



Alyssa Healy on her way to 66. Photo: Getty Images

Jul 02, 2019 20:24 BST

Australia Women Win Tense Ashes Opener

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Australia Women won the first match of the Women's Ashes, getting home by two wickets in a low-scoring affair.

England rallied hard with the ball to really get Australian hearts fluttering but their below-par total of 177 wasn't quite enough, despite a nervy finish.

They were indebted to Nat Sciver (64) and some lower-order resistance from Laura Marsh (24*) and Sophie Ecclestone (27) in reaching 177, helping them to recover first from 19-4 and then 44-5.

With the ball the hosts were very impressive. An early wicket from Anya Shrubsole got them on their way and birthday girl Katherine Brunt kept the pressure up with a wicket of her own, the big scalp of Meg Lanning.

A lightning-fast stumping from Sarah Taylor saw the back of Ellyse Perry before Ecclestone - the pick of the bowlers with 3-34 - and Marsh ratcheted up the pressure to keep the game alive.

It wasn't quite to be for Heather Knight's team in the end, and Australia got over the line to take a 2-0 lead in the multi-format series. The second Royal London Women's ODI is at the same venue on Thursday.

QUOTES

Heather Knight: "It's disappointing, of course, but there was a lot of heart to take from the way we fought right to the end and made Australia work incredibly hard for the win.

"We lost too many early wickets up top and it was always going to be very hard to recover from that, but to get up to that total and then to bowl like we did and take it that deep was great to see.

"I said before the game that resilience is one of the things we pride ourselves on and we saw a lot of that today. We're obviously 2-0 down on points now so we'll need that resilience to bounce back and get on the board in Thursday's second ODI."

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