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DAMBULLA: Australian cricketer George Bailey (R) plays a shot as Sri Lanka's wicketkeeper Kusal Perera looks on during the fourth one day international (ODI) cricket match between Sri Lanka and Australia at The Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla yesterday. — AFP

AUSTRALIA CRUSH SRI LANKA, CLINCH ODI SERIES

DAMBULLA: John Hastings claimed six wickets before Aaron Finch and George Bailey's attacking half-centuries powered Australia to a series clinching six-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the fourth one-day international in Dambulla yesterday.

Australia rode on Finch's 19-ball 55 and an unbeaten 90 from Bailey to chase down 213 in 31 overs and take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier Hastings' career-best bowling figures of 6-45 helped bowl out Sri Lanka for 212 after electing to bat first despite Dhananjaya de Silva's fighting 76.

In reply, Finch's opening blitz gave Australia a rocket start against a Sri Lankan attack that missed skipper Angelo Mathews' medium pace after the all-rounder hurt his calf while batting.

Finch, who equalled the record for the fastest fifty in 18 balls by an Australian, struck eight fours and three sixes as he carted the Sri Lankan spinners to all parts of the ground.

Left-arm spinner Sachith Pathirana's triple strike in the space of five deliveries checked the visitors' surge but only for a brief while.

Pathirana got the wickets of danger man Finch and Usman Khawaja for nought in his opening over of the innings. He then bowled skipper David Warner for 19 on the first ball of his next over.

Bailey, who registered his 21st ODI fifty,

carried the momentum forward as he anchored Australia's chase with his 85-ball knock, laced with 11 fours and a six.

"Tough to muscle your way out of a form slump. Couldn't be happier for George (Bailey), has had to play out of his skin. He's been innovative, he's been our backbone and rock in the middle," said Warner.

Bailey got the perfect partner in Travis Head, who scored 40, as the duo put on 100 runs for the fourth wicket.

Head was trapped lbw off Dilruwan Perera but Matthew Wade, who remained unbeaten on eight, joined Bailey at the crease to hit the winning six.

The victory comes as a welcome relief for the visiting side after they suffered their first series whitewash against Sri Lanka in the three Test matches.

"Very very pleasing. Thrilled to win the series, hard-fought effort. Conditions here are quite challenging," said Warner, who was appointed captain after the second ODI to give Steve Smith some rest.

HASTINGS' HEROICS

Sri Lanka suffered from a lack of partnerships as their innings ran out of steam as they folded on the last ball of the 50th over.

Australia's pace spearhead Mitchell Starc struck in the very first over to have debutant batsman Avishka Fernando trapped lbw for

nought.

Man of the match Hastings soon got Kusal Mendis caught behind for one. The on-field umpire gave the batsman not out before Australia successfully reviewed the decision.

Scott Boland, who replaced Josh Hazlewood in the Australian starting XI, joined the pace charge to dismiss previous match centurion Dinesh Chandimal-caught behind to leave Sri Lanka reeling on 31 for three. De Silva and Mathews then started a rebuilding act, mixing caution and aggression against a persistent Australian attack.

Mathews, who was badly shaken after being hit on the back of his helmet off a Boland bouncer, made a gritty 28 before retiring hurt with a calf injury that hampered his footwork and running between the wickets.

De Silva, whose maiden ODI half-century included nine boundaries, looked a little edgy after Mathews' departure and soon departed after spooning a catch to mid-wicket off Hastings.

Australia's spinners then got in on the act as Adam Zampa and Head took two more wickets to land Sri Lanka in deeper trouble.

Pathirana chipped in with a crucial 24-run cameo to help Sri Lanka pass the 200-run mark from a precarious 165 for seven.

Hastings' double strike in the 48th over brought him his maiden five-wicket haul in ODIs.

SCOREBOARD

DAMBULLA, Sri Lanka: Final scoreboard of the fourth one-day international between Sri Lanka and Australia in Dambulla yesterday:

Sri Lanka	76	Boland 10-1-36-1, Faulkner 10-0-39-0, Zampa 8-0-30-1, Head 2-0-5-1
D. de Silva c Finch b Hastings	76	
A. Fernando b Starc	0	
K. Mendis c Wade b Hastings	1	
D. Chandimal c Wade b Boland	5	
A. Mathews c Bailey b Hastings	40	
A. Perera c Wade b Zampa	7	
K. Perera c Warner b Head	6	
T. Perera c Finch b Hastings	13	
S. Pathirana c Faulkner b Hastings	24	
D. Perera c Wade b Hastings	18	
A. Aponso not out	1	
Extras (b 4, lb 2, w 15)	21	
Total (all out; 50 overs)	212	
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Fernando), 2-18 (Mendis), 3-31 (Chandimal), 3-115* (Mathews, retired hurt, not out), 4-121 (de Silva), 5-130 (A. Perera), 6-134 (K. Perera), 7-165 (T. Perera), 8-199 (D. Perera), 9-200 (Pathirana), 10-212 (Mathews)		
Bowling: Starc 10-1-51-1, Hastings 10-0-45-6,		
		Australia
		D. Warner b Pathirana
		A. Finch lbw b Pathirana
		U. Khawaja lbw b Pathirana
		G. Bailey not out
		T. Head lbw b D. Perera
		M. Wade not out
		Extras (b 1, lb 1, w 2, nb 1)
		Total (4 wickets; 31 overs)
		Fall of wickets: 1-74 (Finch), 2-74 (Khawaja), 3-97 (Warner), 4-197 (Head)
		Bowling: T. Perera 3-1-24-0, Aponso 8-0-59-0, D. Perera 7-0-69-1, Pathirana 8-0-37-3, de Silva 4-0-21-0, A. Perera 1-0-5-0
		Did not bat: J. Faulkner, J. Hastings, M. Starc, A. Zampa, S. Boland
		Result: Australia won by 6 wickets.

A limping Mathews, who scored a gutsy 40, returned to bat in that same over to add some useful runs to the Sri Lankan total, which in the end proved insufficient for the rampaging visitors.

"Really disappointed with the way we played, didn't click as a batting unit

through the series. We didn't do well," said Chandimal, who led the side in Mathews' absence in the Australian innings.

The fifth and final match of the series is scheduled on September 4 in Pallekele. —AFP



NEW YORK: Serena Williams of the US reacts to a point against Ekaterina Makarova of Russia during their 2016 US Open Women's Singles match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on August 30, 2016 in New York. — AFP

MURRAY, SERENA POWER INTO US OPEN SECOND ROUND

NEW YORK: Wimbledon champions Andy Murray and Serena Williams powered into the second round of the US Open as the stars came out on Arthur Ashe Stadium court on Tuesday night.

Williams, launching her latest bid to rewrite the record books, started strong and didn't let up in 6-3, 6-3 victory over 29th-ranked Ekaterina Makarova.

The US world number one appeared untroubled by the balky right shoulder that has hindered her in recent weeks, delivering a dozen aces and 27 winners overall in the 63-minute contest.

"I knew today I needed to be focused because I've played her. She's gotten to the semi-finals. She goes deep in majors," Williams said of the Russian left-hander who beat her in the fourth round of the 2012 Australian Open.

"She knows how to play big matches on big courts. She's not intimidated. I knew I had to really come out today. It was my only option really." Williams said she wouldn't know until she'd slept on it how her shoulder might respond to the effort.

"Every day, I'll just see how it goes," said Williams, who is chasing a record seventh title on the hardcourts of Flushing Meadows where she first triumphed in 1999.

A victory would see her break the Open Era record of 22 Grand Slam titles she now shares with German

Steffi Graf and close in on Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 major titles. While Williams has struggled since Wimbledon, Murray went from claiming a second title at the All England club to a successful defence of his Olympic gold in Rio.

Vying to become the fourth man in the Open Era to reach all four major finals in a calendar year, Murray, too, produced a dominant service performance in a 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Czech Lukas Rosol.

"I don't think I had any break points against me, which is very good," the Scot said. Before the floodlights came up, Serena's elder sister Venus claimed a Grand Slam record of her own as her 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 victory over Ukraine's Kateryna Kozlova marked her 72nd appearance in the main draw of a major.

The 36-year-old Venus, enjoying a resurgence in a 2016 season that includes a WTA title in Taiwan, survived 63 unforced errors against the rising 22-year-old, although she was pleased that her aggressive approach also yielded 46 winners.

"The good part is I'm playing the game I want to play, I'm playing aggressively and moving forward," Venus said. "It's just about making a few less errors and it's a completely different story." Fourth seed Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland, trying to make it to the quarter-finals in New York for the first time, breezed past US qualifier Jessica Pegula 6-1, 6-1 and fifth-seeded

Romanian Simona Halep also eased through with a 6-0, 6-2 victory over Belgian Kirsten Flipkens.

Men's third seed Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland, a two-time semi-finalist, reached the second round with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-4, 6-4 win over Spain's Fernando Verdasco.

Kei Nishikori, who became Asia's first men's Grand Slam finalist in New York in 2014, when he fell to Marin Cilic in the final, also advanced, downing German Benjamin Becker 6-1, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

A LOT OF ACES

Eighth-seeded Dominic Thiem of Austria needed five sets to secure his second-round spot, downing Australia's John Millman 6-3, 2-6, 5-7, 6-4, 6-3.

Juan Martin del Potro, the 2009 US Open champion whose career was nearly ended by three wrist surgeries, advanced with a 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) victory over fellow Argentine Diego Schwartzman.

There was a little record-setting on the men's side as well, with Croatian Ivo Karlovic belting a US Open record of 61 aces in a 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 win over Taiwan's Lu Yen-Hsun.

Karlovic, 37, beat the previous best of 49 aces for one match in New York established by Richard Krajicek in 1999. "I knew there were a lot of aces because there was a period when almost every serve was an ace," Karlovic said. — AFP