

Nice Garry leaves nice guys in shade

Australia take control of the third Test against Black Caps after off-spinner Nathan Lyon takes five

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
SYDNEY, JANUARY 5

AUSTRALIA TOOK a commanding 243-run lead over plucky New Zealand in the third Test in Sydney on Sunday, looking set for a clean sweep of the series. The Australians dismissed the Black Caps for 251 to lead by 203 runs on the first innings before batting a second time in a bid to build an overwhelming total with two days remaining.

At stumps on day three, the hosts were 40 without loss with David Warner on 23 and Joe Burns not out 16, and were expected to bat on for some time on the fourth day. Off-spinner Nathan Lyon captured five for 68 to lead the Australian bowling attack, with Kiwi Test debutant Glenn Phillips top-scoring with a charmed knock of 52.

"We're in a very good position here," said Lyon, who has now taken a career 385 Test wickets. "A lot of work to do in the morning and we have to see what lead we the batsmen want to get to. It is pretty special to play here in front of your home crowd, in front of your family and friends. Nice to go up on the honours board."

Phillips, who only flew in on the eve of the Test as cover for a team weakened by a virus outbreak, was dropped twice and given a reprieve when caught off a no-ball. Lyon put down the two caught-and-bowled chances when Phillips was on two and 17. The Kiwi batsman dodged another bullet on 28 when he was caught by Travis Head at deep mid-wicket only to be recalled when James



Nathan Lyon took five for 68. AP

Pattinson was found to have over-stepped. Phillips hit a cracking pull shot off Pat Cummins to raise his debut half-century before Cummins got him two balls later, ripping through his defences to take off-stump for 52. Lyon bowled Will Somerville and Neil Wagner for ducks and fast bowler Matt Henry came out to bat despite fracturing his left hand earlier in the match. Henry ducked out of the way of a couple of Mitchell Starc thunderbolts directed at his body before he was stumped off Lyon's bowling to end the New Zealand innings.

It was the longest innings of a disastrous lost series for the Kiwis, bettering the 71 overs they faced in the second innings of the second Test in Melbourne. The Black Caps lost three wickets in the middle session with the experienced Ross Taylor out lbw to Cummins for 22 in the second over after lunch.

Taylor remains 20 runs away from becoming the highest-scoring New Zealand batsman in Tests, behind Stephen Fleming (7,172). Wicketkeeper BJ Watling chopped a wide Starc delivery on to his stumps for nine off 30 balls to put his team under more pressure. Colin de Grandhomme was needlessly run out for 20, taking on Matthew Wade's throw from the deep to wicketkeeper Tim Paine while attempting a second run.

Lyon grabbed two key wickets in the morning session, removing Melbourne Test centurion Tom Blundell and recalled Jeet Raval. Raval, who was dropped after twin batting failures as an opener in the first Test in Perth, batted positively at number three before he was leg before wicket to Lyon for 31 off 58 balls.

Tom Latham was out two balls later in the next over from Cummins, done by a fuller delivery and chipping straight to Starc at mid-on. The new skipper, deputising for the sidelined Kane Williamson, was denied a deserved half-century on 49 in his 133-ball vigil.

Blundell fell in the day's fifth over, bowled by Lyon for 34.

Bushfires backdrop

The Sydney Test is being played against the backdrop of one of Australia's most devastating bushfire seasons, with at least 24 people losing their lives in blazes raging across the country, including on the outskirts of Sydney. Play will be suspended in the match at the umpire's discretion, should smoke significantly affect air quality or visibility, but the sky above the ground has remained largely clear so far.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 454 and 40/0 (Warner 23*, Burns 16*) lead New Zealand 251 (Phillips 52, Latham 49, Lyon 5-68, Cummins 3-44) by 243 runs.



APOCALYPSE NOW

Players practise ahead of the ASB Tennis Classic as the sky in Auckland turns orange as smoke from the Australia wildfires arrives in New Zealand on Sunday. *New Zealand Herald via AP*

Never lost my swing, blaming Chappell for it is a cover-up: Irfan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 5

FORMER INDIA pacer Irfan Pathan on Sunday said he never lost his swing, contrary to the general perception at that time, and added blaming then coach Greg Chappell for his downfall was a cover-up.

Pathan, 35, announced his retirement here on Saturday, saying "most players start their India career at 27-28 but I ended up playing my last game at that stage".

Pathan was 27 when he made his final appearance in 2012. There was also a time when there was speculation over the left-arm pacer's intention to play all three formats.

"All these discussions...people talking about Greg Chappell they are just covering up. (The discussion that) Irfan was not interested, it was coming from somewhere. All the aura

they made that Irfan lost his swing, people need to understand, that you are not going to get the same kind of swing that you get in 10 overs. I was still getting the swing," Pathan said.

"People talk about my performance, but my job was different. I was given job to contain because I was bowling first change. I had been told this is your job. I remember getting dropped after winning the game in Sri Lanka in 2008, who gets dropped after winning the game for the country without any reason?" he questioned.

Pathan featured in 29 Tests (1105 runs and 100 wickets), 120 ODIs (1544 runs and 173 wickets) and 24 T20 Internationals (172 runs and 28 wickets).

Many former players feel he could have played for much longer. Form and injury issues prevented him from realising his true potential. After the 2008 IPL, questions were raised over Pathan's willingness to play all

'I remember getting dropped after winning the game in Sri Lanka in 2008, who gets dropped after winning the game for the country without any reason?'

three formats. Pathan, however, asserted that it was never the case.

"Yes, I always wanted to play all three formats. In 2009-2010, I had a back injury, and I was struggling to go to Mumbai, Ahmedabad, in Bangalore to check my back. I used to go through the scan, which is not good for your body, but I used to go through that and have different kinds of scans to actually know what is exactly happening with my back.

"Unfortunately we didn't have those kind of machines at that time which (would) make clear that why I am getting back pain. It eventually turned out to be five fractures, disc prolapse and a crack. I was struggling for two years with back injury and that back injury kept going (getting) worse, but I didn't stop playing Ranji trophy."

Pathan said despite all the challenges he kept pushing himself.

"My speed went down during that time because I was not fully fit. I just kept pushing myself. It was because for the love of the game and the red ball moving away from my hand."

"I was leading Baroda side as well in Ranji Trophy. If that was the case, why would a player, who was well settled in IPL, well settled in ODIs, play nine-day cricket in 10-days (Champions League, three day game versus England and Ranji match against Karnataka)? I scored 100 in the game and

bowled 25 overs. Why should I do that? I love playing for the country and wanted to make a comeback to Test cricket," he said.

He also praised his former captains Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and Anil Kumble.

"When I came into the Indian team, Ganguly knew I could do well with the new ball in Australia. He eventually gave me the confidence. I think that was the start," he said. "When Dravid became the captain, he utilised my potential one step ahead. (He) used me higher in the batting order (when) besides bowling with the new ball," he said.

"Anil bhai was the kind of senior I was lucky to have alongside Sachin *paaji* (Tendulkar), who always gave me the right advice.

"His leadership was outstanding. He is matured in handling tough situations and he showed that during the Monkeygate episode," he signed off.

Sibley, Root put England ahead after Anderson, Stokes records

Cape Town: A gritty 85 not out from opener Dom Sibley ground down South Africa's bowlers as England took control on the third day of the second Test against South Africa at Newlands. Sibley, playing in only his fourth Test, came in during the morning session after James Anderson had picked up the last two South African wickets to finish with 5-40 and give England a first innings lead of 46.

By the close, Sibley was still there and England had reached 218 for four, stretching their overall lead to 264. Sibley's 85, his first Test half-century, came off a painstaking 222 balls in just under six hours and included 13 boundaries.

It was slow going but it consolidated England's advantage after Anderson and Ben Stokes combined to secure an important first innings lead. Anderson completed his 28th Test five-wicket haul — an England record — and Stokes caught last man Anrich Nortje to set an England Test record of five catches by a fielder.

A battle of attrition

Zak Crawley made a streaky 25 when England started their second innings, with Sibley making only three in an opening stand of 28, before the day settled into a battle of attrition.

Sibley and Joe Denly (31) used up 33 overs in adding 73 for the second wicket before Denly hooked Nortje to fine leg.

England captain Joe Root was more aggressive as he and Sibley added 116 for the third wicket. Root made 61 off 98 balls before being caught at slip off Dwaine Pretorius shortly before the close. The ball that got Root was an exception in deviating from a crack outside off stump that was far more of a factor on the first two days.

Dom Bess, who suffered a golden duck in the first innings, came in as nightwatchman and survived until the last ball of the day when he was adjudged to have gloved a bouncer from Nortje to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock, thus collecting a 'pair'.

Those two late wickets marked the high point of the day for the toiling South Africans who will be wary of the potential damage that Stokes and Jos Buttler could inflict on Monday.

On a cool, overcast day, South Africa's bowlers were unable to gain any swing, either conventional or reverse, while the application of the heavy roller before play and after the South African innings seemed to have removed some of the life the pitch had shown on the first two days.

The 24-year-old Sibley came into the match having scored only 71 runs at an average of 14.20 in his first three Tests but the tall, strongly-built opener showed the powers of concentration and patience that made him a heavy scorer for Warwickshire in the 2019 county championship.

Despite the late wickets, England, needing a win to level the four-match World Test Championship, played themselves into a commanding position with two days remaining.

South Africa will be able to claim a second new ball after one over on Monday and will look to strike early if they are to find their way back into the match.

Evergreen Anderson

Anderson took both South Africa's remaining wickets as the hosts added only eight runs to their overnight total. Stokes held his fifth catch of the innings, all taken at second slip to dismiss last batsman Nortje off Anderson's bowling. It was the first time in 1,020 Test matches that an England fielder held five catches. There had been 23 instances of four catches in an innings, most recently by England captain Joe Root against Ireland at Lord's last year.

BRIEF SCORES: England 218/4 (Sibley 85*, Root 61) and 269 all out lead South Africa 223 all out (Anderson 5-40) by 264 runs. **AFF**

[SPORTS BAR]



Pliskova looks to former Murray coach

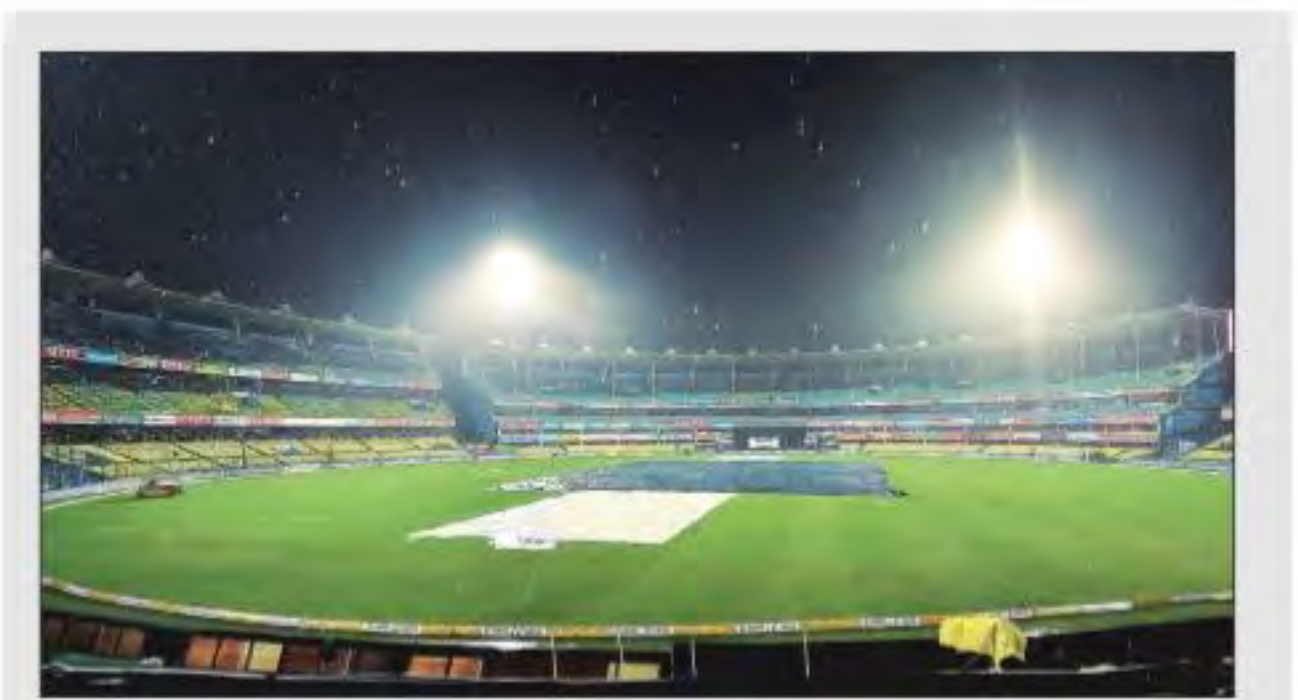
World No.2 Karolina Pliskova is hoping Andy Murray's former coach can help her take the next step up as she targets a Grand Slam breakthrough and reclaiming the top ranking. The tall Czech ditched Spaniard Conchita Martinez in November despite winning a single-season career-high four titles in 2019. She has since hired Venezuelan coach Daniel Vallverdu with former Ukraine Fed Cup player Olga Savchuk — a long-time friend — also joining her team. "I didn't want to stay where I was," she said at the Brisbane International on Sunday ahead of opening the new season with the defence of her title. "He also had stints with Thomas Berdych and Grigor Dimitrov, but has not worked before with a top women's player," she added.

Mohun Bagan beat Real Kashmir 2-0

There was bone-chilling cold. Then there was a Real Kashmir outfit used to such extreme conditions but Mohun Bagan still, making light of both, won their I-League match 2-0 here on Sunday. After a barren first half, Joseba Beitia (71st minute) and Nongdamba Naorem (73rd) scored for the Kolkata giants in a span of two minutes, shattering the hopes of home fans. Meanwhile, Indian Arrows played out a 1-1 draw with NEROCA FC in the I-League here on Sunday. Sushil Meitei gave the visitors the lead in the 24th minute before Vikram Partap Singh equalised for the hosts three minutes before the end of first half.

Five-star Kerala end winless run in style

Kerala Blasters ended their 10-match winless run in the Hero Indian Super League with a convincing 5-1 demolition of Hyderabad FC here on Sunday. Bartholomew Ogbeche (33', 75') scored twice in a contest that saw the visitors score the opener through Bobo (14'). Vlatko Drobacov (39'), Raphael Messi Bouli (45') and Seityasen Singh (59') also managed to add to the hosts' dominant display at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. It was the first time that the Kochi-based side scored five goals in an ISL game and the result takes them to the seventh spot in the table while Hyderabad continue at the bottom.



The umpires made three inspections before deciding that the outfield had not dried enough to commence the match. PTI

Rain washes out India-Sri Lanka T20I

The first T20 International between India and Sri Lanka was called off without a ball being bowled due to wet outfield, caused by a spell of heavy rain just after the toss, here on Sunday. The umpires held several inspections but the damp patches on the pitch did not allow the match to start, much to the disappointment of fans who had gathered in large numbers to watch their favourite stars in action. The cut off for a five-over shootout was 9.46pm but the outfield could not be prepared in time. The groundsman even used vacuum drier to remove the damp patches on the pitch, but it did not help much. The second match of the three-match series will be played on Tuesday in Indore while the final game is scheduled to be held in Pune on January 10, asprit Bumrah, who was out of action for four months due to stress fractures in his back, was named in the eleven by skipper Virat Kohli, who won the toss and elected to bowl in the team's first match of the new year.

Anahat Singh reaches British Junior Open final

Anahat Singh made the final in the U-13 girls category at the prestigious British Junior Open, beating Egyptian Janna Galal here on Sunday. One more Indian could make the final here and that is Veer Chotrani in the U-19 boy category with his semifinal to held later on Sunday. The morning session belonged to Anahat after her gruelling semifinal against second seed Janna. The India lost the first game only to start a fight that ultimately took the match to a scintillating fifth game. The excitement reached a crescendo in the decider with Janna racing to a 7-1 lead and then Anahat catching up and saving four match balls.

Lagat, Alemu return to Mumbai Marathon

Defending champions Cosmas Lagat and Workesh Alemu will return to Tata Mumbai Marathon, which will be held here on January 19. Kenya's Lagat won the event last year in decisive fashion, when he broke away from the rest of the leading pack around 29 km into the race. He clocked 2:09:15 in 2019, the second fastest winning time in the history of the Mumbai Marathon. Having come home just 40 seconds outside the course record of 2:08:35, set by his compatriot Gideon Kipketer in 2016, Lagat will be back on the start line, motivated not only by the possibility of pocketing another \$45,000 first prize cheque, but also the \$15,000 on offer for a course record.



Hathurasingha demands \$5mn compensation

Sacked coach Chandika Hathurasingha has demanded \$5 million in compensation from Sri Lanka Cricket over the premature termination of his contract, an official said Sunday. The former Sri Lankan Test star and coach made the claim after the two sides failed to agree the terms of his termination last summer. "He has sent a letter of demand asking for \$5 million," board secretary Mohan de Silva told AFP. Details were not immediately available, but the Sunday Island newspaper said Hathurasingha had sought his full salary for the remaining 18 months of his contract which amounted to just over a million dollars. He has also claimed that his reputation as an international coach suffered as a result of what he called the wrongful termination. His claim of \$5 million includes damages as well as the wages he says are due to him.

