

## India - Sri Lanka First Test

# ASHWIN HUNTS DOWN LANKANS



Ashwin appeals

## Galle, Sri Lanka

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin grabbed six wickets as India bowled out Sri Lanka for 183 but then stumbled briefly in reply in a rousing start to the first Test yesterday.

Twelve wickets fell on the opening day and India were themselves reduced to 28-2 before they recovered to post 128 without further loss by stumps at the Galle International Stadium.

Opener Shikhar Dhawan was unbeaten on 53 and skipper Virat Kohli was on 45 during a third-wicket stand of 100, leaving India just 56 runs away from the lead.

Dharmika Prasad trapped Lokesh Rahul leg-before for seven and Rohit Sharma fell in similar fashion to Angelo Mathews for nine, but Dhawan and Kohli stepped in to deny Sri Lanka further success.

Ashwin, playing a Test match on Sri Lankan soil for

the first time, finished with six for 46 – his 11th five-wicket haul – as the home team were bowled out in 49.4 overs after they won the toss and elected to bat.

Leg-spinner Amit Mishra, one of the three spinners in the Indian team on an unusually dry pitch, took two wickets off successive balls to hasten the end.

Ashwin said the two early wickets taken by seamers Ishant Sharma and Varun

Aaron, which reduced Sri Lanka to 15-2, made his work easier.

“Once the seamers did their job, it was very simple after that,” he said. “I just wanted to get into my stride pretty strongly and start with a good rhythm.”

**‘Tacky wicket’**

Ashwin said he expected the pitch to play slower as the game progressed, making it tough for both batsmen and bowlers.

“The wicket was really tacky in the morning and the ball was just deviating enough,” he said. “But as the game goes on, it is going to get really slow. One will have to work harder to get wickets.”

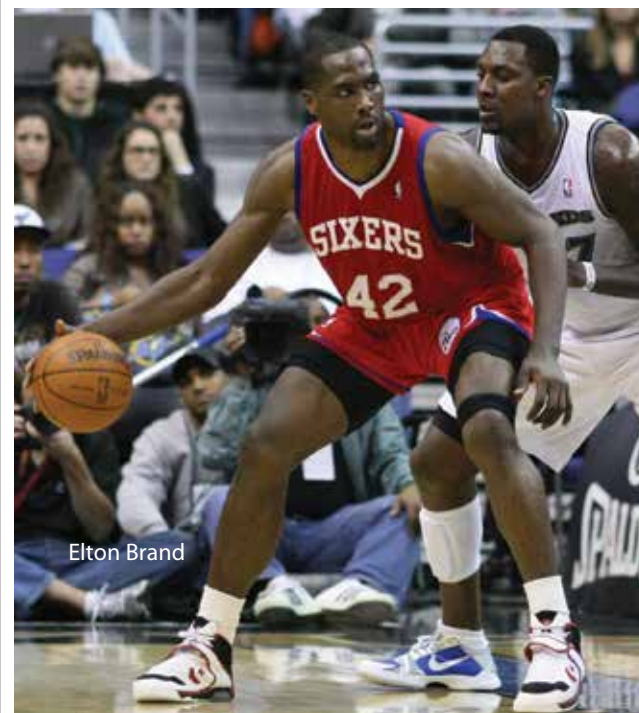
“From that aspect, we need to bat really well and see where we go from here.”

Mathews brought up his half-century with a six over long-on against veteran spinner Harbhajan Singh. He also hit six fours.

Chandimal said the early moisture in the wicket made batting difficult, but acknowledged that the Indians bowled well.

“It was not easy to bat in the morning and India used the conditions well to make it tough for us,” he said. “The pitch eased out later in the day,” he added.

## NBA veteran Brand retires after 16 seasons



Elton Brand

## New York

Elton Brand, the top pick of the 1999 NBA Draft, announced his retirement Tuesday after 16 seasons, which included two All-Star nods.

The 36-year-old centre and power forward was taken first by the Chicago Bulls and earned NBA Rookie of the Year honours for the squad, but was traded to the Los Angeles Clippers after two seasons in the league.

Brand became a tough inside player in seven seasons with the Clippers, twice being named to NBA All-Star Games, but he missed most of the 2007-08 season with a ruptured left

Achilles tendon and was sent to Philadelphia, where he spent four seasons.

He went on to play one season with Dallas and two more in Atlanta, but saw only limited action for the Hawks, who had the best record in the Eastern Conference but lost to Cleveland in the Eastern Conference playoff finals.

Brand averaged 16.1 points, 8.6 rebounds, 2.1 assists and 1.7 blocked shots a game over 1,041 NBA appearances. In the playoffs, Brand averaged 12.6 points, 6.3 rebounds and 1.6 blocked shots and assists over 40 playoff games, 30 of them as a starter.

### Champions League play-off draw



Final: San Siro, Milan

1st leg: Aug 18/19, 2nd leg: Aug 25/26

## CHAMPIONS ROUTE

Astana KAZ APOEL Nicosia CYP

Skenderbeu ALB D. Zagreb CRO

Celtic SCO Malmö SWE

Basel SUI Maccabi Tel-Aviv ISR

BATE Borisov BLR Partizan SRB

## LEAGUE ROUTE\*

Lazio ITA Leverkusen GER

Man Utd ENG Club Brugge BEL

Sporting POR CSKA Moscow RUS

Rapid Vienna AUT Shakhtar UKR

Valencia ESP Monaco FRA

## Group stage draw: Aug 27

Matchdays: Sep 15/16, Sep 29/30,

Oct 20/21, Nov 3/4, 24/25, Dec 8/9

\*Highest-ranked teams after automatic qualifiers

Picture: Getty Images © GRAPHIC NEWS

## Victorious Pumas change seven for Boks rematch

## Buenos Aires

Argentina have made seven changes to the team that humiliated South Africa last weekend for a Test rematch in Buenos Aires Saturday.

Apart from the personnel alterations, coach Daniel Hourcade has made two positional switches as the Pumas seek to build on a stunning 37-25 win over the Springboks in Durban.

It was the first triumph for Argentina over South Africa after 19 failed attempts since the countries first met in 1993 in Buenos Aires.

And it was the first Rugby Championship away victory for the South Americans after 10 losses in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa over four seasons.

Out of the Durban starting backline go right winger Horacio Agulla, centres

### Sanchez will be monitored with the Rugby World Cup a month away

Marcelo Bosch and injured Jeronimo De la Fuente and scrumhalf Tomas Cubelli.

They are replaced by Santiago Cordero, Matias Moroni, Nicolas Sanchez and Martin Landajo for the match at the 50,000-capacity Estadio Jose Amalfitani in a western suburb of the Argentine capital.

Veteran Hernandez, who was outstanding at fly-half last weekend, retreats to inside centre to accommodate Sanchez in the pivotal role.

Sanchez disappointed in Rugby Championship losses to New Zealand and Australia last month and his form will

be closely monitored with the 2015 Rugby World Cup kick-off just over a month away.

Among the forwards, lock Guido Petti Pagadizabal, flanker Pablo Matera and No. 8 Leonardo Senatore step down.

Into their places come Benjamin Macome, Tomas Lezana and France-based 64-Test veteran Jean Martin Fernandez Lobbe. Juan Manuel Leguizamon, another long-serving warrior in the Pumas pack, moves from the flank to No. 8 in a positional alteration.

While Hourcade is rotating with the World Cup in mind, he retained props Marcos Ayerza and Nahuel Tetaz Chaparro and hooker-cum-skipper Agustin Creevy, who tormented South Africa last weekend. The passionate Pumas dominated the scrums and breakdowns as South Africa suffered their most



Sanchez

humiliating Test loss since a 49-0 meltdown in Australia nine years ago.

It is the final Test warm-

up for both countries before naming 31-man World Cup squads with Argentina due to reveal theirs Sunday.