

Sri Lanka claim historic series win in SA



Sri Lanka cricket team celebrate winning their two five-day cricket Tests against South Africa at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth, South Africa on Feb 23. (AP)

Fernando, Mendis star

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Feb 23, (RTRS): Oshada Fernando and Kusal Mendis struck unbeaten half-centuries as Sri Lanka claimed a historic eight-wicket win in the second and final Test at St George's Park to become the first Asian side to win a Test series in South Africa.

Prior to the series, Sri Lanka had not won a game in any format since October but comfortably chased down a victory target of 197 on the third day for a 2-0 triumph.

Sri Lanka claimed a thrilling first Test victory in Durban by one wicket and outplayed South Africa in the second, setting up their victory by skittling the hosts for 128 in their second innings on Friday.

Mendis scored 84 and Fernando made 75, putting on an unbroken stand of 163 for the third wicket as they pummelled the much-vaunted South African bowling attack on a wicket that became easier to bat on through the Test.



Sri Lanka's batsman Oshada Fernando plays a shot on day two of the second cricket Test match between South Africa and Sri Lanka at St. George's Park in Port Elizabeth, South Africa on Feb 22. (AP)

"It's a great feeling for me and the team. It's not easy when you come to South Africa, so to win the series 2-0 is brilliant," Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne said at the post-match presentation.

"It has been a lot of hard work, but the guys did really well and enjoyed it a lot, which is why I think we created history."

"This victory is dedicated to the Sri Lanka fans who have continued to support us because they were always behind us when we were losing. We wanted to do something here for them."

Sri Lanka had resumed on the third morning on 60 for two, though effectively three down with spinner Lasith Embuldeniya out of the Test with a broken thumb.

As has been the case through the series, Sri Lankan batsmen looked to attack the home bowlers.

Fernando, who made his debut in

the series, completed his maiden half-century off 69 balls, providing the perfect foil for the more aggressive Mendis.

Sri Lanka have now won two of their last six Test series, with both those victories coming against South Africa. They defeated the Proteas at home last July.

It marked another key breakthrough for Asian teams after India won a first Test series in Australia earlier in the season, suggesting tours to countries with pacy and bouncy wickets are becoming less daunting.

South Africa, however, witnessed their run of seven consecutive home Test series wins come to an end and captain Faf du Plessis said their misfiring batsmen must shoulder the blame.

"I thought we were poor with the bat throughout the series," Du Plessis said. "I thought in general through the series both teams probably didn't perform with the bat on two pitches that were very conducive to scoring runs."

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Hetmyer hits magnificent unbeaten 104 from 83 balls

Windies fight back to level series with England

BARBADOS, Feb 23, (RTRS): West Indies produced a dramatic comeback to beat England by 26 runs in Barbados on Friday and level their five-match one-day series at 1-1.

The hosts, who ended a 10-match losing streak in one-day internationals against England, made 289 for six with left-hander Shimron Hetmyer hitting a magnificent unbeaten 104 from 83 balls, including four sixes.

Chris Gayle, who scored a century in the opening match of the series won by England, had laid the foundation with a solid 50 from 63 balls.

But it was Hetmyer, the 22-year-old Guyanese, who got the crowd on their feet with his flamboyant innings including some powerful improvised strokes as well as sensible accumulation.

The century was Hetmyer's fourth in the format at international level and suggests he could be a player to watch in the World Cup later this year.

But having chased down 361 at the Kensington Oval on Wednesday, England would have been con-



West Indies' Oshane Thomas bowls against England during the second One Day International cricket match at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados, Feb 22. (AP)

used their reviews.

Left-arm seamer Sheldon Cottrell returned to the attack and won the game for the Caribbean side with the wickets of Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid – celebrating with his trademark military salute.

Cottrell, a Jamaican Defence Force soldier brought into the side as an extra bowler, ended with his career-best ODI figures of 5-46.

Carlos Brathwaite got the final wicket when Liam Plunkett held out to Holder at long-off and England were dismissed for 263 to the delight of the Kensington Oval crowd.

Holder was quick to praise his key men.

"I am really pleased, credit to Hetty (Hetmyer), he set it up on a sticky wicket, and credit for the way we defended it, led by Sheldon Cottrell," he said.

"When I came back I knew we needed a wicket. I got two in the over and had England under pressure. You need options in this day and age, Cottrell added variation, I love his energy, he's one for the future," added the West Indies captain.

Morgan felt his team should have done better.

"A game is never won until right at the end. We thought 290 was well without our capabilities. We made mistakes and it hurt us, and West Indies deserved to win," he said.

"Collectively, we need to chase a total like that in partnerships, but we failed to nail it down."

West Indies vs England Scoreboard

BRIDGETOWN, Feb 23, (RTRS): Scoreboard at close of play of 2nd ODI between Windies and England on Friday at Bridgetown, Barbados.

WINDIES win by 26 runs

WEST INDIES

C. Gayle b Rashid50
J. Campbell c Ali b Plunkett.....23
Shai Hope c Bairstow b Stokes.....33
D. Bravo run out (Rashid).....25
S. Hetmyer not out.....104
J. Holder run out (Roy).....3
C. Brathwaite b Wood.....13
A. Nurse not out.....13
Extras: (9lb, 3nb, 13w).....25
Total: (6 wkts, 50 overs).....289
Fall of Wickets: 1-61 (Campbell), 2-98 (Gayle), 3-121 (Hope), 4-197 (Bravo), 5-207 (Holder), 6-237 (Brathwaite)
Did not bat: Cottrell, Bishoo, Thomas
Bowling: Wood 10-0-38-1, Curran 10-0-62-0, Ali 7-0-51-0, Plunkett 7-0-39-1, Stokes 10-1-62-1, Rashid 6-0-28-1

ENGLAND

J. Roy b Cottrell.....2

J. Bairstow lbw Cottrell0
J. Root c Hope b Thomas.....36
E. Morgan c Hetmyer b Cottrell70
B. Stokes c Hope b Holder79
Jos Buttler c S.Hetmyer b Holder34
Moeen Ali b Sheldon Cottrell.....12
Tom Curran lbw Jason Holder0
Rashid c Hope b Sheldon Cottrell15
Plunkett c Holder b Carlos Brathwaite..2
Mark Wood Not Out.....1
Extras 0b 3lb 0nb 0pen 9w.....12
Total (47.4 overs).....263 all out
Fall of Wickets: 1-1 Bairstow, 2-10 Roy, 3-60 Root, 4-159 Morgan, 5-228 Stokes, 6-233 Buttler, 7-233 Curran, 8-260 Rashid, 9-261 Ali, 10-263 Plunkett
Bowling: Sheldon Cottrell 9-0-46-5, Jason Holder 10-1-53-3-5, Oshane Thomas 5-0 32-1-6, Ashley Nurse 6-0-28-0-4,67, Devendra Bishoo 10-0-49-0, Chris Gayle 2-0 -15-0-7, Carlos Brathwaite 5.4-0-37-1
Umpire: Gregory Brathwaite
Umpire: Bruce Oxenford Video Paul Wilson
Referee: Andrew Pycroft

Cementing spots in squad top the agenda

India & Australia look to put final touches to WCup plans

MUMBAI, Feb 23, (RTRS): Cementing spots in their World Cup squad will top the agenda for Indians and Australians alike when their limited-over series starts with the first Twenty20 in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

Virat Kohli returns to lead the hosts in their final rubber before this year's 50-over showpiece with two T20s followed by a five-match one day international series.

While India will be busy with the annual Indian Premier League T20 tournament before heading to the World Cup in England, the defending 50-over world champions will have another opportunity to hone their skills against Pakistan next month.

For Kohli, who led India to their first test series victory in Australia but skipped the second half of the New Zealand tour, the series will be the last chance to identify the batsman to fill a middle order spot in an otherwise settled side.

There is not much ambiguity in their pace bowling options while the successful spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav are set to travel to England, where the twice champions begin their World Cup campaign against South Africa on June 5.

Kuldeep has, however, been rested for the T20 leg against Australia while all-rounder Hardik Pandya, a key cog in India's

scheme of things at the World Cup, has been ruled out of the entire series with lower back stiffness.

That has presented an opportunity for spin bowling all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja to make a final audition after being initially overlooked.

The touring side are yet to nail down captain Aaron Finch's partner at the top of the batting order, even if it is a spot that David Warner is likely to fill at the World Cup once his ball-tampering ban expires.

They have multiple options in vice captain Alex Carey, D'Arcy Short and Usman Khawaja and a good performance in the shortest format would do a player's hopes of opening in the one-day side no harm. Australia's players have arrived in India after their involvement in the Big Bash League and Carey, who keeps wickets for Australia, believes that could be an advantage.

"The guys have had their Big Bash campaign just finished and they're in T20 mode so we'll hit the two T20s and then get stuck into the five One-Dayers," Carey told reporters ahead of the first T20.

"The confidence is up for all the players and we're really excited now to get playing, get stuck into the Indians."

South Africa vs Sri Lanka Scoreboard

PORT ELIZABETH, Feb 23, (RTRS): Scoreboard at close of play on the third day of 2nd Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka on Saturday at Port Elizabeth, South Africa Sri Lanka win by 8 wickets.

SOUTH AFRICA 1st innings
D. Elgar b V. Fernando.....6
A. Markram lbw Rajitha.....60
H. Amla b V. Fernando.....0
T. Bavuma run out (K. Rajitha).....0
F. Plessis b Karunaratne.....25
O. de Kock b de Silva.....86
K. Rabada c Dickwella b de Silva.....22
W. Mulder lbw Rajitha.....9
K. Maharaj c Dickwella b Rajitha.....0
K. Rabada c Dickwella b de Silva.....22
D. Steyn not out.....3
D. Elgar c Dickwella b V. Fernando.....0
Extras: (1b, 6lb, 4nb).....11
Total: (all out, 61.2 overs).....222
Fall of Wickets: 1-15 (Elgar), 2-15 (Amla), 3-15 (Bavuma), 4-73 (du Plessis), 5-130 (Markram), 6-145 (Mulder), 7-157 (Maharaj), 8-216 (de Kock), 9-221 (Rabada), 10-222 (Olivier)
Bowling: Lakmal 13-2-33-0, V. Fernando 18-2-62-3, Rajitha 15-2-67-3, Embuldeniya 5-3-0-26-0, Karunaratne 4-3-1-12-1, de Silva 5-0-15-2

SRI LANKA 1st innings

D. Karunaratne c de Kock b Rabada.....17
L. Thirumane c b Olivier.....29
O. Fernando b Olivier.....0
K. Mendis c de Kock b Olivier.....16
K. Rajitha b Rabada.....1
K. Perera c de Kock b Rabada.....20
D. de Silva c de Kock b Mulder.....19
N. Dickwella c Elgar b Rabada.....42
S. Lakmal lbw Maharaj.....7
Extras: (1lb, 2nb).....3
Total: (all out, 37.4 overs).....154
Fall of Wickets: 1-25 Karunaratne, 2-34 Fernando, 3-59 Mendis, 4-64 Thirumane, 5-66 Rajitha, 6-97 Perera, 7-128 de Silva, 8-154 Lakmal, 9-154 Dickwella
Did Not Bat: Fernando, Embuldeniya
Bowling: Dale Steyn 10-2-39-0, Kagiso Rabada 12-4-3-38, Duanne Olivier 10-1-61-3, Willem Mulder 3-2-6-1-2-00, Keshav Maharaj 2-0-9-1

SOUTH AFRICA 2nd innings
A. Markram c O. Fernando b K. Rajitha.....18
D. Elgar c N. Dickwella b V. Fernando.....2
H. Amla c K. Mendis b D. de Silva.....32
T. Bavuma c N. Dickwella b K. Rajitha.....6
F. du Plessis Not Out.....50
O. de Kock c b S. Lakmal.....1
W. Mulder c K. Mendis b D. de Silva.....5
K. Maharaj lbw S. Lakmal.....6

K. Rabada c K. Mendis b S. Lakmal.....0
D. Steyn c L. Thirumane b D. de Silva.....0
D. Olivier lbw S. Lakmal.....6
Extras: (0b 1lb 1nb 0pen 0w).....2
Total: (all out, 44.3 overs).....128
Fall of Wickets: 1-10 Elgar, 2-31 Markram, 3-51 Bavuma, 4-90 Amla, 5-91 de Kock, 6-100 Mulder, 7-113 Maharaj, 8-115 Rabada, 9-116 Steyn, 10-128 Olivier
Bowling: Suranga Lakmal 16.3-3-39, Vishwa Fernando 10-1-32-1, Kasun Rajitha 7-1-20, Dhananjaya de Silva 11-1-36-3

SRI LANKA 2nd innings
D. Karunaratne c O. de Kock b D. Olivier.....19
L. Thirumane c Q. de Kock b K. Rabada.....10
O. Fernando (not out).....75
K. Mendis (not out).....84
Extras: (4b, 5lb, 0nb, 0pen, 0w).....9
Total: (Two wickets, 45.4 overs).....197
Fall of Wickets: 1-32 Thirumane, 2-34 Karunaratne, 3-32 Perera, 4-38 Dickwella, 5-44 de Silva, Lakmal, Embuldeniya, Rajitha, Fernando
Bowling: Dale Steyn 8-0-38-0, Kagiso Rabada 15-2-53-1, Duanne Olivier 12-2-46-1, Willem Mulder 4-1-6-0, Keshav Maharaj 6-4-0-45-0
Umpires: Aleem Dar and Ian Gould
Third Umpire: Richard Kettleborough
Match Referee: Richard Richardson