



Historic Pakistan-Sri Lanka Test hit by bad weather

RAWALPINDI: The cricket in Rawalpindi saw another frustrating day as only 5.2 overs were bowled on the day three of the first Test match of the two-match series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka at Pindi Stadium on Friday.

Sri Lanka were set to resume their innings from their overnight score of 263 for six rain but the entire first session was abandoned due to wet field.

Eventually, the play began at 01.10 p.m. and the guests added 19 runs to their overnight total but bad light intervened to put a full stop on the proceedings.

With no signs of improve-

ment in the conditions, the umpires decided to call it a day. Dhananjaya de Silva, who remained undefeated added another 15 runs to his yesterday's score to reach on 87 off 151 balls that included 13 boundaries. His partner Dilruwan Perera also remained unbeaten on six.

Pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi and teenage fast bowler claimed two wickets apiece, while seasoned Mohammad Abbas and debutant Usman Khan Shinwari picked up on scalp each. Sri Lanka will resume their first innings on Saturday at 09:15 PST.

Heavy rain and bad light hit the second day of the his-

toric Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in Rawalpindi on Thursday, Pakistan's first home Test since a deadly attack in 2009.

Sri Lanka, resuming at 220-5, had progressed to 225-5 in 7.5 overs when heavy rain in the morning forced the teams to have early lunch.

Play was stopped for two hours and 43 minutes but when it resumed only 10 overs were possible with Sri Lanka losing Niroshan Dickwella for 33 before bad light accompanied by rain forced an early call-off at 3:30 pm (1030 GMT).

At the close Sri Lanka were 263-6 with Dhananjaya

de Silva unbeaten on 72 and Dilruwan Perera not out on two.

The stop-start play left both teams frustrated as well as 2,000 fans who had come to watch the revival of Test cricket in Pakistan.

When play resumed after lunch Pakistan took the second new ball and with it lanky pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi removed Dickwella, caught at gully by Babar Azam.

Dickwella, who hit four boundaries, added 67 for the sixth wicket with de Silva, thwarting Pakistan's attempts for early wickets.

De Silva has so far hit 11 boundaries in his 131-ball

stay.

Earlier, the brief period of play saw wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan claim a catch to dismiss de Silva off the bowling of 16-year-old Naseem Shah, but third umpire Richard Illingworth ruled the ball had bounced.

On the next ball de Silva completed his half-century with two runs off Naseem, who with 2-65 was the pick of Pakistan's bowlers.

The Test is the first in Pakistan since a militant attack on the Sri Lankan team bus killed eight people in March 2009, leading to the suspension of international cricket in the country as foreign teams refused to visit

over security fears.

With improved security, Pakistan hosted Zimbabwe, a World XI, West Indies and Sri Lanka in the last four years, but only for limited over matches.

Sri Lanka only agreed to tour after completing a limited over tour (three one-day internationals and as many Twenty20s) in September-October this year under tight security arrangements. —AFP

Still to bat: V. Fernando, K. Rajitha, L. Kumara

Fall of wickets: 1-96 (Karunaratne), 2-109 (Fernando), 3-120 (Mendis), 4-127 (Chandimal), 5-189 (Mathews), 6-256 (Dickwella) —AFP

Quick Read

O'Sullivan refuses to shake hands over germ fears

WASHINGTON: Snooker great Ronnie O'Sullivan added another chapter to his colourful career on Wednesday by refusing to shake hands with his opponent and the referee before a match at the Scottish Open on health grounds.

Traditionally, players shake hands with each other and the official before play begins but five-times world champion O'Sullivan was reluctant to do just that in Glasgow because of health concerns.

Instead he tried to fist bump both James Cahill and the referee before triumphing 4-0 in an all-English contest. "I'll admit I'm a bit OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) with germs," O'Sullivan told Eurosport after the match. "I don't open door handles, I always have tissues on door handles. I am a bit OCD like that," the 44-year-old added. "I have got a bit of a germ thing. It's easier to do that and I don't get any germs."

Cahill recorded a shock win over O'Sullivan in last year's World Championship but 'the Rocket' was too strong for the 23-year-old on Wednesday, taking just over 30 minutes to complete a whitewash win. Meanwhile, China's Ding Junhui, who won the UK Championship title last weekend, advanced into the last 32 with a 4-0 win over compatriot Mei Xiwen secured with breaks of 132 and 100. —Online



Yasir Shah to work with Mushtaq Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Leg spinner Yasir Shah will work with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)'s spin consultant Mushtaq Ahmed before the second Test against Sri Lanka starting at Karachi from December 19.

Yasir Shah, who is the fastest bowler to complete 200 Test wickets, was dropped for the first Test against Sri Lanka at Rawalpindi.

Yasir Shah has been released from the Pakistan national men's cricket team so that he can work with spin bowling consultant Mushtaq Ahmed at the National Cricket Academy, a PCB spokesman, said here Thursday.

Yasir Shah will re-join the cricket team in Karachi on 16th December, where the second Test will commence from 19th December.

Mushtaq Ahmed was appointed as spin bowling consultant by the PCB last week. As per conditions of his contract, Mushtaq will work 120 days in a year at the National Cricket Academy with the Under-16, Under-19 and other domestic bowlers. As and when required, he will also work with the national team.

Yasir Shah struggled against Australia in the last series which Pakistan lost 2-0 after two heavy defeats by an innings margin. He took four wickets for 205 runs at Brisbane and remained wicketless at Adelaide, finishing with a disappointing 0-197. —APP



Atletico, Atalanta reach last 16, Bayern cruise past Spurs

LONDON: Atletico Madrid claimed the final spot in the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday with a 2-0 win over Lokomotiv Moscow, after Atalanta completed an impressive comeback in Group C to qualify.

Bayern Munich sealed consecutive victories over Tottenham with a 3-1 success at the Allianz Arena, while Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus also finished their group campaigns on winning notes. Diego Simeone's Atletico went into their game knowing defeat, coupled with a Bayer Leverkusen win against Juve, would see them dumped out.

Kieran Trippier had a second-minute penalty brilliantly saved by Lokomotiv goalkeeper Anton Kochenkov at the Wanda Metropolitan, but Joao Felix made no mistake from the spot a quarter of an hour later.

Atletico wasted a string of chances and Alvaro Morata had a goal ruled out by VAR for offside. But their place in the knockout rounds was secured when centre-back Felipe volleyed home Koke's cross after a short corner routine.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his second

Champions League goal of the season as Juve, who were already sure of top spot, saw off Leverkusen 2-0 in Germany in the other Group D game.

Substitute Paulo Dybala was the creator of the 75th-minute opener, crossing low for Ronaldo to tap in a record-extending 128th goal in the competition, before Gonzalo Higuain's injury-time clincher.

"Ronaldo and Higuain led by example, they were always the first to work hard for the team," Juve keeper Gianluigi Buffon told uefa.com. Champions League debutants Atalanta claimed a famous 3-0 triumph at Shakhtar Donetsk to qualify with Manchester City despite having lost their first three games. The Italian outfit, who finished third in Serie A last season, conceded 11 goals in their opening three matches, but drew with City at the San Siro before beating Dinamo Zagreb to keep their hopes alive.

Timothy Castagne stabbed in the crucial first goal in the 66th minute, before Mario Pasalic found the net shortly after Shakhtar full-back Dodo was controversially sent off in Kharkiv. —Reuters

Tahiti to host 2024 Olympics surfing

PARIS: The Polynesian island of Tahiti has been chosen to host the surfing events at the 2024 Paris Olympics after being selected over beaches in southwest France and Brittany, organisers said on Thursday. Tahiti lies 15,700 kilometres (9,750 miles) from Paris but was chosen because it offers near-guaranteed surfing waves in the summer months.

The events will take place at Teahupoo, a location that boasts some of the biggest waves on the men's World Cup circuit.

"It's an extremely pleasant surprise and recognition for our history that will restore honour to Polynesia, where surfing began," the president of Tahiti's surfing federation, Lionel Teihotu, told AFP.

According to the 2024 organising committee there was no difference in the cost or environmental impact of the four possible venues. Tahiti was preferred on "sporting grounds" — a survey by Meteo France, the French meteorological centre, suggests that Teahupoo offers a greater likelihood of good surfing waves during the summer months, the Paris local organising committee said.

The choice of Teahupoo is controversial because it does not currently feature on the

women's world circuit. The waves there are currently considered to be too dangerous for women surfers.

Organisers said they would get round the problem of hosting the Olympic women's surfing events with careful scheduling.

"We can put the women on at a time of the day when the waves are less powerful," Teihotu said. "We have ways of planning that now and it will allow women to also surf at Teahupoo."

The choice of Tahiti has not gone down well with the other venues who bid to host the surfing although the decision did not appear to come as a great surprise.

"We realised over the weeks that Tahiti had the whip hand, we are not completely surprised," said Landes spokesman Philippe Courtesseyre. The town of Lacanau and its partner Bordeaux questioned the idea of staging the surfing so far from Paris.

"This decision is very surprising as the late application of Tahiti is at the opposite end of the values that we expect for this kind of event, such as the carbon footprint, the hosting, the associated costs, the legacy," they said in a statement. —AFP

WBC reinstates Whyte as heavyweight champion

WASHINGTON: British heavyweight Dillian Whyte has been reinstated as WBC interim champion and will get a mandatory shot at the title currently held by Deontay Wilder, the WBC said on Wednesday.

The decision comes five days after the UK Anti-Doping agency (UKAD) withdrew a charge against the 31-year-old Whyte for a doping violation and follows a WBC investigation.

"In light of the WBC's own finding and of UKAD's withdrawal of the claim against Mr. Whyte, the WBC has closed its internal investigation," the WBC said in a statement.

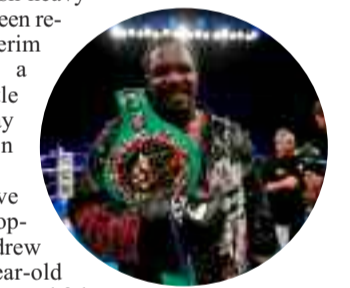
The WBC said it found no sufficient or conclusive evidence that Whyte intentionally took a banned substance with the aim of enhancing his performance.

"The WBC is hereby lifting its provisional suspension and confirming its recognition of Mr Whyte as WBC Interim World Heavyweight Champion," the statement added.

Whyte won the title on July 20 by beating Colombian Oscar Rivas but the WBC provisionally suspended recognition of his status as interim champion 10 days later over an irregular urine sample he had provided out-of-competition in June.

UKAD had charged Whyte for a doping violation as his sample before the fight "indicated the presence of two metabolites of a steroid" but on Friday it cleared him of any wrongdoing.

The agency said there was nothing in Whyte's "longitudinal urinary profile" to suggest he used steroids. —AFP



PARIS: Male surfer rides on waves.

Labuschagne ton stalls Kiwis in day-night Test

SYDNEY: Emerging Australian batsman Marnus Labuschagne on Thursday posted his third successive Test century to frustrate a resilient New Zealand attack on the opening day of the first Test in Perth.

After Australia won a potentially pivotal toss in scorching heat and elected to bat in the first ever day-night Test in Perth, the home team were 248 for four at stumps after facing some challenging bowling from the disciplined Kiwis.

Having toiled without much success in 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) heat, the Kiwis fought back late in the day by removing Steve Smith (43) and Matthew Wade (12).

However, Labuschagne was the rock of the Australian innings and was unbeaten on 110, with Travis Head on 20.

Batting was hard work for most of the Australian top order in the high temperatures, but Labuschagne further added to his rapidly growing status with a chanceless century.

The leading runscore in Test cricket this year, the 25-year-old passed the 1,000 run mark in the five-day format en route to triple figures.

Called up from outside the Ashes squad for the Test series in England after Smith was injured, Labuschagne had posted his first two Test centuries in his previous two outings against Pakistan.

He reached this hundred against New Zealand in style, lofting spinner Mitchell Santner straight down the ground for six to move from 95 to 101.

It was just the second six of his Test career and

he reached the milestone in 166 balls.

By contrast, star batsman Smith really struggled during his innings against some disciplined bowling, taking 164 balls to make 43 before falling to a leg side trap from the bowling of Neil Wagner (2-52).

Smith and Labuschagne put on 132 for the third wicket, but Wagner peppered the former with short balls and he duly hit another rising delivery to Tim Southee at leg gully.

He had previously been dropped in the slips on 19, denying debutant Lockie Ferguson his first Test wicket after being called up to replace the injured Trent Boult. Ferguson shortly after left the field with a right calf problem and played no further part in the

