

Kuldeep flips India's fortunes

Dharamsala

Wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav said it was a dream come true to grab four wickets on debut and spin India right back into the game after Steve Smith hit his third ton of the series yesterday.

Kuldeep was informed on the morning of the series-deciding match that he would be handed his Test cap with skipper Virat Kohli having failed to recover from his shoulder injury.

But the 22-year-old showed few signs of nervousness, bewitching the Aussie batsmen with his guile and unorthodox action to return with figures of 4-68.

"I am very happy. It's a dream come true for me. In a Test match I could not have asked for more than this," Kuldeep said after the first day's play.

"The wicket was good to bat on, the ball was not turning wicket. I tried to bowl just wicket to wicket.

"Obviously I have worked a lot on my variations. The wrong'un, the flipper and the normal chinaman."

The visitors squandered a promising start to be bowled out for 300 just minutes before the close of play after winning the toss and electing to bat first.

The Aussies owed their total to Smith who smashed 14 fours in his fine 111-run knock to become the first Australian skipper to hit three centuries in a Test series in India.

The 27-year-old also became only the second visiting captain to achieve the feat after England's Alastair Cook.

The Aussie looked firmly in control, having cruised to 131-1 at lunch but Kuldeep's scintillating spell meant the tourists lost their remaining wickets in the last two sessions.

At stumps, India had played out one over without scoring any runs.

With the series tied 1-1 going into the finale, the hosts must win the match to regain the Border-Gavaskar trophy.

"Credit to the Indians for bowling well, we had to grind ourselves to get to 300," said wicketkeeper-batsman Matthew

Scores at stumps :
Australia 1st innings:

D. Warner c Rahane b K. Yadav	56
M. Renshaw b U. Yadav	1
S. Smith c Rahane b Ashwin	111
S. Marsh c Saha b U. Yadav	4
P. Handscomb b K. Yadav	8
G. Maxwell b K. Yadav	8
M. Wade b Jadeja	57
P. Cummins c and b K. Yadav	21
S. O'Keefe run out	8
N. Lyon c Pujara b Kumar	13
J. Hazlewood not out	2
Extras (b1, lb10)	11
Total (for all out, 88.3 overs)	300

India 1st innings:

L. Rahul not out	0
M. Vijay not out	0
Extras (0)	0
Total (for no loss, 1 over)	0

Wade, who made 57.

"It was good to get some runs but it's 1-1 in the series and we need to play really well tomorrow (Sunday)."

India's ploy to keep Kuldeep (4-68) under wraps and use him for the final Test paid rich dividends.

The chinaman bowler picked his first international wicket when he had David Warner (56) caught by stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane in the slips.

The bowler broke down as he hugged his teammates to celebrate the occasion.

Kuldeep struck again soon to send back Peter Handscomb (eight) with a ball that turned in sharply and hit the stumps.

Glenn Maxwell also lost his wicket to the wrist-spinner, misreading a googly only to see the ball clipping the off bail.

Smith had put on 134 runs for the second wicket with Warner after Australia lost opener Matt Renshaw in the second over of the day.

The unassuming captain underlined his reputation as the world number one Test batsman, reaching his 20th century

in the process and seventh hundred in his last eight Tests against India.

The skipper raised his bat and helmet to acknowledge the standing ovation from a grateful Australian dressing room.

Smith's efforts meant he remained on top of the batting chart in the series with a whopping 482 runs from seven innings.

He finally lost his wicket to spinner

Ravichandran Ashwin, with Rahane taking another catch in the slip region.

Smith's run in the series has been in contrast to Kohli who managed only 46 runs from three Tests.

Before this game, Kohli played 54 Tests on the trot without missing a match since November 2011.

Ashwin took his tally to 79 in the 2016-17 season, the most by any bowler in one season, surpassing South African Dale Steyn's 78 scalps. (AFP)

India's Kuldeep Yadav (L) celebrates the wicket of Australia's Glenn Maxwell with teammate Umesh Yadav

