

Sports

Amir removes England cornerstone Alastair Cook in first Test

Cook equals Australian great Border's all-time record

LONDON: Mohammad Amir captured the prize wicket of Alastair Cook after the England opener led a fightback on the first day of the first Test against Pakistan at Lord's yesterday. At tea England were 165 for five, having slumped to 43 for three before lunch after home captain Joe Root had won the toss and batted. Cook, in his 153rd consecutive Test, which equalled Australia great Allan Border's all-time record for successive appearances at this level, revived England with a fine 70.

But shortly before tea he was bowled by Amir, a team-mate when Essex won the County Championship last season, as the left-arm quick produced a brilliant delivery that cut away late off the pitch late to clip the top of the opener's off stump.



Mohd Abbas made the breakthrough

Cook faced 148 balls, including 14 fours Ben Stokes was unbeaten on 36, having hoisted leg-spinner Shadab Khan for the first six of this match. Jos Buttler, recalled as a specialist number seven, was unbeaten on 13.

Root opted to bat first in the opening match of this two-Test series, despite the overcast conditions and a green-tinged pitch offering the promise of assistance for Pakistan's pacemen. Both England and Pakistan's have con-

cerns over their batting so it was a particularly bold decision by Root.

It certainly looked a good toss for Pakistan to lose as three members of an England top-order that repeatedly failed during winless winter Test tours of Australia and New Zealand all fell for single-figure scores. Mohammad Abbas made the breakthrough when he bowled Mark Stoneman (four) with a late swinging delivery to leave England 12 for one in the fourth over. Root, promoted up the order to number three, also fell for four when he drove at a wide ball from Hasan and edged behind to opposing captain Sarfraz Ahmed.

Cook got into gear with a cover-driven four off Amir, but he could only watch as fellow left-hander Dawid Malan (six) became Hasan's second wicket of the morning, with wicket-keeper Sarfraz again making no mistake with the catch. At that stage, England were 43 for three.

Just before Malan's dismissal, Faheem Ashraf rapped the pad of Cook, then on 23, with 'umpire's call' going against Pakistan after they reviewed former Australia seam bowler Paul Reiffel's original decision of not out. England were 72 for three at lunch, with Cook 46 not out and Jonny Bairstow, batting up the



LONDON: England's Alastair Cook watches the ball after playing a shot on the first day of the first international Test match between England and Pakistan at Lord's cricket ground in London yesterday. —AFP

order at number five, unbeaten on 10. Cook, England's all-time leading Test run-scorer, went to fifty with a four to third man off Amir before Bairstow was bowled by Ashraf for 27.

Buttler, having been encouraged to play the

attacking game that makes him such a dangerous white-ball batsman, was quickly into his stride with two fours in three balls off Shadab—a whip through midwicket followed by a cover-driven boundary. —AFP

Kohli to skip Surrey stint after injury

MUMBAI: India cricket captain Virat Kohli has suffered a neck injury during an Indian Premier League (IPL) match and will not play for English county championship side Surrey next month, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said yesterday. Batsman Kohli had signed a one-month deal to represent Surrey in June to prepare for a test series against England this year, but injured his neck while fielding for Royal Challengers Bangalore against Sunrisers Hyderabad last week.

"Kohli, who was scheduled to play for Surrey in the month of June, has been ruled out from participating," the Board of Control for Cricket in India said in a statement. "This decision was taken following assessments by the BCCI medical team, subsequent scans and a specialist visit. The Team India captain will now undergo a period of rehabilitation under the supervision of the BCCI medical team."

Kohli is scheduled to undergo a fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru on June 15 and the BCCI expects him to be fully fit for the tour of England. India begin their tour of England in July with three



Virat Kohli

Twenty20 internationals and three one-day internationals. They then take on the hosts in a five-test series starting in August.

Ajinkya Rahane was earlier this month picked to lead India against Afghanistan, who play their maiden test in Bengaluru in June, keeping in mind Kohli's county commitments. —Reuters

Warner wife miscarried after ball-tampering scandal

SYDNEY: The wife of disgraced cricketer David Warner revealed yesterday she suffered a miscarriage in the aftermath of her husband's part in a ball-tampering scandal that rocked the game.

Candice Warner said the couple lost the baby a week after his tearful press conference in Sydney in late March after he was sent home from Australia's tour of South Africa and banned for a year.

She attributed the loss to stress and an arduous flight home, describing the couple's devastation at realising she was miscarrying. "I called Dave to the bathroom and told him I was bleeding. We knew I was miscarrying. We held one another and cried," she told the Australian Women's Weekly magazine.

"The miscarriage was a heartbreaking end to a horror tour. "The ordeal from the public humiliations to the ball-tampering had taken its toll and, from that moment, we decided nothing will impact our lives like that again." The couple already have

two children, Ivy Mae, 3, and Indi Rae, 2, and Warner said she discovered she was pregnant again in Cape Town. "We were overwhelmed, knowing another little Warner was on the way," she said. "I don't think either of us realised how much we longed for this baby."

Australia's tour of South Africa had started badly, with Warner charged with bringing the game into disrepute during the first Test for an altercation with Quinton de Kock.

Warner claimed de Kock made a "vile and disgusting" remark about his wife.

"That attack during the first Test in Durban when Quinton called me names — I should've known it wasn't going to end well," said Candice Warner.

She said she was watching on TV with her two children when the ball-tampering incident flared up during the third Test and "I sat slumped on the bed and wondered if I could take any more."

In the aftermath, her husband wanted to return to Australia with Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft, who were also involved in the scandal, but they were put on separate flights with the Warner family handed the longest route back.

"We got the longest and toughest route. No one knew I was pregnant and Dave did everything to get me home safely, fearing any more strain could affect our unborn child," she said, adding that she was in "a bad state". —AFP