



Australia middle-order batsman Brad Hodge plays an expansive drive on the off-side during his century against the Netherlands in a World Cup group encounter at the Warner Park stadium in St Kitts on Sunday.

# Hodge missile hits Dutch

AFP, St. Kitts



Brad Hodge hit a maiden one-day hundred and Michael Clarke scored an unbeaten half-century to help Australia achieve a thumping 229-run World Cup win over Netherlands here on Sunday.

Australian middle-order batsman Hodge scored 123 and shared an invaluable 204-run fourth wicket stand with Michael Clarke (93 not out) to help Australia reach 358-5 after electing to bat.

The Netherlands were then unable to cope with the Australian bowling attack and were dismissed for 129 in 26.5 overs. Dan van Bunge topscored with 33, while Darron Reekers (25) and Peter Borren (24) were other notable scorers.

Left-arm spinner Brad Hogg was the pick of Australian bowlers with 4-27.

Paceman Glenn McGrath finished with 2-33, to complete fifty wickets in the World Cup.

The 37-year-old paceman now need another six wickets to overhaul Pakistan's left-arm paceman Wasim Akram's World Cup best of 55.

Left-arm paceman Nathan Bracken finished with 2-33 to seal an emphatic win for Australia whose final group match will be against South Africa on March 24.

South Africa and Scotland, the two

other sides in Group A, meet each other on Tuesday with the top two advancing to the Super Eight stage.

Australia owed their total to Hodge who rescued Australia from a precarious 116-3 in the company of Clarke as the two benefitted from five dropped catches by the Dutch fielders.

Hodge was finally dismissed in the 48th over, bowled by Peter Borren.

He hit eight boundaries and seven sixes during his enterprising 89-ball knock.

His previous best one-day score was 99 which came against New Zealand at Melbourne during the tri-

series last month.

Clarke missed his hundred by seven runs, hitting six boundaries and three towering sixes during his 85-ball knock.

Australia looked to be in a bit of bother for a brief spell when they lost opener Matthew Hayden (29), Adam Gilchrist (57) and skipper Ricky Ponting (23) to be at 116-3 in the 21st over.

The Dutch attack bowled a better line and length than they did against South Africa who piled up 353-3 in 40 overs on Friday in a match which saw Herschelle Gibbs smash six sixes in an over.

But their fielding left a lot to be desired as they dropped two chances off Hodge and two off Clarke, to allow the pair to score 130 runs in the final ten overs.

Shane Watson hit a four and a six to finish with 12 not out. Micheal Hussey failed for a second match in a row as he managed just two.

Earlier, Gilchrist and Hayden had put on 73 by the 12th over when paceman Tim de Leede had both caught in the outfield. De Leede was the pick of the Dutch bowlers with 2-40.

Ponting, who hit a brilliant 113 in his team's 202-run win against Scotland in Australia's first match, was let off at 23 but the Australian skipper failed to make the most of his lifeline and was smartly snapped up by Ryan ten Doeschate off his own bowling.

## Tigers drawn with WI, SA in T20 world meet

CRICINFO, undated

Bangladesh have been drawn with West Indies and hosts South Africa in Group A of the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship to be held in September.

Archrivals India and Pakistan are pitted against each other in the group stage while England and Australia have also been drawn together.

Cricket South Africa (CSA) have confirmed the four groups, although the fixtures still have to be ratified by ICC and the final list is not expected until the end of the month. England, Zimbabwe and Australia are in Group B, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Kenya in Group C and Pakistan, India and Scotland in Group D.

The tournament is due to run

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# England struggle past Canada

AFP, Gros Islet



England tried to made light of Andrew Flintoff's absence with a 51-run victory against Canada in their World Cup Group C match here Sunday.

England made 279 for six after being sent in but, despite reducing Canada to 65 for four, were unable to bowl out the minnows without their pace-bowling all-rounder.

They were held up first by a fifth-wicket stand of 96 between Abdoool Samad (36) and Ashif Mulla (58), who hit all-rounder Paul Collingwood for a six over the roof of the stand at deep mid-wicket.

Although both batsmen fell within the space of four balls, with the score on 161, Canada finished on 228 for seven -- their best total at the World Cup in 11 matches after they'd made 202 against the West Indies at Centurion in 2003.

It was also 29 more than the 199 they managed four days ago in their seven-wicket opening Group C match thrashing by Kenya.

Desmond Chumney was 27 not out and George Codrington seven not out.

England had Canada in trouble at 22 for two after Liam Plunkett removed Geoff Barnett and Ashish Bagai.

Canada skipper John Davison, back in the opening slot where he made the fastest World Cup hundred, off 67 balls against the West Indies, at Centurion four years ago, made 21 off 25 balls before lofting James Anderson to Ian Bell on the cover boundary.

Monty Panesar took one for 35 from 10 overs but Samad and Mulla were largely untroble by the remainder of England's attack.

Samad was eventually lbw to Panesar before Mulla's 60-ball innings with one six and seven fours ended when he was stumped by wicket-keeper Paul Nixon off medium-pacer Ravi Bopara,

Flintoff's replacement.

Flintoff was dropped for a "breach of team discipline", the Lancashire ace one of several players fined for staying out until the early hours of the morning after England's six-wicket defeat by New Zealand in their World Cup opener here Friday.

England's Irish-born left-handed opener Ed Joyce top-scored with 66 while Paul Collingwood finished on 62 not out off 48 balls with one six and four fours.

Former Guyana left-armer spinner Sunil Dhaniram, now a fork-lift truck driver, took three wickets for seven runs in 11 balls as England declined from 153 for one to 161 for four before scoring 30.

However, a fifth wicket stand of 81 between Collingwood and Bopara, who made 29 on his World Cup debut and in only his second match at this level, revived England's innings.

Nixon added late impetus with a dynamic 23 not out off just eight balls including a straight six off the last ball of the innings from former West Indies fast bowler Anderson Cummins.

Dhaniram, 38, removed Ian Bell (28), Joyce and dangerman Kevin Pietersen (five) on his way to figures of three for 41 from his full 10 overs.

Joyce, dropped twice helped

England captain Michael Vaughan put on England's first century opening stand in 27 one-day international.

That end when Vaughan fell for 45, a slashed square-cut off spinner Samad caught by Davison at backward point to leave England 101 for one off 20 overs.

Vaughan faced 64 balls with seven fours.

Dhaniram's burst began when Ian Bell on 28, top-edged a sweep and was caught by Codrington.

And in his next over Dhanirman struck twice in six balls as England suffered another mid-innings slump.

First Joyce was bowled reverse-sweeping before Pietersen (five) clipped a return catch.

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the World Cup Group C match between England and Canada at Beausejour Cricket Ground in St Lucia on Sunday:

### ENGLAND

Joyce b Dhaniram	66
Vaughan c Davison b Samad	45
Bell c Codrington b Dhaniram	28
Pietersen c and b Dhaniram	5
Collingwood not out	62
Bopara b Codrington	29
Dalrymple c Bagai b Cummins	2
Nixon not out	23
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, w-8, nb-5)	19
Total: (For 6 wkts in 50 overs)	279
Fall of wickets: 1-101, 2-153, 3-160, 4-161, 5-242, 6-245.	
Did not bat: Plunkett, Anderson, Panesar.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Cummins	7	0	58	1
Bhatti	7.5	0	41	0
Davison	10	1	32	0
Samad	5.1	0	31	1
Codrington	10	0	70	1
Dhaniram	10	0	41	3

### CANADA

Davison c Bell b Anderson	21
Barnett b Plunkett	7
Bagai c Pietersen b Plunkett	6
Billcliff b Bopara	20
Samad lbw b Panesar	36
Mulla st Nixon b Bopara	58
Chumney not out	27
Dhaniram run out	30
Codrington not out	7
Extras: (lb-2, w-11, nb-3)	16
Total: (For 7 wkts in 50 overs)	228
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-22, 3-51, 4-65, 5-161, 6-161, 7-217.	
Did not bat: Bhatti, Cummins.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	10	1	40	1
Plunkett	9	0	46	2
Panesar	10	1	35	1
Bopara	9	0	43	2
Collingwood	9	0	41	0
Dalrymple	3	0	21	0

**Result: England won by 51 runs.**  
**Man-of-the-match: Paul Collingwood.**  
**Toss: Canada**  
**Umpires: Billy Doctrove (WIS) and Peter Parker (AUS)**  
**Match referee: Jeff Crowe (NZL)**

# Press lament delay in Flintoff axe

AFP, London



England cricket managers should have acted earlier to curb all-rounder Andrew Flintoff's binge-drinking

excesses, British newspapers said Monday after he was fired over a drunken incident in St Lucia.

But while welcoming the disciplinary action, commentators also voiced concern that two team coaches were reportedly in the bar where Flintoff and other players were drinking, and did nothing to stop them.

"Boozer Freddie had it coming," headlined the Daily Mail. "The fact is that England have been avoiding hard decisions about their ebullient all-rounder for too long.

"Had they acted earlier, the disruptive effects of Flintoff's binge-drinking exploits would not have arisen during the middle of a World Cup," it added, comparing Flintoff to Ian Botham, also not shy of celebrating.

Flintoff was stripped of his country's vice-captaincy after reports that he had been one of a number of players who stayed out drinking until the early hours of Saturday morning following the six-wicket defeat by New Zealand.

The all-rounder, who went on a 24-hour binge after England's

historic Ashes victory in 2005, apologised profusely over the incident, in which he reportedly had to be rescued after taking a hotel pedalo out to sea in the small hours.

"By dropping Andrew Flintoff (England coach) Duncan Fletcher has at last shown he has teeth in that unsmiling mouth," said former England bowler Derek Pringle, writing in the Daily Telegraph.

"But .. there remain searching questions over the team's leadership, especially with regard to discipline," he added, noting along with others than two members of the coaching staff were in the bar.

This fact "begs the question they did not show a bit of savvy and

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# SA focused on Scots

AFP, Basseterre



Top-ranked South Africa would want to be as ruthless as possible against minnows Scotland before taking on bitter rivals Australia in their crunch World Cup test.

"We are focused on our match against Scotland, because this is the match to play for now," said South African captain Graeme Smith of his team's Group A clash at Warner Park on Tuesday.

Smith's men know their real challenge will come on March 24 against defending champions Australia whom they displaced as world number one last month.

Smith believed his team's emphatic 221-run win over the Netherlands in their first group

match last week had given the players a much-needed work out.

"After what happened in Trinidad we arrived in St Kitts and since then have better preparation. The batsmen have had good workouts and the bowlers bowled a few so I am happy with the preparations," said Smith, whose team had a poor build-up to the tournament.

They struggled to beat debutants Ireland and went down by seven wickets to Pakistan in their warm-up matches in Trinidad, where the facilities and a tricky pitch came under criticism.

But against Netherlands in their Group A opener they piled up 353-3 with Jacques Kallis hitting an unbeaten 128, while Herschelle Gibbs wrote his name in history books by slamming six sixes in an over for the first time in one-day cricket during his 40-ball 72.

Mark Boucher made the fastest World Cup fifty off just 21-balls.

Only opener AB de Villiers failed to make an impact when he was

dismissed without scoring, a failure Smith was happy to write off.

"He (De Villiers) had a good series against Pakistan back home and there is no doubt in my mind that he is a good player and will be among runs soon," said Smith who hoped his team will keep up the momentum of the first match.

"We know Scotland are a slightly better side so we need to improve. We have analysed some video footage of them," said Smith whose side has never played Scotland in one-day internationals.

Smith has, however, played alongside Scotland's acting captain Ryan Watson during his school days back home.

Watson will replace regular captain Craig Wright who has gone home to attend a family funeral but will be back for his team's last group match against the Netherlands on March 22.

Scotland's Australian-born

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## Vaughan denies 'drink culture'

AFP, Gros Islet

England captain Michael Vaughan insisted his side did not have a drink culture after Andrew Flintoff was dropped from the team for their 51-run World Cup win against Canada.

Flintoff, who was also stripped of the vice-captaincy for the tournament, and five other players -- James Anderson, Ian Bell, Jon Lewis, Paul Nixon and Liam Plunkett -- were all fined for drinking into the early hours of Saturday morning following England's six-wicket defeat against New Zealand in their opening Group C match here Friday.

Former skipper Nasser Hussain, who led England from 1999 to 2003 when Vaughan took over as skipper, hinted at a drink problem within the England squad.

But Vaughan was adamant the recent excesses were a one-off.

"I don't see a drinking culture within this England team. I see a

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Tigers captain Habibul Bashar (C) helps a tiny tot to cut a cake during a dinner hosted by local Bangladeshi families to congratulate the Tigers win over India on Sunday.

PHOTO: TIGERCRICKET.COM