South Africa seal Sri Lanka series despite Isuru Udana heroics

S Lanka lost their first four wickets in first four overs

CENTURION: Isuru Udana's astonishing 84 for Sri Lanka wasn't enough to stop South Africa from clinching their Twenty20 international series with a 16-run win in the second match at SuperSport Park on Friday.

Udana thrashed his not out score off 48 balls to take Sri Lanka from a seemingly hopeless position to one where they had an outside chance of winning. It initially looked easy for South Africa, who scored 180 for three after being sent in, with Reeza Hendricks hitting a fluent 65 and Rassie van der Dussen a powerfully-struck 64.

Sri Lanka lost their first four wickets in the first four overs and were floundering at 62 for six when Udana walked in to bat in the 10th over. But, as he did in the fourth one-day international, Udana overshadowed the recognised batsmen with a superb display of clean hitting, although he had a let-off when he was caught on the long-on boundary off JP Duminy when on 31, only for Duminy to be no-balled for over-stepping. Udana hit eight fours and six sixes.

"He's the kind of player we need. He showed his character," said Sri Lankan captain Lasith Malinga, who was disappointed with yet another top-order batting failure. "It's really frustrating. We always talk about getting a partnership."

Duminy praised a "really good team performance" and the way Dale Steyn and Chris Morris had struck twice each with the new ball. "There are a few things we can improve in the middle and end overs. Udana played a fantastic innings but we gave him a few lifelines," he said.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second T20 international between South Africa and Sri Lanka at SuperSport Park yesterday:

South Africa	
A. Markram c Malinga b Udana	3
R. Hendricks c Kamindu Mendis b Malinga	65
H. van der Dussen b Dananjaya	64
J. Duminy not out	33
D. Miller not out	8
Extras: (b1, lb1, nb1, w3)	6
Total: (3 wkts, 20 overs)	180

Fall of wickets: 1-9 (Markram), 2-125 (Hendricks), 3-139 (Van der Dussen)

Bowling: Malinga 4-0-26-1 (1nb, 1w), Udana 4-0-39-1 (2w), Dananjaya, Vandersay 4-0-25-0, T. Perera 2-0-30-0, Kamindu Mendis 1-0-12-0.

Did not bat: C. Morris, D. Pretorius, S. Qeshile, D. Steyn, L. Sipamla, T. Shamsi

Sri Lanka	
N. Dickwella c Sipamla b Morris	20
A. Fernando c Shamsi b Steyn	0
Kusal Mendis b Steyn	4
T. Perera c Qeshile b Pretorius	22
Kamindu Mendis c Qeshile b Morris	0
A. Perera c Duminy b Shamsi	11
D. de Silva run out (Duminy)	10
I. Udana not out	84
A. Dananjaya b Shamsi	1
L. Malinga b Morris	8
J. Vandersay not out	0
Extras: (nb1, w3)	4
Total: (9 wkts, 20 overs)	164

Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Fernando), 2-5 (Kusal Mendis), 3-31 (Dickwella), 4-31 (Kamindu Mendis), 5-56 (T. Perera), 6-62 (A. Perera), 7-83 (De Silva), 8-129 (Dananjaya).

Bowling: Steyn 3-0-34-2, Morris 4-1-32-3 (w1), Sipamla 4-0-42-0, Pretorius 4-0-22-1 (2w), Shamsi 4-0-16-2, Duminy 1-0-18-1 (1nb).

Result: South Africa won by 16 runs
Series: South Africa 2-0

PRETORIA: Sri Lanka's Isuru Udana plays a shot during the second Twenty20 international (T20I) cricket match between South Africa and Sri Lanka at SuperSport Park Stadium, on Friday, in Pretoria. — AFP

Hendricks and Van der Dussen put on 116 off 78 balls for South Africa's second wicket. Hendricks started the season as one of the favourites to make South Africa's squad for the Cricket World Cup later this year but a run of poor form, together with the resurgence of Aiden Markram, put his chances in doubt.

Markram opened the batting with Hendricks on Friday but was out for three in the second over. While man of the match Van der Dussen's innings was marked by power hitting, which brought him four fours and three sixes, Hendricks oozed class as he struck nine fours in a 46-ball innings marked by fluent off-side drives. —AFP

Malinga to retire after T20 WCup

CENTURION: Sri Lankan limited overs captain Lasith Malinga will retire from international cricket after next year's Twenty20 World Cup, he revealed on Friday. Malinga said that he would quit one-day internationals after the World Cup in England and Wales this summer before calling time on his career following the Twenty20 tournament, being played in Australia over October-November 2020.

"After the World Cup, my cricketing career is ending," the 35-year-old said after his side were beaten by 16 runs by South Africa in the second Twenty20 international at SuperSport Park.

"I want to play in the T20 World Cup and then end my career." Malinga dismissed South African top-scorer Reeza Hendric.

Earlier, Malinga says he is ready to sacrifice his earnings from the lucrative Indian Premier League (IPL) in order to win a place in the country's World Cup squad. Selectors have made it mandatory for Sri Lanka players to participate in a 50-overs tournament at home if they want to be considered for selection in the 15-member squad for the May 30-July 14 Cricket World Cup in England and Wales.

"I had asked the board for the No-Objection Certificate for me to play in the IPL, and they had said that was fine, but that all players who want to go to the World Cup would need to stay back for the provincial tournament," Malinga told ESPNcricinfo.

"So I told them I'd play in the provincial tournament, and I asked the board to inform Mumbai Indians and IPL, since it was their decision. I'm ok with losing those earnings from IPL. I'm doing it for the country."

The 35-year-old fast bowler, who has taken the most wickets (154 in 110 matches) since the first edition of the IPL in 2008, was bought by the Mumbai franchise for 20 million Indian rupees ($289,184.50) in the January auction for the upcoming season. He had worked as a bowling mentor for the same team after going unsold in 2018.

"Once I become available for Mumbai Indians, I would have missed seven or eight games," Malinga added. "So there's probably no point in them waiting around for me. Better for them to find someone else to replace me with."

The IPL kicked off yesterday with a match between India captain Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore and champions Chennai, who are led by India wicketkeeper and former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. — Agencies

Finch's century helps Australia to eight-wicket win over Pakistan

SHARJAH: Aaron Finch's fine century drove Australia to a convincing eight-wicket win over a new-look Pakistan in the first one-day international on Friday. The Australian skipper scored 116 off 135 balls for his 12th one-day international century that helped his team overhaul the 281-run target in 49 overs on a flat Sharjah stadium pitch.

The win gives Australia the lead in the five-match series and comes on the back of their 3-2 series win in India earlier this month. "To be able to chase down the target for the loss of two wickets is nice. It's nice to keep the momentum with a fourth win in a row," Finch said.

Finch's match-winning knock overshadowed Haris Sohail's maiden one-day hundred (101 not out) which helped Pakistan to 280-5 in their 50 overs. "We needed wickets at the top which did not come our way because Finch and Marsh handled the chase very well," stand-in captain Shoaib Malik said.

"Congrats to Haris for getting a hundred but we did not push Australia hard," he added. The 32-year-old Australia smashed Malik for a huge six towards deep mid-wicket to complete his century-his first since June last year against England at Chester-Le-Street-off 120 balls.

Finch, who knocked four sixes and eight boundaries, added an innings-building 172 runs for the second wicket with Shaun Marsh who scored an unbeaten 91 off 102 balls with four boundaries and two sixes.

With 46 needed Finch became Mohammad Abbas's maiden wicket but Peter Handscomb hit 30 not out to help Marsh cross the line. Finch and Marsh came together after opener Usman Khawaja fell for 24 to medium pacer Faheem Ashraf, the only other success Pakistan's new-look bowling attack could achieve.

SHARJAH: Shan Masood of Pakistan bats during the first one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Pakistan and Australia in Sharjah on Friday. — AFP

Pakistan rested six of their key players including regular skipper Sarfraz Ahmed in order to keep them fresh for the World Cup starting in UK from May 30. But the young and inexperienced Pakistan led by Malik proved no match for Australia, who are on a roll after their win in India earlier this month.

Left-hander Sohail, who reached 1,000 runs in his 27th one-day international when on 40, anchored Pakistan's innings, adding 98 for the third wicket with Umar Akmal who made a 50-ball 48 in his first international match for two years.

Sohail took a single to complete his hundred in the last over, finishing with six boundaries and a six. Pakistan had handed one-day debuts to opener Shan Masood and Abbas-who have played 15 and 14 Tests respectively.

Masood put on 35 in an opening stand with Imam-ul-Haq (17) before off-spinner Nathan Lyon dismissed Imam in the seventh over, caught and bowled. Masood, who hit five boundaries in his 62-ball 40, was then bowled by paceman Nathan Coulter-Nile who finished with 1-38 in his 10 overs.

Umar smashed three sixes in one Jhye Richardson over but fell one short of his half century. Malik fell for 11 and Ashraf and Imad Wasim scored 28 each. Wasim hit four boundaries and a six during his 13-ball unbeaten knock, helping Pakistan to 55 runs in the last five overs.

Today's second ODI is also being played in Sharjah, with the third in Abu Dhabi (March 27) and the last two in Dubai (March 29 and 31). — AFP

Folau equals try record as Crusaders win streak ends

SYDNEY: The Canterbury Crusaders' 19-game win streak was brought to a halt yesterday by the NSW Waratahs, with star Wallabies fullback Israel Folau equalling the all-time Super Rugby try record. Defeat culminated a traumatic week for a team left reeling by the Christchurch mosque massacres.

Based in the New Zealand town where a white supremacist killed 50 people a week ago, the Crusaders were playing their first game since the tragedy. But the reigning champions were unable to get the win they desperately wanted, crashing 20-12 in a scrappy match on a wet night at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Folau wrote himself into the record books with a 59th touchdown, matching the mark held by Doug Howlett during his stints at the Highlanders, Hurricanes and Blues between 1997-2007.

"I'm very proud. We're building wins off defence and really happy that we were able to get tries then create a good wall to stop these guys," said Waratahs skipper Michael Hooper. "Another really good performance."

In a show of solidarity, both teams ran onto the field at the same time before linking arms in a minute's silence to commemorate those who died in the mass shooting that stunned rugby-mad New Zealand. The Crusaders, who wore armbands with the words "United 15-03-2019", marking the day of the tragedy, cancelled their match last week against the Highlanders so the players could return home.

"Full credit to these guys (Waratahs), they came out early and put pressure on us and we were chasing the game straight away," said Crusaders captain Sam Whitelock. Asked if he had a message for Christchurch, he replied: "Obviously it hasn't been a great week but we stayed pretty tight. That's what we're trying to do as a team and we're doing it as a city too."

Many of the players admitted the shootings hit them hard and the Crusaders' focus was lacking as Jed Holloway powered through two tackles to dive between the posts after just three minutes. The Waratahs got another try eight minutes later when Folau won a ball in the air and offloaded to Cameron Clark who scorched down the line.

Stunned, the Crusaders, minus the experienced Owen Franks and Kieran Reid, woke up and pulled one back when George Bridge sliced through the defence after a line-out win. But a Bernard Foley penalty saw the home team head to the break with a 15-7 lead and on a greasy pitch, the Crusaders couldn't find a way back.

SYDNEY: Waratahs player Israel Folau (L) is tackled by Crusaders player Ryan Crotty (R) during the Super15's rugby match between Australia's Waratahs and New Zealand's Crusaders at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

The Tahs dominated in the second stanza with Folau's late touchdown putting the game beyond reach. Will Jordan pulled one back for the Crusaders on the siren, but it was too late. Earlier, a late try and conversion from Beauden Barrett saw the Hurricanes end the Stormers' three-game win streak 34-28 in Wellington.

The two teams also linked arms during a moment's silence ahead of a see-sawing eight-try game. "They put a lot of pressure on us, so we have to take our hats off to that," said skipper Barrett. "We did well to slow them down and put them under pressure." South Africa's Stormers came into the match with plenty of confidence, but playing in New Zealand is a tough assignment and they failed to make the most of their opportunities.

The visitors took a six-point lead with SP Marais slotting two easy penalties but the Canes, who rested All Blacks trio Dane Coles, TJ Perenara and Ngani Laumape, soon settled. — AFP