



## Proteas Women target series sweep to signal new era of consistency.

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By Kevin Rademeyer, Sports Journalist.

Photo: Suresh Rajcoomar.

South Africa's women's cricket team are intent on turning promise into sustained dominance as they prepare for the third and final T20 International against Pakistan at Willowmoore Park in Benoni on Monday evening.

Having already secured an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series, the Proteas are not content with merely winning. They want a clean sweep.

For all their recent success on the global stage, including successive ICC Women's T20 World Cup final appearances in 2023 and 2024, consistency in bilateral cricket has at times eluded them. Now, with the 2026 edition on the horizon, the focus has shifted firmly to building momentum well before tournament play begins.

All rounder Nadine de Klerk made that ambition clear ahead of the series decider. "We did not have the best bilateral series before reaching up at World Cups and we shocked the whole world," she reflected. "But we knew we were better than that and now, having won the series, we still want to start clean sweeping teams and really dominate world cricket."

That mindset has been evident throughout the contest against Pakistan. South Africa opened the series with a convincing 2-0 lead, sealing victory in Benoni on Friday in a rain shortened encounter that showcased both depth and discipline.

After a delay of nearly two hours, Pakistan were restricted to 100 for nine in 14 overs. Ayabonga Khaka delivered a decisive spell, claiming three wickets for just 10 runs in two overs. She was well supported by Marizanne Kapp and Masabata Klaas, who dismantled the top order, while youngster Kayla Reyneke continued her encouraging start to international cricket.

Chasing 101, the Proteas were composed. Captain Laura Wolvaardt anchored the innings with an unbeaten 40 from 29 balls, guiding the side home with four balls to spare in a six wicket victory. Contributions from Tazmin Brits and Kapp ensured there was no late stumble as South Africa underlined their authority.

For De Klerk, who missed the opening fixture after returning from India where she celebrated a Women's Premier League triumph with Royal Challengers Bangalore, the series has also marked a smooth personal transition back into national colours. She delivered tidy figures in the second match and calmly supported Wolvaardt at the close.

"It is lovely to get the win, but you have to put that behind you and focus on the next challenge," she said. "Winning the Ireland series at home and coming here and dominating as well shows the depth in the squad is growing. We are finding ways to win."

That depth has become a defining feature of this side. In the opening match of the series, debutant Kayla Reyneke held her nerve under pressure to steer the team home, reinforcing the sense that competition for places is sharpening standards across the squad.

Crowd support has also provided encouragement. Although the third fixture was moved from Kimberley to Benoni due to venue readiness requirements, supporters in both Potchefstroom and Benoni have turned out in strong numbers, even braving inclement weather.

"There was so much rain around but people were sitting waiting for us to get onto the park," De Klerk noted. "It is great to play in front of home fans. Benoni is one of my favourite places to play. The crowd never disappoints and the conditions are good."

The Proteas understand that their recent World Cup exploits, while commendable, will count for little without sustained excellence between global events. Having twice reached the final only to fall short against Australia in 2023 and New Zealand in 2024, the ambition now is to arrive at major tournaments not as dark horses, but as a consistently dominant outfit.

A 3-0 sweep over Pakistan would represent another step in that direction. Beyond Monday's encounter, South Africa will host Pakistan in a three match one day international series beginning in Bloemfontein on Sunday, offering a further opportunity to consolidate gains.

For a side that has proven its mettle under the brightest lights, the challenge now is to make winning routine. Monday evening in Benoni presents the next examination of that resolve.

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