

Shakeel, Salman help Pakistan counter Sri Lanka's spin

Saud Shakeel and Agha Salman put on 120 runs for Pakistan to steady innings after early wobble

● Shakeel is on 69 and Salman is on 61, with Pakistan still 91 runs behind

● Dhananjaya de Silva made 122 for Sri Lanka

AFP | Galle

An unbeaten century stand between Saud Shakeel and Agha Salman rescued Pakistan from a precarious 101-5 on the second day of the rain-hit opening Test yesterday.

In response to Sri Lanka's 312, Pakistan reached 221-5 when rain stopped play with the tourists still 91 runs behind.

Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Prabhath Jayasuriya took three wickets, including skipper Babar Azam.

Sri Lanka batsman Dhananjaya de Silva had earlier made 122 to hand the hosts a respectable total.

"I know I can absorb the pres-



Pakistan's Agha Salman plays a shot

sure with my experience of having played in 50 Tests and can control the game," said De Silva. "That is why the captain and management has trusted in me and given me the number six spot to bat."

But De Silva said they still fell "100 runs short" after they elected to bat first at the start of the two-match series.

Pakistan faltered in their re-

ply before Shakeel, on 69, and Salman, on 61, put on 120 runs to steady the innings and thwart the Sri Lankan spinners.

The left- and right-hand batting combination of Shakeel and Salman mixed the right dose of caution and aggression, with 12 boundaries and a six between them.

The pair showed maturity in tackling the spinners by using

their feet to get to the pitch of the ball, with Pakistan scoring at nearly five runs an over.

'Even-steven position'

"Coming into these conditions one thing Sri Lanka does really well is hold opposition to miserly run rates and they get the wickets in between as well," Pakistan batsman Shan Masood



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DHANANJAYA DE SILVA

told reporters.

"We lost wickets but the way we played allowed us to stay in the game and once we got that healthy partnership going the two teams are in an even-steven position."

Sri Lanka had come out roaring when pace bowler Kasun Rajitha got Imam-ul-Haq out for one and Jayasuriya sent back Abdullah Shafique for 19.

The left-handed Masood hit back as he smashed 39 off 30

balls but fell lbw to Ramesh Mendis, who was denied the wicket by the on-field umpire before Sri Lanka successfully reviewed.

Azam fell when he got an inside edge onto his pads and the ball looped to short leg, taken by wicketkeeper Sadeera Samarawickrama.

De Silva earlier moved from his overnight 94 to register his 10th Test ton in his 50th match to bolster Sri Lanka's position from a shaky 54-4 on Sunday.

Pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi, fellow quick Naseem Shah and leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed ended on three wickets each to bowl out Sri Lanka and lunch was called.

The second day's play began early with revised timings for each of the three sessions and de Silva soon got to his hundred off Shaheen.

De Silva, who smashed 12 fours and three sixes, got useful runs with the lower order before he finally fell to Naseem, who struck twice after Pakistan took the second new ball.

Hometown hero Mora faces undefeated Bourne at BRAVE CF 73

TDI | Manama

Fans from Bogota just got yet another massive reason to pack the Coliseo El Salitre on August 12 for BRAVE CF 73. The card, which headlines the biggest combat sports week in the history of Latin America, BRAVE Pan American Combat Week 2023, got the addition of Eduardo Mora, one of the most prominent and popular fighters in town.

BRAVE Combat Federation announced that Mora will be facing Keron Bourne, from Trinidad and Tobago, in a featured bantamweight bout. The



fight will be the chance for "El Burro" to bounce back from his last promotional appearance, in which he ended up submitted by Izzeddine Al Derbani.

Bourne, who boasts an un-

defeated professional record of 7 wins and no losses, might be making his BRAVE Combat Federation debut but is, by no means, a newcomer to the combat sports community. At

age 39, Bourne is a legend in his country, with an extensive background in multiple martial arts, including a prolific career in sambo, and belts in the regional MMA circuit.

BRAVE CF 73 takes place on August 12 at the Coliseo El Salitre, in Bogota, Colombia. The event, held in association with local promoters LFC, is part of the 2023 BRAVE Pan American Combat Week, alongside the IMMAF Amateur Pan American Championships. The card will be headlined by the bantamweight world title bout between José "Shorty" Torres and Nkosi "The Future" Ndebele.

Yasmeli Araque vs Eidy Macías added to BRAVE event in Colombia

TDI | Manama

The women are taking the central stage at BRAVE CF 73, in Bogota. Promotional veteran Yasmeli Araque makes her comeback exactly four years later, once again Bogota, and takes on Ecuador's Eidy Macías in a strawweight bout.

Venezuela's Araque made her BRAVE CF debut back in 2019, the last time the most global MMA promotion in the world



landed in Colombia. At BRAVE CF 26, she ended up being sub-

mitted by Brazil's Luana Pinheiro in the first round. Now,

Yasmeli is eager for her first BRAVE CF victory, after winning three of her last four fights in the regional scene. Her opponent, Eidy Macías, on the other hand, is having her first chance in global MMA. "The Talent" is undefeated in 5 professional fights and quickly rose through the ranks in South American MMA. At BRAVE CF 73, Macías is out to prove she belongs to the big leagues.

Bahrain Snooker championship kicks off

TDI | Manama

The second ranking championship for snooker, organized by the Bahraini Billiards and Snooker Federation (BBSF), has kicked off with the participation of 55 players, at Al Ahli Sports Club in Mahooz.

The championship witnessed the distribution of the players into 16 groups, half of them including four players, while the other groups had three players each.

The competition has reached the semifinal stage, with Habib Subah, Ahmed Al Hayki, Mohammed Al Shaikh, and Younis Saqer qualifying for this stage.

The final match will be held today.

In the quarterfinals, the competition witnessed Younis Saqer's qualification by defeating Khalil Buseif with a score of four frames to three after Buseif had initially led with two frames to none.

Mohammed Al Shaikh secured his spot in the semifinals with a four-to-three victory over Hesham Al Saqer.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Al Hayki advanced in ranking after defeating Abdullah Majiran with a score of four frames to three.

The first qualifier for the semifinals was the national team star, Habib Sabah, who won his match against Iyad Al Ansari with a score of four



A player in action during a game

frames to none.

Hussain Bubsheet, the head of the National Teams Committee at the BBSF, stated that the championship witnessed the participation of prominent players aiming to improve their rankings and qualify for future tournaments that the national team will be participating in.

"These ranking tournaments, organized annually by the federation to provide an opportunity to utilize them effectively in preparing the players for international, Asian, and global competitions," he said.

Bubsheet praised the high level of competition and the intense and fluctuating matches in the quarterfinals.

He highlighted the outstanding performances displayed by all the players in these matches.

Pidcock picks Pogacar in 'all-out war' for Tour title

TDI | Manama

Ineos rider Tom Pidcock said yesterday he fancies Tadej Pogacar's chances in a titanic Tour de France

title struggle he predicts could go to the wire in Paris in an "all-out war".

"I think Tadej," Pidcock said when asked for his favourite to claim victory.

"Jumbo seem a little bit anxious,

worried, desperate, they are working too hard to make things happen," the Olympic mountain bike champion told reporters at his team hotel at the foot of Mont Blanc.



Tom Pidcock