

CRICKET

Pakistan set
England a daunting target

England's captain Andrew Strauss (left) looks on with teammate Monty Panesar during the third test cricket match against Pakistan at Dubai International cricket stadium, Feb. 4, 2012. (Reuters)

Dubai: England were left to fight hard to save defeat and with it the humiliation of a first-ever series whitewash at the hands of Pakistan in the third and final Test at Dubai Stadium here on Sunday.

Needing to chase their second best achieved target in all Tests of 324, England finished the third day at 36-0, with openers Andrew Strauss (19) and Alastair Cook (15) playing out the tricky 20 overs on an eased out pitch. They still need another 288 runs with all ten wickets intact in the last two days. England's most successful chase to win a Test was the 332 they made against Australia in Melbourne in 1929. Azhar Ali hit a career-best 157 and Younis Khan 127 in Pakistan's second innings total of 365. Pakistan could have got Cook's wicket had Taufiq Umar not dropped an easy catch in the third slip off paceman Umar Gul when the England opener had made just four.

It will need an extraordinary effort from the England batsmen who lost the first Test here by ten wickets and the second by 72 runs in Abu Dhabi after their batting flopped against Pakistani spinners

Saeed Ajmal and Abdul Rehman. Both Pakistan spinners will test the England batting once again after Monty Panesar claimed 5-124 to finally bowl out rivals in their second innings on a pitch that saw 16 wickets fall on the first day.

Pakistan were bowled out for 99 in their first innings and can become the first team to win a Test after being bowled out for under 100 since England, dismissed for 76 in the first innings, beat South Africa by 53 runs at Leeds in 1907.

Pakistan were well placed at 331-4 before losing their last seven wickets for a mere 34 runs following good bowling from England spinner Panesar and Graeme Swann, who finished with 3-101.

Pakistan owed their total to a brilliant career-best knock by Ali and Younis's brilliance. Together they added 216 for the third wicket in a frustrating stand which almost plunged England into submission.

Ali became the ninth wicket to fall, when he gave a bat-pad catch to Cook at short-leg off Swann. He hit ten boundaries and six during his long stay at the crease which was seven minutes short of nine

hours. Ali's previous best first class score was the 153 he made for Khan Research Laboratory against Sui Gas in Rawalpindi in 2009 while his best Test score of 100 came against Sri Lanka at the same venue in October last year.

Dropped on 84 by Swann in the slips off James Anderson, 26-year-old Ali hit Panesar for two boundaries in successive overs to reach the three-figure mark.

Resuming at 222-2, Pakistan lost Younis to a leg-before dismissal to Stuart Broad. Younis challenged Australian umpire Steve Davis's decision but on review he had to leave the field. Younis hit 12 boundaries and a six during his 221-ball knock. Pakistan were 295-3 at lunch but lost cluster of wickets to Panesar, who trapped Misbah (31) and Asad Shafiq (five) to check Pakistan's progress.

Panesar then bowled Adnan Akmal (nought) to further make inroads into Pakistan batting. From the other end Swann had Abdul Rehman (one) and Ajmal (one) in successive overs and then wrapped up the innings by claiming Ali and Umar Gul (four). -AFP

Australia dominate
India in first one-day match

MELBOURNE: A half-century by debutant Matt Wade and some middle-order slogging by the Hussey brothers propelled Australia to a 65-run thrashing of hapless India in the rain-shortened first one-day international on Sunday.

Australia recovered from an early wobble and a three-hour rain delay to post a competitive 216-5 in their allocated 32 overs, before the tourists' batsmen crumbled to be all out for 151 under the lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Wade, touted to replace the struggling Brad Haddin as Australia's first-choice wicketkeeper, compiled an aggressive 67 in his one-day debut, following on from his swashbuckling 72 in his first Twenty20 international against India last week.

Man-of-the-match Wade combined with Mike Hussey in a 73-run stand that righted Australia's ship after fired-up seamer Vinay Kumar had put the hosts on the back foot early with two wickets in a fierce five-over spell that yielded only seven runs.

The 27-year-old bowled David Warner for six and had Ricky Ponting out for two shortly afterwards when the former skipper spooned a simple catch to Suresh Raina at short extra cover. Wade completed the 11th over by blasting a six and a boundary to leave the hosts on 35-2 before the rain came.

He went on with the job after the break despite the quick loss of captain Michael Clarke, who went for 10 after slogging straight to Rahul Sharma at deep midwicket off the bowling of part-time spinner Rohit Sharma.

Wade smacked a second six over long-on before playing on to his stumps for 67, but the 36-year-old Hussey teamed up with his brother David for another quickfire 32-run stand before becoming Vinay's third wicket when

he slashed straight to Virat Kohli at square leg.

David Hussey belted an unbeaten 61 as he and debutant allrounder Dan Christian completed Australia's complement of overs, carting the ball to all parts of the ground.

Sachin Tendulkar, searching for an elusive 100th international century, came out to a hero's welcome in possibly his last appearance at the MCG but was out for two.

Swiping at a short-pitched Mitchell Starc delivery, Tendulkar succeeded only in bashing the ball into Ponting's hands, the 37-year-old diving low to his right to take a brilliant catch and foil "the little master" again.

Starc had Gambhir caught behind for five soon after, and though Kohli and Rohit Sharma cobbled together a promising 53-run stand, Clint McKay removed them both on the way to match-best figures of 4-20 from fewer than five overs.

David Hussey jogged to his right to catch a skied pull off Suresh Raina, who managed only four runs before gifting Christian his first one-day wicket.

Reeling at 77-5, captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni tried to resurrect India's innings but ran out of partners as allrounder Ravindra Jadeja, who was bought for more than \$2 million in the India Premier League player auctions, fell for 19, before Ravichandran Ashwin was run out for five attempting a foolhardy third run.

Praveen Kumar and Vinay slogged through an entertaining 23-run partnership before McKay's fourth wicket wrapped up the match, with paceman Ryan Harris charging in from long on to take a fine low catch to dismiss Kumar for 15. India play Sri Lanka in the second one-day match of the triangular tournament in Perth on Wednesday. -Reuters



Mike Hussey of Australia bats during game one of the Commonwealth Bank tri-series between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Feb. 5, 2012. (AFP)

BASKETBALL

Rose leads Bulls to win as Deng returns

MILWAUKEE: Derrick Rose knows how important Luol Deng is to the Chicago Bulls. Rose scored 26 points and had 13 assists and Deng added 21 points in his return after missing seven games due to injury, as the Chicago



Chicago Bulls' Derrick Rose (1) drives the basket against Milwaukee Bucks' Luc Richard Mbah a Moute, left, and Shaun Livingston, right, during an NBA basketball game, Feb. 4, 2012. (AP)

Bulls easily beat the Milwaukee Bucks 113-90 Saturday night.

"He makes the game easy," Rose said of his teammate. "He makes everybody comfortable out there. It feels good when we have all our leaders out there."

Playing before a sellout Bradley Center crowd that seemed to be filled with more fans rooting for the Bulls, Deng scored on a layup from Rose just 76 seconds into the game.

The Bucks trailed by 24 at halftime and never threatened in the second half, resting all five starters in the fourth quarter.

Deng was averaging 15.9 points and 7.5 rebounds before tearing a ligament in his left wrist Jan. 21 against Charlotte. He consulted with doctors before deciding against surgery, and his initial return against the Bucks appeared promising.

The Bucks were coming off an 88-80 loss to hapless Detroit on Friday night. Coach Scott Skiles said before the game Saturday his team would get blown out in the first half against Chicago if it played just as poorly.

He was prophetic. The Bucks trailed 67-43 at halftime, allowing the Bulls to shoot 62 percent to the Bucks 36 percent in the first half. Chicago also held a 28-13 rebounding advantage in the first half.

"We've got eight straight quarters of pretty poor defense," Skiles said. "To me, the biggest stat on the sheet is we have eight fouls in a game where Derrick Rose is penetrating and penetrating and penetrating." The Bulls scored 113 points despite only going 3 of 4 from the free throw line.

"If you had told me before the game they were only going to shoot four free throws, I would have thought it would be in our favor," Skiles said. "But it was a layup drill for them for a good portion of the game."

Leading scorer Brandon Jennings was in foul trouble for much of the game, and played 10 minutes in the first half and 22 overall. He didn't score until hitting a baseline jumper midway through the third quarter and was held to eight points.

Drew Gooden scored a season-high 24 points. Rookie Tobias Harris was the only other Bucks player in double figures with 19 points. Rose scored 18 in the first half with eight assists and no turnovers. Korver came off the bench to score 15 in the first half.

Watson's long baseline jumper gave the Bulls a 46-25 lead, their first lead of at least 20 points, with 5:51 left in the second quarter.

With Jennings on the bench for much of the first half, the Bucks turned to Gooden. He scored 18 points, making all 10 of his free throws, to lead the Bulls, in the first half. -AP

Jazz send Lakers to
another road loss, 96-87

SALT LAKE CITY: Al Jefferson scored 18 points, Paul Millsap had 16, and Earl Watson keyed a game-clinching 14-0 fourth quarter run to help the Utah Jazz beat the Los Angeles Lakers 96-87 Saturday night. Watson scored eight points and had six assists in the fourth quarter as the Jazz beat the Lakers for the first time in three tries this season.

After he stole the ball from Pau Gasol at the top of the key and fed Derrick Favors for a dunk, Lakers coach Mike Brown went ballistic and charged after official Zach Zarba. Brown received two official technicals and was ejected with 8:34 to play.

Watson threw an alley-oop to C.J. Miles that brought the crowd to its feet and then capped the 14-0 run with a 3-pointer with 6:18 to play that gave Utah its biggest lead of the game, 83-68.

Kobe Bryant scored 26 points and Gasol had 24 points and 16 rebounds but the Lakers dropped to 3-8 on the road.

Just about every play went through Bryant after Brown's ejection. Bryant made two 3-pointers and added three free throws after getting fouled on another attempt in a span of 1:13.

Sandwiched around a driving shot by Watson, Andrew Bynum and Gasol scored

inside to cut the Jazz lead to 87-81.

But Watson, who was playing with a sprained ankle, assisted on baskets by Jefferson and Millsap and then made a 3-pointer for a 94-83 lead with 1:06 remaining. Los Angeles lost seven of its first eight games on the road. The Lakers' 90-87 overtime win at Utah was their only one until claiming road wins at Milwaukee and Friday night in Denver. Many of the Lakers' road woes returned against the Jazz. Plays frequently ended with two Lakers yelling and pointing about where the other should have been.

In addition to the contributions from Bryant and Gasol, Bynum posted 21 points and 12 rebounds but after that was about it. The rest of the Lakers combined for just 16 points. Los Angeles made 5 of 17 field goal attempts in the final quarter.

Neither team led by more than six points until Watson led the big Utah run. The Jazz took advantage of their fifteenth home game, which is tied with Philadelphia for most in the league.

The Jazz also got a boost from Devin Harris, Raja Bell and Watson who were all game-time decisions after the trio missed Utah's 119-101 loss to Golden State on Thursday. -AP



Utah Jazz Paul Millsap (24) attempts to score over Los Angeles Lakers guard Derek Fisher (2) during an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Feb. 4, 2012. (AP)

Batum scores 33 points to help
Blazers top Nuggets

PORTLAND, Ore.: Nicolas Batum set a Trail Blazers record with nine 3-pointers and scored a career-high 33 points, LaMarcus Aldridge added 29 points and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Denver Nuggets 117-97 Saturday night.

Gerald Wallace had 17 points and Marcus Camby had 20 rebounds for Portland. Batum made a career-high nine 3-pointers, the most in an NBA game this season and a franchise record for the Blazers.

Danilo Gallinari had 20 points and Ty Lawson and Kosta Koufos each added 16 to lead the Nuggets, who have lost four of their last five, including

93-89 Friday night to the Los Angeles Lakers.

Portland was coming off a deflating 95-92 loss at Sacramento on Thursday. The Blazers have been a completely different team on the road this season, where they are 3-9. At the Rose Garden, Portland is 11-1, the second-best home record in the Western Conference to San Antonio, which is 13-1. The Nuggets (15-9) were playing their third time in as many days and arrived in Portland after 4 a.m. after their flight out of Denver was delayed because of snow. The Blazers were playing on one day's rest.

Batum returned after missing two games with

a bruised knee. The 6-foot-9 small forward provided a spark for the Blazers after entering the game late in the first quarter, hitting 5 of 6 3-pointers and scoring 17 points in a span of less than seven minutes, lifting Portland to a 52-37 lead in the second quarter.

Denver cut the lead to 59-53 by putting together a 15-4 run going into halftime as Lawson scored eight points. The game got as close as 64-61 in the third on a dunk from Koufos, but the Blazers went on a 14-2 run as the Nuggets hit the wall. Denver was never a threat the remainder of the game and the Blazers led by as many as 25. -AP