

SPORT

Australia end winless streak

AFP, Perth

Australia captain Tim Paine was a relieved man after his team beat India by 146 runs in Perth Tuesday to level the series with their first Test win since the ball-tampering 'sandpapergate' scandal that rocked international cricket.

Set 287 to win, India resumed at 115 for five on the final day and never threatened to pull off a miraculous victory, losing their last five wickets for just 21 runs.

India were dismissed for 140, with spinner Nathan Lyon claiming 3-39 to finish with eight wickets for the match and guide the home team to a drought-breaking success, their first in seven Tests spanning almost

played, to get a win like that against the best Test team in the world is going to give them a huge boost of confidence."

Kohli defended his side's decision to play four fast bowlers instead of picking Ravindra Jadeja to replace injured spinner Ravi Ashwin.

Despite the times unpre-wicket, Kohli said the confident c h a s e target, but the paid credit to Australian bowlers.

"We had the belief we could do it," he said.

"They were more relentless

and got the balls in the right areas for long enough."

Both captains played down the on-field banter during the match, saying it never crossed the line of what was acceptable.

Australia's previous Test win was against South Africa at St George's Park in March.

Australia's best result in the four previous Tests since the scandal was narrowly hanging on for a draw against Pakistan in Dubai.

They had also won only six of 22 one-day internationals and Twenty20 matches since the scandal.

Paine praised the efforts of openers Aaron Finch and Marcus Harris on the first day, saying their century partnership

was critical to the final result, and lauded the growing leadership of Lyon.

He said he expected Finch, who split an index finger while batting in

India captain Virat Kohli hit his 25th century during the first innings.

There were reports of a sledging showdown between Tim Paine and Virat Kohli.

India's Ishant Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja had a go at each other as well and raged in their native Hindi.



Australia pacer Mitchell Starc (L) celebrates Hanuma Vihari's dismissal on the fifth day of the second Test against India in Perth yesterday. Australia won the match by 146 runs, courtesy of Starc's five-wicket match haul.

PHOTO: AFP

It was a highly competitive Test match from both teams and there was a lot on the line, with both teams desperately wanting to win.

TIM PAINE, AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN

10 months.

It was Paine's first Test win in five matches since taking over from the suspended Steve Smith in South Africa, and also the first victory for new coach Justin Langer, coming in his hometown.

Paine, who was involved in a verbal spat with Indian counterpart Virat Kohli on the third and fourth days, said the overwhelming emotion was relief at finally being able to put a dark period in Australian cricket behind them.

"I'm relieved personally," he said.

"It's been hard work -- the first two Tests of this series have been really tough.

"We've got some inexperienced players in terms of Test matches

Mushy unsold at IPL auction

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman Mushfiqur Rahim remained unsold while Mahmudullah Riyad was not put under the hammer at the Indian Premier League 2019 auction which was held in Jaipur yesterday.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had put forward eight names, among whom Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah were the only two to survive the shortlist under the wicketkeeper-batsman and all-rounder categories respectively for the 12th edition of the money-spinning T20 league scheduled to start on March 29 next year.

Mushfiqur and Riyad -- two of Bangladesh's Big Five -- had a base price of 50 lakh rupees each. However, none of the franchises put forth bids for the 31-year old Mushfiqur while Mahmudullah was not even called.

The mystery package of Tamil Nadu spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who had a base price of 20 lakh rupees, and last year's most expensive Indian cricketer Jaydev Unadkat accumulated a whopping 8.4 crore price-tag to become the two most expensive buys of the auction. Kings XI Punjab secured the services of Varun while Unadkat was snapped up by Rajasthan Royals.

Such a high price-tag for Varun may have raised some eyebrows as the 27-year old all-rounder has no prior experience of playing in the IPL.

However, Varun's price could be justified if his performance for the Madurai Panthers in the 2018 Tamil Nadu Premier League season is taken into account.

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan was earlier retained by the Hyderabad Sunrisers while Mustafizur Rahman was not registered by the BCB this time around after being released by the Mumbai Indians.

Spirited Brothers take on determined Sheikh Russel

SPORTS REPORTER



Falling giants Brothers Union will hope to repeat a spirited performance to ensure their first final berth in the professional football era when the All Oranges take on Sheikh Russel KC in the first semifinal of Walton Independence Cup today.

The match will get underway at 4:30pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Brothers Union, once regarded as the third force in the country behind popular outfits Abahani and Mohammedan, never played in any tournament final since the introduction of professional football in 2007. Even though they clinched the Federation Cup title in the 2004-05 season and became runners-up in the 4th Independence Cup the same season, their performance has gone downwards during the professional era.

However, the Gopibagh-based

outfit now have an opportunity to write new history for which they must upend the 2012 champions Sheikh Russel. Brothers had made it to the semifinals in the 7th Independence Cup in 2014 where they were beaten 2-0 by minnows Feni Soccer Club.

The challenge for Brothers is



LIMA LEONARDO
Brothers Union striker



AZIZOV ALISHER
Sk Russel striker

expected to be sterner this time as Sheikh Russel are seemingly determined to make it to the final after losing to Chittagong Abahani in semifinals of last edition.

Brothers, however, can draw inspiration from their long-serving Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin, who has

made his charges competitive and injected a belief to fight till the last minute. And their never-to-die attitude was evident in their come-from-behind victory in the quarterfinals against last edition's champions Arambagh KS.

"Football has changed a lot tactically and no one now is a big team on the ground; rather those who can implement game plan properly will come out on top. We are looking forward to playing the final," said Brothers Union manager Amer Khan.

On the other hand, Sheikh Russel will also not leave any stone unturned in a bid to make their first final in six years since their treble winning 2012 season.

"Brothers have nothing to lose and will trying to play well, but we don't want to waste a good chance to qualify for the final as we are focused on winning the match," Russel coach Saiful Bari Titu said.

In the final reckoning, though, the outcome may well be decided by the foreign players of the two sides.



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal yesterday returned from Sylhet, where the Tigers won the ODI series but succumbed to a dismal defeat in the first of three T20Is against West Indies. As focus shifts back to Dhaka, the onus will be on the batsmen.

PHOTO: STAR

Discerning strengths key to T20 success

MAZHAR UDDIN



As far as game plans and application are concerned, Bangladesh have been unable to live up to their potential in the shortest format of the game when compared to ODIs over the years.

There has been a specific pattern by which the Tigers have been getting successes in the fifty-over format, chiefly by recognising their strengths and weaknesses. However, it is a contrasting scenario when it comes to T20 cricket, where over-urgency and an intention to smash opponents from the word go has backfired.

Batting first, Bangladesh's average score for the first three wickets in T20Is in 2018 is 61.62 while batting second the Tigers' average score for the first three wickets is 68.16. That clearly reflects the lack of a platform for batsmen down the order to cash in on.

Among the 83 T20Is Bangladesh have played, they have won 25 while losing 56 and the batting department has remained the biggest concern for the team management.

2018 has not gone as well for the Tigers in the shortest format as it has in ODIs as, despite reaching the final of the T20 Nidahas Trophy in March this year, Bangladesh have won just four out of 14 games so far.

Among those defeats, the latest was an eight-wicket hammering at the hands of the West Indies in the first of the three-match T20I series in Sylhet, where, apart from Shakib Al Hasan's 43-ball 61, only two others managed to reach double figures.

Bangladesh were eventually bundled out for 129 with an over to spare while the West Indies chased the target with 55 balls in hand, laying bare the extent to which the hosts were dominated.

Interestingly whenever the Tigers display a collective approach with the bat, results often go in their favour. Although a lack of firepower is a drawback for Bangladesh and keeps them on the back foot to an extent,

BANGLADESH BATTING IN T20IS IN 2018 (14 MATCHES SO FAR)

157.37 average score batting first in eight innings (top score 193 for five in a loss against Sri Lanka by six wickets)

155.83 average score batting second (chased down 214 runs against Sri Lanka and won by five wickets)

61.62 average score for the first three wickets (batting first)

68.16 average score for the first three wickets (batting second)

Ten individual fifties struck in 14 games

whenever the Tigers have tried to flex their muscle, their focus seems to shift away from their game plan.

For example the Tigers chased down a huge 215-run target against Sri Lanka in the Nidahas Trophy courtesy of a collective approach from their batsmen.

Openers Tamim Iqbal and Liton Das both scored forties and added 74 runs to set a platform, which Mushfiqur Rahim cashed in on. He remained unbeaten on a 35-ball 72 and took the Tigers to a five-wicket victory.

It was the same case during the three match T20I series against the strong West Indies in August this year where the Tigers clinched the series 2-1. It was Tamim in the second game and Liton in the third that struck fifties and set the platform for others to make the most of. On both occasions, Bangladesh posted a formidable total before going on to win the matches.

Far too often however, like in the first T20I against the West Indies, the batsmen tend to get over-aggressive rather than looking to provide a solid start -- the Bangladesh batsmen need to calculate the 120 deliveries well to get the most out of them.

Epic effort from M&M

AFP, Wellington



Angelo Mathews celebrated with push-ups on the pitch after joining Kusal Mendis in passing 100 Tuesday as Sri Lanka batted the whole day without losing a wicket to give themselves hope of an unlikely first Test draw in Wellington.

Mendis was 116 not out at stumps on day four and Mathews 117, with their record-breaking unbroken 246-run partnership setting a Sri Lankan record against New Zealand.

It was also the first time in New Zealand that a full day's play has been completed without a Test wicket falling and the first time anywhere since South Africa achieved the feat against Bangladesh in Chittagong in 2008.

The pair's epic vigil meant the tourists ended the day at 259 for three after starting in a seemingly hopeless position with three wickets down for just 20 in their second innings after conceding a first-innings deficit of 296 to New Zealand.

Sri Lanka still need a further 37 to avoid an innings defeat but with a flat pitch offer-

ing nothing to New Zealand's seam attack and rain threatening on the final day, a draw is now a real prospect.

"Even tough it's a belter of a wicket, the concentration and commitment they had was unbelievable," bowling coach Rumesh Ratnayake said.

"We couldn't have asked for anything more."

New Zealand had hoped to wrap up the match early on the fourth day after posting an imposing 578 in the first innings, anchored by Tom Latham's unbeaten 264 -- which eclipsed former England captain Alastair Cook's 244 as the highest score by an opener carrying their bat in Test history.

But the home bowlers grew increasingly frustrated by the stubborn rearguard action, resorting to a barrage of bouncers that failed to rattle the batsmen.

Spinner Ajaz Patel said the Black Caps had not played poorly and were still upbeat about claiming victory on the final day.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 282

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 578

SRI LANKA: Second innings 259 for 3 (Mendis 116 not out, Mathews 117 not out;



Sri Lanka batsman Angelo Mathews struck a fluent century on the fourth day of the first Test against Sri Lanka at Wellington yesterday. The former captain celebrated the feat by doing push-ups, a potential riposte at the selectors for being dropped from the ODI squad for fitness concerns.

PHOTO: AFP