Twitter Thread by Aishu Haridas

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Highlights of what happened after 36/9 - a thread.

#AUSvIND



Boxing Day Test - we lose Virat, Ajinkya takes over captaincy, with a forgettable loss still lurking. We carry a record of not winning at the 'G while chasing. Aussie win the toss & elect to bat, meaning we'd have to bat fourth.

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With Shami gone due to injury, Bumrah leads from the front making sure the Aussies bundle out within 200 with the other bowlers chipping in at regular intervals. Ashwin picking Smith for a blob is the most special part of it all.

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At 64/3 & in the danger of conceding a lead yet again and under immense pressure, captain Rahane chips in with a ■ which is at par with his Lord's knock & with Jaddu's contribution lower down, India manage a lead of 131.

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Siraj, the son of an auto rickshawman, having lost his father before the series & not being able to attend the funeral, plays his debut Test, tears up during the national anthem. He was the highest wicket taker for India in the 2nd innings wrapping up Aussies for 200.

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Needing 70 to win & losing a couple of early wickets, Gill steadies the ship, looking like a million dollars while batting on debut. India chase down the target, breaking the record. Ajinkya aptly hitting the winning runs & is awarded the MoM.

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SCG Test - India lose Umesh to injury, Saini makes his debut, Rohit is back. With Marnus & Smith scoring runs on a pitch that absolutely did nothing, Jaddu chips in with 4 wickets.

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Gill notches up his debut 50 and Pujara added the same score as well. The middle order failed but Jaddu remains not out giving some fight.

Injury concerns arise with Jaddu ruled out to bowl in the 2nd innings & Pant not being able to keep, his batting in doubt.

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With a bowler short, India find it tough to restrict the free-scoring Aussies. The four bowlers give it their all as the hosts set a target of 407 for the visitors, declaring at 312/6.

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India end with on 90/2 at EOD after a good start by the openers. Jinks goes early the next day as Pant (with an injured arm) & Pujara, defending & attacking, put on a steady partnership giving a glimmer of hope for an unlikely win.

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Counter attacking, Pant lets loose, a victory looking more than possible at the moment. But when you live by the sword, you die by it. Pant goes for 97 just before taking the new ball & Pujara goes soon after, just after the new ball is taken. A win out of question.

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Ash joins Vihari to help India draw the match with Jaddu being injured. Both batsmen at crease end up playing with injuries, battling on with the bruises, ducking both the deliveries and sledges thrown at them with immaculate patience, grit, determination & class.

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India draw the Test at Sydney, series still poised at 1-1 with a ripper waiting at Gabba. But injury concerns resurface again as they lose Vihari, Ash, Bumrah and Jaddu to injuries ahead of the final & important Test of the series.

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Gabba Test - Natarajan, a bowler from a small village in Salem, who wasn't picked in the initial squad is set to make his Test debut. Alongwith Washy. And Shardul who's hardly played a Test. India bowl first at Gabba, Siraj who's 2 Tests old, leads the attack.

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Yet another injury & India lose Saini who can't bowl further in the first innings. Marnus scores a 100, Australia score 369.

History said, Aussies have never been beaten when they scored above 350 at Gabba & that India've never won there before. :)

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At 186/5 with a huge lead staring down at us, a debutant at 7 & an almost debutant at 8 come together to knit a mind boggling partnership of 123 runs, notching up half centuries, showing resilience second to none & helping India reduce the lead by a large margin.

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Again with a depleted bowling attack, Siraj picks up a fifer, well assisted by Shardul as well. The target set is 328 & overs are lost due to rain. India 4/0 at the end of day 4, requiring 324 from a possible 98 overs on the final day.

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Rohit gets out early, reducing the chances of a win a little. Gill again looks like a dream, taking on Starc, pulling and cover driving to perfection before a loose shot sends him back for an extremely classy & well made 91. Almost cementing his place in the side.

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Pujara the warrior, taking hits and bruises on every part of his body, fights on. From 6 (60), he starts to accelerate, slowly but surely. As wickets fall on the other end, he holds fort making sure a draw is never out of option if by chance we don't get a win.

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As Pujara goes to the new ball, it's on Pant. A win is still an option, but what if he gets out going for it? What if he plays a rash shot? What if nerves get better off him? What if there is a sudden rush of blood? Lot of questions asked as we enter the final hour.

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He answers all of them with his bat. He defends, he attacks, he pulls, he falls down, he comes down the track, he plays the unorthodox shots but more importantly he stays. He stays there. Till the end, hitting the winning runs helping India win the match & the series.

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Look at his face, look at the satisfaction on it, the relief. All the criticisms, all of them who thought he was over, what a way to answer them. What a fighter, what a freaking rockstar of a guy! We owe him, we owe him big. We owe every single player in the squad.

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Not just Pant, every player has a back story that'll move you, every player showed a lot of character. From 36/9 to coming back to level the series & then going on to win it - words fall short!

Team India, class of 2020-21, #AUSvIND - take a bow.

PC: Cricinfo (end of thread).


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