

AUSTRIAN SKI KING HIRSCHER WINS WORLD CUP OVERALL TITLE, MATCHES VONN'S RECORD | 22

SUAREZ, MESSI ON TARGET AS BARCA COME FROM BEHIND TO BEAT RAYO VALLECANO | 22



Right-Hander's 84*, Handscomb Ton Help Australia Complete Highest Successful Run Chase Vs India After Hosts Read Conditions Wrong Again

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Mohali: "We need to be good enough to bowl with a wet ball if there is dew," declared Virat Kohli after winning the toss on Sunday afternoon at a venue amenable to very tall chases and dewy evenings. With that left-field decision, he basically sealed India's fate as an unfancied Australia nervelessly pulled off the highest successful chase against India in ODIs.

As it emerged later, the misadventure with the dew in Ranchi mistakenly convinced Kohli and the team not to lend too much credence to the factor on a warm March day in Punjab. Kohli also knew the pitch would play true, and batting first would give his struggling openers a better chance to get back among the runs, minus the added pressure of a tall chase.

On the dew factor, Kohli was proved wrong, and at the end of the day it didn't matter that he was right on the second.

It was a day of scarcely believable feats. Chasing a mammoth 359 after India's openers finally found form and Shikhar Dhawan came up with a scintillating ton, the unfancied Aussies whittled the target down first to 14 off 21 and then just three of 16 with five wickets in hand!

The dew factor loomed large, with India's butter-fingered fielders struggling to hold on to crucial catches, their spinners being rendered ineffective for long periods, their wicketkeeper missing a crucial stumping and towels being in heavy use after the 35-over mark, when the PCA stadium could feel the night chill.

Australia, of course, were well served by two extraordinary innings, by Ashton Turner (84 not out off 43; 5x4, 6x0) and Peter Handscomb (117 off 105; 8x4, 3x6), and a 192-run third-wicket stand between Handscomb and Khawaja, but this match may well be remembered for India's bungling in assessing the Mohali dew.

"We had it in control for about 35 overs," said Shikhar Dhawan. "We expected dew in the last game but it did not happen. We didn't expect dew here today and it came heavily. You could play any shot on that surface once the dew came. Because of dew the ball wasn't grip-



SWEEPING SUCCESS: Peter Handscomb en route to scoring 117 in Mohali

"Hayden has been great to me, privileged to get my cap from him, still nervous standing up and talking to him. He's spent a lot of time with me in the nets, was a brilliant player of spin bowling. He's a legend, great to sit down and chat with him | **Ashton Turner**

ping. If there was no dew, it wouldn't have been possible (for Turner) to play those shots. Turner took the game away from us."

There were, however, two other crucial factors behind India's feat that cannot be explained away by the dew. One was the absence of MS Dhoni behind the stumps and some horrid goof-ups by his replacement Rishabh Pant, whose performance served as a telling reminder of how quietly effective Dhoni has been in reading this new crop of Indian spinners. By the time Pant had botched up a stumping and a run-out chance, a section of the crowd was angrily asking to "bring back Dhoni!"

The second non-dew factor was another stutter in the middle after the 191-run opening stand. India scored 91 in the last 10 overs, losing six wickets, and neither KL Rahul, who replaced Ambati Rayudu and got a chance to bat at No. 3, nor Pant could build their innings. On such a benign surface, this proved crucial. Incidentally, this was the same pitch on which India had put on 392/4 against Sri Lanka in the last game here, in Dec 2017.

If Rohit Sharma had been the aggressor that time, this day belonged to his opening partner Dhawan, desperately in need of runs with the World Cup looming. Dhawan exploited the friendly nature of the surface with an enchanting 143 (115 balls; 18x4, 3x6) and added a Mohali record 193 with Rohit (95; 92b, 7x4, 2x6).

The sheer impact of their performance served as timely reminder of why Kohli has invested heavily in this pair, now India's second-most prolific ODI opening combo of all time, behind just Tendulkar and Ganguly. As it turned out, it was the only bright spot for India on the day, keeping the series alive till the last game in Delhi on Wednesday.

ON FLAT PITCH, TURNER RULES



TURNING IT AROUND: Ashton Turner smashes one to the fence in Mohali on Sunday

HIGHEST SUCCESSFUL CHASES VS INDIA IN ODIS

Score	Overs	Team	Venue	Date
359/6	47.5	Australia	Mohali	10-3-2019
322/3	48.4	Sri Lanka	The Oval	8-6-2017
322/6	49.5	Pakistan	Mohali	8-11-2007
319/7	48	Pakistan	Ahmedabad	12-4-2005
311/7	47	Pakistan	Peshawar	6-2-2006

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

INDIA'S HIGHEST LOSING TOTALS IN ODIS

Score	Overs	Team	Venue	Date
358/9	50	Australia	Mohali	10-3-2019
347	49.4	Australia	Hyderabad	5-11-2009

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

"Last game we were told there will be dew, got into the wrong side of that. Here, they just played better, have to accept. We had to get fifth bowler out of the way, if Kedar and Vijay were bowling with the dew it was difficult, we wanted to get their overs out of the way first before the dew. It became too wet to bowl towards the end, first part of the bowling was fine. In the end when these guys were going hard, it became difficult | **Virat Kohli**

"Lovely feeling, my role was to try to take it till the end as much as possible, pretty special. Khawaja and I didn't talk much, we just left each other to play our own games. Once the dew came on, we noticed there wasn't much spin, helped us play our natural game. Maxi played a beautiful role tonight, took the pressure off me | **Peter Handscomb**

NUMBERS GAME

1 Dhawan-Rohit has become the first pair to be involved in three 175-run stands (all for first wicket) against Australia in ODIs

6 Jasprit Bumrah became the second No. 11 Indian batsman after Venkatesh Prasad (vs Australia in Nairobi on Oct 7, 2000) to hit a six off the only ball faced by him in an ODI innings. Both recorded the feat off the last ball of the innings

218 Sixes hit in 199 innings by Rohit Sharma — a new record for an Indian in ODIs, eclipsing the 217 in 286 innings by MS Dhoni

143 A career-best knock played by Shikhar Dhawan in ODIs, bettering the 137 vs South Africa at Melbourne on February 22, 2015. Dhawan's 16th century in ODIs is his third vs Australia.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA: R Sharma c Handscomb b Richardson 95, S Dhawan b Cummins 143, K Rahul c Carey b Zampa 26, V Kohli c Carey b Richardson 7, R Pant c Finch b Cummins 36, K Jadhav c Richardson b Cummins 10, V Shankar c Maxwell b Cummins 26, B Kumar c Carey b Richardson 1, K Yadav not out 1, Y Chahal c & b Cummins 0, J Bumrah not out 6; Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-5); Total (9 wks; 50 overs): 358; Fall of wickets: 1-193, 2-254, 3-266, 4-296, 5-314, 6-331, 7-344, 8-351, 9-352; **Bowling:** Cummins 10-0-70-5, Behrendorf 10-1-61-0, Richardson 9-0-85-3, Maxwell 8-1-61-0, Zampa 10-0-57-1, Finch 3-0-22-0.

AUSTRALIA: A Finch b Bhuvneshwar 0, U Khawaja c Kuldeep b Bumrah 91, S Marsh b Bumrah 6, P Handscomb c Rahul b Chahal 117, G Maxwell lbw b Kuldeep 23, A Turner not out 84, A Carey c Dhawan b Bumrah 21, J Richardson not out 0; Extras (b-4, lb-8, w-5) 17; Total (for 6 wks, in 47.5 overs) 359; FoW: 1-3, 2-12, 3-204, 4-229, 5-271, 6-357; **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar 9-0-67-1, Bumrah 8.5-0-63-3, Shankar 5-0-29-0, Kuldeep 10-0-64-1, Kedar 5-0-44-0, Chahal 10-0-80-1.

Dominator Dhawan serves timely reminder with a blazing century

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Mohali: Career resurrections have become second nature for Shikhar Dhawan, so much so that he probably doesn't bat an eyelid when his form, technique and consistency are under scrutiny. This time around, though, things were different: the trough seemed to run deep, too deep for comfort with a World Cup looming, competition growing and every passing game being touted as the definitive form guide.

The numbers were not on Dhawan's side. Since the 114 against Pakistan in Dubai in September last, Dhawan had averaged a mere 24.50 coming into this game. In his last six innings before the fourth ODI, he averaged 11.5. In 2019, his average was a career worst (26.70) when he has played at least five matches in a year.

Was, that is, before Sunday's latest shot in the arm for a career marked by scintillating highs and long periods of mediocrity. For a batsman who thrives on rhythm and timing, finding a comfort zone is key, and comfort zones were becoming harder to come by for Dhawan. It had to be Mohali, venue of the left-hander's memorable ton on Test debut, the fastest debut Test ton yet scored. It had to be Mohali, where the ball comes on easily to the bat, at just the right pace and height, for Dhawan to get some fluency going and shrug off the negative baggage.

His 16th ODI ton (143 off 115; 18x4, 3x6) saw Dhawan reprising the role, seemingly effortlessly, of a formidable enforcer at the top of the order. From the moment he flicked his first ball of the day from Cummins (5/70) towards the long-leg fence, Dhawan would have sensed it could be his day. In the fifth over he hit a

MOST CENTURY STANDS FOR 1ST WKT IN ODIS

PAIR	For	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave.	100	50	RR
Ganguly & Tendulkar	India	136	2	6,609	258	49.32	21	23	5.17
Gilchrist & Hayden	Aus	114	3	5,372	172	48.39	16	29	5.96
Greenidge & Haynes	WI	102	4	5,150	192*	52.55	15	24	4.61
Dhawan & Sharma	India	100	1	4,526	210	45.71	15	13	5.33
Sehwag & Tendulkar	India	93	0	3,919	182	42.13	12	18	6.16
Amla & Quinton de Kock	SA	86	2	4,014	282*	47.78	10	14	5.42



GABBAR IS BACK: Shikhar Dhawan celebrates his century on Sunday

full one, again from Cummins, past the bowler to the straight boundary. The timing had returned. The trademark whips, gorgeous cover drives and the backfoot punches immediately followed.

Unfortunately, India read the dew factor wrong and lost the game. "Of course it feels enjoyable, satisfying to get such a knock. I'm sad that we lost the game," Dhawan said later. So how does he deal with being under constant scrutiny? "I don't read newspapers and just follow my process," he cheekily said, and when pressed further on what this 'process' was, revealed a deeply philosophical outlook: "I stay in my world. I just make sure

I stay in my positive mindset, not let negative things in. I talk to myself, cut down negative thoughts and accept both realities (of scoring and failing). Once I accept, I enjoy my game! I do my skill work, and (focus on) fitness and mindset."

It's a process that has served him well in lean times. Sure, the conditions were flatter than at any time during the past six months, and it was pleasant for batsmen who like to play on the up. Dhawan got a lot of bad balls but he also didn't let any go to waste. For now, he has shown why he deserves the World Cup ticket. For the moment, all's well in Dhawan's world.

GALLERY

Warner smacks century on return after surgery

Sydney: David Warner smashed a rapid-fire century for his Sydney club side on his return from elbow surgery, reinforcing his destructive abilities ahead of the World Cup in England. The opener plundered seven sixes and four fours in his 77-ball onslaught for Randwick-Petersham, better known as the Randy Petes, in a one-day game against Penrith that they lost. He was finally caught during Saturday's match, in front of a few dozen fans, off the bowling of 18-year-old left-armer Henry Raizl, the Cricket Australia website reported. Year-long ball-tampering bans from state and international for Warner and former Australian skipper Steve Smith run out on March 28. They were both left out of Australia's squad on Friday for the upcoming one-day series against Pakistan despite being eligible for the final two games.

Mandhana achieves career-best ranking in T20Is: India opener Smriti Mandhana has jumped three places to reach a career-best third position in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player rankings released Sunday. Mandhana, the top-ranked ODI batter who led the T20I side in the absence of Harmanpreet Kaur, scored 72 runs in the three matches, including a fifty in the third match. Harmanpreet, who had missed the England series due to an ankle injury, slipped two places to the ninth spot. AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

CRICKET: Senior Women's T20, 10 am (Live on Star Sports 1); Syed Mushtaq Ali, 1.30 pm (Live on Star Network); NZ vs Bangladesh, 2nd Test, Day 4, 3.30 am (Live on Star Sports Select 1)
FOOTBALL: ISL: Semifinal, Bengaluru vs NorthEast, 7.30 pm (Live on Star Sports 1)
TENNIS: ATP 1000: Day 5, 11.30 pm (Live on Sony ESPN)

Fixing bigger crime than murder: Dhoni

New Delhi: "The biggest crime that I can commit is not a murder, it is actually match fixing," Mahendra Singh Dhoni has said in a soon-to-be released documentary that focuses on Chennai Super Kings' fairytale IPL comeback last year; following a two-year suspension for spot-fixing.

Dhoni led the Chennai franchise to its third IPL title in 2018, making it a dream return to the competition after the team served out a two-year ban for its management's role in the 2013 spot-fixing scandal. "The team was involved, I was accused too. It was a tough phase for all of us. Fans felt that the punishment was harsh. Coming back was an emotional moment and I have always said, what doesn't kill you makes you strong," says Dhoni in the 45-second trailer of documentary 'Roar of the Lion'.

Cap issue: PCB wants action against India

Karachi: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has sent a strongly worded letter to the International Cricket Council (ICC), calling for action against India for wearing camouflage military caps during the third One-Day International against Australia. "We have made our point very strongly to the ICC which now has no doubts or confusion about our intention or stance now on this matter," Mani told reporters on Sunday night. "We will be



STRAIGHT TALK: MS Dhoni

Dhoni had not commented on the turmoil before this.

In July 2015, Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals were suspended from the cash-rich cricket league for two years for betting activities of their key officials Gurnath Meiyappan and Raj Kundra during the 2013 season. Both the officials were banned for life from being involved in any cricket matches conducted by the BCCI. PFI

sending another letter to the ICC in next 12 hours after more consultations with our lawyers," he added.

Mani said that Pakistan's stance is very clear that cricket must not be used for politics. "This is the second that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has tried to use cricket for politics. They took permission from ICC for some other purpose and used it to do something else, which is not acceptable," he said. PFI

Mushtaq Ali T20: Karnataka trounce Delhi

Indore: Karnataka continued their winning streak in the Super League stages of the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy after they trounced Delhi by 8 wickets here on Sunday. Earlier, Karnataka had beaten domestic giants Mumbai and Uttar Pradesh in their previous two Super League stage matches of the national T20 tournament.

It was an all-round show from Karnataka where right-arm medium pacer Koushik V shone with the ball and later Mayank Agarwal and Karun Nair remained unbeaten as Karnataka chased the 110-run target with utmost ease.

Karnataka bowlers justified their skipper's decision to invite Delhi to bat first at the Emerald Heights International School Ground.

Koushik (4-19) and leg-spinner K C Cariappa (3-15) wreaked havoc as Delhi was restricted to a meagre 109/9 in their 20 overs. Apart from Nitish Rana (37 off 29 balls) and Lalit Yadav (33 off 40 balls), no other Delhi batsman showed spine as Koushik and Cariappa rattled their top and middle order. For Karnataka, medium pacer R Vinay Kumar (1-13) also played his role to perfection. Chasing 110, Karnataka reached home with 4.3 overs to spare. **Brief Scores: Delhi 109/9** (N Rana 37, L Yadav 33; V Koushik 4-19, K C Cariappa 3-15) lost to Karnataka **112/2** (M Agarwal 43 not out, K Nair 42 not out; NSaini 1-21) by 8 wickets. PFI

De Kock hits ton, SA win series

Durban: Quinton de Kock's swash-buckling century inspired South Africa to beat Sri Lanka by 71 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis system at Kingsmead on Sunday to secure a winning 3-0 lead in their five-match ODI series.

After South Africa had been put into bat, De Kock smashed 121 off 108 balls at the top of the innings — his 14th ODI hundred — as they went on to make 331-5 off their 50 overs. Sri Lanka, set a revised target of 193 after a rain delay, fell a long way short, managing to score only 121-5 off 24 overs in reply. **Brief Scores:** SA 313/5 (de Kock 121, van der Dussen 50, Miller 41 not out; Udana 2-50) vs Sri Lanka 121/5 in 24 overs (KMendis 41; Tahir 2-19)

New Zealand looking for result in rain-marred Test Wellington: New Zealand were 38 for two, trailing Bangladesh by 173 at stumps on Day Three of the rain-shortened second Test in Wellington on Sunday. New Zealand openers Tom Latham and Jeet Raval went cheaply, leaving Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor to hold the



Quinton de Kock in action on Sunday

fort until the return of rain brought an early end to the day less than 12 overs after tea.

Earlier, Tamim Iqbal gave the tourists a sound start with 74 before they wilted in the face of a barrage from New Zealand's short-ball king Neil Wagner who took four for 28. Bangladesh, having reached 119 for one, saw the next nine wickets fall for just 92 runs. Boul's late burst gave him three for 38.

New Zealand, in reply, were two for eight before Williamson and Tay-

lor began their rescue mission. **Brief Scores:** New Zealand 38/2 (Taylor 19*) vs Bangladesh 211 (Tamim 74, Wagner 4-28, Boul 3-38)

Stirling, Balbirnie help Ireland level ODI series against Afghan Dehradun: Half-centuries by Paul Stirling and Andy Balbirnie helped Ireland to a five-wicket series-leveling win over Afghanistan in the fifth and final ODI on Sunday. Chasing a modest 217, Ireland depended on a 81-run second wicket stand between Stirling and Balbirnie to achieve their target in 47.2 overs as the series ended at 2-2 in Dehradun. The second ODI was washed out.

Left-arm spinner George Dockrell led a disciplined bowling attack to set up the win as Ireland kept down Afghanistan to 216 for six after being put into bat first. Stirling top-scored with 70 and Balbirnie made a patient 68 to drive a tricky chase for Ireland in a hard-fought series that comes after their whitewash in the two Twenty20 matches. **Brief Scores:** Afghanistan 216/6 (A Afghan 82) vs Ireland 219/5 in 47.2 overs (P Stirling 70, A Balbirnie 68).

Future of Tests robust: MCC survey

New Delhi: Test cricket is in robust health after a strong year, the custodians of the game's laws have said, following a survey in which fans hailed it as the "ultimate" of the game's three formats.

The future of the long format has been a subject of debate since the rise of Twenty20 leagues across the cricketing globe coincided with dwindling crowds for test matches outside Australia and England. The lure of quick money has

spawned several Twenty20 freelancers while many players have signed white ball-only contracts in English county cricket making their priority very clear.

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) surveyed over 13,000 responders from more than 100 countries with an overwhelming 86 percent fans identifying test cricket as their preferred format.

"Responders ... still consider the test format to be the pinnacle of cricket and the favourite for-

mat of cricket to attend, follow and watch, with respondents describing the game as the 'ultimate' form of cricket," the MCC said in a statement.

The last couple of months have been a great advertisement for the long form with India registering their first ever test series victory in Australia, West Indies humbling mighty England, and Sri Lanka becoming the first Asian country to win a series in South Africa. REUTERS