

Emotional Ngidi leads SA charge



GOTCHA: South African bowler Lungi Ngidi, centre, celebrates yet another wicket during the second Test against India at SuperSport ground in Centurion yesterday. Ngidi finished with match figures of 7/90, including 6/39 in the second innings – his best ever haul in first-class cricket. South Africa clinched the three-Test series

Picture: AFP

Debutant grateful to mentor after second Test heroics

CRICKET

By MAHLATSE MPHAHLELE

PROTEAS fast bowler and man of the moment Lungi Ngidi says he is humbled by the massive support he has received on the event of his Test debut against India where he returned highly impressive figures of 6/39 in the second innings and 7/90 in the match.

His six wickets in India's second innings were the seventh-best by a South African on debut and the 27th-best all-time to follow in the footsteps of Lance Klusener (1996), Kyle Abbott (2013), Alf Hall (1923), Marchant de Lange (2011), William Ashley (1889)

and Peter Pollock (1961).

He helped South Africa to convincingly beat the number one-ranked India by 135 runs at SuperSport Park, where the Proteas wrapped up the series with a match to spare.

"To be honest, it is difficult to describe the feeling. It is something that I am not used to have people cheering in my ear. Every time it hit me, it gave me goose bumps. But it is an honour and privilege to see people appreciate the work that you do out there," he said.

Ngidi also paid glowing tribute to Pierre de Bruyn, the man who recruited him from Hilton College, Kwa-Zulu-Natal to the University of Pretoria almost five years ago.

Asked to say something to De Bruyn, who used all the tricks in the book to get him to further his education and cricket career at Tuks, Ngidi said he cannot thank him enough for the trouble that he took to convince him to relocate.

"I don't think words will ever be enough to thank him. I would not even know where to start. He moved me from where my cricket had kind of

taken a dip and took me to a place where I am now able to flourish as a bowler. Words simply would not be enough to thank him," he said.

"It took him three years to convince me. But he would consistently arrive asking just for me specifically. I wanted to see if he really meant it by playing hard to get, but eventually in my matric year I decided I wanted to further my studies and he offered me that opportunity and play cricket at the same time. I honestly do not know where it was going to go. I started from scratch at Tuks and here I am," he said.

Before the Test, De Bruyn said if Ngidi was picked as a replacement for Dale Steyn he would be happier than the Titans player.

"If he plays in his first Test match, I will definitely be the happiest man inside the stadium and probably a little bit emotional," he said last week.

"He has come a long way since he was a little kid. I am abundantly happy for what he has achieved in a short period of time, and I believe that he has a lot to offer because he is a special talent and a humble human being."

