

Cricket – Sharif stuns star-studded England



The crowd celebrate Scotland's first win over England. Picture from The Grange by Nigel Duncan Media

Scotland 371 for five wickets (50 overs); England 365 all out (49 overs) at The Grange.

They swarmed onto the pitch, they danced and even corporate and VIP guests hugged each other after Fife-based Safyann Sharif dismissed last man Mark Wood lbw with a vicious in-swinging yorker.

And this is a moment that the 4,000 people lucky enough to be in the tight but atmospheric arena will say for years to come that they were there.

That's after minnows Scotland humbled the star-studded England cricket team and sent them homeward to think again after a historic, 736 run-feast at The Grange.

Weeks ago Scotland suffered as a controversial lbw decision in Zimbabwe sent them tumbling out of the World Cup to the West

Indies.

Now they face Pakistan in a T20 double-header at The Grange on Tuesday and Wednesday (both days at 4pm) buoyed by their first ever win over The Auld Enemy.

And batsman Calum MacLeod became the first Scot to plunder England's quality bowling attack for a century.

In fact, Glasgow-born MacLeod, who was released by Durham at the end of the 2016 season, carried his bat unbeaten for 140 superb runs to the delight of the sell-out crowd.

And the game was screened live by Sky Sports putting MacLeod and Scottish cricket firmly on the world stage.

They may not have qualified for the World Cup but they skittled England, the No 1 ranked country in one day international cricket.

And the victory made a mockery of the decision to cut the associate nations from next year's World Cup.

England jet home to face the might of Australia at the Oval on Wednesday and skipper Eoin Morgan conceded: "We were miles off where we expect to be and the way we played we didn't deserve to win.

"There were quite a few mistakes made that we need to rectify and learn from ahead of the Australia series."

He spoke minutes after the match announcer warned fans that they faced lengthy bans if they invaded the pitch.

But security staff were engulfed in the euphoria. The players then paraded around the pitch as Flower of Scotland played over the tannoy.

Earlier, Scotland posted a big total of 371 for four. Yes, it was a short boundary, but the effort was colossal against a

top bowling attack.

It was the first time that Scotland had reached 350 in their one day international history and the 47 boundaries the batsmen secured is the most ever accumulated by an associate nation.

MacLeod, however, who plays for Bexley in the Kent Premier League, was centre stage and the 29-year-old celebrated his 57th one day international cap with a 70-ball ton.

The tone was set early on by Scotland captain Kyle Coetzer who pre-match said the players were pleased to have the opportunity to, as he put it, "get back on the horse" quickly against top opposition after the disappointment of Zimbabwe.

He told reporters that Scotland will beat England one day and they delivered 24-hours later.

Skipper Eoin Morgan brought a strong squad to Edinburgh and the glum faces of the fielding side told a story as Scotland sparkled in the summer sunshine.

Coetzer scored an assured and well-constructed 58 from 49 balls with eight fours and his second six brought up his half-century in a first-wicket partnership with Matthew Cross of 103.

In strode MacLeod and the right-hand top order batsman swept the English attack side with some glorious shots.

Scotland maintained a high run rate but Cross was next to go at 107 when he was caught behind by wicketkeeper Sam Billings for 48.

On went MacLeod who teamed up with Richie Berrington, who scored 39, and then was joined by Oxford-born George Munsey who collected 55 runs from 51 balls in a belligerent knock which started with a reverse sweep to the boundary. That's confidence for you and he shared a 107 run partnership with

MacLeod.

Debutant Dylan Budge was next at the crease and he scored 11 runs before departing to allow Aberdeen-born Michael Leask an opportunity.

His cameo of ten runs started with a four off his first ball and the crowd loved it.

Minutes later they stood to salute MacLeod as he left the pitch having faced 94 balls and hitting 16 fours and three sixes.

In came England and Jonny Bairstow downed an espresso before he went out to bat and the caffeine injection certainly worked as he stroked his way towards a hundred.

He threatened to break the record but his knock ended up as the third fastest.

It looked as if the Scotland attack was there for the tacking as England comfortably piled on the agony, plundering boundaries, seemingly at will.

Bairstow was out for 105 from 59 balls with 12 fours and six sixes, but the rot set in when Joe Root was run out for 29 by Mark Watt after a mix-up with Alex Hales.

Still, at 220 for three, and playing as they were, it seemed as if England would stroll to victory with eight wickets remaining as Scotland did not appear to have real penetration in their bowling attack.

Then England lost two wickets in two balls with the score at 245, Morgan bagged at wide mid-on by a smart catch by captain Coetzer and Alex Hales was caught at short mid-wicket for 52 by Alasdair Evans.

That, according to Scotland hero MacLeod turned the game despite 46 runs from Moeen Ali and 47 not out from 44 balls from bowler Liam Plunkett who almost saw England home.

Watt finished as the top Scotland wicket taker with three for 55 with Evans and Berrington also claiming two each.

But it was the Yorker from Safyaan Sharif which will be remembered for sparking scenes probably never seen before at the picturesque Grange ground.