



Laura Marsh celebrates the wicket of Alyssa Healy on day four at Taunton

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Australia retain Women's Ashes after Test draw in Taunton

Australia retained the Women's Ashes after the Test match at Taunton ended in a draw on day four.

The tourists hold an unassailable 8-2 lead over England heading into the three-match IT20 series, with England no longer able to reach the 10 points needed to regain the trophy.

England passed the follow-on target in the morning session and then

declared to set up their best chance of a win. Nat Sciver added 22 to her overnight score before playing on to Jess Jonassen or 88.

Laura Marsh added a vital 28 and when she also fell to Jonassen before lunch England captain Heather Knight called her players in.

England went on the attack with the ball, surrounding the bat with close catchers. And the pressure paid off after lunch as Laura Marsh took two wickets in an over, bowling Alyssa Healy with a sharp-turning ball and then trapping Rachael Haynes lbw four balls later.

Meg Lanning and first-innings century-maker Ellyse Perry steadied the ship until Lanning smashed a Kirstie Gordon full toss right to Georgia Elwiss at cover.

But the chances of winning dwindled as the Australians batted on, with good innings from Perry (76 not out), Jonassen (37) and Sophie Molineux (41), before the handshake came with 17 overs remaining.

Quotes

Mark Robinson: “We worked out that our best chance of [reaching the follow-on target] was against the new ball [this morning]. We did really well this morning and we really felt for Nat [Sciver] as her innings was as good as anything you’ve seen in this match. She’s got out in the end trying to farm the strike to get us over the line, but she played fantastically well under pressure.

“We were trying to bowl them out for 100 or 120 and then have a crazy chase in the evening. We got a couple of wickets but we needed that [Ellyse] Perry LBW shout to go our way and the game drifted away a bit after that.

“We’ve got to congratulate Australia – they’ve played better cricket than us and they’re the holders of the Ashes again.”

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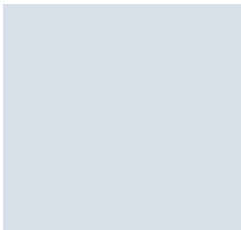
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