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Crawley and Duckett Lead England Charge Before India Responds

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England's top order laid a strong foundation on Day 2 of the fourth Test match at Old Trafford, with openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett dismantling India's bowling attack. However, a late resurgence by the Indian side kept the game finely balanced, with the hosts trailing by 133 runs at stumps.

After dismissing India for 358 in their first innings, England responded with flair. Zak Crawley scored an elegant 84, while Ben Duckett added a brisk 94, forming a 166-run opening stand, their fifth century partnership in 53 Test innings together. A Test match, the longest

format in international cricket, spans up to five days and tests both physical endurance and technical skill.

England captain Ben Stokes played a pivotal role earlier in the day, claiming five wickets for 72 runs in 24 overs, his first five-wicket haul in a Test since 2017. India's innings was notable for the resilience of wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, who returned to the crease after a foot injury forced him to retire hurt on Day 1. Despite obvious discomfort and the absence of a runner, Pant scored a defiant 54 before being bowled by fast bowler Jofra Archer.

Newcomer Anshul Kamboj, playing in his debut Test match after replacing injured pacer Nitish Kumar Reddy, claimed his first wicket by dismissing Duckett. Although the English pair fell short of personal milestones, their aggressive batting ensured a strong start in England's pursuit of India's total.

Despite England's dominant start, India's bowlers found momentum late in the day. Spinner Ravindra Jadeja dismissed Crawley, while Kamboj and Jasprit Bumrah maintained pressure. England's position remains strong, but the Test is far from over. If India wants to level the five-match series, they must overcome a poor track record at Old Trafford, where they have never secured a Test victory.

With the series standing at 2-1 in England's favor, a win here would seal the series for the home side before the final match at The Oval. As it stands, both teams remain in contention, and cricket fans can expect another gripping day ahead.