

Cummins leads Australia to narrow victory over Pakistan in ODI opener



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Skipper Pat Cummins showcased resilience with an unbeaten 32, guiding Australia to a tense two-wicket victory over Pakistan in their first ODI in Melbourne. Chasing 204, Australia faced a scare after losing three quick wickets, but Cummins' steady play helped them reach the target with 99 balls remaining.

Australia's revamped opening lineup, featuring Jake Fraser-McGurk and Matt Short, struggled as Short fell early to Shaheen Shah Afridi. Fraser-McGurk followed, caught off Naseem Shah for 16. Steve Smith and Josh Inglis then steadied the innings with an 85-run stand, though Smith (44) and Inglis (49) fell in quick succession. Further setbacks left Australia teetering at 139-6, but Cummins, alongside Mitchell Starc (2*), ensured a close win.

Earlier, Pakistan managed 203, with new captain Mohammad Rizwan top-scoring at 44. Starc's precision earned him 3-33, and he dismissed key players, including Saim Ayub and Abdullah Shafique. Adam Zampa added pressure, bowling out Babar Azam for 37.

Despite a late push from Afridi (24) and Shafique's quick 40, Pakistan was bowled out in 47 overs. Rizwan praised his team's fighting spirit, but Cummins commended his bowlers and noted the need for stronger batting partnerships in upcoming matches.