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Tim David, Hazlewood Lead Australia Past South Africa

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Australia began their T20I series against South Africa with a commanding 17-run victory in Darwin on Sunday night, marking the first international cricket match in the city in 17 years. The win extended Australia's unbeaten run in the format to nine matches.

South Africa won the toss and chose to bowl at Marrara Stadium. The decision appeared to pay off early as Australia collapsed to 6 for 75. Tim David arrived at the crease amid the pressure and completely turned the innings around with a power-packed display.

David struck 83 runs from 52 deliveries, launching eight towering sixes and scoring at a strike rate of nearly 160. His aggressive counterattack not only steadied the innings but also shifted momentum back to the hosts. Lower-order contributions helped Australia post 178 all out – a total that had looked improbable when David walked in.

Chasing 179, South Africa made a cautious start before Ryan Rickelton anchored their innings with an impressive 71. He combined with Tristan Stubbs for a 72-run partnership that revived the chase and threatened to put the visitors in control.

However, Josh Hazlewood's precise bowling turned the tide once more. Finishing with figures of 3 for 27, Hazlewood removed both Rickelton and other set batters at key moments. Adam Zampa provided crucial support through the middle overs, tightening the scoring rate and forcing errors.

The highlight of the fielding effort came late in the match when Glenn Maxwell produced a stunning boundary-line catch to dismiss Rickelton. Timing his leap to perfection, Maxwell caught the ball inches from the rope, tossed it infield while airborne, and completed the dismissal – a moment that effectively ended South Africa's hopes.

South Africa's innings closed at 161 for 9, falling short despite their mid-innings surge. The result reinforced Australia's dominance in T20 cricket and set the tone for the remainder of the three-match series.

Adding to the night's spectacle, a crowd member pulled off an extraordinary one-handed catch from a Tim David six, all while holding two beers in the other hand. The moment quickly went viral on social media, becoming an instant talking point beyond the cricket community.

The second T20I will be played on Tuesday at Marrara Stadium, where Australia will aim to seal the series and South Africa will look to bounce back. With the city hosting its first top-level international match since 2008, Darwin's return to the global cricket stage proved both competitive and memorable.