

Elgar and de Kock keep Proteas afloat

Ashwin's craft fetches him five; Jadeja picks up 200th Test wicket



Pugnacious: Dean Elgar slugged it out in the middle, growing in confidence as the innings progressed. ■K.R. DEEPAK

SA IN INDIA

S. DINAKAR
VISAKHAPATNAM
Dean Elgar's courage and application takes us to the heart of Test cricket. The South African opener is tough, fights as if his life depends on the innings.

In early 2018, on a volatile surface at the Wanderers, that Bullring, where the ball seamed, bounced off a length, or shot through, Elgar withstood a nasty blow on the helmet from Jasprit Bumrah to carry his bat with a blood-and-guts 86.

Contrast
And here, on the third day of the first Freedom Test on Friday, the 32-year-old South African, in his next Test innings against India, dropped anchor in the vastly different sub-continental conditions for a monumental 160. The innings oozed character. If Elgar slugged it out, Quinton de Kock, the smooth-stroking southpaw, galloped on his skills for a 111 of exquisite strokeplay at the ACA-VDCA ground.

There were more protagonists on an incident-filled day. R. Ashwin, conjuring moments of craft and beauty, scalped five with his off-spin while left-armer Ravindra Jadeja claimed his 200th Test wicket in his 44th Test.

South Africa, 385 for eight at stumps and 117 behind India's first innings score with two days left, has given itself a realistic chance of forcing a draw on a pitch where there is turn and and some variable bounce, but is by no means a minefield.

Weather will remain a factor, too, with scattered thunderstorms forecast on Saturday and Sunday. On pivotal day three, Elgar grew in stature. He got right behind the ball, was solid in defence and did not miss out on opportunities to score. His back-lift starts from around fourth slip but, crucially, once he gets his willow down, Elgar plays close to his body. This tightness in his game is his strength.

Saha's miss
Elgar was fortunate though on 74 when he was drawn into one outside the off-stump from Jadeja but 'keeper Wriddhiman Saha fluffed the offering. As he grew in confidence, Elgar slog-swept, lofted and whipped the ball, using his feet. In fact, this was a surface where, if the batsman employed his footwork he looked far more secure than someone who played from the crease. Eventually, Elgar's top-edged sweep was splendidly



Turning things around: Quinton de Kock's strokeplay had a touch of the ethereal. ■K.R. DEEPAK

picked up by Cheteshwar Pujara to end a captivating 164-run sixth-wicket partnership with de Kock – Jadeja's 200th. The manner in which de Kock, all freshness and freedom, stroked the ball on this track seemed ethereal. He picked the length early, consequently had more time, and got himself into terrific positions for strokes on both sides. He skipped forward to drive the ball gloriously through covers, with an amalgam of timing and placement. Or wristed or lofted with authority. The gifted de Kock played the ball late, his late cut off Ashwin was as delicate as they come. And he reached

STAT SPHERE

1 Jadeja is the fastest left-arm bowler to reach 200 wickets (44 Tests), eclipsing Herath (47)

Fewest Tests to 200 wickets among left-armers

44	Jadeja
47	Herath
49	Johnson
50	Starc
51	Bedi & Akram

2 Jadeja is the second fastest Indian to 200 wickets in the longest format

Fewest Tests to 200 wickets among Indians

36	Ashwin
----	--------

44 Jadeja

46 Harbhajan

47 Kumble

48 Chandrasekhar

7 Number of Test centuries Elgar has scored since the start of 2017, the most by an opener

27 Number of five-wicket hauls for Ashwin in Tests. Besides, he has returned a match-haul of 10 wickets seven times

Most centuries scored by batsmen who began their career with a pair (two zeroes) on Test debut

20	Gooch
16	Atapattu
12	Elgar
11	Anwar

SCOREBOARD

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS
502 for seven decl.
SOUTH AFRICA – 1ST INNINGS
Dean Elgar c Pujara b Jadeja 160 (287b, 18x4, 4x6), Aiden Markram b Ashwin 5 (21b, 1x4), Theunis de Bruyn c Saha b Ashwin 4 (25b, 1x4), Dane Piedt b Jadeja 0 (4b), Temba Bavuma lbw b Ishant Sharma 18 (26b, 3x4), Faf du Plessis c Pujara b Ashwin 55 (103b, 8x4, 1x6), Quinton de Kock b Ashwin 111 (163b, 16x4, 2x6), Senuran Muthusamy (batting) 12 (60b, 1x4), Vernon Philander b Ashwin 0 (10b), Keshav Maharaj (batting) 3 (14b); Extras (b-8, lb-4, nb-5): 17. Total (for eight wkts. in 118 overs): 385.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-14 (Markram, 7.1 overs), 2-31 (de Bruyn, 16.3), 3-34 (Piedt, 17.3), 4-63 (Bavuma, 26.1), 5-178 (du Plessis, 57.3), 6-342 (Elgar, 99.3), 7-370 (de Kock, 109.3), 8-376 (Philander, 113.2).
INDIA BOWLING
Ishant 14-2-44-1, Shami 15-3-40-0, Ashwin 41-11-128-5, Jadeja 37-4-116-2, Vihari 9-1-38-0, Rohit 2-1-7-0.

by turning the ball away from the left-hander and castled him with one that came in with the arm. And Vernon Philander was bowled by a huge off-spinner. With South Africa revealing resolve and desire, there is plenty at stake over the last two days.

Putting selfie above sport

S. DINAKAR
VISAKHAPATNAM

Fans run on to the ground disrupting play for various reasons. As early as in the 70s, Brijesh Patel received a kiss on the cheek by a lady fan who breached security during the India-West Indies Test at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

And in countries such as Australia and England, we have streakers who sprint across the ground just for 'fun' or to highlight a cause. On the third afternoon at the ACA-VDCA ground here, a local man managed to hoodwink security for a different reason – taking a selfie with an India cricketer! The entire stadium was in



Off with you! Ajinkya Rahane attempts to shoo off the intruder. ■K.R. DEEPAK

splits when the man, with an official chasing him, got close enough to Ajinkya Rahane for a selfie!

The intruder was soon escorted off the ground but not before he had got the job done!

Going back to the roots worked: Ashwin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM

R. Ashwin's last five-wicket haul in Tests was in Sri Lanka, August 2017. On Friday, the senior off-spinner once again scalped five in an innings. During this period, his fortunes have been mixed. He has been troubled by injuries, found himself out of the Test XI and also from the shorter formats.

Ashwin said going back to his roots helped him stay focused. "To stay away from not playing cricket itself is very tough for me. In order to substitute that, I played whatever games I got."

South African opener Dean Elgar said, "We knew it was going to be tough. We knew we were going to be facing quality bowlers on a wearing pitch. But I always had the hope that if we knuckle down, apply ourselves, and build a platform to express ourselves, we could always get to the position we are in." About inputs from batting consultant Amol Muzumdar, Elgar said, "He's an experienced player and is giving you intel on conditions. He might just say one thing that might sit on your head the whole time."

'The Hundred' decision only after IPL: Harbhajan

S. DINAKAR
VISAKHAPATNAM

Harbhajan Singh finds himself in the eye of a gathering storm. The off-spinning great has signed up for The Hundred, a 100-ball-an-innings tournament in England next July.

He is an overseas cricketer at the draft with a base price of £100,000. However, the BCCI bars any current player – even among retired players, it gives NOCs to these leagues only under exceptional circumstances – and the 39-year-old Harbhajan finds himself in a dilemma.

Will he announce his retirement from all cricket run by the BCCI, including the IPL, before taking the plunge into The Hundred?

Harbhajan, commenting here for Star Sports, was typically candid in his response to a question from *The Hindu*. He said, "Yes, I have given my name for the draft. But I will take a decision only after playing the IPL next year for the Chennai Super Kings. The Hundred is only after the IPL." The BCCI, on its part, has said it was not aware of any Indian cricketer signing up for The Hundred. This year, Yuvraj Singh was permitted



Harbhajan Singh. ■K.R. DEEPAK

by the Board to play in the Global Twenty20 in Canada, but that was only after he had retired from all BCCI competitions. About the South African batting resistance on day three, Harbhajan said, "The Indian spinners are used to really conducive tracks in the country. But this pitch is not giving them as much help. That is why they are struggling here." While R. Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are trump cards at home, Harbhajan said India needed to groom a group of spinners around them. "Kuldeep Yadav got a five-wicket haul in his last Test for India, at Sydney. There is another wrist spinner, Rahul Chahar, who can be tried out in Test cricket."

Nothing goes right for India

Lee, Luus and bowlers script a thumping win for SA

SA-WOMEN IN INDIA

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
SURAT
For once, the Women in Blue had no clue – with bat or ball. They were hammered by a South African side that was playing for pride in the final match of the T20I series at the Lalbhai Contractor Stadium. The Indians won the series 3-1. The manner in which they lost – by 105 runs, their biggest in T20Is – must have been a shock for the full house on Friday.

On song
The fans were treated to a superb exhibition of stroke-play by Lizelle Lee (84, 47b) and captain Sune Luus (62, 56b). They put on 144 for the first wicket. After the way they failed to read the Indian spinners in the previous games, not many would have expected the South African batters to explode in such a stunning manner. Poonam Yadav, the spearhead, and the rest of the spinners were dispatched



A lot to cheer about: Despite losing the fifth game badly, India won the T20I series 3-1. ■VIJAY SONEJI

mercilessly all around the park by Lee & Luus. The openers treated the seamers with disdain too. Mansi Joshi, one of the three changes the host made for this match, was singled out for punishment in the fourth over. After Luus pulled the first ball through mid-wicket for four, Lee took over. Her extra-cover drive was probably the shot of the night as 17 came off the over. Lee displayed good footwork and played strokes all around, even scooping Arundhati Reddy under her 'keeper's head to reach her

fifty off just 28 balls. By the time her top-edge off Poonam was caught well by Shafali Verma, running a few yards at mid-wicket, she had batted India out of the game. The South African seamers ensured just that, sending half the Indian side back to the dugout within the first six overs. The teams will now travel to Vadodara for a three-match ODI series, beginning on October 9. The South Africans will be sitting in the team bus in a happier frame of mind on Saturday morning.

Brijesh leads player group at BCCI AGM

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Former BCCI president Anurag Thakur's brother Arun Singh Dhumal and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's son Jay Shah are the two with political links who figure as representatives of the 38 BCCI members (Cricket Association of Puducherry included) for the AGM and election to be held here on October 23. While Arun was elected president of the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association recently, Jay did not contest the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) election. Among the cricketers, Karnataka's Brijesh Patel is eminently qualified to hold a senior position in the Apex Council as he has been in cricket administration for a long time. It remains to be seen if he gets the support of those who will be calling the shots when the time comes for nominations.

The other well-known players who have been nominated to represent their States are Sourav Ganguly (Bengal), Mohammad Azharuddin (Hyderabad), Jaydev Shah (Saurashtra) and Harvinder Singh (Indian Railways). There are also others like Rajat Sharma who ever since he became the DDOCA President, has been freely talked as the future BCCI President and seasoned Administrator Rajiv Shukla. With only six positions in the BCCI Apex Council and two in the IPL Governing council available, only a handful can aspire to become Apex Council members. Electoral officer N. Gopalaswami said he would scrutinise representatives of the BCCI members who are deemed to be BCCI Constitution-compliant by the CoA. The valid list will be announced on October 10.

Dalilah sets 400m hurdles WR



Peerless: It was Dalilah Muhammad's night at the Khalifa Stadium on Friday. ■GETTY IMAGES



Uibo (Est) 8,604, 3. Damian Warner (Can) 8,529. **Women: 400m hurdles:** 1. Dalilah Muhammad (USA) 52.16s (WR, Old: 52.20, self), 2. Sydney McLaughlin (USA) 52.23, 3. Russell Clayton (Jam) 53.74. **400m:** 1. Salwa Eid Naser (BRN) 48.14s, 2. Shaunae Miller-Uibo (Bah) 48.37, 3. Shericka Jackson (Jam) 49.47. **Shot put:** 1. Gong Lijiao (Chn) 19.55m, 2. Danielle Thomas-Dodd (Jam) 19.47, 3. Christina Schwanzitz (Ger) 19.17. **Heptathlon:** 1. Katarina Johnson-Thompson (GBR) 6981

Indians in action today
■ Men's javelin qualification (Shivpal Singh, 7 p.m.)
■ Women's 4x400m relay, semifinal (10.25 p.m.)
■ Men's 4x400m relay, semifinal (10.55 p.m.)
■ Men's marathon (T. Gopi, 2.29 a.m. on Sunday).

points, 2.Nafissatou Thiam (Bel) 6,677, 3. Verena Preiner (Aut) 6,560.

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA
Lizelle Lee c Shafali b Poonam 84 (47b, 15x4, 1x6), Sune Luus st. Taniya b Harmanpreet 62 (56b, 7x4), Mignon du Preez c Poonam b Arundhati 13 (7b, 2x4), Nadine de Klerk (not out) 9 (6b, 1x4), Laura Wolvaardt (not out) 4 (4b); Extras (lb-1, w-2): 3; Total (for three wkts. in 20 overs): 175.
FALL OF WICKETS
1-144 (Lee, 15.5 overs), 2-161 (du Preez, 17.6), 3-163 (Luus, 18.3).
INDIA BOWLING
Deepti 3-0-26-0, Mansi 4-0-49-0, Anuja 4-0-32-0, Poonam 4-0-34-1, Arundhati 4-0-28-1,

Harmanpreet 1-0-5-1.
INDIA
Shafali Verma c Lee b Ismail 4 (8b, 1x4), Smriti Mandhana c Luus b de Klerk 5 (10b, 1x4), Je-mimah Rodrigues lbw b Ismail 0 (1b), Harmanpreet Kaur b Khaka 1 (6b), Deepti Sharma c Bosch b de Klerk 2 (8b), Veda Krishnamurthy lbw b Bosch 26 (24b, 3x4), Taniya Bhatia c Luus b Bosch 0 (2b), Arundhati Reddy c Luus b de Klerk 22 (25b, 3x4), Mansi Joshi (not out) 3 (16b), Anuja Patil b Shangase 3 (3b), Poonam Yadav b Shangase 0 (2b); Extras (lb-2, w-2): 4; Total (in 17.3 overs): 70.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-4 (Shafali, 2.2 overs), 2-4 (Je-mimah, 2.3), 3-10 (Harmanpreet, 3.4), 4-13 (Smriti, 5.1), 5-13 (Deepti, 5.3), 6-13 (Taniya, 6.2), 7-62 (Veda, 13.4), 8-65 (Arundhati, 15.2), 9-70 (Anuja, 17.1).
SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING
Ismail 4-1-11-2, Khaka 3-1-9-1, de Klerk 4-1-18-3, Bosch 3-0-13-2, Luus 3-1-17-0, Shangase 0.3-0-0-2.
Toss: South Africa.
Player-of-the-match: Lee; **Player-of-the-series:** Deepti.
South Africa won fifth T20I by 105 runs, India clinched series 3-1.



Thriller: Pacers pipped Kings by one point. ■VIVEK BENDRE

NBA

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI
Sacramento Kings and Indiana Pacers put on a breathtaking show laced with pacy turnovers, precision shooting and powerplay under the board as the NBA India Games 2019 got off to a blistering start at the NSCI indoor stadium. The Pacers sneaked past the Kings 132-131 in the first pre-season game in India. The sides were locked 118-all in regulation time, leading to overtime.

NBA-style atmosphere
The game took off in NBA-style atmosphere, recreated in Mumbai, mixed with a fusion of music and dance at the breaks. Dikembe Mutombo, the Congolese-American who made a name in the league with Houston Rockets, made an appearance during a break and guarded the basket as girls from the NBA Junior programme tried to evade the lanky figure under lights. The crowd stood in deference as the national an-

thems of India and the United States was sung, following which the stands erupted into a roar. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and Nita Ambani, Reliance Foundation chairperson, walked out before the tip-off to present the match ball to the Kings and the Pacers. **The result:** Indiana Pacers 132 (Domantas Sabonis 22, Jeremy Lamb 20, Malcolm Brodgon 15) bt Sacramento Pacers 131 (Buddy Field 28, Harrison Barnes 21, DeArron Fox 16). (Regulation time 118-118).