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Pant's run-out was turning point of India's innings: Southee

Press Trust Of India

WELLINGTON: New Zealand pacer Tim Southee believes that Rishabh Pant's freak run-out went a long way in changing the course of the Indian innings that eventually folded up for 165 in the first Test here on Saturday.

Pant, who started the day with a six in the first over suffered because of Ajinkya Rahane's poor call and India lost five wickets for 33 runs from that point. Rahane himself fell to Southee as he inside edged to the keeper trying to shoulder arms and

off and finish the Indian batting line-up like that with two dangerous players in this morning, said Southee, who picked four wickets.

Southee has never been an out and out fast bowler and at this stage of his career, he relies on his ability to move the ball both in the air and off the pitch.

"Well, I probably gave up worrying about speed a while ago, so I guess you've got to rely on other skills, and I guess swing, there was a little bit of swing there today.

"Not been as windy as it was yesterday, so us as a bowling unit,



late inward movement became his undoing.

Asked if there was any strategy to dismiss Rahane, Southee replied: "No, the run-out of Pant was a big this morning. With him (Pant) being such a dangerous player and leading into that second new-ball, he could have scored quickly along with Jinks (Rahane's nickname)."

Southee knew that Rahane had no option but to attack once Pant was dismissed.

"We knew though if we could open one end up with the bowlers, then Jinks was looking to play a little bit more aggressively, which brings us into play a little more.

"The way we bowled this morning was pretty good. To come

we try to expose that swing when we get it, and there was a little bit there today," said Southee.

On the day, Southee reckoned that one wicket less had been a better effort. New Zealand were 216 for five at stumps on day two, leading India by 51 runs.

"You always want to be one wicket less than what you are. But saying that, if we can carry on tomorrow morning, get a couple of partnerships together and try and build that lead, then going into the second innings it will be nice."

There was some turn on offer for Ashwin and that surprised Southee, who hasn't seen pitches at the Basin Reserve offer turn on day two.

INDIA-NZ IST TEST DAY 2



Ishant Sizzles, Williamson Dazzles On An Intriguing Second Day

Press Trust Of India

WELLINGTON: Ishant Sharma's lion-hearted bowling effort met its match in Kane Williamson's elegance as New Zealand ended an attritional second day of the opening Test against India with a slight upper-hand, here on Saturday.

After another lower-order collapse that saw get India bundled out for 165, Ishant, coming straight back from an ankle injury, took three for 31 in 15 overs despite Williamson's effortless 89 in New Zealand's day-end score of 216 for 5.

New Zealand now lead by 51 runs.

Mohammed Shami (1/61 in 17 overs), during his final spell

of the day, removed Williamson, who couldn't check an uppish drive. Henry Nicholls' (17 off 62 balls) struggle seemed to have hampered Williamson's rhythm.

During the final hour, Ravichandran Ashwin (1/60 in 21 overs), who also bowled beautifully throughout the day, relieved Nicholls of his agony with a delivery that had drift and a hint of turn as India skipper Virat Kohli snapped the low catch at second slip.

Williamson looked good as he hit some delightful strokes square off the wicket. The square drive on the rise off Jasprit Bumrah (0/62 in 18.1 overs), followed by a cover drive, showed his class.

In all, the New Zealand skip-

per hit 11 boundaries off 153 balls.

Bumrah, in particular, was punished by Williamson, who also back-cut him for a boundary and Taylor then punished another half volley through the covers.

Either Bumrah bowled too full and drivable length deliveries or too short that even Rishabh Pant failed to gather the ball over his head.

This was where Ishant came into the picture. While he was lucky to get opener Tom Latham out with a delivery drifting on leg-stump, the other opener Tom Blundell (30) had a typical Ishant dismissal w

The ball was full on the off-stump channel and jagged back enough to find the gap between

his bat and pad.

"Actually, the wicket became slow. It had tennis ball bounce at the start but when we bowled, there was no seam movement available," Ishant said after the end of the day's play.

Williamson and Taylor then had a partnership of 93 runs during which New Zealand also got the lead before Ishant, coming back for his third spell, bowled one that reared up from good length and proved to be an easy catch for Cheteshwar Pujara at short-leg.

"I was just not holding the ball on seam as kookaburra goes soft after 40 overs. When the seam really gets soft, you need to come hard and hit the length very hard and bowl cross seam,"

said the seasoned pacer.

Looking good for his 22nd Test hundred, Williamson, in his bid to get another boundary, couldn't check a cover drive and the low catch was taken by substitute fielder Ravindra Jadeja.

Earlier, New Zealand's debutant Kyle Jamieson (4/49) and veteran Tim Southee (4/49) took four wickets apiece as Indian innings folded in 68.1 overs. The duo took four of the five wickets that fell on the second morning with India adding only 43 runs to their overnight score of 122/5.

Rishabh Pant (19) started with a six but then a horrible mix-up with senior partner Ajinkya Rahane (46) resulted in a run-out and the little chance of recovery was gone for good.

ECB chief 'not a champion' of four-day Tests

Agencies

LONDON: ECB chief executive Tom Harrison says there are no plans to introduce four-day Test matches in England as debate swirls over the future of the longest form of the game.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is next month set to discuss a proposal to reduce matches in the World Test Championship by a day from 2023.

The ICC allowed four-day Tests in 2017 and they have been tried in one-off games between South Africa and Zimbabwe and England against Ireland.

But they are not allowed in the Test world championship, which is led by Virat Kohli's India, where matches take place over the traditional five days.

The England and Wales Cricket Board said in December that it was "cautiously" supportive of the move towards shorter Tests as a way of reducing players' workloads.

But in an interview with The Cricketer magazine, Harrison said he had been incorrectly "positioned as the champion of four-day Tests".

"There are no plans over the next few years to introduce four-day Tests in England...certainly not in the World Test Championship... the Ashes," he said.

But he added: "I'm cautiously supportive of four-day Tests, in



certain geographies, in certain times of the year, against certain opposition.

"In a cluttered calendar, when we're facing enormous pressure on schedules, four-day Test cricket does answer some questions, some of the time. "It's not the answer to all of our problems and our own problems." Asked if the ICC could impose four-day Tests on its members, Harrison was firm in his response.

"There's no support for that — India, Australia and us — and that's quite a powerful lobby," he said.

The influential Marylebone Cricket Club last month threw its weight behind five-day Tests.



Pakistan president to give honorary citizenship to Darren Sammy on March 23

ISLAMABAD : West Indies' all-rounder Darren Sammy will be given Pakistan's highest civil award -- Nishan-e-Pakistan -- and honorary citizenship of Pakistan by President Arif Alvi on March 23, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Saturday.

In a tweet, the PCB's media department announced that citizenship will be conferred on Sammy for his "inval-

able contribution to cricket in Pakistan".

"President of Pakistan Arif Alvi will confer the highest civilian award and honorary citizenship to Darren Sammy on 23 March for his invaluable contribution to cricket in Pakistan," read the tweet.

Sammy is currently leading Peshwar Zalmi in the ongoing edition of the Pakistan

Super League (PSL).

This comes after Zalmi owner Javed Afridi was recently quoted as saying by The Dawn that the franchise had put in a request to the president to grant the Zalmi skipper honorary citizenship of Pakistan and requested PCB chairman Ehsan Mani to pursue it personally so that the application is approved.

Asian Wrestling C'ships: 4 Indians including Bajrang, Ravi through to final

NEW DELHI: Bajrang Punia and Ravi Dahiya on Saturday assured themselves of silver medals at the Asian Wrestling Championships underway at the KD Jadhav Wrestling Hall in the national capital.

Satyawart Kadiyan (97kg) and Gourav Baliyan (79kg) also assured themselves of silver medals. Naveen (70kg) lost in the semi-final and will face Uzbekistan's Meirzhan Ashirov in the bronze medal match.

Bajrang was dominant in the 65kg category, beating the three opponents he faced by technical superiority. The Asian Games gold medallist started the day with a 11-0 win over Tajikistan's Dзамshed Sharifov. He then beat Uzbekistan's Abbas Rakhmonov 12-2 in the quarter final.

Bajrang then faced Iranian junior world champion Amirhossein Maghshoudi. He won the bout 10-0 to go through to the final. He now faces Japan's Takuto Otoguro in a rematch of the 2018 World Championships final.

Ravi beat Japanese Yuki Takahashi 14-5 in his first match of the 57kg category followed by a 6-3 win over Tugs Batjargal of Mongolia in the quarter-final. He then beat Kazakhstan's world championship bronze medallist Nurislam Sanayev 7-2 to set up a title bout against Tajikistan's Hikmatullo Vohidov.

Satyawart beat both his opponents by technical superiority. He beat Jordan's Zaid Shishani 10-0 before beating Tajikistan's Rustam Iskandari by the same scoreline. He faces Mojtaba Mohammadshafie Goleji of Iran in the final.

Baliyan beat Mongolia's Batzul Damjin 3-1 in his first match of the day. He followed that up with a 6-5 win over Japan's Shinkichi Okui to seal his place in the final where he faces Kyrgyzstan's Arsalan Budazhapov.



ROONEY SCORES IN 500TH LEAGUE GAME AS DERBY DRAW WITH FULHAM

LONDON: Wayne Rooney celebrated his 500th appearance in English league football with a goal before Aleksandar Mitrovic saw second-tier high-flyers Fulham to a 1-1 draw away to Derby.

Former Manchester United star Rooney, the England national side's all-time leading goalscorer, struck from the penalty spot after Tim Ream handled early in the second half at Pride Park when he cheekily chipped the ball over Fulham goalkeeper Marek Rodak.

But Mitrovic, the Champion-

ship's top scorer, volleyed in Aboubakar Kamara's cross for his 22nd goal of the season 17 minutes from time to earn Fulham a draw and lift the London club within two points of second-placed Leeds in the race for automatic promotion to the lucrative Premier League.

Only the top two sides at the end of the regular season are guaranteed a place in English football's top flight, with the other promotion place decided by a series of play-off matches involving the teams finishing in third to sixth positions.