

1st Test, Day 3: Jason Holder double century has England facing defeat vs West Indies

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Jason Holder celebrates after scoring a double century against England during day four.

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados: An outstanding double hundred from West Indies captain Jason Holder and a supporting century by Shane Dowrich left England humbled for the second day in a row and battling to avoid a huge defeat in the first test on Friday.

Just 24 hours after England was skittled for 77, Holder scored 202 not out as his side amassed 415-6 declared in its second innings on day three to set England a notional winning target of 628.

Keaton Jennings and Rory Burns safely made their way to the close of play on 56-0.

Holder hit 23 fours and eight sixes as he relentlessly punished a listless attack and proved himself an impostor in the lowly position of number eight.

Only two players in the history of test cricket have scored more from that position in the batting order, Wasim Akram and Imtiaz Ahmed, while his 295-run stand with Dowrich (116 not out) was the third largest the game has ever seen for the seventh wicket.

"To score a double hundred in front of your home crowd is a very pleasing feeling," Holder said. "I was ecstatic. It was a dream come true.

"We are very confident. England are still a long way off. With a bit of variable bounce, there are still a lot of things in our favor. Maybe we can wrap it up by tea."

Holder produced a vibrant, beaming celebration when he reached 200 by thumping part-time seamer Jennings into the leg-side and his prompt declaration left England 20 overs to bat before stumps.

In the short term all focus will be trained on batting for six full sessions to claim a draw, but beyond that there are questions over the make-up of the England team and the condition of James Anderson and Ben Stokes.

The pair have sent down almost 100 overs between them in Bridgetown and looked weary as they trudged off in Holder and Dowrich's slipstream.

Holder raced to his third test hundred in 99 balls, accelerating with a pair of sixes off the struggling Adil Rashid. England captain Joe Root resorted to bowling at leg stump from round the wicket as England's enthusiasm waned.

Root's disposition was not helped when Holder survived two half-chances on 127 and 151, Burns and Ben Foakes making game attempts at two very tough chances but coming up short.

Anderson took the second new ball and England fared little better than with the old one. Dowrich slowed as he approached his hundred but brought up the 200 partnership in style as he drove the veteran paceman down the ground.

- AP