

Dhawan, Kohli and Rahul fire as India takes series to the decider

The bowlers, too, join the party as the Men in Blue pull off a 36-run win in a high-scoring contest; Smith's effort goes in vain for Australia

AUS IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
RAJKOT

The 50-over game requires a group of individuals to chip in with vital contributions for a team to succeed. India couldn't have asked for a better occasion than Friday's must-win encounter against Australia for a cohesive effort.

Shikhar Dhawan laid the foundation for a massive total, thanks to solid partnerships with opener Rohit Sharma and captain Virat Kohli, who returned to his customary No. 3 position. K.L. Rahul, batting at an unaccustomed No. 5 slot, then ensured that India finished on a high of 340 for six on a flat pitch at the Saurashtra Cricket Association stadium.

Pandey's brilliant catch

Manish Pandey timed his jump to perfection and plucked the ball out of nowhere to send back the dangerous David Warner, putting Australia under pressure. Spin twins Ravindra Jadeja, the hometown hero, and Kuldeep Yadav struck vital blows in the middle overs even as Steve Smith threatened to run away with the game. The

pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Navdeep Saini – included in the place of Shardul Thakur – then came to the party as the Men in Blue sealed a 36-run win.

While India saw almost all its players making contributions, Smith and leggie Adam Zampa – who continued to finish on the right side of his 'mini-battle' with Kohli – lacked support from the others. The series will be now decided in Bengaluru on Sunday.

Asked to bat, Rohit and Dhawan gave India a solid start of 81 before the former was trapped in front by Zampa while attempting a sweep. Dhawan played some glorious shots and continued to prosper in the company of Kohli. The left-hander was looking good for a century before holing out in the deep for 96. Shreyas Iyer came and went, trying to swing Zampa and losing his stumps.

Kohli, who treated Zampa with respect and gave others the treatment, was brilliantly caught on the edge of the boundary, thanks to a relay catch by Ashton Agar and Mitchell Starc.

Manish Pandey, who came in for the injured Rishabh Pant, fell quickly. At 280



Shifting gears: Rahul accelerated at the right time to take India to a mammoth total. ■VIJAY SONEJI

I have been in decent form and very confident about my skill... so having a new responsibility and a new role is a blessing. I am enjoying my batting, so wherever I get to bat, I want to put up a good performance

K.L. RAHUL

for five in the 45th over, India was in danger of falling short of a challenging total

for the second time in succession.

However, Rahul took the game away from the Aussies, while justifying the faith shown in him as a middle-order batsman.

Off the 60 runs India scored in the last six overs, Rahul contributed 38 off 18 balls, including an astonishing assault on Starc.

The Karnataka player then impressed with his glove-work, having skipper Aaron Finch stumped off Jade-

ja. Despite Smith and Marnus Labuschagne – who batted for the first time in an ODI after not getting an opportunity on his debut in the first game in Mumbai – forging a 96-run partnership for the third wicket, Jadeja struck at a crucial juncture.

The left-armer enticed Labuschagne into an error, the ball landing into the long-off fielder's hands.

Kuldeep spun it India's way in his penultimate over, tempting Alex Carey into



Finding his range: Dhawan set the Indian innings rolling with a stroke-filled 96. ■VIJAY SONEJI

I think it sets up a nice Grand Finale, doesn't it? One-all going into Bengaluru, usually a pretty good batting wicket. I think it's going to be an exciting game. Really looking forward to it

STEVE SMITH

playing against the turn with a clever change of field. Smith, on 98, then played

on while trying to cut, as the fate of the game was sealed. Shami, though expensive, castled Ashton Turner and Pat Cummins off consecutive deliveries.

Richardson employed the long handle against Shami in

the penultimate over before Bumrah, who bowled two maiden overs and looked sharp, forced Zampa to edge behind.

Rahul snapped up the offering, making it a night to cherish for him and India.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA
Rohit Sharma lbw b Zampa 42 (44b, 6x4), Shikhar Dhawan c Starc b Richardson 96 (90b, 13x4, 1x6), Virat Kohli c Starc b Zampa 78 (76b, 6x4), Shreyas Iyer b Zampa 7 (17b, 1x4), K.L. Rahul run out 80 (52b, 6x4, 3x6), Manish Pandey c Agar b Richardson 2 (4b), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 20 (16b, 1x4), Mohammed Shami (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (b-5, lb-4, w-5): 14; Total (for six wkts. in 50 overs): 340.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-81 (Rohit, 13.3 overs), 2-184 (Dhawan, 28.4), 3-198 (Shreyas, 32.4), 4-276 (Kohli, 43.1), 5-280 (Pandey, 44.1), 6-338 (Rahul, 49.4).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING
Cummins 10-1-53-0, Starc 10-0-78-0, Richardson 10-0-73-2, Zampa 10-0-50-3, Agar 8-0-63-0, Labuschagne 2-0-14-0.

AUSTRALIA
David Warner c Pandey b Shami 15 (12b, 2x4), Aaron Finch st. Rahul b Jadeja 33 (48b, 3x4), Steve Smith b Kuldeep 98

(102b, 9x4, 1x6), Marnus Labuschagne c Shami b Jadeja 46 (47b, 4x4), Alex Carey c Kohli b Kuldeep 18 (17b, 1x6), Ashton Turner b Shami 13 (15b), Ashton Agar lbw b Saini 25 (25b, 3x4), Pat Cummins b Shami 0 (1b), Mitchell Starc c Rahul b Saini 6 (11b), Kane Richardson (not out) 24 (11b, 4x4, 1x6), Adam Zampa c Rahul b Bumrah 6 (6b, 1x4); Extras (lb-10, w-10): 20; Total (in 49.1 overs): 304.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-20 (Warner, 3.2), 2-82 (Finch, 15.1), 3-178 (Labuschagne, 30.5), 4-220 (Carey, 37.2), 5-221 (Smith, 37.5), 6-259 (Turner, 43.1), 7-259 (Cummins, 43.2), 8-274 (Agar, 46.1), 9-275 (Starc, 46.3).

INDIA BOWLING
Bumrah 9.1-2-32-1, Shami 10-0-77-3, Saini 10-0-62-2, Jadeja 10-0-58-2, Kuldeep 10-0-65-2.

Toss: Australia; **MoM:** Rahul. *India won by 36 runs to level the three-match series 1-1.*
Third and final ODI: January 19 (Sunday), Bengaluru, 1.30 p.m.

Injury to Rohit, Dhawan raises concerns

AMOL KARHADKAR
RAJKOT

Openers Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan suffered injuries during the second ODI, raising an alarm ahead of Sunday's decider in Bengaluru.

While Dhawan was hit in the ribs by a short ball from Pat Cummins, Rohit injured his left shoulder while diving on the boundary to stop a boundary in Australia's chase.

Though Dhawan carried on after receiving

treatment, he didn't field during the Australian innings. While a team spokesperson said Rohit was being assessed by the physio, he insisted that Dhawan "looks fine."

Bharat for Pant

Rishabh Pant, who suffered a concussion in the series-opener in Mumbai on Tuesday, is being monitored at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and K.S. Bharat was flown as a back-up ahead of Friday's game.

STAT SPHERE

1 The match saw the teams scoring the most runs (644: India 340, Australia 304) in an ODI in India without an individual century

3 Kuldeep becomes the joint-third fastest spinner (58 ins) to claim 100 ODI wickets

44 Rashid
53 Saqlain
58 Tahir
58 Kuldeep
60 Warner

3 Kuldeep is also the third quickest fastest to 100 ODI wickets for India, after Shami (56 ins) and Bumrah (57)

4 Rahul (27 ins) is the fourth fastest Indian to reach 1000 ODI runs, after Kohli (24), Dhawan (24) and Sidhu (25)



Bapu Nadkarni passes away

SPORTS BUREAU
MUMBAI

Former India all-rounder, Bapu Nadkarni, 86, breathed his last due to age-related ailments here on Friday.

Nadkarni, who played 41 Tests during the 50s and 60s, was ailing for quite some time, and passed away at his daughter Anuradha Khare's residence in Powai at 5.45 p.m.

Born in Nashik, Nadkarni – a left-arm spinner – was considered one of the most economical bowlers in the game, as he conceded just 1.67 runs per over in his Test career.

Incredible figures

The cricket fraternity still remembers Nadkarni's feat of bowling 21 successive maidens in the fourth Test against England in Madras in 1964. His spell of 32-27-5-0 is



Pinpoint accuracy: Bapu Nadkarni will be remembered for his long and economical spells. ■FILE PHOTO: VIVEK BENDRE

still considered one of the finest displays of bowling in the longer format of the game. In the nets, Nadkarni – who played International cricket between 1955 and 1967 – would bowl endlessly at a coin placed on a good length.

That, he later said, helped him improve his accuracy.

Even though he is remembered for his economical bowling, Nadkarni also scored 1414 runs in Tests, including a century against England and seven half-centuries, and 8880 runs in First Class cricket.

Nadkarni took 88 wickets in Tests and 500 wickets in 191 First Class appearances.

Lost a real champion, says Gavaskar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
RAJKOT

"Indian cricket has lost a real champion," said Sunil Gavaskar on Friday on hearing about Bapu Nadkarni's death.

"He came as assistant manager for quite a number of our tours. He was very encouraging. His favourite term was *chodo mat* (hang in there) which we all learnt from.

Gritty player

"He was gritty considering that he played in the days when gloves and thigh pads were not very good, as you would get hit, but he still hung in there, as he believed in *chodo mat*", Gavaskar said.

"Every time he was on a

tour he was very very helpful in terms of strategy. At lunch time or tea time, he would say try this if you were a fielding captain.

"He would tell bring this bowler, or ask this bowler to bowl round the wicket. He was fantastic."

"He was probably the main guy instrumental in having Sandeep Patil come back after a blow on his head.

"He was the one who kept urging Sandeep that 'it doesn't matter, you are here and you should go out and bat again'. Bapuji was the assistant manager on the tour.

"It was only because of him that Sandeep went on to score that 174 in the next Test because Bapuji was constantly there with him.

Stokes, Pope put England in command

ENGLAND IN SA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PORT ELIZABETH

Centuries by Ben Stokes and Ollie Pope, followed by two late wickets, put England in a dominant position on the second day of the third Test against South Africa at the St. George's Park on Friday.

England declared on 499 for nine and South Africa was struggling on 60 for two when rain brought an early close to a day which the hosts would probably prefer to forget.

Stokes (120) and Pope (135 not out) set up England's big total by putting on 203 for the fifth wicket.

They came together on the first day when their side was struggling at 148 for four.

England was already in a strong position when it

reached 426 for eight at tea. The 37 minutes after the break rubbed it in as Wood joined Pope.

Wood slammed five sixes in an innings of 42 off 23 balls, dealing out severe punishment to left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj before holing out.

There was a bizarre incident when Wood appeared

to have been caught off Rabada when the total was 467.

Come back... don't!

England captain Joe Root signalled a declaration but when Rabada was found to have sent down a no-ball after a check by the umpires, Root cancelled his decision and 32 runs were added as Pope cut loose.

SCOREBOARD

England – 1st innings: Z. Crawley c van der Dussen b Nortje 44, D. Sibley c Elgar b Nortje 36, J. Denly lbw b Maharaj 25, J. Root b Rabada 27, B. Stokes c Elgar b Paterson 120, O. Pope (not out) 135, J. Buttler c & b Maharaj 1, S. Curran c Elgar b Maharaj 44, D. Bess c Malan b Maharaj 1, M. Wood c Nortje b Maharaj 42; Extras (b-2, lb-14, nb-4, w-4): 24; Total (for nine wkts. decl. in 152 overs): 499.

Fall of wickets: 1-70, 2-103, 3-134, 4-148, 5-351, 6-354, 7-413,

8-426, 9-499.
South Africa bowling: Philander 16-5-41-0, Paterson 24-3-62-1, Rabada 28-7-97-2, Nortje 25-4-97-1, Maharaj 58-15-180-5, Elgar 1-0-6-0.
South Africa – 1st innings: D. Elgar (batting) 32, P. Malan c & b Bess 18, Z. Hamza c Pope b Bess 10, A. Nortje (batting) 0; Total (for two wkts. in 18 overs): 60.
Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-60.
England bowling: Broad 4-1-18-0, Curran 5-0-25-0, Bess 6-1-12-2, Wood 3-2-5-0.

Rabada out of fourth Test after rules breach

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PORT ELIZABETH

South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada will miss the fourth and final Test against England next week after his celebrations after taking England captain Joe Root's wicket upset match officials.

Rabada was found guilty of a Level 1 breach of the ICC's code of conduct.

He was also fined 15 % of his match fee and handed one demerit point. As it was his fourth demerit point in a 24-month period, Rabada incurred an automatic one-match ban.

India begins Olympic preparations in right earnest

Faces off against favourite the Netherlands in the first match of double-header

PRO HOCKEY

UTHRA GANESAN
BHUBANESWAR

Constantly under the spotlight with the invisible burden of history, the Indian men's hockey team will take its first step towards yet another Olympic dream with game one of the double-header against the Netherlands in its Hockey Pro League opener here on Saturday.

The upcoming six months would be the most comprehensive Olympic preparation for the team in recent times, both in quality and quantity.

Having withdrawn from the inaugural edition of the competition in 2019, 2020 would see the team take on

the world's top-eight teams in similar back-to-back games in the run-up to the Tokyo Games.

The coming weekend would be the first test in that series, in a format the team hasn't played too often.

The last time India played in such a format competitively was during the Olympic Qualifiers in November 2019.

But the opposition Russia would hardly have posed the kind of challenge that the Netherlands will.

Also with most European players used to this format in their club engagements, the visitors, for once, should be in a more familiar territory than the hosts.

The previous time the two met, the Dutch came back



Uphill task: The Indian men's hockey team – at a training session on Friday – will have to step it up against the Netherlands. ■BISWARANJAN ROUT

from being a goal down to end India's World Cup campaign in the quarterfinals in

2018. India coach Graham Reid, then, was on the opposition bench as deputy to

Max Caldas and would be the insider in the Indian management.

In the year since then, India has had outings against teams largely ranked lower while the Netherlands finished third in the inaugural HPL. Adding to the excitement – or pressure – would be the fact there would be a winner every game with drawn matches heading into shootouts.

Little to separate

Despite the general impression, there is little to separate the two sides in recent times with India winning four to the Netherlands' five with a draw in the preceding 10 outings.

The difference, though, is

in the fact that while India's wins against top sides have remained occasional high points in its kitty, the Netherlands has gone on to make the podium of major events more often than not.

That experience of being able to grab the big moments would be the biggest advantage for this Dutch side.

India captain Manpreet Singh admitted that most of the team's recent games could have gone either way but it was the ability to take the half-chances that made the difference.

On Saturday and Sunday, it would be more of the same.

Reid, across the line now, would be hoping to finish on the winning side yet again.

IN BRIEF

Ghafari magic leaves South Africa spellbound

KIMBERLEY

Afghanistan shocked South Africa in the opening match of the Under-19s World Cup on Friday, thanks to leg-spinner Shafiqullah Ghafari's stunning spell of 9.1-2-15-6.

The scores: South Africa 129 in 29.1 overs (Bryce Parsons 40, Ghafari 6/15) lost to Afghanistan 130/3 in 25 overs (Imran 57, Ibrahim Zadran 52).

India-A starts with a win

LINCOLN (NEW ZEALAND)

India-A top-order warmed up for the upcoming one-day series with a 92-run win against New Zealand XI in the first of the two practice games here on Friday.

The scores: India-A 279/8 in 50 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 93, Suryakumar Yadav 50, Shubman Gill 50) bt New Zealand XI 187 in 41.1 overs (Jakob Bhula 50, Khaleel Ahmed 4/43).