

'Superhuman' Perera scripts epic win

Blockbuster Sunday

REUTERS, Durban

Sri Lanka's middle-order batsman Kusal Perera scored a brilliant unbeaten century to lead them to a famous one-wicket win over South Africa in a thrilling first Test at Kingsmead on Saturday.

Perera was not out on 153, his highest Test score, as he put on 78 for the last wicket with number 11 Vishwa Fernando (six not out), taking Sri Lanka to a victory target of 304 that had looked out of sight for much of the innings.

South Africa appeared odds-on for victory when they claimed the ninth Sri Lankan wicket with the score on 226, but Perera launched a brilliant counter-attack with a mix of powerful hitting and intelligent farming of the strike.

The win, Sri Lanka's first in any format since October, ends South Africa's run of seven home series victories in a row with the second and final test in Port Elizabeth from Feb. 21-25.

sixth wicket to take Sri Lanka to within a hundred of their target.

But Keshav Maharaj (3-71) removed the latter and along with Duanne Olivier (2-35) took four wickets for the addition of 20 runs to leave South Africa on the brink of what looked like being a routine victory.

But Perera, with only one previous Test hundred to his name, continued to attack the bowling and, along with the stout rear-guard from Fernando, kept South Africa at bay.

The last wicket stand of 78 is the highest ever to win a first class game of cricket,

while the previous highest in Tests was 57 by Pakistan against Australia in 1994.

"It was an incredible game of cricket, and obviously very disappointing to be on the losing side," South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said.

"Well played to Sri Lanka, Perera was unbelievable; he deserves all the accolades that will come to him.

"Our bowlers were pretty good over the last two days, apart from a superhuman effort from Perera. I thought 300 was enough on this wicket, but great batting took it away from us."

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 235 and 259

SRI LANKA: First innings 191 and 304 for nine (Perera 153 not out, de Silva 48; Maharaj 3-71).

Result: Sri Lanka won by one wicket lead the two-match series 1-0.

Player-of-the-match: K Perera



Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Perera is overjoyed after leading the visitors to an unforgettable win on the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa at Kingsmead yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

I don't know what to say, it was a great effort as a team, the lower order batsmen gave me great support. I played my part, but we win as a team. This is a special game for us.

KUSAL PERERA

"I don't know what to say, it was a great effort as a team, the lower order batsmen gave me great support," Perera said at the post-match presentation. "I played my part, but we win as a team. This is a special game for us."

The winning total is the third-highest run chase ever in Durban and leaves Sri Lanka unbeaten in three Tests at Kingsmead, with two wins and a draw.

South Africa were missing seamer Vernon Philander with a hamstring injury on Saturday, but the much-vaunted seam attack that had seen off Pakistan earlier in the season was expected to complete the win when Sri Lanka resumed the day on 83 for three.

Dale Steyn picked up two wickets in an over to leave the tourists on 110 for five, but Perera and Dhananjaya de Silva (48) put on 96 runs for the

WHAT THEY SAID

What an amazing win. One of the best if not THE best overseas win by Sri Lanka. Kusal Janith Perera was unreal. Congratulations to the team and Hathurusingha. Keep believing and keep fighting. If you compete for long enough the opportunities to win come your way.

- KUMAR SANGAKKARA

Magnificent from KP @KusalJPerera. Really top class batting. The composure shown after Canberra is something to admire. Very well played. Congratulations!!

- RUSSEL ARNOLD

What a beauty!!!! One of the best innings under pressure. Showed intelligence and mental strength KJP and very proud of you.

- MAHELA JAYAWARDENA

That was a really good game. We had a tough series in Australia but we learnt well. We have lost a lot of matches in last few years, so it's a proud moment for us, the team, and for me as captain. I think he (Perera) batted really well, getting a hundred in South Africa is not easy, against this fast bowling attack.

- DIMUTH KARUNARATNE

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani and former champions Sheikh Russel KC will look to regain the solo lead in the Bangladesh Premier League when they take the field in the first two matches of the seventh round at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Six-time champions Abahani, who take on strugglers Brothers Union, come into the match on the back of a four-match winning streak. Since their second-match defeat against Bashundhara Kings, they have moved from strength to strength, and a win would today take them to 18 points from seven matches, three clear of Kings who have 15 points from five matches.

National team striker Nabib Newaz Jibon is himself in a rich vein of form, scoring five

goals to move to the top of the goal-scorers' chart, and the Sky Blues will be hoping for more of the same from him as well as foreign strikers Sunday Chizoba and Kervens Belfort.

However, before Abahani's match, Sheikh Russel will have the opportunity to take the lead as they square off against three-time champions Sheikh Jamal DC in the day's first match.

Sheikh Russel are two points off the lead on 13 from five matches. The only blemish for Saiful Bari Titu's charges was the game before their last, when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Saif Sporting Club. However, they bounced back, beating Chittagong Abahani in their last match. Sheikh Jamal, too, have been in good form of late. Having collected only one point from their first three matches, the Dhanmondi giants have since strung together a three-match winning streak and a win today would help them

SHORT CORNER

T&T, Police post victories

T&T Club and Bangladesh Police SC registered victories in their respective matches of the Bangladesh Championship League at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

T&T Club beat Feni Soccer by a solitary goal, scored by Atiqul Islam in the 59th minute of the match. In the second match, Bangladesh Police handed a 3-1 defeat to Uttar Baridhara Club. Amirul scored twice while Bablu scored the other goal for Bangladesh Police. Jewel scored the consolation goal for Uttar Baridhara.

-- SPORTS REPORTER

Sala's funeral held in Progreso

The funeral of Cardiff City striker Emiliano Sala took place in his home village in Argentina on Saturday three weeks after he was killed in a plane crash.

A public vigil was held in a gymnasium in Progreso, the modest village in the province of Santa Fe which Sala left as a teenager to forge a career in Europe. The 28-year-old died last month just two days after completing a Cardiff club-record £15 million move from French club Nantes.

Cardiff City manager Neil Warnock and chief executive Ken Choo both travelled to Argentina to attend the ceremony.

"People will be able to pass by the coffin, leave a letter, a drawing or flowers," Daniel Ribero, president of San Martin de Progreso, the local club where Sala began his career, said. "He represented a lot for us. We're a small village and Emi was a celebrity, the only player to turn professional."

-- AFP

Ronaldo on target as Juve cruise ahead of Atletico showdown

Cristiano Ronaldo set up Paulo Dybala to score early and added one himself with defender Leonardo Bonucci also on target as Juventus surged 14 points clear in Serie A on Friday with a 3-0 win over lowly Frosinone.

"The game against Atletico Madrid will be very different. It's crucial that we get a goal there, otherwise qualification would be rather difficult to achieve. But this team is growing, we are even better than the first weeks (of the season)."

-- AFP

Dilkusha lift Div-I hockey title

SPORTS REPORTER

Dilkusha SC became champions in the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey league following a 4-3 win over title-rivals Hockey Dhaka United at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The win ensured Dilkusha ended the campaign with a 100 per cent record, winning all 10 matches to get promotion to the next Premier Division League. Hockey Dhaka United finished second with eight wins, a defeat and a draw.

OUTLETS

BANANI
GULSHAN
BARIDHARA
JIP
UTTARA
DHANMONDI
MIRPUR
BAJAKA
SHIMANTO

আপনার ও আপনার পরিবারের সুস্বাস্থ্য প্রতিদিন

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