

## Cricket 184

### Chapter 184

The sun rose gently over the Gabba on Day 5, casting long golden rays across the pitch, illuminating the theatre of battle one last time. The morning breeze danced across the stadium, rustling flags and sending a ripple through the crowd. The stakes couldn't have been higher — India needed 295 runs to win the final Test, clinch the series, and etch their name into the annals of cricket history with a whitewash on the hallowed grounds of Australia's fortress.

Inside the Indian dressing room, the atmosphere was thick with purpose. Every sound felt amplified — the velcro of gloves being fastened, the creak of leather boots tightening, the soft murmur of focused prayers. A few nervous smiles broke through the tension, but the determination was palpable. Rohit Sharma, calmly, adjusted his helmet. Beside him, the young and fearless Shubman Gill nodded, ready for battle.

With hearts pounding and dreams burning bright, the two openers emerged onto the Gabba outfield, greeted by a mixed chorus of cheers and tension from the crowd. Mitchell Starc stood at the top of his run-up, ball in hand, eyes locked in.

The first few overs were a test of patience. The Australian quicks probed with precision. Then, disaster struck.

8.2 – "Edged, gone! It's Cummins, as it is so often!" cried Harsha Bhogle.

A sharp delivery outside off, teasing Rohit into a stroke — the edge flew and Tim Paine pouched it safely. Rohit Sharma had to walk.

"That channel outside off has Rohit's name on it," said Allan Border. "Perfect line, hint of movement, and a sharp diving catch from Paine."

India: 18/1.

The silence from the Indian fans was quickly filled with renewed hope. A wave of chants erupted as Aarav Pathak stepped onto the field. His name rang through the Gabba like a rallying cry. Banners waved, and even some Aussie fans tipped their hats. The 'Prince of Indian Cricket' was in.

Sunil Gavaskar chuckled from the commentary box. "And here comes the Prince. You just feel something's going to happen when he bats."

Taking guard with calm assurance, Aarav exchanged a nod with Gill. Together, they began to shape India's innings.

The beginning was cautious — textbook defense, smart leaves, and watchful eyes. Starc and Cummins continued to probe. But slowly, rhythm found its way into their bats.

Aarav flicked Starc elegantly through midwicket — the first boundary of intent. Gill followed with a glorious straight drive that kissed the turf all the way to the fence. By the 20th over, India had steadied the ship: 55/1.

As the drinks break approached, both batsmen looked settled. Their understanding was flawless — sharp singles, quick calls, and encouraging nods.

27th over: Cummins to Gill — short and wide. Gill carved it behind point.

"Fifty for Gill!" cried Manjrekar. "That's a classy half-century! Timing, composure, elegance — everything you want in a top-order batsman."

The crowd rose. Applause thundered across the stadium.

The Indian dugout stood, clapping.

Gill raised his bat with a modest smile. At the other end, Aarav walked over, tapped gloves, and said, "Well played, partner. Let's keep pushing."

Soon, Aarav unleashed a flurry of elegant strokes. A lofted drive against Lyon sailed over mid-off. The next over, he punched Starc through the covers with a grace reminiscent of Laxman.

Then came that moment —

35th over: Aarav on 44, Starc steaming in. A pitched-up delivery. Aarav met it with a divine straight drive — one that bisected mid-on and mid-off with surgical precision.

"That's poetry!" exclaimed Ricky Ponting. "That's Sachin-esque!"

The camera panned to the Indian fans, who were on their feet.

In the 38th over, a flick to square leg gave him the two runs he needed.

Fifty for Aarav!

He raised his bat, a gentle smile lighting his face as the crowd roared. From the dugout, players clapped furiously. Ravi Shastri pumped his fist. Even Glenn McGrath, in commentary, nodded appreciatively.

"This young man," he said, "is playing Aussies bowler in this series like he had played them from his childhood."

By the 41st over, India reached the 135-run mark. The partnership between Gill and Aarav had crossed 90 — calm, calculated, and courageous.

Lunch was called. The players walked off to a standing ovation.

India: 135/1. Gill unbeaten on 65. Aarav on 55.

Lunch – Inside the Indian Dressing Room

Laughter mixed with intensity as players regrouped around the whiteboard.

Ravi Shastri stood in the center, marker in hand. "We're at 135. We've batted 41 overs. We need 165 more in 40-50 overs. That's just over three an over. Boys, we can do this."

Rahane leaned in, eyes sharp. "We push now. We keep wickets in hand, but we don't go into a shell. Let's aim for 170 by tea. Then finish strong."

Shardul nodded, munching on a banana. "We just need to keep the scoreboard moving."

Aarav sipped his drink, expression focused. "They're getting tired. You can see it in their field placements. Let's squeeze them."

Gill added, "Let's not let Lyon settle. Rotate. Sweep. Use our feet."

Rohit chuckled. "This is your game now, boys. Light that fire."

Shastri concluded, voice booming, "Let's bring the Gabba down. Let's write history."

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The roar of the Gabba crowd echoed like distant thunder as we walked back to the crease after lunch. The Brisbane sun, now mercilessly overhead, cast no shadows — just an unforgiving heat that blanketed everything in a golden haze. The pitch had aged since morning, drier now, the cracks stretching like the nerves of the nation.

The scoreboard read 135 for 1. But those numbers didn't capture the weight we carried. Not just the pressure of a run chase.

I took a breath, adjusting my gloves as I reached my mark. Opposite me, Shubman Gill tapped his bat, then met my eyes with a small, knowing nod.

Green and Lyon resumed hostilities. Their plans had shifted — no longer hunting for the edge or teasing with flight. Now it was about bruising us, about breaking us. Green, with his towering frame, peppered us with rising deliveries, his short balls skidding awkwardly off the surface. Lyon, usually a master of drift and dip, turned sinister — landing the ball in the rough and letting the bounce take care of the rest.

They were trying to rattle us. But we held firm.

Then came a brutal stretch.

Hazlewood replaced Green. And with him, intent sharpened into assault.

Over 47 — the bodyline siege began.

Gill stood tall, but he was under siege. One delivery thudded into his elbow. The sound — a sickening, hollow crack — brought silence to the Gabba. The physio rushed in. Gill waved him away.

"No," he muttered. "I'm fine."

He flexed his arm once. Twice. Pain etched on his face — but not weakness. He got back into position, jaw clenched, eyes burning. Next ball — a bouncer. It cannoned off his helmet. The crowd gasped. He adjusted the grille and looked straight at Hazlewood. Not a word spoken. But a message sent.

Harsha Bhogle on commentary: "My goodness, what courage. That's not just resolve, that's defiance. Shubman Gill "

Sunil Gavaskar: "This is what Test cricket is about. It's not just a test of technique — it's a test of will. And this young man... he's passing it with distinction."

Score: 150/1

Then it was my turn.

Cummins came on from the Vulture Street End. The crowd lifted again. There was something menacing in his run-up now. Like a hunter closing in on his prey.

First ball — short. I read it early. Swiveled. The ball came at chest height. CRACK! I pulled it ferociously behind square. The ball disappeared into the stands.

SIX.

The Gabba erupted. But not like before. This was different. There was awe in the noise. A recognition of intent.

I locked eyes with Cummins. I wanted him to see that shot wasn't instinct.

It was statement.

Second ball — a better one. Back of a length. Rising on me quickly. I stepped forward to defend. The ball dropped near Cummins. In a flash, he picked it up and hurled it — not at the stumps.

At me.

The ball rocketed toward my chest. I ducked, reflexes kicking in. My bat came up instinctively, and the ball ricocheted off the edge, spinning away toward cover.



For a moment, everything stilled.

My breath caught. My fingers buzzed from the jarring contact.

Then the blood boiled.

I stood up slowly, body tense. The heat of the sun now matched by the fire in my chest. I started walking — directly toward Cummins.

Deliberate. Controlled. Furious.

Warner sprinted in.

"Leave it, mate! Don't act big now!"

Tim Paine followed. "Hey! don't run here and there"

I kept walking.

"This isn't club cricket," I said, locking eyes with Cummins. "You know that wasn't right."

There was even more heat, some words shared which should not be shared here.

Smith was in too now, arms out. "Let's keep it clean, boys. Let's play."

The umpires finally stepped in. A heated exchange. Tension radiating off all of us like steam from the pitch.

But I didn't back down. I walked back to the crease, slowly. The crowd wasn't cheering anymore. They were watching.

The next four balls?

Harsha Bhogle: "Well... if you're watching this, don't blink. This is Test cricket's fire and poetry in motion."

Ball 3: Full and wide. I leaned into it, elegant, effortless — cover drive. FOUR.

Ball 4: Straight, pitched up. The full face of the bat met it — like slicing sunlight. Straight drive. FOUR.

Ball 5:Short. I backed away and uppercut it — the ball flew over the slips. FOUR.

Ball 6:Outside off. I stepped into it. Another masterpiece of a cover drive — even sweeter than the last. FOUR.

Allan Border (voice almost disbelieving):"What a reply. You don't see that every day — not even at the Gabba. This... this is a moment."

170/1.

Cummins turned away, shaking his head. No send-offs. No chatter now.

I was on 82. Gill on 70.

At the end of the over, Gill jogged over. we had a small chat there.

"That's the fire I was waiting to see, bhai," he said, his voice rough with adrenaline.

I nodded. "We don't back down. Not now. Not ever."

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The sun over the Gabba blazed down with the fury of an Australian summer, the stands echoing with the roars of fans who sensed the pulse of history about to be rewritten. On the field, tension was as thick as the Brisbane humidity. India was in pursuit of 295 — a chase that would not just define a match, but shape the identity of a generation.

We resumed at 170/1 after that fiery exchange with Cummins, Gill and I riding the momentum of a charged-up partnership. Every heartbeat felt like a ticking clock, every run an assertion of belief. But as cricket often writes its own unpredictable script, the 53rd over changed the mood entirely.

Nathan Lyon, the master of the dusty turner, floated one outside off. Gill, who had batted with elegance and steel, stretched forward and nicked it — a sharp edge flying low to Steven Smith at slip. He didn't miss. The Australians erupted. They knew the breakthrough they desperately needed had come.

Gill looked devastated, like a man torn from a dream just short of its completion. I walked up, patted his back firmly. "You've done more than enough," I whispered. I 'will take it from here.

As he left, Rahane came in. Our captain. The man of calm in storms. But cricket is cruel sometimes. Lyon's very first ball to him rapped him on the pads. Loud LBW appeal. Umpire said not out. Tim Paine wasn't convinced. He gestured for the DRS. Replay. Ultra-edge. Ball-tracker. Three reds. Decision overturned. Silence among our camp. Just like that, Rahane was gone for a golden duck.

India — from 178/1 to 178/3 in the blink of an eye.

The Australians were bouncing, roaring, slapping backs. They could smell blood. The momentum was shifting. We could all feel it.

Then walked in Rishabh Pant — flamboyant, fearless, unpredictable. He looked at me and smirked, "Looks like we gotta do it, bhai. Let's write the ending of this film."

And so, we began.

Every ball we faced had weight, had history. Lyon looped in deliveries that bit and turned like vipers. Cummins hurled missiles of intimidation, eyes burning with vengeance. But Pant was dancing down the track, lofting Lyon over midwicket like it was a net session. I was threading gaps, guiding edges, driving on the up with purpose.

Then came the 59th over. Cummins steaming in. A length ball outside off. I leaned in, caressed it through the covers with a blend of timing and defiance. The ball sprinted to the boundary like it had a date with destiny.

My heart thundered.

The bat in my hand felt light, like it carried the dreams of millions.

I stepped out of the crease, raised my bat like a sword and drove it into the turf.

My ground.

My war.

Then slowly pulled it back, raised it to the skies, and stretched my arms. A silent roar in my soul echoed louder than the stands. The Gabba, once a fortress, now felt like my palace. The ghosts of battles past, of generations of visiting teams who faltered, seemed to bow their heads.

Allan Border's voice crackled through commentary: "This is Aarav's empire now."

Pant roared across the pitch and clapped his gloves together, "King move, bhai! Let's finish this."

The Aussies were drained. We saw it. We felt it. Every ball they bowled now came with less sting, every misfield signaled crumbling resolve.

Pant started counter-attacking in true Pant fashion — cheeky ramps that made you gasp, savage sweeps that sizzled to the fence, calculated charges that threw the bowlers off their rhythm. I played anchor when needed, aggressor when the moment demanded. We kept the scoreboard ticking, the pressure rising.

230/3.

Then 260/3.

Each run felt like a declaration.

Our dressing room roared with each boundary. Rohit was pacing like a lion in a cage. Rahane clapping rhythmically, nodding with each stroke. Ravi Shastri had his arms crossed, and laughing like a maniac.

The final 8 over left and we only need four runs.

Lyon took the ball again. His eyes betrayed desperation.

I took guard. Silence in the crowd. My heartbeat the only sound in my ears.

First ball. Lyon pitched it at good length, middle stump line. I stepped forward, eyes locked.

Flicked.

Time slowed.

The ball sailed. High, wide, and handsome. Past midwicket. Past the rope.

Boundary.

Game. Set. Match.

The crowd erupted. But louder than all was the noise from our dugout. Our dressing room emptied like a dam bursting. Pant sprinted to me, arms wide, his laughter booming with pure joy. We collided mid-pitch — a hug, a yell, fists punching the sky.

The team swarmed us. Gill, Siraj, Sundar, Saini — every man in blue(white but it just looked good to write white) was around us. Shardul jumped on my back. Rohit lifted Pant.

Commentators:

Harsha Bhogle: "India has breached the Gabba! They've done what no team has done in over 32 years! This is not just a win, this is a statement."

Sunil Gavaskar:

"Gabba's fortress has fallen." "Gabba's arrogance lies in ruins." "The Gabba's invincibility has been broken."



"The pride of the Gabba has been shattered — and by the hand of one man, Aarav Pathak, who breached this fortress like a king on his debut."

Ricky Ponting: "Unbelievable. Absolutely unbelievable. I've played here, captained here, but this... this is something else."

Matthew Hayden: "This Indian team... they've rewritten every script."

We didn't just win a match.

We conquered a myth.

I stood there, surrounded by my brothers, on the soil of their fortress, now painted with our glory. Each blade of grass seemed to echo our chants, each beam of sunlight blessed our moment.

The Gabba was no longer invincible.

India — 3-0 in Australia.

A whitewash.

A legacy.

And as I looked up at the sky, bat still in hand, heart still thundering, I knew...

This wasn't just a win.

This was history.

This was the rise of a new India.

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The sun had barely begun to set over Brisbane when the Gabba, still buzzing from India's historic chase, became a cauldron of celebration. After breaching the 32-year-old fortress, Team India erupted into joyful chaos. The players broke into an impromptu dance, forming a giant circle on the lush green outfield. There was no choreography, just pure emotion. Arms flailed, bats were waved, and laughter rang across the stadium as the entire squad, support staff included, celebrated like schoolboys who had just won their first match.

Drums from the stands, chants from the Indian fans, and even a few claps from the Australian crowd added to the moment. Flags waved, songs echoed, and phones captured memories that would soon flood social media under the hashtags #GabbaConquered and #NewIndiaRises, #PrinceAarav. The

players didn't care about the cameras, the microphones, or the formalities—this was their time, a release of every ounce of emotion from a month of grinding battle.

Soon, the post-match presentation ceremony commenced. A small podium was set up on the edge of the boundary ropes. The great Allan Border, flanked by Australian and Indian cricket board officials, stepped up to the mic.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Allan began, his voice echoing across the Gabba. "What we witnessed today wasn't just a victory. It was a statement. On behalf of Cricket Australia, I want to first congratulate Team India for a dominating series win. You have shown resilience, character, and flair."

A roar followed from the Indian fans, many still standing with emotion in their throats and tears in their eyes.

"Now, for the Player of the Match... For his majestic hundred in the final innings and wickets in his bag, and for carrying India over the line with nerves of steel, the award goes to... Aarav Pathak!"

The crowd erupted as Aarav stepped up, beaming. He shook hands with Border and received the medal and a check. The applause was thunderous, echoing with chants of "Aarav! Aarav!" that filled the Brisbane air like a second anthem.

But the ceremony wasn't over yet.

"And now," Allan continued, "the Player of the Series... With a total of 829 runs with an average of out of the world 135 and 26 wickets in just four Tests, making an unforgettable debut tour... Aarav Pathak again!"

(Thank You Nine11P2 for counting the Number of runs and wicket)

(Hey if Please can anyone calculate this and tell me the real numbers, these numbers are just imaginary numbers, and if anyone can please tell me his total stats like how many runs he scored, how many 50's, 100's wickets, fifties. plz if any one could!)

More cheers. Pant whooped from the sidelines. Siraj punched the air. Aarav took the second medal and trophy and stood beside Border for the customary post-award interview.

Allan chuckled, holding the mic. "Aarav, first of all, congratulations. What a debut tour! Let me just confirm — 829 runs, including 4 centuries and 4 fifties, and 26 wickets with some absolute fire. Broke all the debut series record of my buddy Gavaskar. Also tell us, where were you hiding all these years?"

Aarav laughed. "Well, I was here only, got the chance to play my favorite format and I think I loved it.

"You faced some of the best bowlers in the world and bowled to world-class batsmen... yet, you looked like you've been doing this for years. Nervous at all?"

"Honestly," Aarav replied with a grin, "only nervous about my dance moves after the win. Cricket? That's the easy part. The hard part was trying not to trip while doing that team circle celebration."

Laughter again.

"So, Aarav," Allan smirked, "any advice for other young players watching a youngster destroying Aussies?"

"Yeah," Aarav quipped. "If Cummins stares at you, just stare back and hit four boundaries in a row. Works every time. Also, carry an extra helmet — just in case the sledging gets personal."

The crowd erupted in laughter again, loving the mix of charm and wit.

With that, Border smiled and turned back to the podium.

"Now, the moment we've all been waiting for. I would like to invite India's captain, Ajinkya Rahane, to come forward and lift the Border-Gavaskar Trophy."

Rahane walked up to thunderous applause. He accepted the gleaming silver and golden trophy and posed for the photos with a reserved, proud smile. The cameras clicked in a frenzy, capturing a captain who had led with silence, strength, and sharpness.

But as soon as the official photos were done, he turned back to the team.

With a grin, Rahane walked to Aarav and handed him the trophy.

"You earned this, champ," he said.

Aarav smiled. He looked around, saw the team nodding, cheering, pushing him forward.

He raised the trophy high above his head. "CHAMPIONS!" he roared.

The squad erupted around him. Pant leapt on his back. Gill ruffled his hair. Shardul and Sundar hoisted him briefly in the air. The tricolor waved in the stands. The music blared.

It was more than a series win. It was history.

India had swept Australia 3-0 in their own backyard. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy returned home, not just as silverware, but as a symbol of grit, unity, and a star reborn under pressure.

And amid it all, Aarav Pathak stood at the center. Not just a debutant anymore.

A legacy in the making.

A torchbearer of the new India.

And on that evening under the Brisbane sky, as the last echoes of victory chants faded into the wind, the story of the 2020-21 Border-Gavaskar Trophy found its hero — bold, fierce, and unforgettable.