

## Sports

# Williamson stands up as England crumble for 58

## England flirted with lowest test score

**AUCKLAND:** New Zealand captain Kane Williamson was in sight of his 18th test century as the ball dominated the bat on the opening day of the two-match series with England dismissed for a record low score of 58 at Eden Park yesterday. Williamson was 91 not out with Henry Nicholls on 24 as New Zealand advanced to 175 for three at stumps, a lead of 117 after England had been bowled out in the first 90 minutes of play following a Trent Boult and Tim Southee seam onslaught.

Boult and Southee struck early and often after Williamson had won the toss and opted to bowl with the pink ball in the first day-night test in New Zealand. Boult finished with a career-best six for 32 after he had ripped the top off England's batting with 4-9 from his first six overs. Southee finished with 4-25. While England's fans buried their heads in their hands and voiced their frustration over social media, it could have been much worse had bowler Craig Overton not produced a counter-attacking 33 not out.

After slumping to 23-8, Overton hit a boundary to push his side past the lowest score in test history—the 26 scored by New Zealand against England at Eden Park in 1955. Overton then ensured they surpassed their own lowest score the 45 they limped to against Australia in Sydney in 1887. Prior to his innings, England's batsmen had looked totally

lost. While Boult and Southee bowled between a good and full length, the ball was not swinging wildly or seaming markedly. Too many of their batsmen, starting with former captain Alastair Cook, failed to move their feet and were crease bound, with four wickets falling to catches behind the wicket.

England captain Joe Root (nought), Ben Stokes (nought) and Chris Woakes (five) were all also bowled by Boult, while Moeen Ali failed to clamp down on a Southee yorker. “We always hoped there would be something in the wicket,” New Zealand coach Mike Hesson said.

“**Boult takes career-best test figures**”

“It didn't do a lot but it did enough. “Sometimes when it does a bit more, they play and miss but once they found their length in about the fourth over they were exceptional and Trent certainly deserved the plaudits he got and Tim did a great job as well.” England's bowlers appeared angry at their sensational collapse—their lowest score against New Zealand and sixth worst overall—and strangled the hosts' batsmen for long periods of the remaining two sessions. Tom Latham and Williamson, however, stoically wore the bowlers down and took their side to a 30-run lead entering the final session under lights. The 31-year-old Stuart Broad, however, broke through in the first over of the evening session, with Latham clipping a full delivery to



**AUCKLAND:** New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson (3rd left) is congratulated by teammates after taking a catch during the first day of the day-night Test cricket match between New Zealand and England at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday. — AFP

Woakes at mid-wicket on 26 to give him his 400th test victim.

Despite becoming just the second England bowler to reach the milestone—new ball partner Jimmy Anderson has 525 wickets—Broad's celebrations were muted as he raised the ball to the applauding crowd when they were informed of the milestone. An aggressively-minded Ross Taylor

was the only other wicket to fall under the lights when he misread an Anderson bouncer and was caught by Woakes at mid-wicket for 20. “We know that it can be difficult against the new ball and we knew that even if we're not going anywhere, if we spend some time out there we can get the rewards later on,” Hesson added of his team's cautious batting approach.—AFP

## Feeling like a million bucks: Unadkat thrust into spotlight

**COLOMBO:** He isn't well known on the international stage, but fast bowler Jaydev Unadkat has been thrust into the cricketing limelight after being handed a bumper payday by the Indian Premier League. Heads turned when the Rajasthan Royals paid \$1.8 million dollars for the left-arm seamer, making him the most expensive Indian player at this year's IPL auction. Even Unadkat said he was surprised at the price tag, which will earn him more than \$100,000 per game when the competition starts next month. The 26-year-old was second only to England all-rounder Ben Stokes at the auction, despite a stop-start international career so far.

Since his international debut in 2010, Unadkat has played one Test, seven ODIs and 10 Twenty20s for India, and had a

mixed outing at last week's tri-series in Sri Lanka. However, hopes are high that the “Prince of Porbandar”—nicknamed after his home city in Gujarat—could be about to become a fixture in India's T20 team. “He is a very promising bowler and will only get better with the more matches he plays. I like him,” former India captain Sunil Gavaskar told AFP in Sri Lanka. Unadkat was just 19 when he made his one and, so far, only Test appearance against South Africa at Centurion in 2010.

It was a debut to forget, however. He failed to take a wicket in 26 overs, gave away 101 runs, and was promptly dropped. Unadkat then spent three years in the international wilderness before playing all seven of his one-day international appearances so far in 2013. He missed much of the following two years through injury, and it wasn't until June 2016 that he made his T20 debut for India. But his limited-overs international career received a shot in the arm late last year when he shone in a series against Sri Lanka. Unadkat finished with four wickets in three matches at an economy rate of 4.88, the lowest on either side. “He takes his cricket to the next level when he has to. He has got a few gears and I like now the change up in his action as well,” former Australian fast bowler Brett Lee told AFP in Colombo. — AFP

## Man City owners to expand stable of soccer clubs

**LONDON:** City Football Group, which owns Premier League leaders Manchester City, is looking to add to its stable of soccer clubs and is especially keen on acquisitions in China, according to its chief commercial officer, Tom Glick. Manchester City is one of several clubs owned by the group, a holding company in which Abu Dhabi United Group owns an 87 percent stake with the remaining 13 percent held by the China Media Capital consortium.

In addition to Manchester City, the group owns MLS franchise New York City, Australian side Melbourne City, Uruguay's Club Atletico Torque, a joint majority stake in Spanish club Girona and a minority stake in Japan's Yokohama F Marinos. “I think it's very likely we'll do some more (acquisitions) and we're looking at a num-

ber of places across the globe,” Glick told CNBC in an interview aired on Thursday.

“There are a number of very interesting markets and healthy leagues with great upsides so we're looking at a number of places, including places in Asia.” While praising the game's potential for growth in Japan, South Korea and India, Glick said the health of football in China, along with the government's backing for the game, made it an especially attractive destination for investors. Chinese President Xi Jinping, an avid soccer fan, has launched an ambitious drive to improve Chinese football from the ground up and spoken of his desire for the country to qualify for another World Cup, host the tournament and eventually win it.

China has invested heavily in the sport in recent years, boosting its domestic league by signing a number of high-profile, international players and coaches. “There's a huge push and an ambition from the government,” Glick added. “The league is already a very healthy league with good attendances, good television viewership, so I think it's a really exciting time right now for China and that's one of the markets that we're there on the ground, investing.”—Reuters