

England dig in to salvage heart-pumping draw in 4th Ashes Test



James Anderson and Stuart Broad walk off after the match ended in a draw
AFP | London

Battle-weary England dug deep for a gripping draw with just one wicket left to deny dominant Australia a 4-0 series lead in the fourth Ashes Test in Sydney yesterday.

Number 11 batsman James Anderson doggedly played out a tense 102nd and final over from leg-spinner Steve Smith in deteriorating evening light as England ended on 270 for nine chasing a 388-run target in a heart-pumping finish.

It all came down to the last six balls at the Sydney Cricket Ground with eight fielders crowding around the bat as Anderson fended off Smith's part-time leg-spin.

Australia had looked set to win the day-long battle and pull off a thrilling victory when they claimed the ninth wicket of Jack Leach, caught in the slips by David Warner off Smith for 26 to mass team celebrations.

But Anderson and long-time pace partner Stuart Broad played out the remaining two nail-bitingly tense overs to give



the beleaguered tourists a morale-boosting fighting draw after losing the Ashes series 3-0 inside 12 days.

Ben Stokes with a gutsy 60, his second half-century of the match, and first-innings centurion Jonny Bairstow's 41 held up the Australian victory charge.

But once both departed after tea, the Australians were relentless in taking the struggle down to the final over.

Tottenham and Liverpool survive FA Cup scares

Lucas Moura and Harry Kane help Tottenham rally and sink Morecambe

● Liverpool survive early scare to cruise to FA Cup win over Shrewsbury

AFP | London

Tottenham avoided an embarrassing FA Cup exit at the hands of third-tier Morecambe yesterday as Liverpool were forced to come from behind to beat lowly Shrewsbury.

West Ham beat Leeds 2-0 in the day's only third-round match featuring two Premier League teams while Wolves saw off Championship side Sheffield United 3-0.

Spurs needed a late flurry of goals from Harry Winks and substitutes Lucas Moura and Harry Kane to spare their blushes and beat League One club Morecambe 3-1.

Tottenham made eight changes from the side that lost to Chelsea in the first leg of their League Cup semi-final in mid-week, with Kane given his first rest under Antonio Conte.

Morecambe boss Stephen Robinson was absent for the game against the club where he began his playing career after testing positive for coronavirus.

Spurs -- 59 places higher than their opponents in the English



Liverpool's Roberto Firmino, center, scores his side's third goal

league system -- dominated the opening half an hour but the visitors went ahead in the 33rd minute when captain Anthony O'Connor converted from close range.

The home were level in the 74th minute but they needed a fluke -- midfielder Winks overhit a free-kick from the left-hand side but it caught goalkeeper Trevor Carson out and sailed into the far corner.

Moura put Spurs ahead in the 85th minute after rounding the goalkeeper and Kane made sure Spurs would progress.

Liverpool named five youth team players in their team to face League One side Shrewsbury at home after a Covid-affected build-up to the match, with more academy players on the bench.

The Merseyside club have also had to deal with injuries and are without Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane and Naby Keita, all of whom are at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Shrewsbury weathered almost half an hour of Liverpool possession but struck with their first real attack of any threat, when Daniel Udoh fired home from close range following a Nathanael Ogbeta cross.

Klopp returns

Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp was back in the dugout at Anfield after finishing his isolation

period following a positive test for Covid-19.

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Kaide Gordon, one of four teenagers handed a start in a youthful Liverpool lineup, became the second-youngest scorer in the club's history -- at 17 years and 96 days

Shrewsbury's lead just seven minutes before Kaide Gordon scored his first goal for the club at the Kop end.

The 17-year-old controlled Conor Bradley's low cross from the right with one foot in a crowded penalty area before slotting home with the other.

Just before half-time Liverpool were ahead when Ethan Ebanks-Landell handled in an aerial challenge with Virgil van Dijk and Fabinho scored the penalty.

Substitute Roberto Firmino increased Liverpool's lead 12 minutes from time with a close-range backheel and Fabinho scored his second to make it 4-1 with the last kick of the game.

Nadal beats Cressy to claim Melbourne title

● Halep sends Australian Open warning with first title in 16 months

Reuters | Melbourne

Top seed Rafael Nadal beat American qualifier Maxime Cressy 7-6(6) 6-3 to win the Melbourne Summer Set 1 ATP 250 event and build up momentum heading into the Australian Open.

The Spaniard, playing his first competitive tournament since August, was largely untroubled as he wrapped up the win in an hour 48 minutes.

Cressy was put under serious pressure by Nadal from the off, having to defend three break points in his first service game, but there was little to separate the two for the rest of the first set, which required a tiebreak.

Nadal stepped on the gas late in the tiebreak, saving a set point at 5-6 down and then earning a set point of his own with a forehand winner, which he converted to take the first set 7-6(6).

Cressy responded by breaking first in the second set to take a 2-1 lead, but Nadal immediately shut down a potential comeback with a break of his own to bring the set back on serve.

The Spaniard then broke again to lead 5-3 and held serve to claim the title.

"I'm coming back from some



Rafael Nadal of Spain celebrates with the trophy after his victory in Melbourne

Exactly where I would like to be is being 100 percent healthy from last year, playing until the end of the season, and with not having come back after five, six months away from competition

RAFAEL NADAL

challenging moments and injuries, so it means a lot to be here," the 20-times Grand Slam champion said, before praising his opponent.

"Congratulations Maxime, it's a great start to the season. I wish you all the very best for the rest of the season and your career."

Halep beats Kudrmetova

Earlier yesterday, former world number one Simona Halep stormed past Veronika Kudrmetova 6-2 6-3 at the

Melbourne Summer Set 1 final to claim her 23rd career title.

Kudrmetova began the contest strongly, breaking Halep's serve to take a 2-1 lead in the first set, but the two-times Grand Slam champion broke right back in the next game and then twice more to clinch the first set 6-2.

The second set unfolded in similar fashion, with Kudrmetova taking the lead and Halep rallying to level the set at 2-2. Halep broke a few games later to make it 5-3 and then held to love to secure the win.

American Amanda Anisimova battled through injury to beat Aliaksandra Sasnovich 7-5 1-6 6-4 and claim her second WTA title in the Melbourne Summer Set 2.

Anisimova, who took a medical timeout for treatment on her left thigh in the second set, showed great resolve to fight back from 3-0 down in the deciding set and break twice, before sealing the win with an emphatic ace.

Barty sends Australian Open warning with Rybakina demolition



Ashleigh Barty

AFP | Adelaide

World number one Ashleigh Barty showed why she is the Australian Open favourite when she demolished Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina in the final of the Adelaide International yesterday.

Barty took just 64 minutes to see off the seventh seeded Rybakina 6-3, 6-2 and claim the 14th singles title of her career.

The 25-year-old Australian has been in superb form this week and has had to beat a host of top players in a stacked top half of the draw.

She received a first round bye, but then faced Coco Gauff (world number 22), Sofia Kenin (12) and Iga Swiatek (9) on her way to the decider.

"We've obviously had a brilliant week, been able to work progressively through each match," Barty said.

BRAVE International Combat Week 2022 to be launched in special press conference



TDI | Manama

In association with IMMAF, KHK Sports, BRAVE CF, and Bahrain MMA Federation, a new venture will be incorporated into the 2022 edition of BRAVE International Combat week.

The biggest combat sports festival in Asia will take place in the Kingdom of Bahrain, this March, with a brand new format that promises to bring in a new era for combat sports. It will be live streamed on BRAVE CF's YouTube channel starting at 4:00 PM AST.

The 2022 BICW will be officially launched today afternoon, in a special press con-

ference to be held at the Wyndham Garden Manama Hotel, in the heart of Bahrain, with the presence of Kerrith Brown, IMMAF president, the CEO of KHK Sports and president of BRAVE CF, Mohammed Shahid, and president of the Bahrain MMA Federation, Mohamed Qamber.

They will present the new format for the BRAVE International Combat Week and the upcoming BRAVE Combat Federation event that is a staple of the BICW in recent years, as well as details of the MMA Super Cup. The trio will also be available for questions that can be put forth by media through BRAVE CF's Twitter page @bravemmaf.