

Vinales sets pace for Dutch MotoGP



Spanish MotoGP rider Maverick Vinales of the Movistar Yamaha

Assen
World championship leader Maverick Vinales rebounded from his struggles in Barcelona with the fastest time across the first two practice sessions on Friday ahead of the Dutch MotoGP.

The Yamaha star finished a disappointing 10th at the Catalan GP a fortnight ago but comfortably outpaced German rookie Jonas Folger

and defending champion Marc Marquez at Assen on a day that featured heavy rain.

"I feel good, this is a track I like. The bike is working good and already from this morning we had a good set-up for this afternoon," said Vinales, who has won three of the seven races this season.

"We gained a lot of good information for qualifying. We are trying and discussing

the chassis, but as I always say: when we have grip, the bike is really nice to ride. Today it was easy to ride and control, and it was nice to feel good again."

The Spaniard posted a best lap of 1min 33.130sec, with Folger 0.367sec behind, as most of the leading names made the top 10 with the exception of Ducati's Jorge Lorenzo, 14th at 1.393sec.

The 22-year-old Vinales, twice a winner at Assen in the support classes, tops the standings with 111 points, but four riders are within striking distance of the leader.

Andrea Dovizioso, who has closed to within seven points of Vinales after back-to-back wins in Italy and Spain, was fourth quickest with veteran Italian Valentino Rossi sixth on the second

Yamaha. Nine-time world champion Rossi briefly led this year's championship after three successive podium finishes in Qatar, Argentina and the United States.

But the veteran Italian has slipped worryingly off the pace and is now fifth in the standings, 28 points behind Vinales.

Rossi has seven wins in MotoGP at the Assen track which has staged a world

championship round every year since 1949.

"This day was tough, as always in Assen, but in the end it was quite positive for me because I was in the top five this morning and in sixth position this afternoon," said Rossi.

"It was very important to stay in the top 10 for Q2 on Saturday because it looks like the weather will be worse then." (AFP)

South Africa beat England by three runs

Taunton
South Africa beat England by just three runs to win the second Twenty20 international at Taunton yesterday and level the three-match series at 1-1.

England, set a target of 175, were on course for a series-clinching win while Jason Roy (67) and Jonny Bairstow (47) shared a second-wicket stand of 110.

But when Roy was controversially given out obstructing the field -- the first time this had happened in a T20 international -- after being hit by a throw from the deep, having veered off his original course running between the wickets, the innings fell away.

England's cause was not helped by batting second under increasingly dark skies in a match that started at 1600 GMT despite a lack of floodlights on the ground, although home skipper Eoin Morgan did opt



South Africa's Andile Phehlukwayo (2nd L) celebrates with teammates

to field first after winning the toss.

A target of 12 off the last over became four off the last

ball after Liam Dawson hit Andile Phehlukwayo for a boundary.

But he could not repeat the

trick and South Africa had a narrow win.

The series concludes at Cardiff on Sunday.

Windies, India one-day opener abandoned

Port of Spain

Heavy rain forced the abandonment of the first one-day international between the West Indies and India at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad on Friday.

India had made 199 for three off 39.2 overs before the downpours prevented any further play.

The second match takes place at the same venue on Sunday.

ICC confirms plans for World XI

London

Plans for the full resumption of international cricket in Pakistan moved forward yesterday when the sport's global governing body said it wanted to send a World XI to the country later this year.

With the exception of Zimbabwe's tour two years ago, Pakistan have had to play all of their 'home' matches outside of the country since a 2009 terror attack on Sri Lanka's team bus in Lahore.

But Friday saw the International Cricket Council, following the

conclusion of its annual meeting in London, announce that plans for a World XI to play in Pakistan later this year were "continuing to be developed".

The ICC board said it had agreed to support a three-game Twenty20 series between Pakistan and a World XI in a bid to help revive international cricket in the country.

All the matches would take place in Lahore and be accorded full Twenty20 international status, the ICC said, adding "further details will be announced in due course."