

Pakistan complete four-series sweep against South Africa

Faheem Ashraf took three for 17 to spark South Africa's collapse in the fourth Twenty20 at Centurion

● Both teams suffered collapses, but South Africa's 145 target proved insufficient

AFP | Centurion

Pakistan completed a clean sweep of four trophies in four series against South Africa but had anxious moments before scrambling to a three-wicket win with one ball to spare in the fourth and final Twenty20 international at SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday.

"It is a big moment for Pakistan. It is not easy winning matches in South Africa," captain Babar Azam said through an interpreter at the post-match presentation.

Pakistan, who earlier in the season defeated South Africa in Tests and T20 internationals in Pakistan, followed up a 2-1 one-day series win with a 3-1 victory in the T20s to round off a successful tour.

Medium-pace bowler Faheem Ashraf set up what seemed likely to be an easy win for Pakistan when he took three for 17 as South Africa were bowled out for 144 on what is usually a high-scoring ground.

Pakistan were cruising at 92 for one in the tenth over as Babar and Fakhar Zaman shared an impressive second-wicket



Faheem Ashraf celebrates with teammates after a wicket

partnership after Mohammad Rizwan was stumped in the first over.

But Fakhar, who hit five fours and four sixes in a 34-ball 60, went for one big hit too many and sliced a high catch to backward point.

Babar, who was named man of the series, was caught at wide third man for 24 three balls later and Pakistan found themselves in a collapse in which six wickets fell for 37 runs.

Two no-balls in the penultimate over by Sisanda Magala proved disastrous for the hosts, with the second resultant free hit being slammed for six by Mohammad Nawaz.

However, it still went down to the fifth ball of the over before Nawaz clinched victory with another six, off Lizaad Williams.

South Africa, with five key players released to the Indian Premier League and without appointed captain Temba Bavuma because of injury, batted poorly but clawed their way back into the game despite bowling four no-balls and seven wides.

"I am disappointed but we have young cricketers with great talent and I am proud of them," said stand-in captain Heinrich Klaasen.

"We showed we can fight and compete as a young group but we need to get more consistency in our performances."

Faheem earlier started a South African collapse similar to that which later afflicted Pakistan.

South Africa had reached 73 for one after the early loss of Aiden Markram when Faheem

YOU KNOW WHAT

The series completed a truncated home season for South Africa, who lost a T20 series against England and gained their only series win when they won two Tests against Sri Lanka before taking on Pakistan

had Janneman Malan caught at mid-off for 33 in the ninth over.

He followed up with the wickets of Klaasen and George Linde. He bowled his four overs in succession and did not concede a boundary.

"My brief was clear from the captain but the tone was set by the new ball bowlers," he said.

Fast bowlers Hasan Ali and Haris Rauf took three for 40 and two for 18 respectively.

Rassie van der Dussen top-scored for South Africa with 52 off 36 balls.

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BRAVE CF Signs Combat Sambo World Cup Champion Ruslan Tedeev

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation continues to beef up its Lightweight division with the addition of a huge name in Russian MMA. Combat Sambo World Cup champion Ruslan Tedeev has signed a multi-fight deal with the fastest-growing MMA organization in the world and is expected to make his promotional debut sooner rather than later.

Tedeev has amassed a very respectable 13-2 professional record and will make his BRAVE CF debut on the back of a five-fight win streak, which saw him become one of Eastern Europe's most sought-after fighters.

Through his social media



Ruslan Tedeev

profiles, the Lightweight contender expressed his happiness at joining BRAVE Combat Federation and is hopeful he can debut soon, perhaps in Belarus, where the promotion is heading to next for BRAVE CF 51.

"I'm delighted to have signed a deal with BRAVE Combat Federation, which has been recognized as the fastest-growing MMA organization in the world. I can't wait to debut in my new home and show the world all my skills. Thank you to His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa and Mohammed Shahid for the opportunity to fight at BRAVE CF"

Tedeev will join a stacked Lightweight roster at BRAVE CF, led by world champion Amin Ayoub and also containing the likes of top KHK Team Bahrain wrestler Ahmed Amir, Kyrgyzstan's number one male fighter Abdissalam Kubanychbek, BRAVE CF 2020 Fighter of the Year Rolando Dy, England's Sam Patterson, among other top fighters.

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RUSLAN TEDEV

Folayang faces Aoki in battle of veterans

TDT | Manila

Once and for all, Filipino former ONE lightweight world champion Eduard Folayang and Japanese grappling specialist Shinya Aoki will make known who the real boss is.

The two grizzled veterans will square off for the third time in the Circle in ONE on TNT IV at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on April 29.

The trilogy will surely be a big draw among fight fans as both fighters are eager to settle their unfinished business and, of course, emerge victorious.

Folayang, who is known as "The Landslide", was supposed to face Japanese-Korean icon Yoshihiro Akiyama but the latter withdrew due to injuries. On the other hand, Aoki's original opponent, Sage Northcutt, was also forced to pull out of their scheduled bout due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

Folayang and Aoki first met in the Circle in 2016 when the Igorot warrior scored a third-round technical knockout win to capture the lightweight belt.

Representing Team Lakay, the 36-year-old Folayang had his first successful title defense against Ev Ting of Malaysia and New Zealand in 2017 before Martin Nguyen dethroned the Filipino mixed martial arts icon the same year.



Folayang hits Aoki with a leg kick during their second meeting

It was in 2018 when Folayang rode high on crest of a three-match win streak capped off by retaking the vacant belt against Amir Khan.

In the Folayang-Aoki rematch, their first encounter in more than two years, the Japanese exacted sweet revenge on the Filipino via first-round arm-triangle choke submission

for the title.

Coming into the fight, Folayang is in high spirit and looking forward to an action-packed encounter with Aoki.

"This is a very unpredictable sport as in our previous bouts, Aoki did well while I'm in a bad performance streak but we always learned from the past,"

"My expectation is to give all my best with no regrets. I will approach this fight positively and as much as possible be precise in the way I execute my game"

XX EDUARD FOLAYANG

Folayang who believes that he has evolved as a fighter and improved his skill.

"My expectation is to give all my best with no regrets. I will approach this fight positively and as much as possible be precise in the way I execute my game."

Folayang only earned one victory from his last five fights since March 2019, with the last one coming against Mongolian Tsogookhuu Amarsanaa. In that span, aside from his loss to Aoki, he also fell to Eddie Alvarez of the US, Pieter Buist of the Netherlands and Caruso.

So this battle of veterans will serve as a golden opportunity for Folayang to snap a two-bout slide and for his waning career to receive a much-needed shot in the arm.

"I think I'm a much different fighter now compared to before. I have prepared hard for him," said Folayang.

Chelsea's Tuchel vows to hunt down Man City ahead of FA Cup clash

AFP | London

Thomas Tuchel admits Chelsea still lag behind Manchester City as he prepares to face the runaway Premier League leaders in an FA Cup semi-final but vowed to hunt down Europe's "benchmark" club next season.

Chelsea face City at Wembley on Saturday, with Tuchel chasing a maiden managerial win over Pep Guardiola, whose side are still on course for an unprecedented quadruple.

The Blues' German boss be-

lieves Chelsea still have long-term ground to make up on City but has exhorted his players to close that gap just for 90 minutes.

"We have to accept that there is a gap between us and Manchester City," said Tuchel, who replaced Frank Lampard in the Stamford Bridge hot seat in January.

"If you look at the fixture in the Premier League and the fixtures in the last years we have to accept this. And it's important that we accept this without making ourselves too small.

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