

Head’s century puts Australia in command

New Zealand in a spot of bother after losing two wickets

NZ IN AUSTRALIA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Australia snatched two early wickets on Friday to leave New Zealand facing an uphill battle to stay in the second Test as it chased the home team’s 467, built on the back of a gritty 114 from Travis Head.

At the close on day two, the Black Caps were 44 for two with Tom Latham not out nine and Ross Taylor on two as a series defeat looms.

Quick blows

Captain Kane Williamson lasted only 14 balls, skying a James Pattinson delivery to wicketkeeper Tim Paine on nine, while Tom Blundell, called up for the out-of-form Jeet Raval, was out to Pat Cummins for 15.

The visitors need to win to square the three-match series after crashing by 296 runs in the opening day-night clash in Perth.

Australia looked in complete control at tea on 431 for five, but then collapsed to 467 all out within nine overs of the re-start.

Skipper Paine departed



Patient knock: Travis Head silenced critics with his second Test century. ■ AFP

for 79 seven balls after tea, with Mitchell Starc gone soon after for one. Head, Cummins and Nathan Lyon rapidly followed with Neil Wagner and Tim Southee doing the damage.

Australia started the day at

257 for four with Steve Smith on 77 and Head 25.

Head came into the match under pressure after a lean spell, but silenced his critics with his second Test century, reaching three figures off 222 balls.

“It’s very nice to contribute. It’s pretty cool to score a Boxing Day hundred, nice to get my opportunity,” said Head, adding that Paine counter-attacking when he came in helped.

It was a patient innings

from the 25-year-old, who scored his only other century (161) against Sri Lanka in Canberra.

After reaching his ton he began hitting out and finally fell to a Wagner full toss, slicing it to Mitchell Santner.

It pays to know the ‘bloke in the truck’

ANI
MELBOURNE

After New Zealand’s Ross Taylor was handed a lifeline by the decision review system (DRS) in the Boxing Day Test, Australia skipper Tim Paine came up with the best possible way to sledge the batsman.

“Maybe, he knows the bloke (person in charge of ball-tracking),” was Paine’s

comment. In the 14th over of the Kiwi innings, James Pattinson had Taylor adjudged lbw by the on-field umpire, but Taylor chose to review the call, and ball-tracking showed the delivery missing leg-stump.

Cricknet.com.au’s official handle tweeted the video of the incident and captioned the post as “He

knows the bloke in the truck”.

“That’s twice I have seen him out plumb in front, but not given.

“I saw him being struck on the pad in New Zealand, that was absolutely hitting the stumps, he knows the bloke in the truck,” Paine says from behind the stumps.

SCOREBOARD

Australia — 1st innings: D. Warner c Southee b Wagner 41, J. Burns b Boult 0, M. Labuschagne b de Grandhomme 63, S. Smith c Nicholls b Wagner 85, M. Wade c Watling b de Grandhomme 38, T. Head c Santner b Wagner 114, T. Paine lbw b Wagner 79, M. Starc c Williamson b Southee 1, J. Pattinson (not out) 14, P. Cummins c Latham b Southee 0, N. Lyon c Wagner b Southee 1; Extras (lb-22, b-5, w-4): 31. Total (in 155.1 overs): 467.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-61, 3-144, 4-216, 5-284, 6-434, 7-435, 8-

458, 9-463.

New Zealand bowling: Boult 31-3-91-1, Southee 33.1-6-103-3, de Grandhomme 30-5-68-2, Wagner 38-11-83-4, Santner 20-1-82-0, Blundell 3-0-13-0.

New Zealand — 1st innings: T. Latham (batting) 9, K. Williamson c Paine b Cummins 15, C. Williamson c Paine b Pattinson 9, R. Taylor (batting) 2; Extras (lb-3, b-4, w-1, nb-1): 9. Total (for two wkts. in 18 overs): 44.

Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-39.

Australia bowling: Starc 4-0-18-0, Cummins 7-3-8-1, Pattinson 5-1-9-1, Lyon 2-0-2-0.

BCCI honour for Srikanth and Anjum



K. Srikanth. ■ FILE PHOTO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former India captain K. Srikanth will be conferred the Life Time Achievement Award during the BCCI Awards Nite in Mumbai on January 12.

The Life Time Award 2019 for women will be bestowed on Anjum Chopra, also a former captain.

The award function will be held ahead of the first ODI against Australia on January 14.

England fights back after Philander and Rabada restrict the visitors

de Kock equals South African Test record by holding six catches as the home team takes a 103-run first innings lead

ENGLAND IN SA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CENTURION

Vernon Philander led a relentless South African bowling performance before England fought back on the second day of the first Test at Centurion’s SuperSport Park on Friday.

Philander took four for 16 in 14.2 overs as South Africa appeared to have taken control by bowling out England

for 181, a first innings lead of 103.

But England struck hard at the start of the second innings. South Africa was 72 for four at the close, an overall lead of 175 on a pitch which has proved difficult for batsmen throughout.

Master class

Philander, 34, who has announced he will retire from international cricket at the end of the four-Test series,

produced a master class of control to complement the strike power of fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada (three for 68) and Anrich Nortje (two for 47).

Wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock equalled the South African Test record by holding six catches, a feat which had been accomplished six times before — on four occasions by new head coach Mark Boucher.

Joe Denly hit a half-centu-

ry for England after a shaky start. Denly was dropped on nought and took 28 balls to score his first run as Philander had an opening spell of one wicket for no runs in five overs.

Maiden wicket

England collapsed, however, after Denly was caught behind off an inside edge to give all-rounder Dwaine Pretorius his first Test wicket.

Fast bowler Anrich Nortje

bowled Jonny Bairstow for one in the next over and then claimed the key wicket of Stokes when he switched to bowling around the wicket and induced a loose drive which presented de Kock with his fifth catch of the innings.

From a promising position at 142 for three, England lost its last seven wickets for 39 runs.

But wickets continued to fall when South Africa batted

again. James Anderson, who dismissed Dean Elgar with the first ball of the match on Thursday, again claimed a wicket in his first over when Aiden Markram played around his pads and was leg before wicket.

Zubayr Hamza was caught by wicketkeeper Jos Buttler down the leg side before Elgar was caught behind for 22 off Jofra Archer’s second ball to reduce South Africa to 29 for three.



On the ball: An acrobatic Quinton de Kock pouches the offering from Jos Buttler off Vernon Philander. ■ REUTERS

SCOREBOARD

South Africa — 1st innings: D. Elgar c Buttler b Anderson 0, A. Markram c Bairstow b Curran 20, Z. Hamza c Stokes b Broad 39, F. du Plessis c Root b Broad 29, H. van der Dussen c Root b Curran 95, D. Pretorius c Root b Curran 33, V. Philander c Buttler b Broad 35, K. Maharaj c Stokes b Archer 6, K. Rabada b Broad 12, A. Nortje (not out) 0; Extras (lb-4, nb-2, w-3): 9; Total (in 84.3 overs): 284.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-32, 3-71, 4-97, 5-111, 6-198, 7-245, 8-252, 9-277.

England bowling: Anderson 20-4-69-1, Broad 18.3-4-58-4, Curran 20-5-58-4, Archer 19-4-

65-1, Root 4-0-26-0, Denly 3-0-4-0.

England — 1st innings: R. Burns c de Kock b Philander 9, D. Sibley c de Kock b Rabada 4, J. Denly c de Kock b Pretorius 50, J. Root c de Kock b Philander 29, B. Stokes c de Kock b Nortje 35, J. Bairstow b Nortje 1, J. Buttler c de Kock b Philander 12, S. Curran c Hamza b Rabada 20, J. Archer b Philander 3, S. Broad c Elgar b Rabada 2, J. Anderson (not out) 0; Extras (b-4, lb-5, nb-2, w-5): 16; Total (in 53.2 overs): 181.

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-15, 3-70, 4-142, 5-143, 6-150, 7-176, 8-176, 9-181.

South Africa bowling: Rabada

15-1-68-3, Philander 14.2-8-16-4, Pretorius 8-2-23-1, Nortje 12-2-47-2, Maharaj 4-1-18-0.

South Africa — 2nd innings: A. Markram lbw b Anderson 2, D. Elgar c Buttler b Archer 22, Z. Hamza c Buttler b Broad 4, F. du Plessis c Curran b Archer 20, H. van der Dussen (batting) 17; A. Nortje (batting) 4; Extras (b-1, lb-1, nb-1): 3; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 72.

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-25, 3-29, 4-62.

England bowling: Anderson 4-0-19-1, Broad 5-2-6-1, Archer 6-1-37-2, Curran 4-2-8-0, Stokes 1-1-0-0.

Liverpool embarrasses Leicester

Manchester United runs riot against Newcastle

PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Liverpool stretched its Premier League lead to 13 points by outclassing second-placed Leicester in a 4-0 win on Boxing Day while Manchester United overturned a poor start to thrash Newcastle 4-1.

Liverpool’s trip to its closest challenger was the top billing of a busy Thursday card and the newly-crowned World club champion showed its class.

Scant reward

Roberto Firmino’s header was scant reward for a dominant first half display as Sa-

dio Mane and Mohamed Salah wasted big chances.

However, three goals in seven minutes in the final quarter ensured the scoreline reflected Liverpool’s control.

James Milner doubled the visitors’ lead before Firmino’s classy finish made it 3-0. Trent Alexander-Arnold, who helped set up all the first three goals, rounded off a stunning individual display by drilling home the fourth.

United had been beaten 2-0 at Watford on Sunday and another frustrating evening seemingly beckoned when Newcastle’s Matty Longstaff scored his second Premier League goal — both of which have come against the Red Devils.

However, unlike when the Magpies beat Ole Gunnar Solskjaer’s men 1-0 in October, the response from United was emphatic.

Martial fired in at the near post with the help of Newcastle ‘keeper Martin Dubravka before a thundering finish from Mason Greenwood and Marcus Rashford’s header made it 3-1 before the break.

Another defensive error then teed up Martial to dink over Dubravka for the fourth early in the second half.

The results: Leicester 0 lost to Liverpool 4 (Firmino 31, 74; Milner 71-pen, Alexander-Arnold 78); Manchester United 4 (Martial 24, 51, Greenwood 36, Rashford 41) bt Newcastle 1 (M Longstaff 17).



Opening strike: Roberto Firmino, second from left, heads in the first of his two goals against Leicester City. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Nikhat Zareen to take on Mary Kom

BOXING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

M.C. Mary Kom and Nikhat Zareen stayed on course for a showdown and a ticket to the Olympic Qualifiers on Friday, winning their respective bouts during the selection trials at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

While Nikhat won against Jyoti Gulia, Mary out-punched Ritu Grewal in the opening bouts of the 51kg, both registering unanimous victories from the huge 10-judge panel.

The final bout will decide who will represent India at the Olympic Qualifiers in Wuhan, China, in February.

These were two of the five bouts that were unanimously awarded to the winner with the other five bouts registering split decisions.

Big surprises

The big surprises were former World Championships medallist Saweety Boora, expected to give a tough fight to Pooja Rani in the final trials but going down 1-9 to Nupur in the 75kg and youth World champion Sakshi Chaudhary getting past Asian Championships bronze medallist Manisha Moun in the

57kg 7-3.

The 2016 World Championships silver medallist Sonia Lather got the better of her namesake and runner-up at the 2018 edition, Sonia Chahal by an identical margin.

“There is no pressure to win or anything. For a long time I have been fighting to have this bout and now it will happen tomorrow so I am just waiting for it and looking forward to giving my 100 percent to it,” Nikhat said after her bout.

“There is no plan but I will try not to repeat mistakes from the India Open. Whatever the decision is tomorrow, I am well-prepared for it.

“I will only try to avoid too much of clinching like it happened in Mary didi’s bout today and there is clean, fair and beautiful boxing,” the 23-year old added.

The results: 52kg: Nikhat zareen bt Jyoti Gulia 10-0, Mary Kom bt Ritu Grewal 10-0; **57kg:** Sakshi Chaudhary bt Manisha Moun 7-3, Sonia Lather bt Sonia Chahal 7-3. **60kg:** Simranjit Kaur bt Pavitra 10-0, Sarita Devi bt Shashi Chopra 9-1. **69kg:** Lalita bt Meena Rani 9-1, Lovlina Borgohain bt Anjali 10-0. **75kg:** Pooja Rani bt Indraje 10-0, Nupur bt Saweety Boora 9-1.

2020 Sportstar ACES Awards

Readers will have a chance to pick their favourites for the 10 Popular Choice Awards. The top two contenders from each category, based on popular vote, will be sent to a jury, which will decide the winner

THE NOMINEES

SPORTSWOMAN OF THE YEAR (RACQUET SPORTS)



P. V. SINDHU (BADMINTON)

Since December 2018, Sindhu has won two of the biggest titles in the game — the \$1.5 million BWF World Tour Finals and the 2019 World Championships. After finishing second best at the 2016 Olympics, 2018 World Championships, 2018 Asian Games, 2018 Commonwealth Games and 2019 National Championships, her play at the Worlds this year made the badminton world take note of her unseen capabilities. She beat Nozomi Okuhara to become the first Indian to win gold in the competition.



ARCHANA KAMATH (TABLE TENNIS)

Archana won her maiden National singles title in January. This major triumph in the senior ranks came after she upstaged favourite Manika Batra in the semifinal and Kritika Sinha Roy in the final. At the Commonwealth Championships in Cuttack, Kamath added the mixed doubles gold medal in the company of G. Sathiyan. Earlier, she was also a part of the gold-winning Indian team. At 19, Archana has the game to rattle the bigger names



JOSHNA CHINAPPA (SQUASH)

Joshna retained the Women’s Asian Individual Squash Championships crown, in May, this year, beating Hong Kong’s Annie Au at the National Squash Centre in Kuala Lumpur. She also reached the semifinals of the Oracle Netsuite Open, a PSA World Tour Gold event, in San Francisco and the Macau Open (PSA World Tour Bronze event). Additionally, she also made the quarterfinals of the CIB Black Ball Open in Cairo

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