

Ton-up Jaiswal leads India's march into the final

Sushant's three-wicket haul helps the team bowl out Pakistan for just 172

U-19 WORLD CUP

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
POTCHEFSTROOM (SOUTH AFRICA)

Defending champion India cruised to a 10-wicket win over Pakistan here on Tuesday to reach the Under-19 Cricket World Cup final for the seventh time.

India, the record four-time winner of the competition, dismissed Pakistan for 172 in 43.1 overs before comfortably knocking off the runs with 88 balls to spare.

India will play either New Zealand or Bangladesh, which meet in the second semifinal, for the title at the same venue on Sunday.

Pakistan will contest the third-place play-off in Benoni on Saturday.

Yashasvi Jaiswal struck an unbeaten 105 off 113 balls, completing his century and sealing the victory in style with a six over deep mid-wicket.

Dream come true

"It's a dream come true for me. To be able to do this for my country is a great feeling.

"To score a hundred against Pakistan in a World Cup semifinal is something I can't put in words," said Jaiswal.

"They bowled well initially and we wanted to ride that out and we knew we could dominate them after that."

Left-hander Jaiswal, who was snapped up by the Rajasthan Royals in the 2020 IPL auction, smacked eight fours and four sixes as he took over as the tournament's leading run-scorer.

Able support

He was ably supported in a leisurely chase by Divyaansh Saxena who finished 59 not out, his second fifty of the competition.

Jaiswal earlier claimed the key wicket of Pakistan opener Haider Ali (56) with his part-time legspin as Pakistan collapsed from 96 for two in an innings where just three players made double digits.

Ali and captain Rohail Nazir (62) helped Pakistan recover after losing Mohammad Huraiera and Fahad Munir cheaply, but only Mohammad Harris, who hit a brisk 21 off 15 balls, provided any additional contribution.

Left-arm seamer Sushant Mishra took three for 28 while right-arm quick Kartik Tyagi and legspinner Ravi Bishnoi collected two wickets apiece.

"The pitch was good, and we didn't put enough runs on the board," said Pakistan skipper Nazir.



Commanding show: Yashasvi Jaiswal struck an unbeaten 105 off 113 balls as India raced to a 10-wicket victory. •PTI

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN

Haider Ali c Bishnoi b Jaiswal 56 (77b, 9x4), Mohammad Huraiera c Saxena b Sushant 4 (6b, 1x4), Fahad Munir c Ankolekar b Bishnoi 0 (16b), Rohail Nazir c Tilak b Sushant 62 (102b, 6x4), Qasim Akram run out 9 (16, 1x4), Mohammad Harris c Saxena b Ankolekar 21 (15b, 1x4, 1x6), Irfan Khan b Tyagi 3 (9b), Abbas Afridi lbw b

Bishnoi 2 (3b), Tahir Hussain c Jurel b Tyagi 2 (10b), Aamir Ali c Veer b Sushant 1 (6b), Mohammad Amir Khan (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (b-1, w-10, nb-1): 12; Total (in 43.1 overs): 172.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (Huraiera, 1.6 overs), 2-34 (Munir, 8.5), 3-96 (Haider, 25.3), 4-118 (Akram, 30.3), 5-146 (Harris, 34.4), 6-156 (Irfan, 37.2), 7-163 (Afridi, 38.1), 8-169 (Nazir, 41.4), 9-172 (Tahir, 42.6).

INDIA BOWLING

Tyagi 8-0-32-2, Sushant 8.1-0-28-3, Bishnoi 10-0-46-2, Akash 7-0-25-0, Ankolekar 7-0-29-1, Jaiswal 3-0-11-1.

INDIA

Yashasvi Jaiswal (not out) 105 (113b, 8x4, 4x6), Divyaansh Saxena (not out) 59 (99b, 6x4); Extras: (lb-2, w-10): 12; Total (for no loss in 35.2 overs): 176.

PAKISTAN BOWLING

Tahir 6-1-17-0, Akram 8-0-37-0, Amir Khan 5-1-20-0, Afridi 7-0-50-0, Aamir Ali 5.2-0-38-0, Munir 4-0-12-0.

Toss: Pakistan.

Man-of-the-Match: Jaiswal. India won by 10 wickets with 14.4 overs to spare and entered the final. Final on Feb. 9 at 1.30 p.m. IST

de Kock scores century, SA wins first ODI

REUTERS
CAPE TOWN

Captain Quinton de Kock smashed a sparkling century as South Africa eased to a seven-wicket victory against England in the opening ODI here on Tuesday.

After being put into bat, England overcame a top-order wobble to post 258/8 in 50 overs, helped by a well-constructed 87 from Joe Denley in the side's first ODI outing since lifting the World Cup at Lord's last July.

But de Kock (107) and Temba Bavuma (98) put on 173 for the second wicket as South Africa reached 259/3 to secure victory with 14 balls to spare.

de Kock reached his 15th ODI century in 106 balls before he was bowled by the part-time spin of Joe Root.

The second ODI will be played in Durban on Friday, with the three-match series ending in Johannesburg on Sunday.

The scores: England 258/8 in 50 overs (J. Denly 87, C. Woakes 40, J. Roy 32, T. Shamsi 3/38) lost to South Africa 259/3 in 47.4 overs (Q. de Kock 107, T. Bavuma 98).

Prajnesh brings cheer to Indian fans

Defeats Maden in straight sets; Kadhe goes down to Vesely

TATA OPEN

N. SUDARSHAN
PUNE

India No.1 Prajnesh Gunneswaran won his first ATP Tour level main draw match at home following a 7-6(4), 7-6(5) defeat of Germany's Yannick Maden in the Tata Open Maharashtra at the Balewadi Stadium here on Tuesday.

Prajnesh's one hour and 38 minute win over the World No. 131 brought some much-needed cheer to the home crowd which had earlier in the evening seen a third Indian crash out when Arjun Kadhe was beaten 6-2, 6-4 by Czech Jiri Vesely.

Prajnesh started the match with three quickfire holds, giving away just two points. Maden was less clinical but protected his serve equally well. But at 3-4, a bout of nervousness, saw Maden shank a routine forehand and double fault, thereby conceding the crucial break to make it 5-3.

But the home favourite handed the break right back, courtesy a poor service game that saw him double fault twice. Prajnesh continued to wobble and at 5-5 a string of unforced errors gifted Maden a break opportunity. The fans heaved a sigh of relief when Prajnesh saved it with a fine inside-out forehand.

The match, inevitably, slipped into a tie-break but two backhand errors by Prajnesh allowed Maden to go 3-0 ahead. But the Indian dragged himself back to restore parity and he was



All grit: Prajnesh kept his cool to oust Maden. •R. RAGU

helped in no small measure by his opponent who dumped two forehands into the net. With a huge ace and a service winner Prajnesh went 6-3 up. The set was had two points later when a Maden forehand sailed long.

Little to separate the two

The first game of the second set stretched to deuce with the Maden serve coming under pressure. But for that, there was little to separate the two in the first 10 games.

Prajnesh had a 30-30 on the Maden serve but two wide returns put paid to his hopes. The Indian held to love to stretch the match into another tiebreak.

Prajnesh appeared to have had the contest firmly in his grasp when he gained a 4-2

lead, but let it slip by giving away three points in a row. What he required at 4-5 were steady nerves and he showed he had them in plenty when he executed a tough overhead and followed it up with an ace.

He sealed the match on his first match point with a crunching forehand winner. "I held up quite well" Prajnesh said. "I served well, used my forehand well. The wrist and the elbow felt fine. It was much closer to my regular style. I am happy."

In doubles, Leander Paes and Mathew Ebden outplayed second seeds Divij Sharan and Artem Sitak 6-2, 7-6(5).

The results (first round):

Prajnesh Gunneswaran bt Yannick Maden (Ger) 7-6(4), 7-6(5); James Duckworth (Aus) bt Peter Gojowczyk (Ger) 7-6(5), 6-4; Jiri Vesely (Cze) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 6-4; Egor Gerasimov (Blr) bt Paolo Lorenzi (Ita) 6-2, 6-3; Ilya Ivashka (Blr) bt Evgeny Donskoy (Rus) 6-3, 6-2.

Nikola Milojevic (Srb) bt Antoine Hoang (Fra) 7-6(5), 6-4; Roberto Marcara (Ita) bt Lukas Rosol (Cze) 6-3, 6-2.

Doubles: Leander Paes & Mathew Ebden (Aus) bt Divij Sharan & Artem Sitak (Nzl) 6-2, 7-6(5).

On Monday: Salvatore Caruso (Ita) bt Ramkumar Ramanathan 3-6, 6-4, 7-5.

Warriors beat Superstarz

Both teams have already made it to the semifinals

PBL

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

In an inconsequential match with both the teams having already made it to the semifinals, North-Eastern Warriors scored a 4-3 win over Chennai Superstarz in the Premier Badminton League championship here on Tuesday.

It was evident Superstarz decided to give young talent like K. Sathish Kumar and S. Sankar Muthuswamy a feel of what it means to be on the court in such a high-profile league.

In the first men's singles match, Kaushal Dharmam of Warriors got the better of Sathish.

The 23-year-old, trained by Uday Pawar, scored an easy first-game win. But in the second, he was surprised by his 18-year-old opponent's tenacity.

In men's doubles, Superstarz's B. Sumeeth Reddy and Dhruv Kapila downed Warriors' Bodin Isara and G. Krishna Prasad after the latter put up a terrific fight in the second game.

World No. 30 Kirsty Gilmore won the Trump match for Superstarz against Asmita Chaliha.



Tough one: Kirsty Gilmore won the Trump match for Chennai against Asmita Chaliha. •NAGARA GOPAL

For 16-year-old S. Sankar Muthuswamy of Superstarz, the youngest ever to play in the PBL, it was a very satisfying outing against World No. 18 Lee Cheuk Yiu.

Muthuswamy impressed many with his solid defence and court movements.

With team scores tied 3-3, Warriors' Lee Yong Dae and Kim Ha defeated Dhruv Kapila and Sanjana Santosh.

Convincing win

Later, B. Sai Praneeth of Bengaluru Raptors, came up with a vintage performance under pressure to outsmart P. Kashyap, while World No. 39 Brice Leverdez out-slugged Shreyash Jaiswal (T) 15-12, 10-15, 15-10; Chang Peng Soon & Eom Hye Won bt Kim Gi Jung & Pia Zebadiah 15-8, 15-12.

The results: North-Eastern Warriors bt Chennai Superstarz 4-3 [Kaushal Dharmam bt K. Sathish Kumar 15-3, 15-11; Bodin Isara & G. Krishna Prasad lost to B. Sumeeth Reddy & Dhruv Kapila 13-15, 14-15; Asmita Chaliha lost to Kirsty Gilmore (T) 12-15, 11-15; Lee Cheuk Yiu (T) bt S. Sankar Muthuswamy 15-8, 15-11; Lee Yong Dae & Kim Ha Na bt Dhruv Kapila & Sanjana Santosh 15-11, 15-9].

Bengaluru Raptors bt Mumbai Rockets 5-0 [Arun George & Rian Agung Saputro lost to Kim Gi Jung & Kim Sa Rang 15-13, 8-15, 10-15; Tai Tzu Ying bt Shreyanshi Pradeshi 15-8, 15-12; B. Sai Praneeth (T) bt P. Kashyap 15-14, 14-15, 15-14; Brice Leverdez bt Shreyash Jaiswal (T) 15-12, 10-15, 15-10; Chang Peng Soon & Eom Hye Won bt Kim Gi Jung & Pia Zebadiah 15-8, 15-12].

Tatenda Taibu and the horrors of a life outside the charmed circle



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

First they tried to bribe him with money and promises of prime farmland. When that failed, the Deputy Information Minister called him to his office and casually threw an envelope across to him. It wasn't more money. It contained pictures of those presumably killed by the regime.

Tatenda Taibu knew something like this would happen when he stood up to the corrupt cricket board run by President Robert Mugabe's men. He was just 22, had been leading the national team for nearly two years, and realized that he had to leave the country.

His son was just a few months old, his wife had nearly been kidnapped, and they were followed by what looked like official vehicles everywhere they went. Threatening telephone calls were made, false stories spread.

Better conditions

All skipper Taibu had done was ask for better conditions and financial deals for his players. Cricketers in Zimbabwe missed out on much

of the money provided by the International Cricket Council (ICC) thanks to high-level corruption in the administration. The captain himself was paid in US dollars while the rest had to make do in the local currency as inflation galloped.

Exile and the ICC ban on Zimbabwe cost Taibu many years of international cricket. Despite all that he has been through - delineated without sentimentality or self-pity in his autobiography, *Keeper of Faith* - he looks fit enough to play for his country. He is just 36, younger than current international Jimmy Anderson of England.

But, like Henry Olonga, who too raised his voice (along with Andy Flower) at the 2003 World Cup, Taibu had to retire in his 20s. He was good enough to be in the national squad at 16 (when still in school), play for his country at 17, be named vice-captain to Flower at 18 and become the youngest Test captain at 20, younger than Tiger Pataudi was when he led (Afghanistan's) Rashid Khan broke that record by a few days recently). He was the poster boy of Zimbabwe's development programme, emerging from the township of Highfield in Harare.

Strength of character

To have the strength of character to walk away from a comfortable life as a national hero and take on the authorities is as rare as it is commendable; it is rarer among sportsmen.

Taibu's book should be recommended reading for Indian players - not so much to inspire protests as to give them a more balanced perspective on the cricketing world.

These have been Zimbabwe cricket's heroes - players whose impact has gone beyond the game. In 2003, there was the black armband protest by Olonga and Flower "mourning the death of democracy in Zimbabwe".

They had to flee the country for focusing the attention on the corrupt and murderous ways of President Robert Mugabe and his government.

Here in India, with the national team leading the rankings and with the top players earning in millions of dollars, it might be difficult to understand what teams with less money, less exposure, fewer players to choose from go through. Taibu has written about the galloping rate of inflation in the country.

"A friend told me the story of how he walked 15km to the bank to pick up his wages, and walked back 15km to save money. He arrived home that night with his money but when he woke up the next day inflation had risen so much that his monthly wage was enough to buy three oranges."

When Taibu first led a protest, his teammates stood behind him, but very soon they turned and signed separate contracts with the cricket board. It was a betrayal, but one that Taibu empathises with now, although he

felt differently at the time. "I realised that I had been swimming across an ocean for players who wouldn't jump a puddle for me," he wrote.

Insight

Taibu who lives and coaches in England has the makings of a top international coach (he was briefly in the KKR squad at the IPL). Here's an insight into how he played the two great spinners of his time: "For Muthiah Muralitharan, if you saw the back of his hand with the thumb sticking out, that was the doosra. If you didn't see the thumb but saw the ball coming out of the back of the hand, that was the ball that went straight on..."

For Anil Kumble, he focused on the little finger of the bowling hand which conveyed the messages to him.

Taibu returned to Zimbabwe following exile in Bangladesh, South Africa and England, and later became a selector. "Tatenda" in shona language means "Thank you, we are grateful", and there is much in his story, including his spiritual journey, that is moving. Taibu's gratitude for everything shines through too.

Alongside Alan Butcher's *The Good Murungu*, Duncan Fletcher's autobiography *Behind The Shades*, Olonga's *Blood, Sweat and Treason: My Story*, Taibu's *Keeper of Faith* gives life to Zimbabwe's recent cricket literature.

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