

over New Zealand.

Pakistan, who surprisingly turned down an extra eight overs on offer on Monday to win the match, wrapped it and the series up on Tuesday when Inzamamul Haq and Yousuf Youhana scored the 28 runs needed for victory in just four overs.

Inzamam finished on 72, while Youhana was not out 88 for the visitors who made 277 for three after chasing 274 for the win. But Miandad said he had made a mistake on Monday when they decided not to continue on and he had been concerned with the heavy overnight rain in Wellington that cleared on Tuesday morning but caused a delay to the start of play.



Javed Miandad gives thumbs up after victory. —AFP

As the players walked on to the field at 1130 (2230 GMT), the rain started again and they returned to the pavilion. "Yes, we were a bit confused with the extra time ruling," Miandad said. "I agree we

able to finish.

Stephen Fleming, the New Zealand captain, said he thought it was strange that Pakistan had not taken the extra time. "It could have been a terrible mistake and the rain last night and this morning put into context how crazy it was," he said. "I asked Dave Orchard (one of the umpires) before the last over last night whether they (Pakistan) had claimed the extra time and he said they hadn't. "I suggested they keep quiet about it and got Buts (Ian Butler) to bowl the final over quickly. "In the end it didn't matter, but I can imagine what things would have been like in Pakistan if it rained all day today." —Reuters

He unwittingly caused a stir in Pakistan last month when Indian media reports said he had been enlisted to help India's bowlers on their tour of Australia. That came to nothing but Akram didn't rule out helping bowlers from other countries. Fleming said it was a vexing issue, with only Bond and perhaps Ian Butler providing New Zealand's batsmen with reverse swing work-outs. "We don't get exposed to 150kmh inswingers that often. It's very hard to get facilities to practice that. "I don't think it was application or commitment that was missing, it came down to skill issue." —AFP

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Six best bowling performances

By Oliver Brett

SHOAIB Akhtar and Muttiah Muralitharan both feature in the six best bowling performances of 2003. Makhaya Ntini and Stuart MacGill, both with four five-wicket hauls and the only two bowlers to get more than 50 Test wickets, were consistently excellent rather than spectacular and do not quite get onto the list. Instead, two West Indians, plus Andy Caddick and Andy Bichel take their places in the top six. On a slightly different vein, who do you think was the best bowler of the year?

Andy Caddick — final Ashes Test, January

He has hardly bowled a ball since because of injury, but Caddick took 7-94 in Australia's second innings to bring about one of those cricketing oddities, a home Test defeat for the Aussies. The final-day SCG wicket, retaining plenty of pace but prone to some alarmingly high bounce, suited the veteran Somerset seamer to a tee.

Justin Langer and Ricky Ponting both fell lbw, while first-innings centurion Steve Waugh played on for just six and Adam Gilchrist was caught behind. But will Caddick bounce back from injury to represent his country again? Only time will tell.

Andy Bichel — World Cup, Australia v England, March

The Port Elizabeth pitches took some stick for being too bowler-friendly during the World Cup but Australia won all three of their matches there. By far their narrowest escape of the entire campaign, however, came against England in a group



Caddick



Bichel



Lawson

match their rivals had to win to claim a Super Six berth. England were 66-0 when a ball that had lost its shine was handed to Andy Bichel. In next to no time, he reduced them to 87-5, eventually finishing with 7-20 in a total score of 204-8. Australia also found the slow wicket tough to bat on and at 135-8 looked to be sliding to defeat. But Bichel's 34 not out off 36 balls - and some brilliant stuff from Michael Bevan - gave them a stunning win.

Jermaine Lawson — WI v Australia, fourth Test, May

In his first six Tests, the young Jamaican speed merchant Jermaine Lawson had taken 22 wickets including a hat-trick in Barbados against the Aussies. The final Test in Antigua was both the making of Lawson and the first serious crisis he would face as an international cricketer. Bowling consistently above 90mph, he took 7-78 to set up

a win for the home side. But his action also attracted interest for the wrong reasons. Reported by the ICC, he had to undergo remedial work after recovering from a back strain sustained in the same match. Worryingly, he was not included in a recent 16-man squad announced by Jamaica.

Corey Collymore — WI v Sri Lanka, second Test, June

A month on from Lawson's heroics, Corey Collymore returned the best figures by a West Indies bowler for eight years as his team clinched the home series against Sri Lanka. The tourists gained a nine-run lead on first innings at Sabina Park before Collymore, the Barbadian right-arter who even now has played only six Tests for his country, let rip. The dangerous left-handers Sanath Jayasuriya were both removed by Collymore just before they got into their stride. Captain Hashan

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Shoaib Akhtar awarded the Man of the Match celebrates with Moin Khan after beating New Zealand in the second Test in Wellington on Tuesday. —Reuters

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Tillakaratne was bowled for just seven and the last four Sri Lankans all fell to Collymore, giving him figures of 7-57.

Muttiah Muralitharan — Sri Lanka v Eng, first Test, Dec

England had won their two previous Test series against Sri Lanka, effectively countering Muralitharan both at home and away. On this occasion, much was made of Murali's new delivery, effectively a leg-break bowled with a virtually identical action to his viciously-spun off-breaks. On the third day of the first Test of the series at Galle, Murali effectively showed that this particular series would be beyond England because the mystery ball was simply too good. He took 7-46 in England's first innings, and though they clung on for draws both there and Kandy, the tourists were thumped in Colombo. Murali fin-

ished with 26 wickets in the series, and cost barely one run per over.

Shoaib Akhtar — Pakistan v NZ, second Test, December

The Boxing Day Test in Wellington would decide the destiny of the series and the home side dominated for the first three days. At 95-3 in their second innings early on day four, already leading by 265, the Black Caps looked uncatchable. But ignore the threat of Shoaib Akhtar at your peril. The Rawalpindi Express removed the limpet-like opener Mark Richardson and the rest of the batsmen were clueless to defy him. Grabbing figures of 6-30, and 11 wickets in the match, Shoaib masterminded a staggering collapse to 103 all out. Remarkably, it was also his first match on tour - he had missed the drawn Test in Hamilton with injury. —BBC