

SPORT



THE TWO HEROES: England batsman Joe Root (L) walks back to the pavilion after being dismissed for 130 on the second day of the fourth Ashes Test against Australia at Trent Bridge yesterday. England bowler Ben Stokes then dismantled the Australians with a five-wicket haul, leaving England on the cusp of a win.



PHOTOS: REUTERS

Eng close in on the Ashes

AFP, Nottingham



Ben Stokes's five-wicket haul left England on the verge of an Ashes-clinching win in the fourth Test at Trent Bridge on Friday. When bad light forced an early close to the second day, Australia were 241 for seven in their second innings -- still 90 runs shy of making England, 2-1 up in the five-match series, bat again.

Pace bowling all-rounder Stokes had taken five wickets for 35 runs -- the second five-wicket haul in his Test career.

Australia had been 113 without loss on Friday until Stokes took three wickets for four runs in 13 balls shortly before tea. With the floodlights on in the final session, Stokes returned to have wicket-keeper Peter Nevill, leaving a ball that cut back into him, plumb lbw for 17.

But Adam Voges held firm with 48 not out -- his highest score of the series so far, with Mitchell Starc nought not out as Australia at least avoided the embarrassment of a two-day defeat.

Australia left-handed openers Chris Rogers and David Warner had frustrated England with a century stand that was in stunning contrast to their side's first innings 60 all out in 111 balls, where they both made ducks.

Stuart Broad took a Test-best eight for 15 on his Nottinghamshire home ground as England caught everything that came their way on Thursday.

But on Friday, England captain Alastair Cook dropped a regulation first slip catch when Warner had made 10.

Ian Bell then floored a far more difficult slip chance when Warner was on 42 and Joe Root then held a brilliant catch in the cordon when Rogers was on 47, only for the batsman to be reprieved when replays confirmed Mark Wood had bowled a no-ball.

Rogers and Warner added 113 in 24 overs compared to the 18.3 needed to wrap up Australia's first innings.

But while Australia had dropped lively all-rounder Mitchell Marsh for this match, England counterpart Stokes proved the value of such a player, particularly on a day when the frontline bowlers were not taking wickets.

After Rogers fell, Warner contributed to his own downfall on 64 when a top-edged pull off Stokes looped gently to Broad at mid-on.

Warner faced just 74 balls for his runs, including nine fours and two sixes but his anger at his dismissal showed that crease-occupation was the priority for Australia.

Australia were soon 136 for four when star batsman Steven Smith, carelessly drove Broad straight to Stokes at point and was out for five.

Australia captain Michael Clarke, on 13, pushed hard outside off stump against fast bowler Wood. The ball flew straight to Cook at first slip but he juggled the chance only for second slip Bell to grab the rebound.

After Nevill fell, Stokes struck again when Mitchell Johnson (five) nicked a sharply swinging ball to Cook at first slip.

When the umpires decided conditions were too gloomy despite the floodlights, England were looking at a second successive win inside three days after their eight-wicket victory in the third Test at Edgbaston last week.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 60

ENGLAND: First innings 391 for 9 decl (Root 130, Baristow 74; Starc 6-111)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 241 for 7 (Rogers 52, Warner 64, Voges 48; Broad 1-36, Stokes 5-35)

AFC CUP PLAY-OFF QUALIFIERS

Sheikh Jamal fly for Kyrgyzstan

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Premier League champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club were scheduled to leave for Kyrgyzstan in the early hours today to take part in the AFC Cup Play-off Qualifiers with a hope of advancing to the next round.

The Dhanmondi giants have been in superb form throughout the season, having won Bhutan's King's Cup, the Federation Cup and the professional league title, and they are eager continue that momentum in the qualifying round for Asia's second-tier club competition.

The new leviathans of Bangladesh football will get their first opportunity to prove their mettle outside the South Asian region when they take on Casa Benfica (Benfica de Macau) on August 13 and FC Alga Bishkek of Kyrgyzstan on August 15 in a bid to reaching the play-off stages.

"We haven't had any preparation for

these play-offs as the players have been in action throughout the season, but we have gathered relevant information about the opposition as much as we could. I think the opposition teams are not too much strong and we have the ability to fight against them," said Sheikh Jamal coach Joseph Afusi adding that the absence of striker Wedson Anselme would not affect team combination.

Skipper Mamunul Islam, however, was confident of making it to the next round of the play-offs by emerging champions in Group B.

"We are going to play in the AFC Cup for the first time with a team which has played well throughout the season. Our target is to qualify for the next round," said Mamunul.

"Before the first match against Casa Benfica, we will get three to four days in Kyrgyzstan for recovery as well as to cope with the conditions. So I am confident that we can put up a good show," said the Bangladesh captain.

'It's over, Michael'

AFP, Sydney



Australia's humiliating batting collapse against England which saw the team all out for 60 before lunch was Friday acknowledged as a "horror show" and prompted a call for skipper Michael Clarke to retire.

Australia were demolished in just 111 balls on the first day at Trent Bridge on Thursday in the shortest completed first innings in Test history, all but smashing hopes of an Ashes victory for the tourists.

"Australian cricket has spiralled into crisis after arguably the darkest day in Ashes history, as England took an extraordinary 214-run lead heading into day two," declared Brisbane's Courier Mail.

Australia's specialist batsmen were destroyed by England's bowling in the fourth Ashes Test, with Stuart Broad taking eight wickets for just 15 runs. The home side's Joe Root then followed with a stunning 124 not out.

"Before lunch, Australia had already been Broad-sided. By stumps their Ashes campaign was all but Routed," said the Courier Mail online. "Not since Australia stuttered to 58 in 1936 have they suffered a worse Ashes collapse."

Ben Horne from Sydney's Daily Telegraph said Australian cricket now "faces a mass

cleanout".

"This is as bad as it gets, in the only series Australians genuinely care about," Horne added.

The Sydney Morning Herald described the wipe-out as "a first day that will live in infamy".

The paper said the entire first innings fitted within the 140 characters of a single Tweet and noted that skipper Clarke's eight-minute post-play press conference lasted as long as his first three batsmen did at the crease.

Clarke, who last week insisted he would keep playing after this Ashes series, made only 10 runs in the lamentable innings, prompting Herald columnist Peter FitzSimons to call on him to quit.

"After a debacle like this -- all out for 60; Australia humiliated to historical proportions; the Ashes lost; dead lucky to push the English into the third day; and reduced to doing a victory lap if we win so much as the toss before the fifth Test -- someone has to pay the piper," he wrote.

Despite 34-year-old Clarke's record, FitzSimons said Australia cannot keep selecting a player who doesn't score runs and it was clear that "Pup", as Clarke is known, was now an "Old Dog who has no new tricks".

"Michael, it's over. You've been an extraordinary player, the best of your generation. You've been a great servant of the game in general, and Australian cricket in particular.

"But ... it's over."

SL pick rookie paceman for India series

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's selectors on Friday named uncapped fast bowler Vishwa Fernando in a 16-man squad for the three-Test series against India starting next week, the cricket board announced.

Fernando, 23, who has taken 98 wickets in 34 first-class matches, dismissed India's Rohit Sharma and Wriddhiman Saha while playing for the Sri Lanka Board President's XI in the ongoing tour match in Colombo.

Opening batsman Kusal Perera, a veteran of 48 one-day internationals and 20 Twenty20 matches, was the other player without Test experience to be picked in the squad.

Perera replaces middle-order batsman Kithuruwan Vithanage and Fernando comes in for seamer Suranga Lakmal from the squad that lost to Pakistan 2-1 in the recent Test series at home.

SQUAD

Angelo Mathews (capt), Lahiru Thirimanne, Kaushal Silva, Dimuth Karunaratne, Kumar Sangakkara, Dinesh Chandimal, Upuul Tharanga, Jehan Mubarak, Kusal Perera, Rangana Herath, Dilruwan Perera, Tharindu Kaushal, Nuwan Pradeep, Dhammika Prasad, Vishwa Fernando, Dushmantha Chameera (subject to fitness).

IN A NUTSHELL

Soumya's new whip

Bangladesh cricket team opener Soumya Sarkar took to Facebook to show his fans his new car; a brand new Toyota Premio.

When contacted, Soumya revealed that he bought the car on Wednesday and his first passengers were his coaches from BKSP, whom he took on a ride.

Soumya will take his car back to his hometown of Satkhira tomorrow, but whether he will drive there himself or not is unclear.

Teammate Sabbir Rahman asked the leading question, "Do you know how to drive?" and Soumya simply responded with a sad face.



Money's 'apology' to Rousey

Floyd Mayweather apologised for mistakenly referring to mixed martial arts superstar Ronda Rousey as a man, before ridiculing suggestions that the two fighters could one day meet in the ring.

"They asked me about Ronda and I didn't know it was a female. I apologise. I wish her all the best," Mayweather said.

He also scornfully dismissed a suggestion that Rousey might one day meet him in a bout.

"I am in the one hundred million dollar business, not the one hundred thousand dollar business," he said.

Compiled by Star Sport Desk

Sonia 60th in Kazan

SPORTS REPORTER

Swimmer Sonia Akter put up a dismal performance in the 16th FINA World Championship in Kazan, Russia as she finished 60th among 64 swimmers in women's 50m butterfly event yesterday.

Sonia took 32.81 seconds to cross the 50m distance, some 6.35 second more than Brazil's De Paula Daynara, who qualified for the 16-competitor semifinals as the last swimmer.

Jet-lagged or hungover?

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Was it Brazil's caipirinha cocktail or did the head of the International Olympic Committee skip a major news conference in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday because of jet lag?

IOC President Thomas Bach failed to appear at the chief media event marking the one-year countdown to the 2016 Rio Olympics.

On arrival, Bach had appeared in good form, relishing two of Brazil's most beloved pastimes -- football on the beach and a glass of the national cocktail.

"Thirty hours of flying and then one Brazilian caipirinha makes people tired," Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes quipped, addressing Bach's absence well into the event.

"It was just one caipirinha," he quickly added.



Sri Lanka under-16 football team arrive in Sylhet ahead of tomorrow's opening fixture of the SAFF U-16 Football Championship against defending champions India. The match, to be held at the Sylhet District Stadium, will begin at 5:00pm. Hosts Bangladesh will play their first match against the islanders on Tuesday.

PHOTO: BFF

Kiwis clinch series

AFP, Harare



Captain Kane Williamson's steady knock and an assured performance from the New Zealand bowlers saw the tourists secure

a 38-run victory in Friday's third one-day international against Zimbabwe and wrap up a 2-1 series win.

Williamson recorded his sixth straight score of 50 or more as his 90 guided New Zealand to 273 for six, and although Zimbabwe's opening stand gave the World Cup finalists a scare, the bowlers held their nerve to restrict the hosts to 235 all out.

New Zealand therefore completed a come-from-behind series victory, having lost the first ODI by seven wickets.

"It certainly wasn't easy today, so

the way that the boys stuck in it and put up a competitive total was a really good effort," said Williamson, who was named man of the match and man of the series.

"We thought it was a very good total until Zimbabwe came out and played the way they did and put us under a lot of pressure, but full credit to our boys for learning from that first game and pulling it back nicely."

On a dry wicket, New Zealand's batsmen were tested by Zimbabwe's spin duo of Graeme Cremer and John Nyumbu, who took five wickets between them.

Off-spinner Nyumbu made the initial breakthrough when he dismissed Tom Latham, and after New Zealand rebuilt to 100 for one, Cremer had Martin Gupthill caught at slip for 42 and then spun one through the

defences of Colin Munro.

Williamson added 70 for the fourth wicket with Grant Elliott, but New Zealand were pegged back when Cremer dismissed Elliott for 36, and Williamson was brilliantly caught on the boundary for 90 off Nyumbu's bowling.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: 273 for 6 in 50 overs (Guptill 42, Williamson 90, Elliott 36, Neesham 37 not out, N McCullum 25 not out; Nyumbu 2-52, Cremer 3-44)

ZIMBABWE: 235 all out in 47.4 overs (Masakadza 57, Chibhabha 32, Ervine 32, Williams 63; McClenaghan 3-36, Sodhi 2-47)

Result: New Zealand won by 38 runs and clinched the 3-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-match: Kane Williamson.

Player-of-the-series: Kane Williamson.