



World Cup Cricket at a Glance

THE long wait of four years is finally over. World Cup Cricket, one of the sport's most spectacular and glamorous extravaganzas has begun. As all the cricket maniacs are aware of, this year's World Cup will be hosted in the subcontinent and the hosts are India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This major month long event will conclude on March 17. Among the 12 participating nations there are three newcomers, viz Holland, UAE and Kenya, who have achieved the right to play in this Cup by qualifying in the ICC Trophy. The 12 teams, from all over the globe, has come with only one mission — to clinch the ultimate glory in the World Cup cricket. Although cricket is a game of glorious uncertainty and the underdogs have often emerged as winners, let us sum up and assess the strength and weaknesses and possibilities of some of the top contenders.

by Nafisul Islam



Shane Warne... the irresistible leggie.

— Courtesy: Sportstar

They are very agile and athletic in fielding side. In Jonty Rhodes they have the world's best fielder. They are the only team who can match Australia in fielding. But batting is perhaps their weaker side. It does not have the consistency and talent of Australia or India. However, it has improved tremendously. Andrew Hudson and Gary Kirsten are very solid openers followed by their skipper Hansie Cronje, stroke-makers Daryll Kullinan, Jonty Rhodes, Jacques Kallis.

In Brian McMillan they have an excellent allrounder who can be compared with the likes of Ian Botham. McMillan is a very hard hitting middle order batsman and a fiery paceman. Cronje and Kallis can also bowl a little. So South Africa are a balanced and matured side and if they can cope with the slow, flat wickets of the subcontinent, they can go one step further than last time and reach the finals.

India, one of the host nations, have immense pressure on them to do well. India comes to this World Cup as one of the favourites. They have an excellent record over the past 5 years on home soil. They have a great depth in their batting with batting master Sachin Tendulkar as their opening batsman. If Sachin clicks in time India can well go on to pile up a huge total. After Sachin Tendulkar follows allrounder Manoj Prabhakar, Sidhu, Azharuddin, Kamble, Manjrekar, Jadeja and the wicket-keeper Nayan Mongia. But their fielding and bowling often let them down.

There is an absence of a world class pace bowler and allrounder in the team. Among the pacemen Jagvaji Srinath has improved a lot.

There are also three spinners in the side viz Aashish Kapoor, Anil Kumble and Raju. Anil Kumble is one of the world's most effective wrist spinners and he bowls very well on the turning Indian wickets. The one big question is: can Mohammed Azharuddin make his team the first one to clinch the Cup on home soil.

Sri Lanka, one of the co-hosts are also strong contenders and like the Indians they have a very good one-day record on home soil. They have a very strong and exciting batting line up, led by experienced batsmen, their skipper Arjuna Ranatunga and De Silva.

In Ramesh Kaluwitharana they have one of the world's most talented and exciting opening batsman. The other batsmen are Jayasuriya, Gurusinha, Tillakaratne and others. They are also the best fielding side in the subcontinent. But they do not have a very sharp bowling attack.

But if Wickramasinghe, Dharmasena, Pushpa Kumara, Muralitharan bowl accurately Sri Lanka can exceed all expectations. From underdogs they have emerged as champions over the past couple of years. They have beaten the Pakistanis on home soil both in Test and one-dayers and the Pakistanis, New Zealanders and West Indians to win the Singer Trophy. They have a good possibility of at least reaching the semifinals.

Pakistan, the co-hosts besides India and Sri Lanka despite having a disastrous year are also a tough team to beat. As the defending champions, the Pakistanis are rebuilding the team under Wasim Akram to make a challenge for the trophy.

The West Indies have also had a lean patch like Pakistan. They were defeated for the first time in 15 years in a Test series by Australia the previous year. But no one can count out the West Indies, the winners of the first two World Cups. They have a very balanced bowling attack led by the ageing but still destructive new ball bowlers Walsh and Ambrose. Otis Gibson is a promising allrounder. Roger Harper gives variation to their attack. Their main problem is their batting. Without world record holder Brian Lara they do not have any other really consistent batsman.

Their innings have often collapsed when Lara failed to click. But Lara is such a master batsman that he is capable of leading his team to the finals single-handedly. Other batsmen like Campbell, captain Richie Richardson, Chanderpaul and Holder have to find their form if West Indies are to win the World Cup.

Traditional giants England are no longer the force they used to be. But they have the superb record of reaching the finals thrice although they failed to be the champions each time.

The other teams like New Zealand, Zimbabwe, UAE, Kenya and Holland are not weakling and have the capability to provide a few surprises. Meanwhile, only time can tell who will hold aloft the trophy after the finals on March 17th.



Some Records of the World Cup:

- Kepler Wessels is the only player in the world who played for two countries. In 1983 he played for Australia and in 1992 for South Africa.
- In 1992 no bowler could take 5 wickets.
- Only two batsmen in the World Cup made runs over 1000. They are Javed Miandad (1029) runs and Vivian Richards (1013) runs.
- In 1987 the teams who batted first and made runs over 210 have all won their respective matches.
- Chetan Sharma is the only player who did hat-trick in the World Cup.
- The funniest thing is that all the teams who batted first in the World Cup final has all won the Cup.



Symbols of a grand event. A brand new logo and an ancient cup are classy appurtenances to the Wills World Cup.

— Courtesy: Sportstar

Can Pakistan Ascend To The Throne Again?

by Ishrak Ahmed Siddiky

THE VI World Cup cricket took off in Ahmedabad. The first match was between England and New Zealand. This year 12 teams are participating and it is hard to predict who will win.

Last year's champion Pakistan have a very balanced team this year, but can they perform according to the expectations? Thousands of people are in confusion over this issue. The bribery scandal, players revolt, changing of captains has altogether made Pakistani Cricket go into darkness. Five to six captains were changed over the last couple of years! Now if Pakistan Cricket Control Board (PCCB) changes the captains at regular intervals how do they expect the team to do good?

Pakistan's new captain is their 'old war horse' Wasim Akram. According to Akram and many other sport zealots, if Pakistan can click at the right moment then they can win the World Cup. Their team manager Intikhab Alam said that Pakistan is one of the most balanced team, in world cricket. We hope he can prove that.

Another thing that bother Pakistan is injuries. All the time Pakistani players are victim of hamstring or ligament injury. This is also one of the reasons for their setback.

Nobody in 1992 thought that Pakistan is going to win the World Cup. For as you know that cricket is a game of uncertainty, anything can happen. Earlier Pakistan was led by very experienced captain Imran Khan. His life and soul was cricket. His only aim was how to win the World Cup. And at last he succeeded what he desired. Another good thing for Pakistan is the return of their star batsman Javed Miandad. This experienced cricketer can change the face of the game. He has scored more than 8,000 runs and if he can click at the right moment I see no reason why Pakistan won't win the World Cup. The only threat to Pakistan in their group is South Africa. South Africa is an ever improving side and if Pakistan can just understand their weakness then they can beat South Africa easily. But Pakistan must be careful of



If he strikes rhythm, Wasim can discomfit any batsman in the world.

— Courtesy: Sportstar

players like Jonty Rhodes and Alan Donald.

Pakistan for this year's World Cup has announced the name of their players.

They are as follows: Wasim Akram (captain), Amir Sohail (vice captain), Javed Miandad, Ramiz Raja, Saad Anwar, Ijaz Ahmed, Salim Malik, Inzamamul Haq, Mushtaq Ahmed, Aaqib Javed, Saqlain Mushtaq, Aftab Rahman.

Mushtaq Latif and Waqar Yunis. All these players are very good. Now let us see what they are capable of:

• Wasim Akram: Captain and strike bowler. Does good batting when the team needs.

• Javed Miandad: Excellent right-hander batsman. Can change the face of the game, and also can keep his head cool at final overs.

• Saad Anwar: Hard hitting batsman. Can give Pakistan a nice start.

• Amir Sohail: Vice captain and opening batsman. Also bowls, and is also a good fielder.

• Ramiz Raja: Talented batsman, capable of producing runs and is also a good fielder.

• Ijaz Ahmed: Has a very good temperament. Excellent batsman.

• Waqar Yunis: World's fastest bowler. He is a threat to batsman.

• Salim Malik: Capable of producing runs when gets set to the wicket. Also a bowler.

• Inzamamul Haq: The tall man, who is the most ferocious hitter of Pakistan. He is a talented batsman too.

• Mushtaq Ahmed: He is Pakistan's most talented spinner. He is one of the best wrist spinners in the world.

• Aaqib Javed: A bowler who can take wicket when needed.

• Saqlain Mushtaq: Only 18 years of age, this young spinner is the consistent of all bowlers. He bowls in line and length.

• Aftab Rahman: He doesn't let the batsmen understand at what pace he bowls. And take wickets when asked of him.

• Rashid Latif: Excellent behind the stumps. He is also a good batsman.

These are description of the players. And if Pakistan can't win the World Cup with such a fine team, then they will break the hearts of their supporters. Pakistan's first match is against Holland on Feb 24th.

Last month the Pakistan government announced that if Pakistan wins each player will get 10 lakh rupees and a house. At last let's keep our finger crossed, and see what happens for I want you not to forget cricket is a game of glorious uncertainty.

From Politics to Sports

by Bachchu

DURING the independence of the subcontinent we read in our books and heard from our elders that Western people were very much fair in every sphere of life whether it is politics or sports or anything else. We were young then.

But now we find things quite different from what we were taught. For instance, the political dominance of the West over the East, including the sub-continent, needs no fresh elaboration.

Here, I would like to draw the attention of the valued readers regarding a few actions of the European countries in collaboration with Australia in the field of international games in order to achieve the supremacy over the subcontinental teams. They go on changing the rules according to what suits them.

Let us discuss a few such examples. In the game of field hockey, most of the period of this century was dominated by this sub-continent. In 1936, during Berlin Olympic, Dhanchand (who is all time the greatest hockey player, coming from India) stick was replaced on the pretext that his stick had some Indian magical influence. But still they could not stop him from his dazzling dribbling and unbelievable stick work and scoring goals against Germany in the final.

Traditionally, hockey was used to be played on natural turfs and nobody could match players from this subcontinent. Finding no other way, the Europeans in collaboration with Australians adopted a cunning tactic.

Instead of natural turfs, they introduced Astro turf. They took full advantage of the above factor because one needs much strength and stamina to play on any Astro-turf, which is a very fast surface. So, the Europeans and

Australians, with better bowling, more strength and stamina than subcontinent players started dominating the game without much difficulties, while our players were merely struggling. After very hard work on Astro turf for many years, again our players have attained a reasonable standard. Pakistan won the last world cup and very recently India defeated Germany and Holland in an international tournaments. These results evoked anxiety amongst the westerners. Now, they have started thinking something else to continue their dominance.

I am sure in the next meeting of the International Hockey Federation, they are going to change some rules, which will suit the robust Europeans and Australians and our players will have difficulty in contesting against them. According to the proposed and, rather, imposed rule, like soccer, a goal can be scored from anywhere of the pitch, ruling out the earlier condition of scoring only from within the D. This rule will suit the Europeans and Australians perfectly because their shooting power is tremendous. I am sure this rule is coming next.

Now let us turn our attention towards cricket. Only England and Australia have the veto power in the ICC (International Cricket Council).

Bishen Bedi of India in his prime time was famous for his slow left arm spin. He used to put seven fielders on the on-side and two fielders on the off-side and with this sort of field placing, his balls were unplayable. Then England hurriedly summoned ICC meeting and passed a rule that no bowler can place more than five fielders on the on-side. Bedi's career came to an abrupt end with the introduction of this rule. But to

the utter surprise of the cricketing world, that rule was scrapped with the retirement of Bedi. One can easily realise how unfair those people are.

Now let us come to the fast bowling. During '50s and '60s, England and Australia had very good bunch of fast bowlers like Truman, Statham, Tyson, Loader, Moss, Miller, Lindwall, Davidson and others. These bowlers were playing hell with our batsmen and they were enjoying every bit of it. Even the spectators used to encourage those bowlers by shouting, "kill him, kill him." I am a witness to such scene.

But when their era of fast bowling ended and Pakistan and West Indies produced their dangerous battery of fast bowlers like Hall, Gilchrist, Andy Roberts, Garner, Croft, Marshall, Holding, Imran, Sarfaraz, Wasim Akram, Waqar Yunis and others, with no time to spare ICC (initiated by England and Australia with their veto power) took the decision that no bowler can send more than two bouncers in an over. That law was nothing but to give protection to the inefficient and coward English and Australian batsmen. Do you think those people are fair? It all seems that there is a deep mischievous understanding between England and Australia in order to help or rescue each other.

Dozens of such examples can be cited of their unfairness in different games and sports from which one can well judge the sick mentality of westerns sporting world.

The writer resides in Goshala, Fazlul Haq Road, Sirajganj.

West Indies and the World Cup

by Ali Arsalan

THIS world cup should be one of the most exciting cricket tournaments we have ever seen. With new teams such as Holland, Kenya and UAE competing, and the old favourites, the world cup should be full of exciting matches and brilliant displays of how the game should really be played.

My personal favourite this time is the West Indian cricket team. Although they have not really been consistent the last few months, they are still a team to be reckoned with and should not be overlooked. Brian Lara, their young sensation and one of the most amazing batsman of all time, should be a thrill to watch and a disaster for all the bowlers if he is in proper form.

The West Indians over the past few months have had many internal problems, with arguments arising between the players and their captain, Richie Richardson. This, I believe is their only weak point

which they will have to overcome. Recently though, there has been a sign of improvement in the team, during the 'Benson and Hedges World Series' tournament. They started the tournament badly, but played quite well in the remaining few.

Some of the other team members although have been struggling for form. Carl Hoppe, Jimmy Adams and especially Phil Simmons are examples of this. The West Indians will have to concentrate on their batting as the slow wickets in the sub-continent will not help their pace bowlers.

Curtly Ambrose and Courtney Walsh may be two of the best bowlers in the world but they may not be able to get good bounce or pace on those wickets. They will need as much of the support from the batsmen and the fielders as they can possibly get.

Chanderpaul, their middle order batsman and leg-spinner, is one of their best players. Recently in one of the tournaments in the West Indies, he played extremely well, making high scores in almost all his innings.

I don't think that the West Indians will have many problems this World Cup. The two teams that I think will really give them any problems are Australia, the leading contender for the title, and Sri Lanka. Otherwise the only worry the West Indians have at the moment is the huge bomb blast in

Colombo which happened recently. Although they have appealed for a change of venue, their and the Australian's requests have then denied and the matches will continue as scheduled. Hopefully, this time, the West Indians should be able to win.