

Bracewell, Kuggeleijn set up New Zealand's T20 win

● Sri Lanka finished their tour of New Zealand without a victory after losing the only T20 in Auckland, having been well on top

● Setting a target of 180, New Zealand bowled out Sri Lanka for 144, winning the only T20I by 35 runs

AFP | Auckland

The recalled Doug Bracewell and debutant Scott Kuggeleijn starred with bat and ball for New Zealand to beat Sri Lanka by 35 runs in the one-off Twenty20 match in Auckland yesterday.

It ended a dismal tour for the Sri Lankans with the drawn first Test followed by a succession of losses in the second Test, three one-dayers and the Twenty20.

New Zealand, sent into bat, recovered from 55 for five to finish on 179 for seven with Bracewell (44) and Kuggeleijn (35 not out) the key contributors.

Although the target was not



Scott Kuggeleijn of New Zealand hits a shot

daunting, and Sri Lanka easily kept up with the required run rate to be four for 118 after 12 overs.

But their last six wickets fell for the addition of only 26 more runs and the innings folded for 144 with 19 balls remaining.

Kuggeleijn and Bracewell both took wickets in their opening overs.

Kusal Perera, who raced to 22

off 12 deliveries was removed by Kuggeleijn's third delivery while Niroshan Dickwella, who smacked a four and a six from the first two balls of the innings, went for 18 with the first ball from Bracewell.

Kuggeleijn and Bracewell also took the catches to dismiss Kusal Mendis (17) and Thisara Perera (43).

The first game all tour for

Sadeera Samarawickrama was a short-lived affair when he was bowled first ball by Lockie Ferguson.

Ferguson finished with figures of three for 21 while Ish Sodhi took three for 30.

Sri Lanka did with the toss and put New Zealand into bat with impressive early results.

With a more disciplined bowling attack than was seen in the

ODIs, and with astute field placements, Sri Lanka ripped through the New Zealand top order to have them four for 27 midway through the fourth over.

Ross Taylor, who tormented Sri Lanka in the one-dayers, had to play a more circumspect role.

New Zealand		
M. Guptill c Mendis b Malinga		1
C. Munro c Shanaka b Rajitha		16
T. Seifert c Sandakan b Rajitha		2
H. Nicholls b Malinga		4
R. Taylor c Dickwella b Perera		33
M. Santner c Perera b Sandakan		13
D. Bracewell c de Silva b Rajitha		44
S. Kuggeleijn not out		35
T. Southee not out		13
Extras: (b2, lb2, wd13, nb1)		18
Total: (for 7 wickets, 20 overs)		179
Sri Lanka		
N. Dickwella c Seifert b Bracewell		18
S Samarawickrama b Ferguson		0
K. Perera c Bracewell b Kuggeleijn		23
B. Mendis c Kuggeleijn b Southee		17
T.Perera c Bracewell b Ferguson		43
D. de Silva b Ferguson		10
D. Shanaka lbw b Sodhi		7
K. Rajitha c Seifert b Sodhi		5
L. Malinga c Guptill b Santner		6
L. Kumara c Kuggeleijn b Sodhi		4
L. Sandakan not out		1
Extras: (wd10)		10
Total: (all out: 16.5 overs)		144

DNA request made in Cristiano Ronaldo rape case

AFP | Los Angeles

Las Vegas police have asked soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo to submit a DNA sample as part of their investigation into rape allegations made against him.

The Juventus forward has vehemently denied the accusations -- with his lawyer, Peter Christiansen, telling AFP the request was standard procedure.

"Mr Ronaldo has always maintained, as he does today, that what occurred in Las Vegas in 2009 was consensual in nature, so it is not surprising that DNA would be present, nor that the police would make this very standard request as part of their investigation," he said in a statement.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said it had made an official request to Italian authorities, adding it is "taking the same steps in this case as in any other sexual assault to facilitate the collection of DNA evidence."

Former model Kathryn Mayorga, 34, of Las Vegas, accused Ronaldo in a complaint filed last year in the state of Nevada.

She claims after meeting him at a Las Vegas nightclub, he raped her at his hotel suite on June 13, 2009 -- just before he joined Real Madrid from Manchester United.

Sarri blasts Bayern over Hudson-Odoi interest



Chelsea's English midfielder Callum Hudson-Odoi runs with the ball during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Maurizio Sarri has lashed out at Bayern Munich for their "unprofessional" behaviour after the Bundesliga club publicly expressed their interest in Chelsea starlet Callum Hudson-Odoi.

Chelsea boss Sarri is furious that Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said this week that they "definitely" want to sign Hudson-Odoi during the January transfer window as he "has the qualities which would fit very well" with the German champions.

Chelsea have reportedly turned down a £35 million (\$45 million) bid from Bayern for the 18-year-old, who has less than 18 months to run on his current contract and has so far refused to sign a new five-year deal, and Sarri is unhappy with Bayern's public approach.

"I think that it's not professional, because they are talking about a player under contract with Chelsea. So they didn't

respect our club, I think," Sarri told reporters yesterday.

Sarri has handed Hudson-Odoi a place in his starting line-up for Chelsea's past two matches -- Tuesday's League Cup semi-final loss to Tottenham Hotspur and the 2-0 FA Cup win over Nottingham Forest last weekend in which the teenager set up both of Alvaro Morata's goals.

But, having helped England win the Under-17 World Cup, Hudson-Odoi could follow the same path taken by his international teammate Jadon Sancho, who has impressed for Borussia Dortmund since leaving Manchester City for Germany.

Regardless of Hudson-Odoi's future, Sarri has recommended Chelsea sign two new players to bolster his squad.

"As you know very well I am not involved in the market. I spoke with the club and the club knows very well my opinion. In my opinion we need two players," he said.

Sterling pens letter to racially abused boy and says 'stand tall'

AFP | London

Manchester City star Raheem Sterling sent a letter to a 13-year-old goalkeeper after hearing he had been racially abused advising him to "stand tall and be proud of who you are".

Sterling himself was the subject of alleged racist abuse from Chelsea fans in a Premier League match in December.

He wrote the letter



Raheem Sterling

on club headed paper when informed by Ethan Ross's grandmother he had been "through a tough time with racial abuse."

Ross, a goalkeeper with the Under-14 team at fourth-tier New Forest County, had been racially abused at his school.

"Dear Ethan, I have recently been told from your lov-

ing Nanna Sue about the tough time you are having with racial abuse," wrote Sterling, who also enclosed signed photographs of the Manchester City squad.

"Remember to stand tall and be proud of who you are and don't let them take away your courage. You are strong and very brave, and your Nanna is also very proud of you. Keep being you kid.

"Remember speaking up doesn't always make life easy, but easy never changed anything."

Ross took to Instagram when

he received the letter on Saturday.

"OMG just got this in the post from Raheem Sterling! Signed by all the Man City players. Thank you so much Raheem Sterling for the support," Ross wrote on Instagram.

His grandmother, who did not wish to give her full name, told The Times that Sterling's gesture had done wonders for Ross's morale.

"When I took the package over to him you should have seen the look on his face -- he was overwhelmed," said the 62-year-old.

Pogba returns as Solskjaer eyes United job boost over rival Pochettino

AFP | Manchester

Paul Pogba will be fit to return from injury for Manchester United's Premier League match at Tottenham this weekend, interim manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said on Thursday.

The France midfielder linked up late with his team-mates for a warm weather training camp in Dubai this week after being injured in a challenge by Jonjo Shelvey during the 2-0 victory at Newcastle on January 2.

Pogba missed last Saturday's 2-0 FA Cup victory over Reading as a result of the knock, but trained well in the United Arab Emirates, according to Solskjaer.

"He looked OK towards the end, so he will be fit. He did have some problems but he came through last couple of sessions well, so he should be OK," the Norwegian said.

Solskjaer has made a perfect start as United's coach since replacing the sacked

Jose Mourinho on December 19, winning each of his first five matches in charge.

The former United striker, who is on loan from Norwegian club Molde until the end of the season, has made clear since his return to Old Trafford he

would love the manager's job on a permanent basis.

However, his opponent on Sunday, Tottenham head coach Mauricio Pochettino, is believed by many observers to be the likeliest person to get the United job.

Solskjaer praised the Argentinian and justified the reports.



"He has done a very good job. That speculation is there for a reason -- because he has done well -- but it's not my job to rate managers. My focus is on me and my team."

Tottenham test

The interim boss, though, has rejected the idea that this match represents his first serious challenge in charge of United, following wins over Cardiff, Huddersfield, Bournemouth, Newcastle and Reading.

"We've had tests. Newcastle away is a test and the first game was a test as to how everyone reacted. The first home game with the crowd is a test," he said.

"We are not going to get as many chances to attack against these as we had before so when we have the ball we have to be ready to play well with it and we have to use the whole pitch because Wembley is a decent size pitch as well," he added.