

Of unforgettables

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Kumble mounted an unlikely fightback, sharing 52 runs for the ninth wicket and staying on through an interruption caused by a power failure to clinch victory.

1998 Coca Cola Cup tri-series, Sharjah: Two inter-linked matches, with a Tendulkar theme to both.

Australia won the final league match by 26 runs, India getting past New Zealand to the final on net run rate, then India won the final by six wickets.

In the first game, Australia scored 284 for seven and it looked they would win comfortably to help New Zealand qualify. But Tendulkar scored a 131-ball 143, (5x6, 9x4) before a sandstorm swept through the ground. India fell short of the revised target of 276 but went past the 237 needed to eliminate the Kiwis.

Tendulkar returned two days later, on his 25th birthday, to hit 134, again from 131 deliveries, as India chased down

Australia's 272. Leg-spinner Shane Warne, struggling with a shoulder injury since the preceding 1-2 test series defeat, conceded 61 runs from 10 overs as Tendulkar launched into him.

1999: World Cup Super Six, The Oval: Australasia won by 77 runs.

Both the eventual champions and India had gone into the Super Sixes without a point, making a win crucial for both.

Australia, asked to bat, rattled up 282 for six after Indian pacemen squandered some early life in the pitch due to rain in the morning. India, in reply, were all out for 205 in 48.2 overs.

Mark Waugh top-scored with a classy 83, but he was completely overshadowed by McGrath, who destroyed the top order with an exemplary opening spell of pace and late movement. He accounted for the top two batsmen in his first two overs, having both Tendulkar, for an eight-ball duck, and Rahul Dravid (two off six deliveries) edging catches to wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist. He also dismissed captain Mohammad Azharuddin for three to all but end the contest in the seventh over, after Damien Fleming had chipped in by bowling Saurav Ganguly (8) at the other end. India, reduced to 4-17, were never in the hunt despite Ajay Jadeja's 100 not out and Robin Singh's 75.



BT
WC Cricket Final
Australia vs India
Live at 1:45 pm

ESPN
Taking Guard Final
WC Cricket Programme
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Liverpool vs Leeds United
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1. Who clinched the Shahjahan Bank International Rating Chess title?	Lovtu	Rajib	Zia
2. New Zealand beat South Africa in a World Cup Group B match by:	102 runs	9 wickets	5 wickets
3. How many runs did Bangladesh score against South Africa in the World Cup Group B match?	120	108	110
4. Bangladesh lost to Canada in the World Cup Group B match			
Name			
Class			
School Address			
Phone: (If any)			

Ganguly on a mission



REUTERS, Johannesburg

Saurav Ganguly, who captains India's one-day side for the 100th time in Sunday's World Cup final, has been described as arrogant, aloof and impulsive.

One former player also argued last month that he was not good enough to play for the team.

But even his fiercest critics would grudgingly recognise Ganguly's contribution if he leads India to their second World Cup title after all-rounder Kapil Dev in 1983.

The 30-year-old is used to criticism, be it centred on his character or his technique.

On Thursday, having scored 111 not out against Kenya to guide his team to Sunday's final at The Wanderers against Australia, he was given only a few moments to savour his achievement before being asked about his lack of attacking off-side shots.

"At times I have played below potential," he conceded.

"Lots of bowlers don't give me much room. They started bowling a bit on my body. Initially I struggled, but I am a better player now off my pads."

Ganguly, at his best, is a fine, fluent driver of the ball.

His 8,696 one-day runs and 22 centuries suggest he can play. His Test average of 40.59, some three runs less than his one-day average,

also puts him in the top bracket.

Yet there is always a rider, as former India Test player Krishnamachari Srikkanth underlined when questioning Ganguly's right to make the final eleven.

His problems with short-pitched bowling are well documented.

Those wanting to question Ganguly's Test credentials can also point to just four centuries in four years. He has never reached three figures against Australia, South

Africa, Pakistan or West Indies.

Those wanting to doubt his World Cup success, meanwhile, stress that his three centuries at the 2003 World Cup have come against Namibia and Kenya, while his average against Test-nation opponents is 17.16.

The articulate son of a wealthy Calcutta printer, Ganguly was criticised at the start of his international career for lack of humility.

He was banished from the side after playing one one-day game as a teenager in Australia 11 years ago.

Ganguly had to wait for another four years before returning for the Test tour of England in 1996 and scoring centuries in his first two Tests.

He was promoted to open in one-dayers later that year by then captain Sachin Tendulkar, the pair forming an enduring one-day partnership.

Ganguly took over as captain in October 2000, after Tendulkar quit following a 3-0 test series rout in Australia. Critics predicted he would fail because he was a loner

lacking in team spirit, a view strengthened after a difficult stint with English county Lancashire. He was dubbed "Lord Snooty" and reportedly once asked former

England captain Michael Atherton to look after his sweater.

Australia captain Steve Waugh is not a fan either. He was furious when Ganguly repeatedly and provocatively turned up late for the toss during the 2001 Indian Test series.

But Ganguly has won other friends, particularly among his teammates.

He has often pleaded with the selectors to show faith in such youngsters as off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif and left-arm pacemen Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra, all at some point criticised for poor attitude.

Sanjay Manjrekar, another former India player turned pundit, feels Ganguly has not been fully understood.

"It has taken everyone a while to get used to the personality of Saurav Ganguly," he said. "He is like no one before him."

"Indians in particular have found it hard to accept someone who does not mind speaking his mind all the time."

"But he has picked and backed talent in the last two years which is paying dividends now."

Victory on Sunday would go some way to silencing the doubters. A century from the "Prince of Calcutta" might shut them up completely.

Captain Sanath steps down



AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan cricket captain Sanath Jayasuriya quit as captain of the national side, he made the announcement over state television here Saturday.

"I have tendered my resignation to the minister of sports (Johnston Fernando). With my decision I have given the selectors to opt for a new captain with the 2007 World Cup in mind," Jayasuriya said.

Sanath Jayasuriya and the Sri Lankan team returned home on Friday after an unsuccessful run in the World Cup in South Africa. The team was knocked out in the semi-final on Tuesday by cup favorites Australia.

Jayasuriya took over the helm of the Sri Lankan team after its disastrous show in the 1999 World Cup, held in England.

There was no immediate response from the Fernando.

The sports minister was quoted in the state-owned Daily News here Saturday as having asked Jayasuriya to continue in the captaincy despite Sri Lanka's failure in the World Cup.

Woolmer's money on Australia

INTERNET, Cape Town

Former South African cricket coach Bob Woolmer believes that, although India will be powerful force in a few years' time, the World Cup final is most likely to be won by Australia.

"Any team can be beaten," Woolmer told The Cape Times on Friday.

"But it is unlikely. Australia have been very powerful, awesome, almost bullying people into submission."

Despite a few vulnerable moments, Australia are unbeaten in the competition. India lost to Australia in the group stages, but have since notched up ten consecutive victories.

"Certainly, India have provided us now with a taste of what they are going to be like in a few years' time," Woolmer continued.

Chappell's guideline



AFP, New Delhi

India captain Saurav Ganguly should rise above "superstitions and quirks" and include spinner Anil Kumble against Australia in the World Cup final, former Australian skipper Ian Chappell said Saturday.

"It's the Aussie batting that India must keep under control and to do so they need an extra front-line bowler in their line-up," Chappell wrote in his column in the Hindustan Times ahead of Sunday's final at Johannesburg.

"My choice would be Anil Kumble and I would even be tempted to open the bowling with the highly competitive leg-spinner who has troubled both Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden (Australian openers) at times."

Kumble, with 308 wickets in 241 one-dayers, has virtually been

reduced to the role of a spectator in the ongoing competition in South Africa. He has figured in just three of his team's 10 matches.

Ganguly's team won nine of those games with just four specialist bowlers three pacemen (Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra) and one spinner (Harbhajan Singh).

India hardly felt the absence of a fifth regular bowler in their previous matches as the trio of speedsters did remarkably well by sharing 43 wickets.

Chappell, however, felt India would require an extra specialist bowler in order to stop the rampaging Australian batsmen in the final showdown.

"So far in this World Cup, India have been predictable almost to the point of being paranoid with their selection, but they need to change that pattern for the final against Australia," said Chappell.

"At the very least, I'd have Kumble primed and ready to go

early if Gilchrist does start well against the quicks as the experienced leggie enjoys bowling with close catchers around the bat.

"It is this type of innovative captaincy that has brought New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming success against Australia. But, I'm not sure such enterprise is in Ganguly's make-up, given his superstitions and quirks."

"If he (Ganguly) wants to grab World Cup glory he has to suppress those inhibiting tendencies for a day and be prepared to 'look outside the box'."

Chappell said India could seize the initiative only if their bowlers restricted Australia to a total of around 225 since they had the batsmen to complete the job after that.

"If Australia score more than 250, India will be relying heavily on another mastery and major contribution from Sachin Tendulkar. As always, Tendulkar is the key to Indian success," he said.

Final showdown

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special moment. But at the end of the day we've got to be on the winning side. That means more than anything," Ganguly told reporters ahead of Sunday's showdown against defending champions Australia.

He added that wicketkeeper and dependable batsman Rahul Dravid, who sustained a finger injury in Thursday's semifinal win over Kenya, will be ready to face Australia.

"He's fit, he just had a sore finger," Ganguly said.

Australia great Ian Chappell advised Ganguly in a newspaper column to recall leg-spinner Anil Kumble who has spent most of the tournament on the sidelines.

But Ganguly said he was tempted to stand by his pace trio Javagal Srinath, Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra whose combined tally of 49 wickets have done so much to get India to the final.

"We'll see on the day. At the present moment the wicket looks a bit damp. It would be a difficult task for me to leave anyone out," he said.

And Ganguly said the memory

of the World Cup victory in 1983 had been an inspiration to the present side.

"It was a long time back, 20 years ago, but I hope we can repeat the performance. It definitely meant a lot to cricket in India after they won in 1983," he said.

Ganguly added the current team were well aware of what another win would mean now. "After the Kenya game, we got into a huddle and said well done."

"We realised we were just one game away from becoming world champions and we must give everything we have."

India have won eight games on the trot since they lost to Australia by 9 wickets on February 15 in a group match, and Ganguly said it was important the team maintained its preparation routine.

"It's better to be relaxed and stick to what has brought us here."

Australia have won a world record 16 successive one-day matches going into the final. Back in 2001 their 16-game Test winning streak was ended by India.

Ganguly, when asked if he believed in 'karma' (fate), said he

did not, and simply replied: "I hope we can do it again."

India, as well as their fanatical fans back home, will also have plenty of neutral support with cricket fans around the world desperate to see someone topple the all-conquering Aussies.

ROAD TO FINAL

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AUSTRALIA
Australia 128-1 in 22.2 overs; A Gilchrist 48, M Hayden 45 (not out)

Feb 20: beat the Netherlands by 75 runs (revised target) at Potchefstroom (Australia 170-2 in 36 overs; D Martyn 67; and the Netherlands 122 in 30.2 overs; A Bichel 3-13)

Feb 24: beat Zimbabwe by seven wickets in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe 246-9 in 50 overs; A Flower 62, A Bignaut 54; and Australia 248-3 in 47.3 overs; A Gilchrist 61, D Lehmann 56 not out, D Martyn 50 not out)

Feb 27: beat Namibia by 256 runs at Potchefstroom (Australia 301-6 in 50 overs; M Hayden 88, A Symonds 59, D Lehmann 50 not out; and Namibia 45; G McGrath 7-15)

Mar 2: beat England by two wickets at Port Elizabeth (England 204-8 in 50 overs; A Bichel 7-20; and Australia 208-8 in 49.4 overs; M Bevan 74 not out; A Caddick 4-35)

Mar 7: beat Sri Lanka by 96 runs at Centurion (Australia 319-5 in 50 overs; R Ponting 114, A Gilchrist 99, D Martyn 52; and Sri Lanka 223 in 47.4 overs; A De Silva 92)

Mar 11: beat New Zealand by 96 runs at Port Elizabeth (Australia 208-9 in 50 overs; A Bichel 64, M Bevan 56; S Bond 6-23; and New Zealand 112 in 30.1 overs; B Lee 5-42)

Mar 15: beat Kenya by five wickets at Durban (Kenya 174-8 in 50 overs; S Tikolo 51; B Lee 3-14; and Australia 178-5 in 31.2 overs; A Gilchrist 67; A Karim 3-7)

Mar 18: beat Sri Lanka by 48 runs (D/L method) at Port Elizabeth (Australia 212-7 in 50 overs; A Symonds 91 not out; C Vaas 3-34; and Sri Lanka 123-7; B Lee 3-35, B Hogg 2-30)

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INDIA
128-1 in 22.2 overs)

Feb 19: beat Zimbabwe by 83 runs in Harare (India 255-7 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 81; and Zimbabwe 172 in 44.4 overs; S Ganguly 3-22)

Feb 23: beat Namibia by 181 runs at Pietermaritzburg (India 311-2 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 152, S Ganguly 112 not out; and Namibia 130 in 23.3 overs; Y Singh 4-6)

Feb 26: beat England by 82 runs at Durban (India 250-9 in 50 overs; R Dravid 62, S Tendulkar 50; and England 168 in 45.3 overs; A Flintoff 64; A Nehra 6-23)

Mar 1: beat Pakistan by six wickets at Centurion (Pakistan 273-7 in 50 overs; S Anwar 101; and India 276-4 in 45.4 overs; S Tendulkar 98, Y Singh 50)

Mar 7: beat Kenya by six wickets in Cape Town (Kenya 225-6 in 50 overs; K Otieno 79; and India 226-4 in 47.5 overs; S Ganguly 107 not out, Y Singh 58 not out)

Mar 10: beat Sri Lanka by 183 runs in Johannesburg (India 292-6 in 50 overs; S Tendulkar 97, V Schwag 66; and Sri Lanka 109 in 23.5 overs; J Srinath 4-35, A Nehra 4-35)

Mar 14: beat New Zealand by seven wickets at Centurion (New Zealand 146 in 45.1 overs; Z Khan 4-42; and India 150-3 in 40.4 overs; M Kaif 68 not out, R Dravid 53 not out)

Mar 20: beat Kenya by 91 runs at Durban (India 270-4 in 50 overs; S Ganguly 111 not out, S Tendulkar 83; T Odoyo 1-45; and Kenya 179 in 46.2 overs; S Tikolo 56; Zaheer Khan 3-14, A Nehra 2-11)

Latif favours India



REUTERS, Karachi

India's cricketers have received support from an unexpected quarter as they prepare to battle Australia in Sunday's World Cup final arch-rivals Pakistan.

Pakistan's new captain, Rashid Latif, said on Friday India deserved to win the tournament in South Africa for the way they had fought themselves back into contention.

"Everybody is saying Australia will win the final," he said.

"I agree the way they have been playing they start off as favourites. But I think India deserve to win the World Cup."

"Purely for the way they have fought back after their dismal performance against the Aussies at Centurion five weeks ago."

Latif said if one took into account how Indian fans had reacted angrily over India's early poor form in the World Cup when

they were handed a nine-wicket thrashing by Australia and the way captain Saurav Ganguly and coach

John Wright had rallied the team to reach the final, they would not be pushovers.

"I think it is going to be one hell of a match. Australia are the reigning champions but I think the Indians are playing their best and most balanced cricket at the moment," he said.

"And with Sachin Tendulkar in such magnificent form, I think he is more than a match for the Australian bowlers."

The 34-year-old Latif was appointed Pakistan captain this week in place of the deposed Waqar Younis after Pakistan failed to move beyond the preliminary round of the World Cup.

"Tendulkar is on course to be the player of the tournament and definitely deserves this distinction," he said.

"It is his positive approach... which has helped India to achieve all these superb wins."

Prince vs punter

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India supremo Jagmohan Dalmiya as well as the ability to inspire and unify a side which is always at the mercy of regional rivalries.

Sunday's match will mark his 100th one-day international as captain - an impressive statistic in cricket-crazy India where pressure from fans often means the easiest way for officials to save their own skins is to sack the skipper at the first sign of trouble.

Ganguly's steel shows in the way he has been determined to carry on in the job despite the stoning of his family home in Calcutta after India went down to a nine-wicket thrashing against Australia in a first round match last month.

Calcutta also has significance for Ponting, nicknamed Punter by his teammates after his link for a bet on the greyhounds.

It was there that his career ran into problems when he was involved in a night-club incident in 1982 and a year later his chances of becoming an Australia captain looked even more remote when he ran into trouble at a Sydney bar.

But Ponting, who hails from unfashionable Tasmania, eventually turned from poacher to gamekeeper.

When Australia wanted a new one-day skipper to replace Waugh in 2002 it was Ponting, not squeaky-clean Test vice-captain Adam Gilchrist, whom the Australian selectors chose.

And with his side going into Sunday's final with a world record 16 consecutive one-day international victories behind them, no one in Australia has had cause to regret placing their faith in a punter.

Battle Within Battle

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had one with Pakistani speedster Shaohab Akhtar. Lee will be hoping to get the little champion out early to keep the Indians on the backfoot.

The first 15 overs of the Indian innings promises exhilarating cricket.

Saurav Ganguly v Glenn McGrath

If spared by Lee, India could still be stung by Glenn McGrath, one of the finest pace bowlers in the modern game.

It will rest on Ganguly, the elegant left-hander, to build the innings should Tendulkar or Virender Sehwag make an early exit.

Ganguly is only second behind Tendulkar in the list of leading scorers at this World Cup with 441 runs and three centuries.

McGrath may have been overshadowed by Lee's spectacular strikes, but the lanky bowler has shown his versatility and outstanding skills by picking up 18 wickets in this tournament.

When Ganguly is on song, he is a delight to watch and a nightmare for bowlers. McGrath will use his considerable guile to keep the Indian captain in check.

Zaheer Khan v Adam Gilchrist

The left-arm seamer has been one of the surprises of India's campaign with 18 wickets so far, equalling Roger Binny's Indian record in 1983 which helped Kapil Dev's men win the title.

Zaheer is not only bowling fast but maintains a good line and length as his three for 14 against

Kenya in the semifinal will testify.

But the hard-hitting Gilchrist at the top of the order will be a different proposition altogether. The Australian wicketkeeper is one of the most exciting batsmen in the modern game.

Few can tear an attack to shreds like he does and the even-paced Wanderers wicket will be ideally suited to his aggressive style. The left-hander trying to smash the left-arm pace of Zaheer out of the ground will be a treat for the fans.

Javagal Srinath v Andrew Symonds

The veteran seamer has been a captain's delight in his fourth and last World Cup, picking up 16 wickets and leading the Indian charge with the young Zaheer and Ashish Nehra.

"I don't want those two to feel this old man can't bowl," said the 33-year-old Srinath who was persuaded out of retirement by Ganguly to spearhead the pace attack.

Srinath's experience will come in handy when Symonds blasts away down the order. The Queensland batsman has been a revelation in the tournament. His selection was slammed by the home media because of his indifferent form leading up to the