

Greg Chappell

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Sachin-awed

AFP, Johannesburg

Australian batting great Greg Chappell on Wednesday wondered if the legendary Don Bradman would have handled the modern game as well as India's Sachin Tendulkar does.

Chappell, a former Test captain and one of Australia's leading batsmen, called Tendulkar a "genius" after watching him score a record 571 runs in the World Cup so far.

"When I watch Sachin Tendulkar bat I find myself wondering how Don Bradman would have coped with the modern game," Chappell wrote in his syndicated column.

"The Indian genius has been at his imperious best. Would Bradman's insatiable appetite for scoring runs have been diminished by so much cricket, especially the endless stream of one-day matches? "How would he have handled the modern method of individual game plans and field placing?" Chappell asked.

"I suppose Bradman experienced some of that with bodyline bowling and field placing and it

curtailed his rampant run making.

"Would Bradman have automatically batted in a helmet and would he have graduated to heavier bats?"

"These are all imponderables, but it is natural to fantasise about such things when watching another blitzkrieg from the modern genius.

"Make no mistake, Tendulkar is a genius!"

Chappell said Tendulkar's combination of deft touches and raw power was virtually unmatched in the modern game.

"Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden and Brian Lara probably go closest to him. They can certainly match his power, though they don't quite match his exquisite skill and versatility," he wrote.

"The versatility is an innate, instinctive skill. It must have been learned somewhere because I doubt that it was taught.

"Something in Sachin's environment early in his cricket development allowed for the acquisition of this skill.

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RISING ABOVE THEMSELVES: Kenyan player Ravindu Shah (R) hugs teammate Collins Obuya (C) for dismissing Zimbabwe's Heath Streak in Bloemfontein yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Don't forget Bond

REUTERS, Port Elizabeth

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said Shane Bond's record-breaking six-wicket display against Australia on Tuesday should not be forgotten even in defeat.

"I feel delighted for him. On a losing day, you have got to keep it in perspective. It was a big spell and it shouldn't be pushed aside because we lost the game."

The strike bowler's figures of six for 23 from 10 overs were the best by a New Zealander in one-day history and equal fifth on the list of World Cup bowling performances. "I think we should celebrate it," Fleming told a news conference.

New Zealand looked set for

victory after reducing the world champions to 84 for seven but, with Bond bowled out, Michael Bevan and Andy Bichel then put 97 for the eighth wicket to get Australia to 208 for nine. New Zealand were then bowled out for 112.

Bond dismissed Australia captain Ricky Ponting for the sixth time in six games against the world champions.

Ponting fell to a meticulously planned trap yet again as he was caught in the slips driving at a ball pitched just short of a length and just outside the off stump. It was the fourth time Ponting had been dismissed in like fashion by Bond.



SHANE BOND

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Harper afraid of WI future

INTERNET, Barbados

West Indies will never regain their supremacy in international cricket until the various regional factions work for a common good, according to team coach Roger Harper.

The former spin-bowling all-rounder believes "insularity at all levels" is hampering attempts to revive Caribbean cricket.

Harper made his comments following the team's arrival in Barbados following their first round exit from the World Cup.

They won three of their five completed matches, but missed out on a place in the Super Sixes after the game with Bangladesh was ruined by rain and they had to share the points.

Harper's contract expires at the

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No more 12th man

REUTERS, Durban

After years as a fringe player, Australia's Andy Bichel is finally getting a regular chance on the big stage.

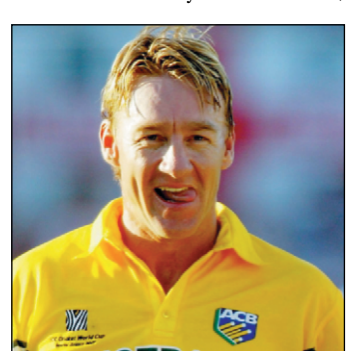
An injury to Jason Gillespie has catapulted the 32-year-old into the world champions' starting line-up and Bichel's presence has made Ricky Ponting's side into an even stronger unit.

With the ball, the seam and swing bowler has taken 13 wickets at an amazing average of just 6.23 including seven for 20 against England at Port Elizabeth, the second best figures in World Cup history.

On top of that there has been the bonus of his batting, with two match-winning contributions, an unbeaten 34 against England and 64 against New Zealand on

Tuesday.

Figures like that mark Bichel down as the outstanding player of the tournament, not bad for a fringe player who has been 12th man in 16 one-day internationals,



ANDY BICHEL

more than any other Australia player.

"There's no doubt that the more you play the more confident you get," Bichel said.

"As for the batting, I have managed to play a few major roles for Queensland and now it is coming through at international level.

"I'm feeling a lot more comfortable and relaxed now but then I have played a lot of cricket with all the players around me too, and that helps as well."

Australia's Test captain Steve Waugh once described Bichel as the perfect 12th man and, although that sounds unkind, it was meant as a compliment.

Far from suggesting he is an expert at making the drinks, Waugh's comment was designed to

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Kenya in final? Why not!

AFP, Bloemfontein

Kenya's Maurice Odumbe celebrated his team's magical passage to the semi-finals of the World Cup here on Wednesday and then set his sights on reaching the final.

"People said we shouldn't be in the Super Sixes and then they said we shouldn't be in the semi-final," said the former skipper who was unbeaten at the end on 38 as Kenya beat Zimbabwe by seven wickets.

"They will probably say that we shouldn't go to the final either, but who knows?"

"Now we play India in the semi-

final and anything can happen."

Kenya bowled out Zimbabwe for a paltry 133 and then knocked off the runs in 26 overs at Goodyear Park reaching 135-7 to canter to victory and set up a semi-final clash with Sourav Ganguly's India in Durban on March 20.

Thomas Odoyo was also unbeaten at the end with 43.

"It's a great feeling," said Odumbe.

"It isn't every day you reach the semi-finals of the World Cup especially when so many great teams have been knocked out."

"We have proved with our perfor-

mances that we can play tough, good cricket and we will stay positive."

Kenya captain Steve Tikolo was equally ecstatic.

"I am overjoyed that the boys have been playing good cricket and today was no exception," he said.

"We had spoken about our place in the Super Sixes and in the meetings reviewed our target for the semi-final and I am absolutely thrilled we have achieved that."

"I am happy for the team although I am not doing much with the bat but trying my best to chip in with the ball."

"It is a great reward for Kenyan

cricket and the guys are more happy to get into the semi-finals. We've left all the monetary calculations to the manager."

Kenya take on reigning champions Australia in their last Super Sixes match on Saturday before clashing with India in the semi-final at Durban on March 20.

"Australia is a top team and we will just go out and play with the same attitude that has got us this far," Tikolo said.

"We will have nothing to lose."

Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak hid his disappointment to compliment the Kenyans.

Sehwag craves for century

REUTERS, Centurion

India opening batsman Virender Sehwag is hoping for a first World Cup hundred to lead his team to victory over New Zealand on Friday.

"I am ready for New Zealand," he said. "I hope to get a hundred."

India, already in the semi-finals, return to the ground where they beat Pakistan by six wickets in the first round, having earlier suffered their one defeat at the venue, against defending champions Australia.

"This is India's favourite ground," Sehwag told a media conference. Asked about the side's one-day series defeat in New Zealand just before the World Cup, he added: "We will try hard to avenge those defeats."

The Delhi right-hander hit two centuries in that series while the rest of the top order repeatedly collapsed on seaming pitches.

The SuperSport Park pitch, however, has favoured batsmen. India chased down a target of 274 against Pakistan.

Sehwag said India would not be intimidated by strike bowler Shane Bond, who ripped through Australia's top-order on Tuesday to claim six for 23.

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Play on with pain

REUTERS, East London

Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya will have to put up with pain from his broken thumb for the rest of the World Cup, according to team physiotherapist Alex Kountouri.

"Sanath's forearm is not a problem but the left thumb is broken right at the tip and he will only fully recover after the World Cup," he said.

"He is taking mild pain killers but can manage the pain for the time being."

Jayasuriya, however, may have to hide himself in a backwater while fielding. Kountouri said: "The only problem for Sanath would be if he was struck hard on it while fielding."

Batsman Hashan Tillakaratne, meanwhile, is recovering from a hamstring strain after missing the Super Six defeat against India.

"It is not serious and he will be fit for Saturday's game (against Zimbabwe)," Kountouri said.

Sri Lanka are fifth in the Super Six table and must win their final game against Zimbabwe to have any chance of reaching the semi-finals.



Sanath Jayasuriya

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Nehra sings Srinath song Sarwan unready Odumbe looking beyond 42



Ashish Nehra

PHOTO: STAR FILE

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Ashish Nehra on Tuesday hailed Javagal Srinath for coming back from retirement to revitalise India's World Cup pace attack.

"Sri's return has really helped me and Zaheer (Khan)," the left-arm seamer said, a day after Srinath sealed a 183-run Super Six victory over Sri Lanka.

The 33-year-old Srinath captured four of the first five Sri Lankan wickets at The Wanderers.

Nehra finished with identical figures of four for 35 while fellow left-armers Zaheer Khan took two for 33 as the three quicks shared out the wickets in 23 overs.

"Sri is always giving us his experience. Especially here, he has stressed the importance of good line and length," the 23-year-old said.

"The wickets are bouncy in

AFP, Bridgetown

Ramnaresh Sarwan, one of the few success stories of the West Indies doomed World Cup campaign, said on Wednesday he's not ready to be captain of the national team.

"That is so far away, I haven't even captained Guyana and I think that the West Indies captaincy won't be for some time because I would have to get some sort of experience before I get into that," said Sarwan who finished the World Cup in South Africa with an average of 104.50.

With current skipper Carl Hooper, 36, nearing retirement and current vice-captain Ridley Jacobs aged 35, the 22-year-old Sarwan has been tipped as a future skipper.

"To captain the West Indies would be a dream come true," added the batsman.

"I just don't want to be thrown into the deep end and then I might drown, so I just have to wait."

Sarwan is used to swimming in the deep end - he was the youngest regional first-class player when he made his debut for Guyana in 1996 at 15 years and 245 days and has played 29 Tests and 34 one-day internationals since then.



RAMNARESH SARWAN

The right-hander has scored 1,720 Test runs at an average of 37.39, and 1,281 runs in one-day internationals, averaging 55.70.

He also said he was looking forward to the Caribbean tour by

AFP, Bloemfontein

Former Kenyan skipper Maurice Odumbe is having so much fun at the World Cup that he wants to play in the 2011 tournament at the age of 42.

Odumbe, a veteran from the 1996 World Cup, is an integral part of his team's semifinal push here which continues on Wednesday with a Super Six clash against Zimbabwe in Bloemfontein.

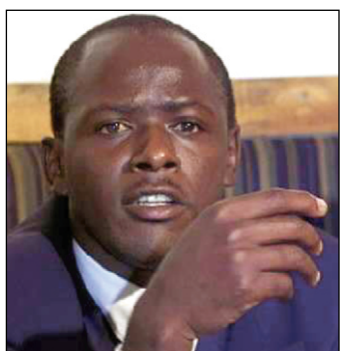
"This is just a dream come true," said the 34-year-old.

"It's the sweetest World Cup for all of us. We have beaten two Test-playing nations (Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) and we are in the second round for the first time."

"I've targeted the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies and will look at my health before deciding whether or not I will play in the

2011 tournament.

"I have a few niggling injuries but I don't think that will hold me back. I'm enjoying the game - it's a



MAURICE ODUMBE

tremendous sport and I will play as long as I can, provided my country needs me," Odumbe told the Johannesburg Star.

Having given up the captaincy last year, Odumbe insists that even