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Darwin T20: Tim David Powers Australia Win

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Australia opened their T20I series against South Africa with a 17-run win in Darwin on Sunday night, marking the return of international cricket to the city after 17 years.

Sent in to bat after losing the toss at Marrara Stadium, the home side found themselves in early trouble at 6 for 75. South Africa's pace attack made quick inroads, removing several top-order batsmen cheaply. But middle-order hitter Tim David turned the innings around with a spectacular display of power hitting.

David smashed 83 runs from 52 deliveries, clearing the rope eight times in an innings that swung momentum firmly back to Australia. His partnerships in the lower order pushed the

team's total to 178 all out, a score that had looked unlikely in the early overs.

In reply, South Africa began cautiously before opener Ryan Rickelton launched a spirited fightback. Rickelton top-scored with 71, combining with Tristan Stubbs in a 72-run partnership that threatened to tilt the match in the visitors' favour. However, Australia's bowlers struck at key moments to break partnerships and slow the run chase.

Josh Hazlewood led the attack with figures of 3 for 27, removing set batsmen and applying pressure during the middle overs. Leg-spinner Adam Zampa chipped in with important wickets, tightening the screws as South Africa's required run rate climbed.

One of the match's defining moments came in the final overs when Glenn Maxwell produced a remarkable boundary-line catch to dismiss Rickelton. Timing his leap perfectly, Maxwell took the ball cleanly before flicking it back into play and completing the catch, drawing loud applause from the crowd and effectively sealing the win.

Off the field, a moment of light-hearted brilliance captured social media attention. A fan in the stands made a clean one-handed catch from a Tim David six, all while holding two beers in the other hand. The clip quickly went viral, adding to the match's entertainment value.

South Africa eventually finished on 161 for 9, falling short despite their mid-innings resurgence. The victory was Australia's ninth consecutive win in T20 internationals, underlining their current form in the shortest format.

The series continues at the same venue on Tuesday night, with both sides expected to make tactical adjustments. Australia will aim to maintain their momentum and seal the series, while South Africa will look to level the contest and take it to a deciding match.

With a large Darwin crowd turning out for the occasion, the match highlighted both the growing appetite for top-level cricket in northern Australia and the value of experienced campaigners like David, Hazlewood, and Maxwell in pressure situations.