

SHAKY PROTEAS HANG ON AS LATE WICKETS TUMBLE

ADELAIDE: South Africa lost skipper Faf du Plessis amid a clatter of late wickets as the match pendulum swung decisively towards Australia in the third day-night Test in Adelaide yesterday.

The Australians, who led by 124 runs on the first innings, reduced the Proteas to 194 for six with the prized wicket of du Plessis for 12 coming late on the third day. At the close, South Africa were holding on and just 70 runs ahead of Australia heading into today's fourth day.

Opener Stephen Cook was in sight of his second Test century and was unbeaten on 81 off 199 balls with Quinton de Kock yet to score. Australia, bidding to prevent South Africa from carrying off a series clean sweep after huge defeats in the opening two Tests, took major strides yesterday with Usman Khawaja leading the way with his near eight-hour epic.

Mitchell Starc captured the big wicket of du Plessis who, motivated by the events of his controversial pre-Test ball-tampering case, scored a career pinnacle unbeaten 118 in the first innings of the match. Du Plessis attempted to drive Starc only to get an outside edge to newcomer Peter Handscomb, who took a brilliant diving two-handed catch in the gully. It was a major moment in the course of the Test given the ability of du Plessis to play out long match-saving innings, memorably his defiant 376-ball unbeaten knock of 110 to deny Australia victory in Adelaide four years ago. Starc started the ball rolling, removing Dean Elgar with the fourth ball of his opening over for a duck and fellow paceman Josh Hazlewood had Hashim Amla caught behind for 45. It was the fifth time Hazlewood had captured Amla's wicket in five innings in the series.

EPIC KNOCKS

Spinner Nathan Lyon tightened the screws with three late wickets. JP Duminy played across the spinner and was bowled for 26 and Temba Bavuma fell three overs from stumps, caught off his gloves by Steve

Smith sweeping Lyon for 21.

Lyon removed nightwatchman Kyle Abbott leg before wicket for a duck in the day's final over.

"It was an unbelievable atmosphere towards the end," Lyon said. "This Test match we have bowled a lot better in partnerships... We still need four wickets and there's still two quality batters there at the moment." South Africa's chances of posting a competitive lead hinge on Cook and de Kock producing a big stand.

"There is an opportunity for us tomorrow to try and capitalise on a big partnership to try and push us up past 180-200 lead," team batting coach Neil McKenzie said. "If we can do that and take a few early wickets as we have done to Australia before that will give South Africa a lot of confidence." Khawaja earlier top scored with 145 with the last four wickets adding 100 runs to put the home side in command.

His 308-ball vigil finally came to an end when he was trapped leg before wicket by Vernon Philander.

The unflappable left-hander occupied the crease for 466 minutes after he was forced to open the innings after a miscalculation over David Warner's time off the field for injury treatment when the Proteas unexpectedly declared. Khawaja left the field to a standing ovation following his second-highest Test score, amassing over three days, ranking only below his 174 against New Zealand in Brisbane last year.

It was the Pakistan-born batsman's fifth Test century, all posted over the last 12 months. Khawaja's epic knock was also the first century by an Australian in the South Africa series and he has now scored 314 runs at 62.80 in five innings. Starc clubbed his seventh Test half-century with a 91-ball 53 before he was caught and bowled by Kagiso Rabada, ending a lively knock that featured five fours and a six.

Abbott was the best of South Africa's bowlers with an economical three wickets for 49 off 29 overs with young gun speedster Rabada claiming three for 84. —AFP



MOHALI: India's Parthiv Patel tries to stump England's Jos Buttler unsuccessfully on the first day of their third cricket test match against India in Mohali, India, yesterday. — AP

BAIRSTOW HITS 89 BUT ENGLAND FALTER IN SECOND INDIA TEST

MOHALI: Jonny Bairstow said England had a "scrappy" opening day after his half-century remained the only bright spot for the visitors who faltered against a persistent Indian bowling attack in Mohali yesterday.

Bairstow hit a gritty 89 to salvage some pride for England's batting after they were reduced to 87 for four in the morning session following their decision to bat first.

Indian bowlers put up a combined effort as Umesh Yadav, Jayant Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja claimed two wickets each. The visitors, who trail the five-match series 1-0, were 268 for eight at stumps with Adil Rashid (4) and Gareth Batty (0) battling on. "It's been a scrappy day but we've dealt with worse in the past and we will carry on to work hard within the game," Bairstow told reporters. "After winning the toss, it was disappointing to lose wickets, at the same time it could have been a disastrous day as well."

"We've also got to take positives from that," Bairstow, who recorded his 13th Test fifty, built crucial 50-plus partnerships with Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler (43) to thwart the opposition's bowling. Bairstow remained calm during his 177-ball stay at the crease before being trapped lbw off Jayant Yadav in the last half hour of play. The batsman, who survived a seemingly close umpire review on an lbw shout off Jadeja on 72, could not overturn his own referral as the on-field umpires call was upheld.

Jadeja halted England's revival twice in the innings only to see Bairstow steady the ship with his composed batting.

Jadeja got Ben Stokes stumped for 29 in the afternoon session and then denied Buttler, who batted with positive intent during his 80-ball

SCOREBOARD	
MOHALI, India: Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the third Test between India and England at Mohali on yesterday.	
England 1st innings:	Extras (b 8, lb 2, nb 1) 11
A. Cook c Patel b Ashwin	27
H. Hameed c Rahane b U. Yadav	9
J. Root lbw b J. Yadav	15
M. Ali c Vijay b Shami	16
J. Bairstow lbw b J. Yadav	89
B. Stokes st Patel b Jadeja	29
J. Buttler c Kohli b Jadeja	43
C. Woakes b U. Yadav	25
A. Rashid not out	4
G. Batty not out	0
Total (8 wickets, 90 overs)	268
Fall of wickets: 1-32 (Hameed), 2-51 (Root), 3-51 (Cook), 4-87 (Ali), 5-144 (Stokes), 6-213 (Buttler), 7-258 (Bairstow), 8-266 (Woakes)	
Bowling: Shami 20-5-52-1, U. Yadav 16-4-58-2, J. Yadav 15-5-49-2, Ashwin 18-1-43-1, Jadeja 21-3-56-2.	
To bat: J. Anderson	
India: V. Kohli (capt), M. Vijay, K. Nair, C. Pujara, A. Rahane, P. Patel, R. Ashwin, J. Yadav, R. Jadeja, M. Shami, U. Yadav	

stay, his fifty. While trudging back to the pavilion Stokes had an angry exchange of words with India skipper Virat Kohli, with the on-field umpire jumping in to pacify the two players.

"I don't know what was said, I don't get involved with all that stuff," said Bairstow.

"You got to respect the fact that you have got guys out there who are very passionate, representing the country in the heat of the battle and at some point there are going to be words," Bairstow and Buttler put on 69 runs for the sixth wicket to give England a shot of getting past the 300-run mark, a total which might prove fighting on a pitch that is expected to turn from day two. Chris Woakes' resilience ended in the penultimate over of the day as Umesh Yadav bowled him on 25.

MORNING BLITZ

Earlier the Indian bowlers rattled England's

top order by claiming four wickets in the morning session including that of skipper Alastair Cook. The Indian quicks bowled at a lively pace after the visitors elected to bat as Umesh Yadav struck first to get teenage opener Haseeb Hameed out for nine. Cook failed to capitalise on two dropped chances on three and 23 to eventually fall to Ravichandran Ashwin, who had dropped him the second time, for 27.

"In cricket, it happens. Teammates will take brilliant catches and drop some easy ones. It's part and parcel of the game," said Umesh Yadav. Ali and Bairstow put on 36 runs for the fourth wicket but Shami struck just before lunch to help India dominate the first session of play. Shami, who was at the receiving end of Cook's two spilt catches, got Ali to mistime a hook as the batsman was caught at fine leg for 16. —AFP



ADELAIDE: Australian batsman Jackson Bird (L) hits a ball past South African fielder Temba Bavuma during the third day of the third Test cricket match between Australia and South Africa at the Adelaide Oval in Adelaide yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

ADELAIDE, Australia: Scoreboard at the close on the third day of the day-night third Test between Australia and South Africa at the Adelaide Oval on yesterday.	
South Africa first innings 259 for 9 declared (F. du Plessis 118 not out, S. Cook 40; J. Hazlewood 4-68)	11-49-3, Rabada 25.1-4-84-3 (2w), Shamsi 29-4-101-1, Duminy 6-0-25-0, Elgar 2-0-11-0, Bavuma 1-0-1-0.
Australia first innings (307-6 overnight)	South Africa second innings
U. Khawaja lbw b Philander 145	S. Cook not out 81
M. Renshaw c Elgar b Abbott 10	D. Elgar c Smith b Starc 0
D. Warner c Elgar b Abbott 11	H. Amla c Wade b Hazlewood 45
S. Smith run out (Philander/de Kock) 59	J.P. Duminy b Lyon 26
P. Handscomb b Abbott 54	F. du Plessis c Handscomb b Starc 12
N. Maddinson b Rabada 0	T. Bavuma c Smith b Lyon 21
M. Wade c de Kock b Philander 4	K. Abbott lbw b Lyon 0
M. Starc c and b Rabada 53	Q. de Kock not out 0
J. Hazlewood not out 11	Extras (lb6, nb3) 9
N. Lyon c Amla b Shamsi 13	Total (6 wickets; 69 overs) 194
J. Bird c du Plessis b Rabada 6	Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Elgar), 2-82 (Amla), 3-131 (Duminy), 4-154 (du Plessis), 5-190 (Bavuma), 6-194 (Abbott).
Extras (lb3, lb9, w2, nb3) 17	Bowling: Starc 19-4-71-2 (1nb), Hazlewood 16-8-22-1, Bird 16-3-42-0 (2nb), Lyon 17-4-48-3, Warner 1-0-5-0.
Total (all out, 121.1 overs) 383	
Fall of wickets: 1-19 (Renshaw), 2-37 (Warner), 3-174 (Smith), 4-273 (Handscomb), 5-277 (Maddinson), 6-283 (Wade), 7-327 (Khawaja), 8-357 (Starc), 9-370 (Lyon), 10-383 (Bird)	
Bowling: Philander 29-5-100-2 (3nb), Abbott 29-	

MARADONA SEES ARGENTINA LEVEL DAVIS CUP FINAL

ZAGREB: Argentina football legend Diego Maradona was courted as Juan Martin del Potro beat veteran Ivo Karlovic to draw his country back level at 1-1 against Croatia in the Davis Cup final on Friday.

Maradona, 56, who inspired Argentina to glory at the 1986 World Cup, watched on with his girlfriend as Croatia went 1-0 up when Marin Cilic battled back from a mid-match collapse to beat Federico Delbonis 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 1-6, 6-2 at the Zagreb Arena.

But in the second rubber Del Potro left the final all square when he despatched big-serving 37-year-old giant Karlovic 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 7-5. It was a fine performance from the Olympic silver medalist, who had secured Argentina's appearance in their fifth final when seeing off Andy Murray-his Rio conqueror-in an epic five-setter against the defending champions Great Britain in the semi-final in Glasgow.

Del Potro, 28, is a veteran of two losing finals-both against Spain in 2008 and 2011 — while Karlovic is the oldest player to feature in a Davis Cup singles match since 43-year-old Australian Norman Brookes in 1920.

Del Potro was rock solid, allowing the Croat not one break point in the entire match which kept the 15,000-capacity crowd enthralled for

three hours and 19 minutes.

He clinched the rubber on his second match point. "I was nervous after I lost the second set but in the end I had to take the longer road to victory," said Del Potro. Earlier, former US Open champion Cilic appeared to be cruising towards a routine victory only to lose his way after storming into a two-set lead over the world number 41.

Sixth-ranked Cilic, who made his second appearance at the ATP Tour Finals last week, secured the first two sets with a single break in each, but Delbonis claimed the third before racing through the fourth to force a decider.

Backed by an impassioned crowd, Cilic regained his nerve in the final set, breaking his opponent in the first game and building on that momentum to eventually close out victory in three hours and 30 minutes.

"The crowd helped me to stay in there, it was not easy," said Cilic. "Federico played a great tennis from the middle of the third set to the end of the fourth. Just at the beginning of the fifth, I tried mentally to stay in there and get that break, and it was a huge difference." Four-time runners-up Argentina are chasing a first title, while Croatia are looking to emulate their 2005 triumph over Slovakia. —AFP

FIRE UP SOUTHEE CREATES HAVOC IN PAKISTAN RANKS

HAMILTON: Tim Southee captured three quick wickets to put New Zealand in a commanding position in the second Test against Pakistan yesterday. Neil Wagner also bagged two wickets as Pakistan collapsed to 76 for five at stumps on day two, still 195 runs behind New Zealand's first innings total of 271.

Babar Azam was not out 34 at the close of play at Hamilton's Seddon Park with Sarfraz Ahmed unbeaten on nine. New Zealand, chasing their first series win over Pakistan in 31 years, had been in trouble at 5-119 before BJ Watling's 49 not out anchored a tail-end revival that lifted the home team to a competitive total. "We could have been bowled out for 200-210," said Watling after coaxing the tail order to extend the innings as long as possible on a wicket offering encouragement to the seamers.

"I enjoy batting with the tail. It can be a challenge sometimes. you have to try and keep them as focused as they can but you just try to eke out as many runs as you can."

But what the non-recognised New Zealand batsmen achieved, the Pakistan top order failed to do as Southee enticed them into making a string of rash shots, seaming the ball away with a mixture of short and full-length deliveries. In his third over, the New Zealand quickly removed opener Sami Aslam for five and Azhar Ali for one. Then, in his fifth over, he dismissed the veteran Younis Khan for two as Pakistan slumped to 12-3. Azam and Shafiq briefly steadied the innings with a 39-run partnership before Wagner's double strike. He bowled Shafiq for 23 then followed up with a short ball to debutant Mohammad Rizwan which he hooked to Matt Henry on the boundary for a golden duck on his test debut.

Ahmed took a single off the next ball to deny Wagner the hat trick.

A 'DISAPPOINTING' EFFORT

Pakistan speedster Sohail Khan described it as a "disappointing" effort by their senior batsmen. "Our players need to learn as quickly as

possible (to leave) the ball outside the off stump because the new ball does the trick here, and if you start chasing the ball outside the off stump, like Asian pitches, it's not the same here."

At the close, Southee had figures of three for 26 while Wagner had 2-15.

But with three days remaining, Sohail held hope Pakistan could recover. "One good partnership will take us close and from there a new game is started," he said. "The responsibility will (then) be on the bowlers to get New Zealand out as quickly as possible." Resuming on 77-2 after rain washed out most of the first day, New Zealand lost three early wickets. Ross Taylor went for 37, adding eight to his overnight score before he was caught flat-footed by Sohail and edged the ball to wicketkeeper Ahmed. Opener Jeet Raval benefited from two dropped catches by Aslam, progressing to 55 when he nicked Imran Khan to Rizwan who had taken over at

first slip. Henry Nicholls (13) edged Wahab Riaz to Ahmed to have New Zealand 119-5 when Watling went to the crease. He added 51 with Colin de Grandhomme to lift New Zealand to 170-5 by lunch, only for de Grandhomme to fall to Imran on the first ball after the resumption of play for 37. Mitchell Santner contributed 16 to a 33-run stand for the seventh wicket before edging Sohail to Younis Khan in slips.

Southee engaged in an intriguing battle with Riaz which saw the washbuckling New Zealander ducking, weaving and slashing through a barrage of short-pitched deliveries.

He reached 29 off 28 balls before he misjudged a slower ball from Sohail and was bowled. New Zealand were all out in the third over after tea when Watling ran out of partners and was left stranded one run short of a half-century. For Pakistan, Sohail took 4-99 and Imran 3-52. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

HAMILTON: New Zealand: Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second Test between New Zealand and Pakistan at Seddon Park in Hamilton on yesterday:	
New Zealand first innings (overnight 77-2; J. Raval 35 not out, R. Taylor 29 not out)	Bowling: Amir 19-2-59-2, Sohail 25-6-99-4, Imran 20-4-5-52-3 (1nb), Riaz 18-4-57-1 (1w), Azhar 1-0-4-0.
J. Raval c Rizwan b Imran 55	
T. Latham c Aslam b Amir 0	Pakistan first innings
K. Williamson c Ahmed b Sohail 13	Sami Aslam c Raval b Southee 5
R. Taylor c Ahmed b Sohail 37	Azhar Ali c Watling b Southee 1
H. Nicholls c Ahmed b Riaz 13	Babar Azam not out 34
C. de Grandhomme c Ahmed b Imran 37	Younis Khan c Watling b Southee 2
B. Watling not out 49	Asad Shafiq b Wagner 23
M. Santner c Younis b Sohail 16	Mohammad Rizwan c Henry b Wagner 0
T. Southee b Sohail 29	Sarfraz Ahmed not out 9
M. Henry c Sohail b Amir 15	Extras: (lb1, nb1) 2
N. Wagner c Younis b Imran 1	: (five wks; 29 overs) 76
Extras: (w5, nb1) 6	To bat: Wahab Riaz, Mohammad Amir, Sohail Khan, Imran Khan
Total: (all out; 83.4 overs) 271	Fall of wickets: 1-7 (Aslam), 2-8 (Azhar), 3-12 (Younis), 4-51 (Shafiq), 5-51 (Rizwan).
Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Latham), 2-39 (Williamson), 3-90 (Taylor), 4-113 (Raval), 5-119 (Nicholls), 6-170 (de Grandhomme), 7-203 (Santner), 8-239 (Southee), 9-270 (Henry), 10-271 (Wagner)	Bowling: Southee 11-3-26-3, Henry 9-2-13-0 (1nb), de Grandhomme 4-2-21-0, Wagner 5-1-15-2.