

SPORTS

sports

Stokes, Pope hundreds and late wickets put England on top



Ben Stokes celebrate his century with Ollie Pope

AFP | Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Centuries by Ben Stokes and Ollie Pope, followed by two late wickets, put England in a dominant position on the second day of the third Test against South Africa at St George's Park yesterday.

England declared on 499 for nine and South Africa were struggling on 60 for two when rain brought an early close to a day which the hosts would probably prefer to forget.

It started with the news that strike bowler Kagiso Rabada would miss the fourth and final Test in Johannesburg next week because of his fourth disciplinary transgression within 24 months.

Then, after taking a pummeling from the England batsmen, the day ended with the hosts facing an uphill battle to avoid going into that match one-down in a series which is tied at 1-1.

Off-spinner Dom Bess took both wickets for England, while Mark Wood bowled with electrifying pace and hit not out batsman Dean Elgar a painful blow on the left forearm.

World player of the year Stokes (120) and Pope (135 not out) set up England's big total by putting on 203 for the fifth wicket. They came together on the first day when their side were struggling at 148 for four.

In contrast to an attritional first day, when England could



only score 224 for four in 90 overs, the tourists scored freely for most of the day, although Pope made hard work of moving from 75 at lunch to his century, needing most of the afternoon before he punched Anrich Nortje through mid-wicket for his 14th boundary after facing 190 balls.

While Pope, 22, moved cautiously to join Dom Sibley in scoring a maiden Test hundred during the series, Sam Curran provided the impetus for England as he hit an aggressive 44 off 50 balls, with six fours and a six. He and Pope put on 59 for the seventh wicket, with Pope contributing 13.

England were already in a strong position when they reached tea at 426 for eight. The 37 minutes after the break rubbed it in as Wood joined Pope with a licence to score as quickly as possible.

Wood slammed five sixes in an innings of 42 off 23 balls, dealing out severe punishment to left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj before holing out to give Maharaj his fifth wicket, albeit at a cost of 180 runs.

Barty sets up Adelaide final

● Rublev wins thriller

AFP | Adelaide

World number one Ashleigh Barty will warm up for the Australian Open with a final at the Adelaide International after a 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/5) comeback win over Danielle Collins yesterday.

The Australian, whose matches have been 5,000-strong sell-outs all week at Memorial Drive, will face Dayana Yastremska on Saturday for the title.

Ukrainian teenager Yastremska defeated her third top-20 opponent in a row with a 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) win over Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus.

The men's final will be a contest between in-form Andrey Rublev and South African Lloyd Harris, who defeated fellow qualifier Tommy Paul 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3.

Rublev is the first man since 2004 to play finals in the first two weeks of a season after the Doha champion outlasted Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime in a 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (7/9), 6-4 thriller which took a shade over three hours.

Auger-Aliassime, 19, saved two match points in the second set and grabbed a 3-0 lead in the third before his Russian opponent fought back.



Ashleigh Barty of Australia plays a forehand to Danielle Collins of the USA

"This match was unreal," said world number 18 Rublev.

"I don't know how I won. I lost myself a bit when I trailed 2-0 (third set). I told myself to start again, breathe and fight for every point."

'It makes me feel old'

Barty took a while to get going against 27th-ranked American Collins who dominated the opening set.

But the second was a different story, with top seed Barty quickly finding her game to level the match.

The third set went to a tie-break after the players traded breaks of serve.

Barty lost a 4-2 lead in the breaker, but won on her second match point as a Collins return

clipped the top of the net.

"I worked hard tonight, and we got the result that we're after," she said. "I felt I had a lot of clarity with what I wanted to do. "Danielle has the ability to take the match out of your hands a little bit."

Barty beat Yastremska in their only previous meeting last March in Miami.

"Dayana brings a lot of variety to her game, she's an exceptional ball-striker. All of these young girls are hitting so hard, it makes me feel old," the 23-year-old said.

Harris reaches first final

Yastremska thrashed world number 20 Donna Vekic in the quarter-finals and was a set up against former Australian Open

“I worked hard tonight, and we got the result that we're after," she said. "I felt I had a lot of clarity with what I wanted to do

ASHLEIGH BARTY

winner Angelique Kerber when the German retired from their last-16 match with back pain.

Ranked 24th, Yastremska is bidding for the fourth title of her career.

Harris, 22, will be competing in his first ATP final.

"To be honest, it doesn't seem real now," he said. "It was a tough match for both of us, we were both nervous."

"I tried to lift my level, but it was a difficult match all in all, one of those days where I felt like I wasn't at 100 percent."

"I wasn't playing my best, but somehow I managed to battle through it -- that was amazing for me."

Harris needed two hours and 11 minutes to advance past the American, firing 13 aces and breaking four times while losing his own serve twice.

India beat Australia to level one-day series



Virat Kohli plays a shot

AFP | Mumbai

Steve Smith hit a swashbuckling 98 but Australia could not stop India powering to a 36 run victory to level their one-day series yesterday.

Thrashed by 10 wickets in the first of the three-match series, Shikhar Dhawan made 96, KL Rahul 80 and captain Virat Kohli 78 as India made 340 for six in their 50 overs and Australia soon fell behind in the run chase.

India completely turned the tables on Australian captain Aaron Finch, who won the toss and put India in to bat. India were a totally different proposition to the side that was never in the Mumbai contest while Finch's bowlers struggled.

Despite Smith's 102-ball innings with a six and nine fours

and Marnus Labuschagne's battling 46, Mohammed Shami came close to a hat-trick as India's pace attack took control and Australia were bowled out for 304 with five balls of the innings left.

Shami bowled Ashton Turner and Pat Cummins with successive yorkers and had an appeal for the third wicket turned down on review. He finished with three for 77.

"It was good to see that we came back so strongly," said Dhawan. "We had a good discussion, we knew we had to target specific bowlers and we showed more intent. Once we were set, we put the pressure on them."

The series, a key preparation for both sides ahead of this year's Twenty20 World Cup, will now be decided in Bangalore on Sunday.

Ross Barkley will stay with Chelsea, says Frank Lampard

AFP | London

Frank Lampard says Chelsea midfielder Ross Barkley will not be allowed to leave during the January transfer window despite reported interest from West Ham.

West Ham manager David Moyes is said to be keen on a loan deal for Barkley after the pair worked together at Everton.

But Lampard is keen to keep the 26-year-old England international at Stamford Bridge after his recent return to form.

Lampard criticised Barkley earlier this season for lacking professionalism after a row with a taxi driver during a night out in Liverpool.

But Barkley, who has made only six league starts this term, is back from a nagging foot injury and impressed during Chelsea's win over Burnley last weekend, prompting Blues boss Lampard to insist the midfielder remains firmly in his plans.

"There's no talk here of Ross Barkley going anywhere; he's our player," Lampard told reporters yesterday.

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