pujara, who scored an aggressive 203 off 221 balls in a Ranji Trophy match last week.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, India's best batsman in the three-match one-day series against Pakistan, kept his captaincy despite calls from former selectors for fresh leadership.

Rohit Sharma was retained despite poor returns in ODIs of late.

SQUAD

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Cheteshwar Pujara, Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Rohit Sharma, Suresh Raina, Ravindra Jadeja, R Ashwin, Ishant Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane, Ashok Dinda, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Shami Ahmed, Amit Mishra.

Kvitova's slump on

AFP, Sydney

World number eight Petra Kvitova's Australian Open preparations were dealt another blow Sunday when she was trounced in straight sets at the Sydney International by Slovakia's Dominika Cibulkova.

Fifth-seed Czech Kvitova, the 2011 Wimbledon champion, continued her form slump in Sydney, losing 6-1, 6-1 to Cibulkova in little more than an hour.

It follows her upset second-round exit from this month's Brisbane International, falling 6-4, 7-5 to Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, and her withdrawal from November's WTA Championships in Istanbul due to illness.

Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki had more luck, downing Urszula Radwanska 6-1, 6-2 in a powerful return to form that saw her take the first set in just 26 minutes.

Russia's Maria Kirilenko also posted a win, overcoming Australian wild card Olivia Rogowska 7-5, 6-2 to progress to the second round.



Andy Murray of Britain poses with the Brisbane International trophy after defeating Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov in the final yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Murray keeps title

Tennis

AFP, Brisbane

Scotland's Andy Murray called on all his experience to defeat rising Bulgarian star Grigor Dimitrov 7-6 (7/0), 6-4 and retain his Brisbane International title on Sunday.

In a high-class final, Murray came from 4-1 down in the first set and a break in the second to subdue the challenge of the talented Dimitrov.

"I thought the standard of tennis was good today," Murray said, admitting he had to change tactics during the first set after Dimitrov's lightning start.

"There were a lot of high-quality rallies and I had to change a few things. He started the match off very well and was extremely aggressive.

"I needed to change things around a little bit and I managed to start dictating a lot of points and use my forehand well. So my groundies worked well today."

The 87-minute victory gave Murray his 25th ATP career title and was the perfect preparation for the Australian Open beginning in just over a week.

But he was made to work hard for the win by Dimitrov, whose playing style and classical one-handed backhand has drawn comparisons with the great Roger Federer.

It was Dimitrov's backhand that initially caused problems for the reigning US Open champion, who had trouble dealing with the amount of slice the

Bulgarian was getting on the ball.

Dimitrov, playing in his first ATP final, broke Murray's first service game and looked untroubled on his own serve until serving for the set at 5-4, when he faltered and allowed the Scotsman back into the match.

Murray took his chance and stormed through the tie-break without dropping a point, his powerful groundstrokes forcing Dimitrov onto the back foot and into error.

Dimitrov had another great chance in the second set when he broke Murray in the seventh game to go ahead 4-3, only for the world number three to hit back immediately.

Murray held his own serve to go to 5-4, then broke again to take the title when a Dimitrov backhand sailed long.

The 21-year-old Bulgarian conceded Murray's experience had been the difference.

"I was up a break and I was actually not playing bad tennis at all I thought," he said.

"But he's one of the best returners in the game by far. He picked up a couple of my serves on big points, so I think that gave him extra confidence. Then he stepped up with his serve.

"When he has to play good, he plays good. He pulled out some really, really good shots when he had to.

"I didn't feel that I was far from winning the set or even the match, but still that was a little margin that he had covered."

Bonus points

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single-round league would have no provisions for batting or bowling bonus points. However, the playing conditions that were distributed to the franchisees reportedly included the batting and bowling bonus scoring system and the first round matches were played accordingly.

Following the end of the first round, the BCB decided to re-distribute the revised playing conditions which had no provision for bonus points with regards to batting and bowling. The decision to introduce a new set of rules in the middle of the competition, though, received stern reaction from the franchisees.

Member secretary of the BCL committee, Naimur Rahman, had earlier claimed that it was a 'printing mistake' that created the entire mess.

Badda's title

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Badda were on 25 points before their last match against Wanderers which they won 2-1, staging a late comeback. A draw in that match would have placed the two teams on equal 26 points, forcing a play-off.

The day after the match a couple of newspapers published reports suspecting foul play in that match. BFF too sent a letter to MFLC, which works independently, attaching some of those paper-cuttings and requested them to investigate the matter. Jatrabari meanwhile sent three letters the MFLC and to BFF alleging that the match was fixed and to declare them as champions.

Football

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will present their strategy for Bangladesh football. 43-year-old de Kruij played for FC OSS, a second division club of the Dutch League in the 1993-94 season. De Kruij's coaching profile is marked by two Nigerian domestic Federation Cup titles for Heartland Club before his contract was terminated earlier this year.

Heartbreak for Serbia

Tennis

AFP, Perth

Serbian duo Novak Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic suffered another painful dose of Hopman Cup heartache when they were edged out by Spain in the final which finished in the early hours of Sunday.

Playing together in the mixed teams tournament for the third time, the pair went into the final as the favourites, but the Spanish duo of Anabel Medina Garrigues and Fernando Verdasco claimed the title by winning the deciding mixed doubles.

Djokovic had given the Serbians the lead in the final with a 6-3, 7-5 win over Verdasco, but Medina Garrigues levelled the decider with a 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2 win before the

Spaniards took the doubles 6-4, 7-5.

Any doubt about the commitment of the quartet was dispelled by Spain's jubilation at winning, and the obvious emotion of Djokovic and Ivanovic as they realised the doubles clash was slipping away.

The Serbian pair were desperate to win after having come just short at their two previous Hopman Cup appearances.

In 2006, representing Serbia and Montenegro, the pair missed the final on a countback of sets won during the round robin matches.

Then in 2011, they qualified for the final only to be forced out of the tournament when Ivanovic suffered an abdominal injury.

To make matters worse for Djokovic, he was also a beaten finalist with Jelena Jankovic in 2008.

Steyn hungry as ever

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Dale Steyn said joining the 300 Test wickets club did not mean the end of his ambitions as a fast bowler.

Speaking after South Africa's crushing win by an innings and 27 runs over New Zealand, achieved in three days at Newlands, Steyn, 29, said he was aware of the significance of the landmark but he hoped there was more to come.

"I've got a lot more to offer," he said. "There's another Test in Port Elizabeth next week and hopefully I've got a few more years in these legs."

Steyn, who has held the top spot in the International Cricket Council Test bowler rankings for more than three years,

became the 25th man to take 300 wickets in Tests.

Only Dennis Lillee (56) and Muttiah Muralidaran (58) achieved the mark in fewer than Steyn's 61 Test matches.

He was the fourth South African to reach 300 after Shaun Pollock (421), Makhaya Ntini (390) and Allan Donald (330).

Steyn admitted that he might have been pushing too hard in the first innings when New Zealand were shot out for 45, with new ball partner Vernon Philander taking the first five wickets in five overs.

"With the start that Vernon had, I was guilty of fishing for a couple of wickets. I was one short of 300 and I thought I had better get in the game. [Captain] Graeme [Smith] realised that. He pulled me in [after four overs] and put me on after Vernon, which was clever of him."

Mike goes out a winner

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played his last Test match had sunk in and he was looking forward to living a 'normal life' with his young family.

"It probably sunk in a while ago because I have known for quite a period of time of when I wanted to finish. I've been prepared for it, I guess," he said.

"But I'm sure there's going to be aspects that I'm going to miss as well, like when I'm out there when the winning runs are hit in a Test match, helping Australia win a series, or being in the dressing room with the boys after the game, singing the team song.

"But all good things have to come to an end at some stage." Hussey said he had nominated spin bowler Nathan Lyon as his replacement to lead the celebratory team song after Test wins.

"I've picked Nathan [Lyon] because I think he is a man of great character. I think he plays the game for the right reasons," he said.

"I think he understands and respects the fabric of the Baggy Green cap and that's what I want to come through from him when he leads the team song in the future."

Hussey said he was looking forward to the next phase of his life with his family post-cricket.

"I certainly owe them a bit and they've been fantastic support over a long period of time, we're probably away for up to eight to ten months of the year and it's a big stress on family life," he said.

"It's also hard on the players being away for that long. I am looking forward to having a bit more of a normal life as such."

Hussey finished his distinguished Test career with 6,235 runs at 51.52 with 19 hundreds.

"It couldn't have ended any better," Hussey said. "I feel very proud to have worn the Baggy Green cap and I've probably achieved a lot more in my career than I ever dreamed I could.

"I feel very fortunate and the game has given me so much."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Earth (Lat.) 6 Witted 9 ---relief 12 Symbol of slowness 13 Inventor Whitney 14 Genetic abbr. 15 Of punishment 16 Burma's capital, once 18 Astute 20 Took the train 21 Oom 23 Thither 24 Xbox enthusiast 25 "--- a Kick Out of You" 27 Worked with rattan 29 Circle around the sun 31 Conspiracy of silence 35 Cardiff's people 37 Sunrise 38 200 milligrams 41 Gear tooth 43 Affirmative action? 44 Culture medium 45 Cringes 47 Longtime Klugman co-star 49 Symbol of sorrow 52 Jazz job 53 Accomplished 54 Intact 55 Individual 56 Chances for short 57 Gumby's horse 9 Witch craft? 10 Battery terminal 11 Less loony 17 Ranked 19 Singer's recording 21 Snapshot 22 Past 24 Jewel 26 In the direction of 28 "Forget it!" 30 Trawler need 32 Rifle 33 Pair 34 Moreover 36 Berates 38 Freight 39 Over 40 Kitchen need 42 Outfit 45 Film sample 46 Nevada city 48 Commotion 50 Regret 51 Pigs' digs

Solution time: 25 mins.

Crossword solution grid with letters filled in.

Cryptiquip crossword grid with numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP B KFNNGKI CGADK JIVAAU AB DI NAVUBML IBLTWIM - TGAI JGFMSK HVU SGHM KGFWT BM WTILGAC KWVWIK. Yesterday's Cryptiquip: IF YOU PROVIDED OVERNIGHT LODGING FOR HIGH-RANKING ENGLISH PEERS, HAVE YOU PUT UP YOUR DUKES? Today's Cryptiquip Clue: B equals I