

England Seal Famous Triumph with Sydney Win

Friday, 07 January 2011

England claimed a first Ashes series triumph in Australia in nearly a quarter of a century in the most emphatic style on Friday after wrapping up a third dominant innings victory in five Tests.

The tourists, who had already ensured they would retain the Ashes, needed a little more than 17 overs to remove Australia's last three batsmen on day five of the final Test to win the series 3-1 with an innings and 83-run victory.

England claimed a first Ashes series triumph in Australia in nearly a quarter of a century in the most emphatic style on Friday after wrapping up a third dominant innings victory in five Tests.

The tourists, who had already ensured they would retain the Ashes, needed a little more than 17 overs to remove Australia's last three batsmen on day five of the final Test to win the series 3-1 with an innings and 83-run victory.

Free entry had ensured a 19,000 crowd watched the tourists perform the final rites and it was dominated by the red and white clad England fans of the Barmy Army, whose songs and chants echoed around the famous Sydney Cricket Ground.

They celebrated wildly as England, just four years after suffering a first Ashes clean sweep in 86 years, matched the achievement of Mike Gatting's touring party of 1986-87.

The England players did a lap of honour after being awarded the crystal trophy that symbolises the tiny urn, deemed too fragile to travel the world.

"We can ... be proud of what we've achieved because not many teams have come out here and won and certainly not many as emphatically as we did in the end," said England captain Andrew Strauss.

"So it's going to be a dressing room full of pride and probably a bit of alcohol as well."

Australia have lost series by bigger margins but in more than 130 years of Test cricket they had never conceded three defeats by an innings or more in a series against any country.

Michael Clarke, whose own form in the series was patchy at best, could have asked for a better time to assume the captaincy, albeit temporarily, from the injured Ricky Ponting.

The 29-year-old conceded his team had been outplayed "in every facet of the game" over the last two months, but did not think it was a time to panic.

"I don't think there's a crisis in Australian cricket at all," he said. "We need a lot of improvement in our game, in all areas. But I do believe we have the talent and potential in that change room to do it.

"We've seen through this series that guys have stood up at different times, but we're way too inconsistent to win a big series. That's what England have shown as a team, they have outplayed us, not one or two individuals."

DOMINANT PERFORMANCE

One individual who did make a difference was England opener Alastair Cook, who was named Man of the Match for the Sydney Test and won the Compton-Miller medal as Man of the Series.

Cook made 189 in Sydney and 766 runs at an average of 127.66 over the five Tests, the second highest by an Englishman in an Ashes series.

"I honestly can't believe what I've just done, or the team. We'll sit and enjoy what we've done today and think about tomorrow tomorrow," said the 26-year-old.

It was Cook's unbeaten 235 in the first Test in Brisbane that rescued England from a perilous position to force a morale-boosting draw and, the Perth defeat aside, England never looked back.

"Thankfully as the series has gone on we've become more dominant and certainly the last two Test matches were as good as an England side I've played in has performed," said Strauss.

After the drawn first Test in Brisbane, England won the second in Adelaide by an innings and 71 runs before Australia fought back to claim the third in Perth by 267 runs.

England again dominated the fourth Test in Melbourne with an even more comprehensive victory, an innings and 157 runs, to ensure they would retain the urn they won back from Australia last year in England.

After four dominant days in Sydney this week, just three wickets were required to secure victory on Friday morning.

Resuming their second innings on 213 for seven, still 151 runs behind England's gargantuan first knock of 644, Australia needed to bat out the last day if they were to claim a draw.

Morning rain showers looked like being their best hope but once they cleared after a 40-minute delay, England's march to victory was only a matter of time.

Peter Siddle, who had taken six wickets including a hat-trick on a rampant first day of the series at the Gabba, was the first to go for his highest Test score of 43.

The seamer was furious with himself after spinner Graeme Swann tempted him into a sweep which James Anderson caught at the boundary in front of the ranks of jubilant England fans.

England took the new ball two overs later and an Anderson fizzer soon had Ben Hilfenhaus caught behind for seven for the outstanding quick bowler's 24th wicket of the series.

Debutant Michael Beer was the final wicket to fall, bowled by Chris Tremlett for two to leave Steve Smith unbeaten on 54 and Australia all out for 281, one run more than their first innings tally.

"I think when you look back at the history of Ashes confrontations, I think what we've achieved here will be remembered pretty fondly," said Strauss.

Source: bdnews24.com