

Root ton puts England in charge

Bold and brave Joe Root century raises tempo and puts the visitors back in the driving seat against Sri Lanka

● England took a 278-run lead over Sri Lanka with one second-innings wicket remaining

AFP | Kandy, Sri Lanka

Captain Joe Root smashed 124 and newcomer Ben Foakes again hit valuable tail end runs to put England in command of the second Test against Sri Lanka yesterday.

England reached 324 for nine -- a second innings lead of 278 -- when bad light stopped play for the day at Kandy.

Foakes was batting on 51 alongside James Anderson on four.

Spinner Akila Dananjaya, whose action is under investigation by the International Cricket Council, claimed six wickets on the turning pitch.

He trapped Root lbw and then bowled Sam Curran for nought with his next ball. Adil Rashid thwarted the hat-trick but soon fell to Dananjaya's guile for two.

It was his third five wicket haul in just his fifth Test for



England captain Joe Root hits out to the boundary

Dananjaya, who must rush off to Australia after the game for an ICC examination of his bowling.

He however could not stop Root and Foakes swinging the game.

Root reached his 15th Test ton soon after tea, making the sweep and reverse sweep valuable

weapons, as he hit 10 fours and two sixes in his 146-ball knock.

Root said he enjoyed making the runs despite the pressure.

"That's what it should be. You shouldn't feel pressure like the pressure is too much for you, you should enjoy the occasion and make the most of the opportunity in front of you," he said after the day's play.

Root raised his bat to a standing ovation from travelling English fans who also lauded Foakes.

Root made an 82-run seventh

England 290	
Sri Lanka 336	
England (overnight 0-0)	
J. Leach lbw b Perera	1
R. Burns lbw b Pushpakumara	59
K. Jennings c de Silva b Dananjaya	26
J. Root lbw b Dananjaya	124
B. Stokes lbw b Perera	0
J. Buttler b Dananjaya	34
M. Ali lbw b Dananjaya	10
B. Foakes not out	51
S. Curran b Dananjaya	0
A. Rashid lbw b Dananjaya	2
J. Anderson not out	4
Extras (b4, lb9)	13
Total (9 wickets, 76 overs)	324
Bowling: Perera 19-2-87-2, Pushpakumara 26-1-97-1, Dananjaya 23-0-106-6, De Silva 4-0-7-0, Lakmal 4-0-14-0	

Every one of England's top seven batsmen were out attempting a sweep of some description.

Jos Buttler dragged one of Dananjaya's deliveries onto his stumps while trying to reverse sweep on 34. Moeen Ali was trapped lbw for 10 after failing to connect with an attempted sweep.

"From my point of view, it was almost a safer shot than playing the forward defensive," said Root.

"With the amount the ball was turning there's a lot of risk involved in that. At times attack is the best form of defence on a wicket like that."

Earlier, left-hander Rory Burns registered his maiden Test half-century in just his second match. He was trapped lbw off Malinda Pushpakumara for 59.

Perera wasted little time in sending nightwatchman Jack Leach back to the pavilion for one in the second over of the day.

Burns then put together 73 runs for the second wicket with Keaton Jennings, who made 26, to steady the innings and help England overcome their 46-run deficit.

wicket stand with Foakes, who reached his fifty with a six off Dilruwan Perera. The hit turned out to be the last ball of the day with dark clouds gathering and thunder heard in the distance.

'Attack best form of defence'

As he did in his sparkling century on his Test debut in the opening game of the series, Foakes mixed caution and aggression to push up the England score.

Pakistan hold edge after New Zealand dismissed for 153

AFP | Abu Dhabi

Leg-spinner Yasir Shah led a double-barrelled attack of spin and pace to leave Pakistan sitting comfortably on the opening day of the first Test against New Zealand yesterday.

Yasir spearheaded Pakistan's wicket-taking with 3-54 as New Zealand, who won the toss and batted on a grassless Sheikh Zayed Stadium pitch, were bowled out for a below-par 153 in 66.3 overs at the stroke of tea.

The day saw 12 wickets fall as Pakistan closed at 59-2, having lost both their openers, Imam-ul-Haq (six) and Mohammad Hafeez (20), before Haris Sohail and Azhar Ali stopped the rot.

Pakistan need 94 more to take a lead and go one up in the three-match series.

Imam was first to go as he edged Colin de Grandhomme's delivery to the slip while Hafeez miscued a pull straight to short mid-wicket -- both caught by Kane Williamson.

New Zealand skipper Williamson, declared fit after missing last Sunday's third one-day international due to a groin injury, top-scored with 63 before falling softly to medium pacer Hasan Ali, who finished with 2-38.

Hasan removed Williamson with a slower delivery as the New Zealand skipper went for a hook and gloved the ball for wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed's fourth catch of the innings.

Williamson's 112-ball knock



Pakistani spinner Yasir Shah (L) celebrates after taking the wicket of New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor (C)

New Zealand 1st innings	
J. Raval c Sarfraz b Abbas	7
T. Latham c Hafeez b Yasir	13
K. Williamson c Sarfraz b Hasan	63
R. Taylor c Sarfraz b Yasir	2
H. Nicholls c Sarfraz b Abbas	28
BJ Watling lbw b Sohail	10
C. de Grandhomme lbw b Hasan	0
I. Sodhi lbw b Sohail	4
N. Wagner c Shafiq b Asif	12
Ajaz Patel lbw b Yasir	6
T. Boult not out	4
Extras: (lb 4)	4
Total: (all out; 66.3 overs)	153
Bowling: Abbas 12-7-13-2, Hasan 16-6-38-2, Asif 13-1-33-1, Yasir 16-3-2-54-2, Sohail 8-2-11-2, Hafeez 1-1-0-0	
Pakistan 1st innings	
Imam c Williamson b de Grandhomme	6
Hafeez c Williamson b Boult	20
Azhar Ali not out	10
Haris Sohail not out	22
Extras: (lb 1)	1
Total: (for two wickets; 23 overs)	59
Bowling: Boult 6-2-20-1, de Grandhomme 8-4-17-1, Patel 6-2-13-0, Wagner 3-0-8-0	

had five boundaries and he added 72 for the fourth wicket with Henry Nicholls who made 28 with four boundaries.

In the same over Hasan trapped De Grandhomme for a first-ball duck before Sohail dismissed Ish Sodhi (four) and BJ Watling (four) -- both were trapped leg-before.

Mohammad Abbas, who has figures of 2-13, had removed Nicholls, caught behind by Sarfraz soon after lunch.

Pakistan dominated the first session as New Zealand were 81-3 at lunch, with leg-spinner Yasir Shah taking the first of his two wickets in his opening overs.

Yasir had derailed New Zealand's progress in the first session with the wickets of opener Tom Latham (13) and Ross Taylor (two) in his first spell.

Yasir said he changed his strategy.

AFP | London

Wayne Rooney believes the future is bright for England as a youthful Three Lions eased past the United States 3-0 at Wembley on his international swansong on Thursday.

Jesse Lingard, Trent Alexander-Arnold and debutant Callum Wilson grabbed the goals in a dominant England display despite Gareth Southgate fielding a very inexperienced side.

Should England avenge their heartbreaking World Cup semi-final defeat by Croatia on Sunday at Wembley, Southgate's men can build on the progress made by surpassing expectations in Russia this summer by qualifying for the semi-finals of the inaugural Nations League.

"It's my opinion that England are in very safe hands from what I've seen this week," said Rooney.

"The way they are being coached is brilliant, it's a great group of young players who have a bright future.

"They will go close to being the next team to bring a trophy back for England."

The decision to honour Rooney with a first cap for two years divided opinion.

However, the biggest cheer of the night was reserved for the introduction of England's greatest ever goalscorer just before the hour mark on his 120th international appearance.

"It will live with me for a long time," added Rooney.

"It is something which created debate because it was the



Wayne Rooney was honoured before kick-off with a guard of honour and the presentation of a plaque bearing a golden Three Lions badge by current skipper Harry Kane

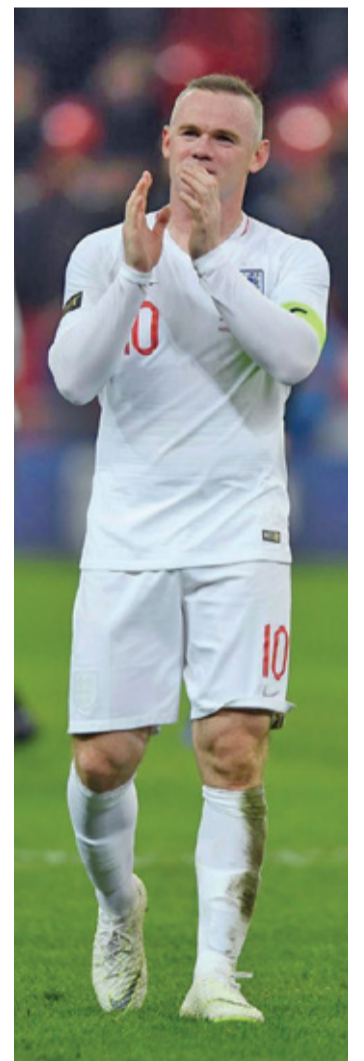
first time something like this happened, but it is the right thing to do for the players if you achieve and leave your mark on the England team."

England's former captain was also honoured before kick-off with a guard of honour and the presentation of a plaque bearing a golden Three Lions badge by current skipper Harry Kane.

"I asked Harry Kane to present me with the award because I believe he will beat my goalscoring record and I look forward to presenting him with the trophy," added Rooney.

Kane didn't get the chance to add to his 19 international goals as Southgate prioritised keeping most of his key players fresh for Croatia's visit on Sunday.

"It has been a brilliant year no matter what happens on Sunday. We've had real shoots of progress and achieved some outstanding results," said



Wayne Rooney of England acknowledges the fans after the International Friendly match between England and United States

Southgate.

"But everybody wants to get to a semi-final out of a very tough group so it would be a really big step forward."