

# NO MORE CHOKERS, PROTEAS LORDS AT LORD'S

## South Africa win World Test Championship, first major title in 27 years

AP, LONDON: Chokers no more.

The South Africans consigned the word to history when they ripped the World Test Championship mace from Australia's callused grip inside four days of a riveting final at Lord's.

South Africa wore a new label Saturday — champion — by claiming its first major cricket trophy in 27 years when it wrapped up a five-wicket win.

The last 69 runs required on day four were confidently knocked off by the Proteas in just over two hours — only three boundaries — with Australia typically fighting all the way to the inevitable end.

South Africa moved from a portentous 213-2 overnight to a winning 285-5, the second highest successful run chase in the 141-year test history at the home of cricket.

Victory laid to rest ghosts of heartbreaking losses on big ICC stages that have haunted South Africa for decades. The venues and dates are infamous in South Africa cricket, among them Birmingham 1999, Dhaka 2011, Auckland 2015, Kolkata 2023 and Bridgetown 2024.

But London 2025 will go down as one of the greatest days in South Africa sports, when its cricket underdogs grabbed the advantage and didn't let go against a red-hot Australia.

The stunning result also bodes well for South Africa's preparations for its home ODI World Cup in 2027. It's a different format, but the Proteas' mindsets won't be burdened by not having won a global trophy since the Champions Trophy's precursor in 1998.

Australia didn't give up the WTC mace easily, relent-



South Africa's captain Temba Bavuma lifts the ICC World Test Championship Mace as he celebrates with teammates after victory on Day 4 of the ICC World Test Championship final match against Australia, at Lord's cricket ground, in London, on Saturday

lessly attacking the stumps and trying to prey on any South Africa butterflies. The desperate Australians used up their three reviews in vain within the first 90 minutes and fought to the end. But the serial champions lost an ICC final for only a fourth time in 14 chances.

"They were fantastic in that fourth innings," Australia captain Pat Cummins said. "There wasn't a lot in the wicket but they didn't give us a chance."

The Proteas were staunch, losing only three wickets on Saturday. One of them was

Aiden Markram, the colossus Australia could not topple until it was too late.

He resumed the day on 102 and was out for 136 when only six runs from victory. He spent six hours, 23 minutes in the middle. Australia didn't celebrate his wicket. Instead, players slapped Markram on the back and congratulated him on his match-winning knock as the Lord's crowd stood and applauded.

"Growing up, Lord's was the one venue I wanted to play at," Markram said. "To do it at a final and win is

something really special." About 15 minutes later, Kyle Verreynne hit the winning run, a drive into the covers. Markram and an injured Bavuma set up the victory the day before with an unbeaten partnership

of 143 runs. They could not finish what they started, adding only four runs together before Bavuma edged Cummins behind for 66, one more than he had overnight. Markram was named

man of the match. He also took two vital wickets, that of Steve Smith on 66 in Australia's first innings, when Smith became the highest foreign test run-scorer at Lord's, and Josh Hazlewood to end Australia's second innings. Kagiso Rabada had nine-for in the match.

South Africa's target was set at 282, considered too far. But in a batting unit far less experienced than Australia's and considered a weak point, Markram and Bavuma chanced on ideal

batting conditions on day three Friday and exploited them mercilessly. The turning point was Bavuma dropped in the slips on 2 by Smith, who broke his finger and didn't return to the match.

South Africa was criticized by some before the final for its supposedly easier road in the 2023-25 WTC cycle - it didn't face Australia or England in a series - but it has won eight straight tests, its second longest streak in history.

### SCOREBOARD

Australia 1st innings: 212 (B Webster 72, S Smith 66; K Rabada 5-51, M Jansen 3-49)

South Africa 1st innings: 138 (D. Bedingham 45; P Cummins 6-28)

Australia 2nd innings: 207 (M Starc 58 no; K Rabada 4-59, L Ngidi 3-38)

South Africa 2nd innings: (target 282, overnight 213-2)

A Markram c Head b Hazlewood 136, R Rickelton c Carey b Starc 6, W Mulder c Labuschagne b Starc 27, T Bavuma c Carey b Cummins 66, T Stubbs b Starc 8, D Bedingham not out 21, K Verreynne not out 4. Extras: 14. Total: 282 for 5.

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-70, 3-217, 4-241, 5-276. Bowling: Starc 14.4-1-66-3; Hazlewood 19-2-58-1; Cummins 17-0-59-1; Lyon 26-4-66-0; Webster 5-0-13-0; Head 2-0-8-0.

Player-of-the-match: Aiden Markram

### FROM 'HOPE TO HISTORY': CRICKETING WORLD EXPLODES WITH JOY

Fantastic win and so well played! Hats off to Markram for that match winning century, and Temba for leading with such ice and fire all through. What an incredible experience of watching this beautiful format of the game! The built up drama, the slow anticipation, and the sweet victory to end it all were moments to savour... And to experience that with my two boys thrilled and on their toes couldn't have imagined it better than this. Go Proteas!

Test cricket continues to weave its magic. In a final where every session had its own story, @ProteasMenCSA found calm in the storm. Markram's composure and Bavuma's grit under pressure stood tall in the fourth innings. A century that will be remembered, a partnership that turned hope into history. Congratulations to South Africa on becoming World Test Champions!

Well done @ProteasMenCSA ..everything went right from the toss already .. enjoy the celebrations

Masterful Markram! Great win by South Africa led by Temba Bavuma. This was a great ad for test cricket. Congratulations to ICC World Test Champions South Africa!

Bosh and Boom. What a win for @ProteasMenCSAthey have out skilled and out wanted the Australians. tremendously led by Temba Bavuma. They're a team that shows how powerful purpose, passion and belief are in shaping the path to a trophy. A glorious day for South Africa

One of the most phenomenally responsible, nerveless 4th innings centuries in the game from Aiden Markram. Fitting that the former ICCU19World Cup winning captain (K G Rabada) helps guide Temba Bavuma's team to the Nation's greatest cricketing moment. ICC WTC Champs 2025

### CAPTAIN TALK

“Whilst we were batting, we could hear the Aussies using that dreaded word, choke. It's been years since we've overcome a final. We've been etched in history, we're part of something that has never been done. It's special in a lot of ways. Also, it's a chance for South Africa to be united. We've got a cause where we can put aside our differences and enjoy. We just have to embrace it

— Temba Bavuma, South Africa captain

“It's the pinnacle, I love Test cricket. Huge achievement to make the final, one-game shootout is a spectacle, didn't end up on the right side but it's been a great week. South Africa were deserved winners as they kept themselves in the game throughout. Aiden and Temba didn't give us a chance. SA showed why they're here and are deserved winners, they kept themselves in the game throughout. Things can change quickly, but it was a bridge too far. Few things we didn't do right. Didn't bat out the opposition after a decent first-innings lead

— Pat Cummins, Australia captain





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