



MEN'S WORLD HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

After a winning start vs Angola, Qatar to take on Japan today

TNN/IHF

DOHA/BORG EL ARAB (EGYPT)

THE reigning Asian champions Qatar, who began their 27th Men's Handball World Championship campaign in Egypt in style with a 30-25 win over Angola on Friday, will next face underdogs Japan in their next Group C clash in Alexandria on Sunday.

While Qatar were slow off the blocks in the opener, they put up an impressive show much to their ranking and reputation.

Runners-up at the world championships in Doha in 2015, Qatar face huge expectations despite their preparations being affected during the ongoing pandemic.

Their performance in the opening match, however, augurs well for Spanish coach Valero Rivera and the team.

Qatar's defence and attack both stood out against Angola. Qatar played an aggressive 6-0 defence, interrupting the Angola attack already at the nine-meter line.

Angola answered with an agile 3-2-1 defence with good goalkeeping from Giovany Muachissengue between the posts. However, his counterpart Danijel Saric was even better, finishing with a 42 per cent save rate.

"The teamwork was the key to win this game today. Our defence was very well and we improved our attack in the second half", said a satisfied goalkeeper Saric.

After the timeout, Qatar scored three goals in a row and took control of the match.

Left wing and 'Player of the Match' Ahmad Madadi, said, "We came with a lot of motivation into this tournament. We miss some players, but of course the whole team knew what happened two years ago. We played very serious from beginning to end and I can only congratulate my team."



A Qatar player shapes up to score a goal against Angola on Friday. (On right) Qatar goalkeeper Danijel Saric battles a charge at the 27th Men's Handball World Championship in Egypt. Qatar won 30-25 against Angola.



Meanwhile, Japan played out a thrilling 29-29 draw against Croatia thanks to their goalkeeper Yuta Iwashita.

The 2020 AHF Men's Asian Championship bronze medallists remained the stronger and faster team in the first half, led by Yuto Agarie, who scored his five goals in the first 30 minutes and was also voted Player of the Match.

Japan coach Dagur Sigur-

sson, applauded his team, saying, "I'm really happy and satisfied. That was historical for us and I'm just incredibly happy and hope that we can continue like this. It was extremely important for the team and I'm very proud of all of them."

"Of course I would have liked to see my team win this game but you can't forget who we have faced. They (Croatia) are a really strong team and



Qatar coach Valero Rivera briefing his players ahead of the team's training session in Alexandria, Egypt, on Saturday.

that's why it really feels like a victory for us," he added.

Last week, President of the Qatar Handball Association (QHA) Ahmad Mohamed Al Shaabi said Asian champions Qatar will be aiming to top the

preliminary group.

"We must aim to win the three matches in the first phase because any loss will make our mission difficult in the second round. Therefore, it is important to lead the group in order

to maintain our chances and rhythm in the second stage," said Al Shaabi. "Despite the difficulties we have faced in our preparation, nothing can diminish our desire to achieve better results," he added.

In recent years, Qatar have established themselves as the dominant Asian force.

Qatar have won the Asian title thrice and reached the World Championship final on home soil in 2015.

Brighton, West Brom boost survival hopes; Chelsea, West Ham win

DPA

LONDON

BRIGHTON and West Brom both picked up vital wins in their fight for Premier League survival Saturday while Chelsea and West Ham moved up the table.

A goal by Neal Maupay gave Brighton a 1-0 win at Leeds to pull them away from the relegation zone while West Brom won 3-2 at Wolves for their first victory under Sam Allardyce.

Mason Mount gave Chelsea a 1-0 win at 10-man Fulham while Michail Antonio scored the only goal as West Ham beat Burnley 1-0 to go ninth. Leicester can go second if they see off Southampton later Saturday.

After nine games without a win, Maupay clinched victory for Brighton at Leeds with his goal after 17 minutes, enough to lift them up to 16th, now five points above the bottom three. Leeds stayed 12th.

"It is a big, big win for us, a much-needed win," Maupay told reporters.

"We have got quality we know that, but we need to keep pushing on and get more wins." At Wolves, Matheus Costa Pereira scored twice, both times from the penalty spot, as



Brighton's French striker Neal Maupay (left) vies with Leeds United's Dutch defender Pascal Struijk during their English Premier League match at Elland Road in Leeds, England, on Saturday. (AFP)

Allardyce tasted victory for the first time since taking over as manager of West Brom.

The result means West Brom are now one point behind third-bottom Fulham and five points from safety.

"The only two disappointing moments for me were the two quick goals we conceded when we didn't look like we

were going to concede," Allardyce said. "(But) overall it was a fantastic victory. It was the (number) of chances we created which pleased me most. I haven't seen us create that many chances."

"A win was very important at this moment in time. The attitude, work-rate and determination of the players, that's

brought us a big, big victory." Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo was dejected, not least since his side overturned Pereira's first penalty with Fabio Silva and Boly making it 2-1 to Wolves just before half-time.

But Semi Ajayi levelled soon after the break for West Brom and Pereira then won the local derby with a second



Chelsea's English midfielder Mason Mount (centre) turns to celebrate after scoring the opening goal during the English Premier League match against Fulham at Craven Cottage in London on Saturday. (AFP)

penalty 35 minutes from time. "Disappointing, frustrated with the way we played and the result," the Wolves boss said. "The beginning of the second half, we started very poorly."

"Two penalties and a throw-in (were West Brom's goals). We knew we required better defending. We must rectify it and do better." Fulham's hopes of getting any-

thing from their west London derby at home to Chelsea ended when Antonee Robinson was sent off for a nasty challenge on Cesar Azpilicueta.

Mount scored the only goal 12 minutes from the end to secure Chelsea's win, lifting them to seventh, but only seven points behind leaders Manchester United, who play at second-placed Liverpool on Sunday.

Antonio's goal for West Ham left Burnley 17th.

"We're not the old West Ham any more, we're the new West Ham," manager David Moyes said. "And we're going to try to become even better."

"It needs time and there will be periods when it's not going so well. There'll be periods when it is, but we're certainly not settling for where we are."

LONGINES HATHAB QATAR EQUESTRIAN TOUR

Faleh Al Ajami excels twice in Big Tour with Demilion and Ulano



Wolfsburg's German midfielder Ridle Baku (right) vies for the ball with Leipzig's German defender Marcel Halstenberg during the German first division Bundesliga match in Wolfsburg on Saturday. (AFP)

Leipzig held and miss top spot, Dortmund draw with Mainz

DPA
BERLIN

RB Leipzig again failed to take over at the top of the Bundesliga following a 2-2 draw at Wolfsburg on Saturday.

Julian Nagelsmann's team - who lost at home to Borussia Dortmund last weekend - salvaged the draw thanks to Willi Orban but sit a point off leaders Bayern Munich, who host Freiburg on Sunday.

Spitting champions Bayern, reeling after being dumped out of the German Cup second round in midweek by second tier Holstein Kiel, also lost their last Bundesliga game to Borussia Muenchengladbach.

Dortmund's rollercoaster season continued with a 1-1 draw at home to Mainz, with Marco Reus missing a penalty as the hosts stayed fourth and Mainz edged off the bottom after 16 games played.

Gladbach missed the chance to go above Wolfsburg into sixth after Stuttgart levelled with a controversial penalty deep into stoppage time to seal a 2-2 home draw.

Werder Bremen beat Augsburg 2-0 late on while Hoffenheim at home to Arminia Bielefeld ended 0-0 as did Cologne against Hertha Berlin.

On Friday, Union Berlin's 1-0 win over third-placed Bayer Leverkusen was marred by allegations of a racist remark towards Leverkusen's Nadiem Amiri.

The German Football Federation (DFB) said on Saturday it had launched a probe against Union's Florian Huebner.

Leipzig opened the scoring at Wolfsburg on 5 minutes when Nordi Mukiele slotted home Emil Forsberg's excellent pass.

Wolfsburg's Wout Weghorst was soon penalized for handball when the ball went in the net at the other end. But the Dutch striker did tally midway through the first half with a poacher's header following a good move - his 11th league goal of the season.

Marcel Sabitzer then gave the ball away too close to goal and Renato Steffen's strike took a wicked deflection on its

way in as the hosts led 10 minutes before the break.

Leipzig hit back early in the second half though when Orban prodded in after a scramble following a free-kick into the box.

The Wolves had won their last five home games in a row but Leipzig were still frustrated.

"There were too many wayward passes in the final third, which played into their hands," said Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi.

"Our performance in the second half was really good and we deserved the equalizer. We have to keep going and carry on working hard."

Dortmund thought they had taken a very early lead at home to Mainz through Erling Haaland but it was ruled out by the video assistant for offside in the build-up.

Mainz goalkeeper Robin Zentner was in fine form, making a string of good saves, while Jude Bellingham also rattled the post.

Out of the blue Mainz went ahead on 57 minutes with Dortmund backing off Levin Oeztunali far too much and the midfielder finding the top near corner from distance.

Al Ajami returned a flawless winning round in 48.98secs to top a 21-rider field. He finished ahead of Nasser Al Ghazali on his



Faleh Suwead Al Ajami astride Demilion on way to winning the Big Tour class in the eighth round of the Longines Hathab supported by The Social & Sport Contribution Fund at the outdoor arena of Qatar Equestrian Federation on Saturday. (Right) The Big Tour winner and runners-up on the podium after being given their prizes by Omar Al Mannai, Vice-Chairman, Organizing Committee, Longines Hathab, and Ali Al Rumaihi, Event Director & Organizing Committee Member, Longines Hathab Qatar Equestrian Tour.

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

FALEH Suwead Al Ajami stood out on his 13-year-old chestnut stallion Demilion on Saturday topping the Big Tour class in the eighth round of the Longines Hathab supported by The Social & Sport Contribution Fund at the outdoor arena of Qatar Equestrian Federation.

Al Ajami returned a flawless winning round in 48.98secs to top a 21-rider field. He finished ahead of Nasser Al Ghazali on his

trusted bay gelding Quel Homme (50.39secs).

Al Ajami also claimed the third spot on the podium as he rode a second time astride bay gelding Ulano. This time he clocked 55.07secs.

Mohammed Saeed Haidan, who had claimed the Medium Tour title on Friday, this time had to be content with the fourth spot on D Saucedo suffering a fault each both in the first ride and in the winning round.

Earlier, in the Open Class Mini Derby without Jump Off, Ghanim Nasser Al Qadi



claimed the first place riding Happy Tina. He clocked 120.41secs to be the fastest.

Jassim Al Jaham Al Kuwari on Sandro Girl was second (123.18) while Mohammed Saeed Haidan on Apple Bee finished third (131.46).

The annual Longines Hathab Qatar Equestrian Tour is held over twelve rounds where the best seven results of the series are taken into account in deciding the overall champions.

With four rounds remaining the championship has now entered the crucial

phase where riders will aim to collect as many valuable points as possible.

Results
Big Tour | Table A, Competition with winning round, Art. 276.2.1 | 130/145cm | Prize Money QR 45,000

1. Faleh Suwead Al Ajami; Demilion; Faults: 4; Time: 78.61secs; Winning Rd Faults: 0; Time: 48.98secs; Prize: QR11,250
2. Nasser Al Ghazali; Quel Homme; 0; 83.83secs; 0; 50.39secs; QR9,000
3. Faleh Suwead Al Ajami; Ulano; 0; 77.68secs; 0;

55.07secs; QR6,750
4. Mohammed Saeed Haidan; D Saucedo; 4; 77.49secs; 4; 48.47secs; QR4,500

Open Class | Table A, Mini Derby (Without J-Off), FEI Art. 277 | 115/125cm | Prize-Money QR25,000

1. Rider: Ghanim Nasser Al Qadi; Horse: Happy Tina; Faults: 0; Time: 120.41secs; Prize: QR6,250
2. Jassim Al Jaham Al Kuwari; Sandro Girl; 0; 123.18secs; QR5,000
3. Mohammed Saeed Haidan; Apple Bee; 0; 131.46secs; QR3,750.

Al Jaaidi tops stage 3 of QCF road races, emerges as favourite for National C'ship

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

ABDULLAH Al Jaaidi of Team Doha Cycling won the third stage of Qatar Cycling Federation's road races on Friday to emerge as one of the favourites for the National Championship title. It was his third podium finish this season and his first time on the top step.

A record number of 155 riders took to the start line for Qatar Cycling Federation's third road race of the season where public appetite for outdoor sport has increased.

There has been such a growth in the sport of cycling that organisers had to add an additional novice class to the event to accommodate new riders. The Al Ghuwayriyah cycling course with its rural setting and interesting triangular multi-lap course is favourite among racers and offers sections of just five to six kilometres apiece of headwind, crosswind and tail wind, each of which contributes to the tactics of bunch racing.

With the first section into the head wind, Khaleel Abdulljanaan (Team Doha Cycling) and Abdulla Al Khater attacked right from the start, taking a gamble that nobody would waste energy giving chase. This pair built a good lead of 1m 30s while behind them the Team Al Jassra combination of Lee Jones and Chris Murrin were putting in repeated surges which fractured the race. By the time the catch was made at 30 km, six riders had already been dropped and, with the wind strength increasing, the remaining riders would now split in half again.

The final six of the ninety kilometers were wind-assisted, which strips away some of the advantage to the sheltered rid-



Abdullah Al Jaaidi of Team Doha Cycling wins the third stage of Qatar Cycling Federation's road races at Al Ghuwayriyah on Friday.



Winners of the various classes pose with their medals at Al Ghuwayriyah on Friday.

ers drafting off those in front. Team Doha Cycling launched a long-range attack at 60 kph and again it was Team Al Jassra chasing them down.

This time Lee Jones did all the work to save Chris Murrin's legs for the sprint to the

line, but to no avail. Abdullah Aljaaidi (Team Doha Cycling) has shown strong form both on and off-road this season and it was he who snatched victory over Murrin and teammate Mouhcine Rhaili with Hamad Al Jaaidi (Team Doha Cycling)

and Fadel Al Khater (Rasen Adventure Shop) edged out from the podium.

This was to be Abdullah Al Jaaidi's third road podium of the season and his first time on the top step. With no other Qatari rider challenging him this

year, he is now a strong favourite for the national championships at the end of the month.

Results:
Men A: 1. Abdullah Al Jaaidi (Team Doha Cycling QAT); 2. Chris Murrin (Team Al Jassra GBR); 3. Mouhcine Rhaili (Team Doha Cycling MAR); **Women A:** 1. Elizabeth Dunne (Team Al Jassra IRL); 2. Sophie Clarke (Rasen Adventure Shop GBR); **Men B:** 1. Khalid Al Yafei (Team Doha Cycling QAT); 2. Rafael Tamarit (Los Gauchos ESP); 3. Jose Figueiredo (Team Doha Cycling POR); **Men C:** 1. Mohsen Jafar (Team Doha Cycling IRI); 2. Khalifa Al Khulaifi (Team Doha Cycling QAT); 3. Phil Angelo Ganitano (Bike to Work Qatar PHI); **Women B:** 1. Daniela Sposi (Rasen Adventure Shop ITA); 2. Isobel Bushell (Team Doha Cycling GBR); 3. Mamiya Ajero (BPMQ PHI); **Novice:** 1. Jonnie Christian Engracia (BPMQ PHI); 2. Julius Borromeo (Team Doha Cycling PHI); 3. Nik Mohd Najib Nik Wan (Team Farhana MAS).

Bologna back to winning ways with 1-0 over Verona

DPA
ROME

BOLOGNA beat Verona 1-0 Saturday to end a winless run of eight games in the Italian Serie A.

Riccardo Orsolini converted a first-half penalty to secure a win the Bolognese had last savoured against bottom side Crotone in late November.

Verona, who have the league's second best defence with 17 goals conceded, produced no effective reaction at the Dall'Ara stadium.

They remained in ninth position, seven points above Bologna who climbed into 12th.

"The three points were something I and everyone [at Bologna] missed," coach Sinisa Mihajlovic said.

"We clinched them today because we were superior to Verona with our aggressiveness and intensity, which are the best weapons."

The Bolognese sit two points above Spezia, who played most of their scoreless draw at troubled Torino without Luca Vignali.

The defender was dismissed on eight minutes after video review of his studs-up tackle but the Ligurians pulled no punches and produced more scoring chances than the hosts.

The Turin side hit a late post from substitute Cristian Ansaldi as the draw held them in the three-team drop zone.

Spezia, who are in their first top-flight season, also had a man sent off when they won 2-1 at Napoli 10 days ago. They have a five-point buffer to the danger zone.

Sampdoria v Udinese completes the Saturday schedule.

Lazio beat Roma 3-0 in Friday's weekend opener. Leaders AC Milan visit Cagliari to close matchday 18 on Monday, with Inter Milan and Juventus playing a league classic a day earlier.

AUSTRALIA-INDIA 4TH TEST AT GABBA



Australia's players celebrate after Nathan Lyon (centre) dismissed India's opener Rohit Sharma on day two of the fourth Test at the Gabba in Brisbane on Saturday. Off-spinner Lyon, playing his 100th Test, is now three short of reaching the personal milestone of 400 wickets.

Lyon edges closer to Test milestone before rain forces stumps



Groundmen monitor after heavy rain stopped play on day two of the fourth cricket Test between Australia and India at the Gabba in Brisbane on Saturday. (AFP)

ICC
BRISBANE

NATHAN Lyon's drive to 400 wickets will resume on Sunday after rain stopped play on day two of the fourth Test between Australia and India with the visitors trailing hosts' first innings total of 369 by 307 runs. India were 62 for 2 at tea, with Cheteshwar Pujara (8*) and Ajinkya Rahane (2*) the not-out batsmen, but play couldn't restart after the break as torrential rain lashed the

Gabba. Australia had resumed at 274 for 5 on Saturday, with Marnus Labuschagne's 108 the highlight of day one. Tim Paine and Cameron Green, on 38 and 28 respectively overnight, took the total to 311 before Paine departed for 50. The skipper was well caught by Rohit Sharma at second slip off the bowling of Shardul Thakur, and Green quickly followed, bowled by debutant Washington Sundar for 47. The tail provided some

handy runs – Lyon added 24 and Mitchell Starc was not out on 20 – but it was a valiant bowling effort by the already-undermanned tourists, who lost seamer Navdeep Saini to a groin strain on day one. India's injury-depleted attack did exceptionally well to dismiss Australia by lunch on the second day, with Thangarasu Natarajan (3-78) and Washington Sundar (3-89) each taking three wickets on debut and Shardul Thakur returning 3-94.

Scoreboard	
Australia (1st innings: Overnight 274-5)	
D. Warner c Sharma b Siraj	1
M. Harris c Sundar b Thakur	5
M. Labuschagne c Pant b Natarajan	108
S. Smith c Sharma b Sundar	36
M. Wade c Thakur b Natarajan	45
C. Green b Sundar	47
T. Paine c Sharma b Thakur	50
P. Cummins lbw Thakur	2
M. Starc not out	20
N. Lyon b Sundar	24
J. Hazlewood b Natarajan	11
Extras: (b4, lb5, nb6, w5)	20
TOTAL: (10 wickets, 115.2 overs)	369
Fall of wickets: 1-4 (Warner), 2-17 (Harris), 3-87 (Smith), 4-200 (Wade), 5-213 (Labuschagne), 6-311 (Paine), 7-313 (Green), 8-315 (Cummins), 9-354 (Lyon), 10-369 (Hazlewood).	
Bowling: Siraj 28-10-77-1 (1w), Natarajan 24-2-78-3 (6nb), Thakur 24-6-94-3, Saini 7-5-2-21-0, Sundar 31-6-89-3, Sharma 0.1-0-1-0.	
India (1st innings)	
R. Sharma c Starc b Lyon	44
S. Gill c Smith b Cummins	7
C. Pujara not out	8
A. Rahane not out	2
Extras: (nb1)	1
TOTAL: (For 2 wickets: 26 overs)	62
Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Gill), 2-60 (Sharma).	
To bat: M. Aggarwal, R. Pant, W. Sundar, S. Thakur, N. Saini, M. Siraj, T. Natarajan.	
Bowling: Starc 3-1-8-0, Hazlewood 8-4-11-0 (1nb), Cummins 6-1-22-1, Green 3-0-11-0, Lyon 6-2-10-1.	
Toss: Australia.	

Starc and Josh Hazlewood opened the bowling thereafter, but it was Pat Cummins who got the breakthrough with just his second delivery, Shubman Gill edging one to second slip where Steve Smith took a sharp catch. Rohit Sharma had looked comfortable on his way to 44 before he became Lyon's 397th Test wicket. Playing in his 100th Test, Lyon coaxed a rash shot from Sharma, who advanced down the wicket only to hole out to Starc, who ran in from long-on to take a good catch. "I had a couple of plans for Rohit," Lyon said, without elaborating too much. "Obviously he's a world-class player, so I just wanted to make sure I was bowling my best ball, and not try to worry too much about what the batters are doing." He said the pitch was drier than usual at the Gabba – comparing the surface on the opening day with a regular day four pitch. "I love bowling here," Lyon said. "It's one of my favorite grounds to play at." With the series tied at 1-1, Lyon looms as a key factor as Australia attempt to claim the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a win in Brisbane. India can retain the coveted trophy with a win or a draw. Play on the third day will start 30 minutes earlier than previously scheduled to make up for lost time.

'Have no regrets', says Rohit on his dismissal

AGENCIES
BRISBANE

INDIA Test vice-captain Rohit Sharma said that he does not regret playing the aerial shot off the bowling of Nathan Lyon on the second day of the ongoing fourth and final Test against Australia here at the Gabba in Brisbane.

Rohit played a knock of 44, but in trying to hit a six off Lyon, the opener ended up gifting his wicket. But the Test deputy said that he just didn't connect well.

"I reached where I wanted to reach, just that I did not connect with where I wanted to hit the ball. I was trying to pierce that long-on and deep square-leg fielder, I just did not connect with the way I would have loved to. I actually liked what I did today, before coming here, we knew it would be a good pitch to bat, of course, there would be bounce and carry to the keeper, but this is what I enjoy," Rohit said during the virtual press conference.

"Once I was in and I had played a few overs, I realised there was not much swing so I did little adjustment there, after that, it was an unfortunate dismissal, it is something I won't regret. I like to put pressure on the bowler once I am in and that is my role in this team to keep putting pressure on the bowlers. The run-scoring has been slightly difficult for both the teams so someone needs to put their hand up and think about how to put pressure on the bowlers," he added.

Elaborating further on his point, Rohit said: "In doing that, there is a chance of making mistakes but you should be ready to accept that. It was a plan so I actually have no regrets about playing that shot, it is something I like to, Nathan Lyon is a smart bowler, he bowled into me so I was not able to get the elevation."



India's opener Rohit Sharma plays a shot on day two of the fourth Test against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane on Saturday. (AFP)

On the second day of the fourth Test, Rohit in trying to be positive, chipped the ball to deepish mid-on and as a result, he was sent back to the pavilion by Nathan Lyon.

Former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar did not hold back on his criticism and said that there is no excuse for Rohit to be playing that kind of shot.

"Why? Why? Why? That is an unbelievable shot. That's an irresponsible shot. There is a fielder at long-on, there is a fielder there at deep square leg. You have just hit a boundary a couple of balls earlier, why would you play that shot? You are a senior player, there is no excuse, absolutely no excuse for that shot. An unnecessary wicket, gifted away. Totally unnecessary," said Gavaskar while commenting for Channel 7.

Rain forced early stumps on day two of the fourth Test between Australia and India at The Gabba on Saturday. India ended the day at 62/2 still trailing the hosts by 307 runs.

Bangladesh call up three uncapped players for West Indies ODIs

ICC
DHAKA

BANGLADESH have called-up three uncapped players for their upcoming men's ODI home series against West Indies.

Mahadi Hasan, the off-spinner, was included in the side, along with the pacers Shoriful Islam and Hasan Mahmud.

Mahmud, in particular, impressed during the inter-squad match between Mahmudullah XI and Tamim Iqbal XI, as per an ESPNcricinfo report. He claimed a four-wicket haul as the Mahmudullah-led side secured a five-wicket victory. Shoriful also impressed

in that practice match, taking two wickets.

The team will be captained by Tamim Iqbal, and includes Shakib Al Hasan, who is set to feature in his first match for Bangladesh since September 2019, when he played against Afghanistan in a T20I.

Bangladesh ODI squad: Tamim Iqbal (c), Shakib Al Hasan, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Mithun, Liton Das, Mahmudullah, Afif Hossain, Soumya Sarkar, Taskin Ahmed, Rubel Hossain, Tajjul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Mehidy Hasan, Mohammad Saifuddin, Mahadi Hasan, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam.

Root slams a double but Sri Lanka roar back in fighting display

AGENCIES
GALLE (SRI LANKA)

SRI Lanka have had a difficult two days against England in Galle, but they roared back on the third day to emphasise just why they are such a force at their fortress. After their spinners triggered a slide in the England line-up, their batsmen put in the sort of solid effort expected of them in their turf, whittling down the deficit to end the day at 156/2, 130 runs in arrears.

By the time stumps were drawn, the mood in the Sri Lankan camp was markedly different from what it was on the last two days.

Play on Day 3 had resumed with England on 320/4, boasting a lead of 185. However, they encountered a relentless Sri Lankan attack this morning, and they were able to add just 101 runs to their overnight total. A lot of that came from

Scoreboard	
Sri Lanka (1st innings): 135	
England (1st innings: Overnight 320-4)	
J. Root c Embuldeniya b D. Perera	228
J. Buttler c Dickwella b Fernando	30
S. Curran b Fernando	0
D. Bess run out	0
J. Leach lbw b D. Perera	4
M. Wood c Dickwella b D. Perera	2
S. Broad not out	11
Extras: (b7, nb6)	13
TOTAL: (All Out, 117.1 overs)	421
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Sibley), 2-17 (Crawley), 3-131 (Bairstow), 4-304 (Lawrence), 5-372 (Buttler), 6-372 (Curran), 7-382 (Bess), 8-398 (Leach), 9-406 (Wood).	
Bowling: Embuldeniya 45-4-176-3, Fernando 14-1-	
44-2, de Silva 15-1-63-0, D. Perera 36-1-2-109-4, Shanaka 7-1-22-0.	
Sri Lanka (2nd innings)	
K. Perera c Leach b Curran	62
L. Thirimanne not out	76
K. Mendis c Buttler b Leach	15
L. Embuldeniya not out	0
Extras: (b1, nb2)	3
TOTAL: (For two wickets - 61 overs)	156
Fall of wickets: 1-101 (Perera), 2-155 (Mendis).	
To bat: D. Chandimal (capt), A. Mathews, N. Dickwella, D. Shanaka, P. de Silva, D. Perera, A. Fernando.	
Bowling: Broad 8-6-3-0, Curran 7-0-25-1, Bess 13-2-30-0, Wood 7-1-20-0, Leach 20-2-67-1, Root 6-0-10-0.	
Toss: Sri Lanka.	

Root and Buttler, who extended their overnight partnership to 68, with Root becoming the seventh England batsman to score 8000 Test runs en route.

The slide began when Buttler was snared off a full delivery from Asitha Fernando, the subtle movement away off the seam prompting a thick edge from the batsman that was pouched by the wicket-keeper. Root soon completed his fourth Test double-century – his second against Sri Lan-

ka, having scored one against them in 2014 at Lord's – but four of the next five batsmen were dismissed for single digits, as Sri Lanka sensed an opening.

On the very next ball after dismissing Buttler, Fernando had Sam Curran dismissed with another full delivery. England didn't help matters. In the next over, Dom Bess was run out for nought after he set off for a run while the Sri Lankans appealed for an



Sri Lanka were 156 for 2 in their second innings after England were bowled out for 421 in their first essay on Saturday. The hosts are still 130 runs in arrears in the first Test at Galle. (@ICC)

lbw against Root, only to realise his partner had stayed his ground.

Thereafter, it was all down to Root to keep the score ticking, as Sri Lanka chipped away at the other end. Jack Leach was trapped in front by Dilruwan Perera, who then had

Mark Wood caught behind in his next over. Stuart Broad, coming in at No.11, came out swinging to put away a couple to the fence.

However, Root, with the onus now on scoring quickly, holed out off Dilruwan, as England lost their last six

wickets for 49 runs.

England still had a huge lead over Sri Lanka, and would have hoped to repeat their efforts in the first innings, when they bundled out Sri Lanka for 135. However, this time around, the hosts were a different force.

Their openers, Kusal Perera and Lahiru Thirimanne, added 101 runs for the opening wicket, with Kusal doing the attacking from one end even as Thirimanne sealed up the other. They ensured they didn't lose a wicket in the second session, and put on as many as 90 runs by tea.

They brought up the 100 mark shortly into the final session, before Kusal gave his wicket away, attempting a waft at a short and wide delivery off Curran, only to pick out the man at deep point. Unlike in the first innings, however, the wicket didn't trigger a slide.

Kusal Mendis partnered Thirimanne in a more attritional partnership. They put on 54 runs off 135 balls, and looked good to help Sri Lanka get through the day without losing another wicket. However, late in the day, Leach had his man, drawing Mendis forward and finding a thin edge through to the 'keeper.