

# Australia lead England by 46 after 20 wickets fall on crazy day at MCG

Green pitch and overcast skies trigger dramatic collapses on opening day

● Australia bowled out for 152

● England collapse for 110

● Tongue claims five-wicket haul

AFP | Melbourne

An astounding 20 wickets fell on a frantic day one of the fourth Ashes Test on Friday with Australia all out for 152 before storming back to dismiss England for 110 and leave the clash on a knife-edge.

England skipper Ben Stokes won a key toss on a green track and his quicks feasted after sending in the hosts under overcast skies in front of 94,199 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

It was the biggest cricket crowd ever at the cavernous arena, exceeding the 93,013 who watched the 2015 World Cup final, and they witnessed the home side collapse with Josh Tongue grabbing 5-45.

But England fared even worse, slumping to 16-4 and never recovering, leaving Australia to face one over before stumps, which nightwatchman Scott Boland safely negotiated with Travis Head at the other end.

Australia were 4-0 at the close with Boland on four, 46 ahead, with Head yet to face a ball.

"I feel like anyone could have taken a 'five-fer' today," said Tongue, who became the first Englishman to take five wickets in an innings in a Test at the MCG since Dean Headley and Darren Gough in 1998.

"When I'm at my best I'm bowling at that fuller length.



England's Josh Tongue (L) celebrates the wicket of Australia's Steve Smith

Stokes has spoken to us quite a bit about it, going a touch fuller but hitting the pitch hard.

"If we get the ball in the same areas tomorrow we can get them three of four wickets down in the first hour."

Australia bowler Michael Neser, who took 4-45, was not making any predictions for the second innings after a day when the ball dominated the bat.

"We saw how tough it was when we batted. The ball was nipping around and we needed to bowl in the right areas," Neser said.

"You need to put pressure back on their bowlers. You need to find the perfect balance be-

## Scorecard

Australia 152 (Neser 35, Tongue 5-45, Atkinson 2-28) and 4 for 0 lead England 110 (Brook 41, Neser 4-45, Boland 3-30) by 46 runs

tween defence and attack."

Tongue said the match was far from over.

"No, not at all. They lead by 50," said Tongue.

"We will come back refreshed tomorrow morning. We have got to make sure to stick to what we did today and come out tomorrow."

## Duckett woes continue

Beleaguered England opener

Ben Duckett's week went from bad to worse, out for two just days after unverified video surfaced showing him drunk during a mid-series beach break.

It was another shocking dismissal for the 31-year-old, lobbing a simple catch to Neser at mid-on off the irrepressible Mitchell Starc.

Neser in the next over removed Jacob Bethell, playing in place of the under-performing Ollie Pope, when he edged to Alex Carey behind the stumps.

Zak Crawley was taken in the slips by Steve Smith off Starc four balls later, then Joe Root edged Neser to Carey to put England into freefall.

"I feel like anyone could have taken a 'five-fer' today. When I'm at my best I'm bowling at that fuller length. Stokes has spoken to us quite a bit about it, going a touch fuller but hitting the pitch hard. If we get the ball in the same areas tomorrow we can get them three of four wickets down in the first hour

JOSH TONGUE

Harry Brook decided attack was the best form of defence, smashing sixes off Starc and Neser, and with Stokes temporarily halted the carnage.

They put on 50 before Scott Boland trapped Brook lbw for 41.

Boland then bowled Jamie Smith for two and had Will Jacks caught behind, all within the space of 10 deliveries from the 36-year-old.

When Stokes edged Neser to Smith in the slips for 16 it was all but over.

Australia have already retained the Ashes after crushing eight-wicket victories in Perth and Brisbane and an 82-run win in Adelaide.

The tourists lost the famous urn in just 11 days of play with a drinking scandal by players during a beach break piling on the pressure.

## Crucial toss

They responded well after Stokes won a crucial toss.

Head drove consecutive boundaries off a wayward Brydon Carse, but he only lasted

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The 94,199 crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Ground was the largest ever for a cricket match at the venue, surpassing attendance at the 2015 World Cup final

22 balls, chopping on Atkinson for 12.

Jake Weatherald tickled down the leg side to wicketkeeper Smith on 10 in Tongue's first over.

Tongue then enticed an edge from Marnus Labuschagne on six that was well taken by Root at slip.

Steve Smith and Usman Khawaja began to stabilise the innings before Tongue struck again to bowl the Australia captain for nine.

Khawaja on 29 got the faintest of edges to Smith off Atkinson before Adelaide century-maker Alex Carey, on 20, flicked Stokes to Crawley who had just moved to leg gully.

Cameron Green, who has had a lean series, crunched back-to-back fours off Tongue. Neser, in his fourth Test but first red-ball affair, went one better, cracking three in succession off the same bowler.

But Green ran himself out for 17 going for a risky single then Starc hoisted Carse to a back-peddalling Stokes at mid-off before Tongue removed Neser and Boland.

## 'Personality' the key for Celtic boss Nancy when it comes to new signings

AFP | Glasgow

Celtic manager Wilfried Nancy insists personality will be a central consideration when he contemplates bringing fresh recruits to the Scottish champions.

The Frenchman took over at the Glasgow giants earlier this month and has been looking at his squad ahead of the January transfer window.

Celtic are currently second in the Scottish Premiership table, six points behind leaders Hearts but with a game in hand over the Edinburgh club.

"We have a lot of ability in terms of the way we play," said Nancy ahead of Saturday's match away to bottom-of-the-table Livingston.

"It is important that when you sign players, they need to have personality," the former Columbus Crew boss added.



Wilfried Nancy

"This (Celtic) is a big club. To play here is not always easy. It is so, so important to have players who can play here at a club like this."

Nancy added Celtic defender Kieran Tierney was an example of the type of player he admired.

"Everybody knows Kieran," he said. "I knew him before I came here. He's an important player for us. There are different kinds of personalities. Kieran is not a vocal leader but shows on the pitch.

## Arteta eager to avoid repeat of Rice red card against Brighton

AFP | London

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta is keen to ensure there is no repeat of Declan Rice's controversial red card against Brighton when his Premier League leaders face Brighton at the Emirates Stadium on Saturday.

The Gunners are just two points ahead of second-placed Manchester City and Pep Guardiola's men could be one point clear at the top of the table if they see off Nottingham Forest at the City Ground before Arsenal face the Seagulls.

Last season, Rice was sent off after he received a second yellow card for delaying a restart.

Arsenal were leading 1-0 before Rice's controversial dismissal but ended up dropping two points in a 1-1 draw.

"I remember it very well," said Arteta as he reflected on the fixture. "I was very pissed off in the manner that we played with



Arsenal's players celebrate winning League Cup quarter-final match

10 men, so hopefully it is going to be very different next time.

"I think the rules are different now. We paid a big price for that rule. And hopefully that stays away and we continue to play with 11 players."

Rice's red card was one of six

Arsenal received in the Premier League last season but they've yet to have a player sent off so far this term.

Kai Havertz could return for Arsenal on Saturday, with the 26-year-old not having featured since the Gunners' first match of

the season following surgery on his right knee.

Havertz returned to training last week and Arteta said he was close to making the squad for their League Cup penalty-shootout triumph over Crystal Palace on Tuesday.

"I remember it very well. I was very pissed off in the manner that we played with 10 men, so hopefully it is going to be very different next time. I think the rules are different now. We paid a big price for that rule. And hopefully that stays away and we continue to play with 11 players

MIKEL ARTETA