

SPORTS

sports

Pakistan dominate Sri Lanka in first home Test for ten years

AFP | Rawalpindi

Test cricket made its long-awaited return to Pakistan after a deadly attack in 2009, with the home team led by fast bowler Naseem Shah dominating Sri Lanka yesterday.

Naseem, who is just 16, grabbed 2-51 on the opening day of the first Test which marked a momentous occasion in Pakistan cricket at Rawalpindi stadium.

Sri Lanka won the toss and batted and closed the day at a precarious 202-5 after bad light stopped play 20.5

overs early.

At close Dhananjaya de Silva was unbeaten on 38 and Niroshan Dickwella not out 11 as Sri Lanka spoiled a good 96-run start given by skipper Dimuth Karunaratne (59) and Oshada Fernando (40).

Pakistan struggled for wickets in the first session as Sri Lanka reached 89-0 at lunch.

Shaheen Shah Afridi trapped Sri Lankan skipper Karunaratne leg-before soon after lunch to trigger a collapse which saw the visitors lose four wickets within just 31 runs in the post lunch session.



Shaheen Afridi rejoices after taking a wicket

Pasha clinches top spot

Team Bahrain follows up top ranking with the number one fighter in the world

TDT | Manama

Super-Heavyweight amateur world champion Pasha Khakhachaev is the new number one fighter in the world, pound-for-pound. The news was confirmed by IMMAF (International MMA Federation), as the Bahraini hero has surpassed former top-ranked Axel Sola, from France, after yet another flawless performance at last month's IMMAF World Championships.

Pasha has had a perfect year in 2019, winning every competition he entered. From the Asian Open in May, to the European Championships in June, and the World Championships in November, Khakhachaev has truly become the biggest star in amateur mixed martial arts, and one of the athletes responsible for Team Bahrain gaining and maintaining its status as the number one nation in the sport.

With a perfect amateur record of eight wins and no losses, Pasha had a singular 2019, winning three bouts by KO, but then

showing his versatility at home, during the World Championships. With a more measured approach, and looking to gain experience, Khakhachaev won twice by decision to become the two-time world champion at Super-Heavyweight.

The dominance of Team Bahrain over the competition can also be measured by how many athletes the country has produced through to the top-20. In addition to Pasha, other eight athletes have been placed in the first 20 places of the ranking, which determines the best fight-



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Pasha Khakhachaev (L) with HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa

er in the world, regardless of weight classes.

Ramazan Gitinov (4th), Shamil Gaziev (5th), and Magomed Gadzhiasulov (6th) are the other names that represent Bahrain in the top-10, while Shamil Gimbatov (12th), Murtaza Talha Ali (13th), Mansur Magomedov (14th), Abdulmanap Magomedov (17th), and Magomed Idrisov (18th) are also included in the top-20.

Liverpool, Chelsea through to Champions League last 16

AFP | Paris

Holders Liverpool safely negotiated Tuesday's trip to Salzburg to take their place in the last 16 of this season's UEFA Champions League while Chelsea are also through, but Ajax suffered a shock group-stage exit.

Six clubs secured spots in the draw for the first knockout round in their final group games, with Ajax and Inter Milan the big names to miss out.

Jurgen Klopp's side just needed to draw in Austria to keep alive their bid to retain the European Cup, and they duly beat Salzburg 2-0 thanks to two goals in two second-half minutes, by Naby Keita and Mohamed Salah.

Keita headed in Sadio Mane's cross against his former club to put Liverpool ahead in the 57th minute, and Salah then rounded goalkeeper Cican Stankovic to score from an improbably tight angle.

The result allowed Liverpool to progress as Group E winners, with Napoli going through in second place, while Salzburg are out and drop into the Europa League instead.

"What a team," Klopp told BT Sport. "What an effort. It was a tough game."

"We scored two wonderful goals. We could have scored six or seven which is crazy. We won the group, we won the game, all good."

Ancelotti sacked by Napoli

Napoli made sure of their



Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah scores a goal

“We scored two wonderful goals. We could have scored six or seven which is crazy. We won the group, we won the game, all good”

JURGEN KLOPP

progress by trouncing Genk 4-0 in Italy with Arkadiusz Milik scoring a first-half hat-trick, the third goal coming from the penalty spot.

Dries Mertens converted another spot-kick in the second half to seal the win, but the Italian side still sacked coach Carlo Ancelotti in the wake of the game.

There was high drama in Group H as Valencia beat Ajax 1-0 in Amsterdam, Rodrigo Moreno's strike taking the

Spaniards through to the last 16 at the expense of last season's semi-finalists, and leaving their hosts stunned.

Ajax had again been impressive this season but were left to rue their inability to win either of their two matches against Chelsea, as Frank Lampard's team progressed in second place, a point ahead of the Dutch giants, thanks to a 2-1 victory against Lille.

Tammy Abraham and Cesar Azpilicueta netted first-half goals for Chelsea, who held on after Loic Remy pulled one back for Lille.

Chelsea, the 2012 Champions League winners, finish level on points with Valencia but come second due to their inferior head-to-head record.

"The Champions League is where Chelsea belong. We knew it was a tough group. We had to fight and recover after losing against Valencia at home in our first game," Azpilicueta told BT Sport.



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