



PHOTO: AFP

Irish players are over the moon after grabbing the last Zimbabwe wicket off the last delivery off their Group D match to earn a tie at the Sabina Cricket Ground in Kingston on Thursday.

## Ireland win a tie

AFP, Kingston



Zimbabwe and Ireland played to a thrilling tie in a tense finish to their World Cup Group D match at Sabina Park here on

Thursday.

Opener Jeremy Bray carried his bat for an undefeated 115 off 137 balls, his second one-day international hundred, to give Ireland a sniff of a chance with a respectable total of 221 for nine off their allocation of 50 overs.

The Zimbabweans appeared to be on course for victory on 203 for five, but they lost their last five wickets for 18 runs in the space of 38 balls to give Ireland a memorable finish to their first match in the World Cup.

There have only been two other tied matches in World Cup history -- South Africa, chasing 213, tied with Australia in 1999 at Birmingham, and Sri Lanka, chasing a revised target of 230 off 45 overs, tied with the Proteas in 2003 at Durban.

It all came down to Zimbabwe needing seven runs from the final over bowled by spinner Andrew White.

Stuart Matsikenyeri, whose unbeaten 73 off 76 balls was the top score for Zimbabwe, drove the first ball to long-off for two, then cut the second to deep point for another

two, before he pulled a full toss just short of mid-wicket fielder Boyd Rankin to scramble a single.

Last man Edward Rainsford drove the fourth ball to long-off for the single to give the strike back to Matsikenyeri, whose top-edged cut

lobbed a chance to short third man.

Irish skipper Trent Johnston, the fielder, leapt, but he could only get his fingertips to the ball and the batsmen crossed for two.

With one run required for victory, White bowled a flat, fast, full-length

delivery and Matsikenyeri drove and missed, but keeper Niall O'Brien had the presence of mind to collect the ball and throw to the bowler's end, when Rainsford had backed up too far, and White ran him out in a chaotic conclusion.

It all unravelled for Zimbabwe, when Brendon Taylor was run out for 24 in the 44th over, backing up too far and failed to beat a deflection from the hands of McCallan onto the stumps at the bowlers' end.

Zimbabwe were still favourites to reach the target, needing 19 runs from 38 balls, but Gary Brent was adjudged lbw for three in the 48th over, and this is where it all went pear-shaped.

Captain Prosper Utseya was caught at cover for one driving straight into the lap of fielder Eoin Morgan, and Christopher Mpofu was run out looking for a single in the penultimate over -- a double-wicket maiden bowled by Kevin O'Brien.

Spin bowler Kyle McCallan was the most successful Irish bowler with two wickets for 40 runs from seven overs, after opening batsman Vusumuzi Sibanda had paced Zimbabwe with 67 off 84 balls.

Zimbabwe started confidently, but Terrence Duffin was a victim of his own indiscretion.

He was dropped twice in the same over that Boyd Rankin had him caught behind for 12 driving loosely at a ball that nipped across him in

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### ZIMBABWE AND IRELAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Group D match in the World Cup between Zimbabwe and Ireland at Sabina Park, Kingston on Thursday:

	R	M	B	4s	6s
<b>IRELAND</b>					
Porterfield c Sibanda b Mpofu	0	4	6	0	0
Bray not out	115	221	137	10	2
Morgan c Chigumbura b Brent	21	37	27	4	0
O'Brien c Taylor b Chigumbura	1	3	5	0	0
Botha b Chigumbura	1	15	7	0	0
O'Brien c Taylor b Rainsford	10	33	28	2	0
White lbw b Brent	28	49	48	3	0
Johnston run out	20	49	24	2	0
McCallan st Taylor b Williams	0	2	3	0	0
Langford c Taylor b Mpofu	15	21	17	1	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-5, nb-3)	10				
Total: (For 9 wks in 50 overs)	221				
Did not bat: W Rankin.					
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-43, 3-44, 4-64, 5-89, 6-145, 7-182, 8-182, 9-221.					

Bowler	O	M	R	W	Econ
Mpofu	10	3	58	2	5.80
Rainsford	7	0	44	1	6.28

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## Johnston relieved

AFP, Kingston

Ireland skipper Trent Johnston praised his team's fighting qualities after the World Cup debutants pulled off a heart-stopping last ball tie against Zimbabwe at Sabina Park on Thursday.

Zimbabwe, chasing 222 to win, were cruising at one stage when they were 175-5 with 10 overs left, but nerves took over and Edward Rainsford was run out on the last ball as the Group D match ended all square, only the third tie in World Cup history.

"We did our best to throw it away," said Australian-born Johnston. "But we fought back in the last eight to 10 overs to give ourselves a chance."

"It was a relief at the end and the fans were great. It felt like there were 20,000 fans in the stadium, they were our 12th man."

"We have a great bunch of fighters in our team and we never know when the game is over."

Next up for Ireland are mighty Pakistan here on Saturday, St Patrick's Day.

"It's a big game. We will have to be really competitive against them. But we will be up for it. We'll give them one hell of a game."

Johnston's fellow Australian Jeremy Bray was named man-of-the-match for his unbeaten 113 as he carried his bat through the Irish innings.

"We have played quite a few games which have gone to the last ball or the last over," said Bray.

"But the skipper has always told us to keep fighting and fighting even when our backs are to the wall."

Bray said he was looking forward to taking on Pakistan.

"They are a fantastic side but it's one-day cricket. If we play to our ability and they have an off-day, anything can happen."

## Utseya blames naivety

AFP, Kingston



Zimbabwe captain Prosper Utseya believes the inexperience of his side cost them victory in Thursday's

thrilling World Cup tie with Ireland. Zimbabwe, chasing 222 for victory, looked to be on course at 203 for five in the 44th over at Sabina Park, but they lost their last five wickets for 18 runs in the space of 38 balls to give Ireland a share of the spoils in their debut World Cup game.

"I think we were a bit tense in this situation, and I think it is a lack of experience on our part," said Utseya.

"If we had been in that situation a few times before we would have known how to pull through, but we panicked at the end."

Utseya feels his side's inability to take control of certain turning points of the match also contributed to the result.

"We did not do ourselves any favours tying this game," he said.

"I thought we gave away too many runs when Ireland batted -- about 20 or so too many -- and we were a little unlucky with a couple of our dismissals."

"We had a few soft dismissals, and we were a little unlucky with the dismissals of Vusumuzi Sibanda and Brendon Taylor, but that's cricket, and we will learn from this experience."

Sibanda trampled on his stumps

to be dismissed, hit wicket, to spinner Andrew White, and Taylor was run out when Stuart Matsikenyeri drove back a delivery from Kyle McCallan and the spinner deflected the ball onto the stumps.

"I believe we are a much better side than Ireland, but we did not do our basics well," Utseya said.

"Sibanda and Matsikenyeri, two of our senior batsmen, came to the party, and we need to see the same happening from our bowlers."

"Every match, we need one of our seam bowlers to take the lead with the ball if we are to be competitive in the remaining matches."

Utseya thinks not all is lost though, and they can give strong performances in their last two matches against West Indies next

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen in action during the second practice session for the Australian grand prix in Melbourne on Friday.

## Irish heroes hailed at home

AFP, Dublin

Ireland's cricketers were hailed as the country's latest sporting heroes on Friday after their thrilling tie with Zimbabwe in their debut World Cup match in Jamaica on Thursday.

The small but growing number of cricket fans in the Irish Republic revelled in glowing newspaper coverage of the draw that is giving the game a profile that it has not had for more than a century.

Though the Irish Cricket Union is an all-Ireland body, Northern Ireland has been the stronghold for the game on the island and it is a minority sport in the Republic.

RTE state radio described the Zimbabwe encounter as "incredible" and said the game must have arrived because taxi-drivers were now discussing the team's progress in Jamaica.

"Unbelievable. No other way to put it. Ireland's cricketer's came back from the dead to tie their first ever World Cup game," says the Irish Times.

"While most people did not even know that Ireland had a cricket team until recently, there are about 18,000 registered players and officials," according to the newspaper.

Traditionally a country of emigration until the new prosperity of the so-called Celtic Tiger economic boom began to attract immigrants, Ireland now has players from countries like New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, India and Pakistan.

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## Ferrari gains early edge

AFP, Melbourne

Ferrari boosted their chances of a morale-boosting victory in Sunday's season-opening Australian Grand Prix with both their cars the quickest in free practice here Friday.

The Italian giants, who dominated Formula One for six years before being dethroned by Renault in 2005-06, looked in threatening shape as the teams prepare for Saturday's qualifying for grid positions.

Brazilian Felipe Massa and Finland's Kimi Raikkonen confirmed their winter pre-season testing times by dominating the second practice session to give Ferrari the early edge ahead of the weekend.

Massa clocked the fastest lap of one minute 27.353 seconds around the 5.3-kilometre Albert Park street circuit.

The Brazilian shaded his teammate Raikkonen by 0.397secs in the second session, with reigning world champion Fernando Alonso, driving for his new McLaren team, seventh best with 1:28.040, some 0.687secs behind.

"This was a positive start to the weekend," Massa said. "But of course what counts is tomorrow's qualifying, and most of all Sunday's race."

Raikkonen, recruited last season by Ferrari to replace retired seven-times world champion Michael Schumacher, was timed at 1:27.750.

"The car seems to be well balanced at this track and we managed to pick up a good baseline of data to analyse," Raikkonen said.

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## SL rejoice big win

AFP, Port of Spain



Sri Lanka were just as pleased with skipper Mahela Jayawardene's return to form ahead of two big World Cup games as they were with their crushing win over hapless Bermuda.

Jayawardene scored a stylish 85 to play a key role in his team's 243-run Group B win, the second biggest in the tournament history.

Sri Lanka made 321-6 after electing to bat at the Queen's Park Oval here on Thursday, with wicketkeeper-batsman Kumar Sangakkara (76) and Chamara Silva (55 not out) also making merry. They then bundled Bermuda out for 78, the sixth lowest World Cup score, with seamers Farveez Maharoof (4-23) and Lasith Malinga (3-10) doing the maximum damage.

"I have not been at my best with the bat in the last two months," said Jayawardene, who had a poor tour of India recently.

"It was good for me to spend more time in the middle. I hope I will continue with it in important games. All the other guys around me are also batting well, so it should be exciting."

Sri Lanka will take on India and Bangladesh in the remaining two group matches, with the top two

advancing to the next Super Eight stage.

The Sri Lankan captain was all praise for Lasith Malinga, a fast bowler with a deceptive round-arm action who rocked Bermuda with three early wickets.

"The last six months have been exciting for us, with Lasith around. He has given us more attacking options. He didn't push himself that hard today (Thursday). He is making his World Cup debut," said Jayawardene.

"He showed a lot of aggression but bowled within himself. He bowled in good areas. The wicket suited his bowling and that was the difference. With his action and the pace he generates, he is always asking questions."

Jayawardene said his team had

been looking forward to playing India and Bangladesh in the remaining games.

"Bangladesh are a very good side. They have been in the international arena for quite some time," he said.

"We are definitely looking forward to that challenge. It is going to be tough as three sub-continental sides will play in these conditions, but the World Cup is all about taking those challenges."

Jayawardene also backed Bermuda's participation in the mega one-event, saying the game was a learning experience for them and they were capable of giving better performances in the next two matches.

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### WC BIG WINS

AFP, Port of Spain

Biggest winning margins in World Cup history after Sri Lanka defeated Bermuda by 243 runs at Queen's Park Oval here on Thursday:

Largest victories (winning team, winning margin, opponents, venue, year):		
Australia	256 runs v Namibia	Potchefstroom 2003
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>243 runs v Bermuda</b>	<b>Port of Spain 2007</b>
Australia	203 runs v Scotland	Basseterre 2007
England	202 runs v India	Lord's 1975
England	196 runs v East Africa	Birmingham 1975
Pakistan	192 runs v Sri Lanka	Nottingham 1975
West Indies	191 runs v Sri Lanka	Karachi 1987
India	183 runs v Sri Lanka	Johannesburg 2003
New Zealand	181 runs v East Africa	Birmingham 1975
India	181 runs v Namibia	Pietermaritzburg 2003

## Participation enough for Irving

AFP, Port of Spain



Bermuda may have suffered a humiliating defeat on their World Cup debut against Sri Lanka here, but skipper Irving Romaine

says the experience matters more for his team than the result.

"We were all emotional and it showed in a couple of early overs. The experience is amazing for us," Romaine said after his side crashed to a 243-run defeat in their opening match at the Queen's Park Oval here on Thursday.

"It was a wonderful experience. Some of the old players were also there. They are disappointed with the result, but they know it is a special day for Bermuda."

Bermuda failed to cope with the Sri Lankan seamers and were

dismissed for a paltry 78 chasing a mammoth 322-run target, with Farveez Maharoof (4-23) and Lasith Malinga (3-10) doing the maximum damage.

"I think we have done well playing against Sri Lanka. We have seen them score more than 400 runs against the Netherlands (at Amstelveen) last year," said the Bermudian skipper.

Romaine said his batsmen found it difficult to read Malinga, a seamer with a deceptive round-arm action who rattled Bermuda with three early wickets.

"We did okay in the field, but the frontline batsmen could not handle Malinga. Tackling that style (of bowling) was a new experience for all of us. I hope our top order gets some runs in the remaining two matches," he said.

India and Bangladesh are other sides in Group B, with the top two qualifying for the next Super Eight stage.

Bermuda are one of the six non-Test-playing nations in the fray, others being the Netherlands, Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Kenya.

Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene believed the minnows could improve if they played more matches against big teams.

"We also didn't stretch the West Indies or England in the 1975 World Cup, but we came back strongly to win in 1996," he said.

"There should be a proper development and I'm sure the ICC (International Cricket Council) is monitoring the progress of these countries. The more games they play at this level, the more they will improve."

"For us, it is always good to have these countries playing in big tournaments. That was how we learnt. Hopefully, they will do the same. We have to take into consideration that they are making their debut."



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani striker Hernan Parodi (C) sees a scrambled effort saved by the diving Chittagong Mohammedan goalkeeper Titu (L) during their B. League clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Bad day for Abahanis



SPORTS REPORTER

Argentine striker Hernan Parodi earned and missed a penalty as Abahani remained winless after two matches in the B. League.

The Dhaka giants -- the biggest money spending club of the season -- dominated yesterday's match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but were handcuffed by the tournament's surprise pack Chittagong Mohammedan to a goalless draw.

The two teams paid tribute to national cricketer Manzarul Islam

Rana and his Khulna Division teammate Sajjadul Hassan Setu, who died in an accident on the same day, by observing a minute's silence during halftime. Rana was also an Abahani player and Setu played with them two seasons back in the Dhaka Premier League.

It was the second occasion Argentine coach Diego Cruciani's boys failed to score after an identical draw against Muktiyoddha in the professional league opener and despite enjoying superior possession, the sky-blues strikers lacked the cutting edge.

The visitors, inspired by their stunning 1-0 home win over Muktiyoddha last week, seemingly came for a draw and successfully implemented their plans led by Guinea midfielder Camara to

extend their collection to four points after three outings.

Abahani, who face archrivals Dhaka Mohammedan in the next round with just two points, must work hard to improve in one week's time as they looked slow and scrappy on the pitch.

In spite of fielding three foreigners, Abahani did not look devastating although they began to get the past the rival backbone midway through the first half when a Pranotosh volley went just wide after agile Mohammedan goalkeeper Titu fisted out a corner by Ujjal.

They created two more chances in the next two minutes but young national striker Emily, who was set by an exquisite through by Parodi,

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