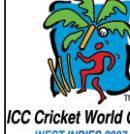




West Indies opener Shivnarine Chanderpaul (R) hits one off his pads for four as Ireland wicketkeeper Niall O'Brien looks on during their Group D World Cup clash at Sabina Park in Kingston on Friday.

WI stroll past Ireland

AFP, Kingston



Shivnarine Chanderpaul collected his sixth one-day International hundred to lead West Indies to a convincing eight-wicket victory (D/L Method) over Ireland in their rain-affected World Cup Group D match on Friday at Sabina Park.

Chanderpaul was undefeated on 102 from 113 balls, as West Indies, chasing a revised target of 190 from 48 overs, struck gold with 59 balls remaining, when Marlon Samuels stroked a waist-high, full toss from Andrew White over the mid-wicket boundary for six.

When Samuels was dismissed, Samuels came and played sensibly to ensure West Indies lost no more wickets before ending the match in grand style to a cacophony of noise from a capacity crowd.

To raucous cheering and the pounding music from the public address system, man-of-the-match Chanderpaul reached his landmark when he drove his 108th ball from Andrew White to long-off for a single. He struck four sixes and 10 fours.

When Samuels was dismissed, Samuels came and played sensibly to ensure West Indies lost no more wickets before ending the match in grand style to a cacophony of noise from a capacity crowd.

Earlier, Ireland, choosing to bat, were restricted to 183 for eight from their rain-reduced allocation of 48 overs, and the target for West Indies was increased under the Duckworth-Lewis Method which is used to readjust totals in weather-affected matches.

Jerome Bray hit the top score for Ireland of 41 from 72 balls, and Andre Botha gathered 28.

Chris Gayle, Darren Powell, and Dwayne Bravo collected two wickets apiece for West Indies.

West Indies had early success, when William Porterfield was caught at first slip off Darren Powell for a duck in the second over touching a short, rising ball.

Both West Indies and Ireland have secured their passes to the Super Eight quarterfinals of the competition, but the outcome of the match was vital, since it allows the World Cup host to carry a two-point bonus into the next stage of the competition.

The victory meant West Indies played unbeaten throughout the group stage and allowed them to top the group with six points, leaving Ireland second on three points, Pakistan third on two points, and Zimbabwe last on one.

Both Pakistan and Zimbabwe have been eliminated from the competition.

West Indies lost Chris Gayle in the fifth over, when he was caught at deep mid-off by Dave Langford-Smith for 18.

But left-hander Chanderpaul put the World Cup hosts firmly on course for victory, when he added

West Indies did not have to wait

too long for more success though. Morgan was caught at deep fine leg off Powell for 18, when he got carried away, hooked at a short, lifting delivery and his top edge flew almost 50 yards behind the stumps and keeper Denesh Ramdin held a superb running catch.

Two wickets in the space of nine balls further slowed Ireland's progress in the middle of their innings, and left the visitors on 82 for four.

Niall O'Brien was caught behind off Ian Bradshaw for 11 in the 21st over nibbling at a ball moving away, and next over, Bray drove at a slower ball from Jerome Taylor and was caught at mid-off for 41.

Kevin O'Brien arrived to consolidate for Ireland in a partnership of 47 for the fifth wicket with Andre Botha before he swung at a delivery from Gayle and was caught at deep midwicket for 12 in the 36th over.

Gayle struck again in the 40th over, when Botha sliced a pull, and he was caught at backward point for 28.

Bravo collected the wickets of Andrew White, bowled for 18, and John Mooney, caught behind, for a duck off successive balls after a break for rain.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Group D match between West Indies and Ireland at Sabina Park on Friday:

IRELAND

Bray c (sub) Simmons b Taylor 41
Porterfield Gayle b Powell 0
Morgan c Ramdin b Powell 18
O'Brien c Ramdin b Bradshaw 11
Botha c Ramdin b Gayle 28
O'Brien c Sarwan b Gayle 16
White b Bravo 18
McCallan not out 20
Mooney c Ramdin b Bravo 0
Langford-Smith not out 8

Result: West Indies won by eight wickets (D/L Method).
Man-of-the-match: Shivnarine Chanderpaul.
Toss: Ireland.
Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Ian Gould (ENG)
Match Referee: Roshan Mahanama (SRI)

Extras: (b-4, lb-11, w-6, nb-2) 23
Total: (For 8 wkt in 50 overs) 183

Did not bat: B. Rankin

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-61, 3-76, 4-82, 5-129, 6-139, 7-163, 8-163.

Bowler O M R W

Taylor 8 0 37 1

Powell 9 2 24 2

Bradshaw 9 0 27 1

Bravo 7 1 35 2

Gayle 10 0 23 2

Samuels 5 0 23 0

WEST INDIES

Gayle c White b Langford 18

Chanderpaul not out 102

Sarwan c O'Brien b McCallan 36

Samuels not out 27

Extras: (lb-1, w-6) 7

Total: (For 2 wkt in 38.1 overs) 190

Did not bat: Lara, Bravo, Smith, Ramdin, Bradshaw, Powell, Taylor.

Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-143.

Bowler O M R W

Langford 9 1 33 1

Rankin 5 0 38 0

Botha 6 0 35 0

Mooney 4 1 22 0

McCallan 10 0 35 1

O'Brien 3 0 13 0

White 1.1 0 13 0

Result: West Indies won by eight wickets (D/L Method).

Man-of-the-match: Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

Toss: Ireland.

Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Ian Gould (ENG)

Match Referee: Roshan Mahanama (SRI)

Joy-ride for Abahani

FROM PAGE 17

The Mohammedan number 10, however, had little effect on the game before being replaced by Farhad.

After an equal sharing of the ball in the first 15 minutes in front of a poor 10,000 holiday crowd, Abahani who were virtually playing in a 4-3-3 formation, began to reveal their real strength with Argentine forward Hector Pardi's lively moves.

Ujjal was equally brilliant and set Parodi with a square pass in the 16th minute but the Argentine's low drive was kept out by black and whites goalkeeper Himesh for a corner.

They wasted two corners before Ghanaians forward Ibrahim sent Parodi racing into the box but the latter fired wide from a difficult angle in the 21st minute. Two minutes later, Ujjal almost broke the deadlock with a spectacular sideways after a throw-in but his powerful

right-footer deflected off a rival defender for corner.

The home side, who fielded four Nigerians, tried to rebuild and won a series of corners but hardly made any impact on a tight Abahani backline led by Argentine central defender Mariano Caporale, who was excellent in aerial challenges.

In the second half, Mohammedan could not raise their game enough to create chances but Zahid and Divine's long-range efforts forced fine saves by Biplab, the Abahani goalkeeper who had a quiet first half.

Parodi put another early chance wide before Abahani's Argentine coach Diego Cruciani pulled off all three foreigners -- two for tiring out and Caporale due to an old foot injury -- in a bid to concentrate on holding onto the slim lead.

The two giants failed to please their fans in the rest of the game and showed lack of pace while trying to

be more technical but Shafiqul Islam Manik's side, otherwise handcuffed by a more defensive second-half Abahani, came close to snatching a late equaliser. However, the efforts of two overlapping defenders were not enough in the dying seconds as Arif's header went just wide after Kamal had chipped the ball from the right.

Yellow cards: Joy, Abul (Abahani), Paul (Mohammedan)

TEAMS

Abahani: Biplab, Siraj, Nazrul, Caporale (Pradip, 78th minute), Waly, Ujjal, Joy, Abul, Ibrahim (Pranotosh, 65th), Emily and Parodi (Zahid 60th).

Mohammedan: Himesh, Arif, Odeafe, Rezaul, Zahid (Asad, 89th), Kamal, Divine, Mithu (Sharif, 58th), Francis, Paul and Nakib (Farhad, 45th).

Referee: Tayab Hassan.

We can improve: Mahela

FROM PAGE 20

In New Zealand.

Jayawardene conceded that he felt his team's total of 254-6 was short of expectations against a strong Indian batting line-up, but off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and left-arm paceman Chaminda Vaas bowled really well.

"We knew how strong the Indian side was. They are a brilliant side, but any team can go through a day like this. Obviously, they have a class batting line-up. We also thought that 254 was probably short," he said.

"But we managed to get a couple of early wickets and that put pressure on them. When you are chasing

it's important that you have wickets in hand and I think that's where they went wrong."

"Rahul Dravid managed to keep one end intact, but Murali bowled really well and Vaas bowled really well upfront. A lot of credit should go to our young guys as well for the way they batted in really tough conditions."

Muralidaran grabbed three wickets and Vaas two as India were bowled out for 185, with Dravid top-scoring with 60.

The Sri Lankan captain said his team now had a chance to go far in the tournament, especially after carrying two points into the next round.

"I reckon three or four wins will probably secure a spot in the last four. But we don't want to look at it that way because if you are winning, it is a very good habit to have. We just want to continue that."

"There are some tough games. We just have to make sure we take one game at a time, like we did in this group."

"I reckon three or four wins will

probably secure a spot in the last four. But we don't want to look at it that way because if you are winning, it is a very good habit to have. We just want to continue that."

No revelation on match-fixing, says co-author

AFP, London

The co-author of murdered Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer's planned book insisted Saturday that it would not have contained any explosive revelations on match-fixing.

Ivo Tennant, writing in The Times newspaper, swiped at rumours that Woolmer was about to blow the whistle on corruption in the sport.

Speculation has swirled that the strangulation killing was carried out by criminals keen to avoid exposure in claims of match-fixing which may have arisen.

"Rumours that Bob Woolmer was murdered because he was harbouring information on match-fixing or an association with corrupt bookmakers can be dismissed unequivocally," Tennant wrote.

"As the co-author of his autobiography and its planned sequel, for which a publisher had still to be found, I can state that he had no intention of writing or publishing any such detail in either this or his book on coaching and sports science, which will be published in June."

Woolmer, 58, was found in his hotel room in Kingston, Jamaica on Sunday and declared dead in hospital, a day after Pakistan's shock defeat to Ireland saw the 1992 World Cup winners crash out of this year's competition.

A former England international, Woolmer was coach of South Africa when its then-captain Hansie Cronje was bought off by bookmakers in 1996, but was never alleged to have been involved himself.

"He had no knowledge of Hansie Cronje's involvement in match-fixing during his time as coach of South Africa, and, if there had been any such approach to his Pakistan players, he would have been involved himself."

"It is important to eliminate as well as identify suspects," he told reporters.

Pakistan Cricket Board chief Naseem Ashraf insisted "there is no suspicion on the Pakistan team."

"The Pakistani team were at the hotel like everyone else (and) they gave their statements -- they were never interrogated. The whole team is under a lot of trauma and stress," he told AFP.

The players were to leave

and we expect to do well if we play to our strengths."

Shivnarine Chanderpaul stroked his sixth one-day international hundred, an undefeated 102 from 113 balls, to guide West Indies over the line against the Irish.

"It's coming together, and everyone has had an opportunity," Lara said.

"There have been teams where players haven't had an opportunity because they were so good. All of our batters had a hit. We got our seven bowlers having an opportunity. It is good for us, but it is now for us to go out there and be more convincing."

"It is now for us to take hold of the situation, like Chanderpaul did in this match with the bat. I'm really comfortable with the guys in the field. We just need to up the ante a little bit with the bat in hand."

Both West Indies and Ireland had already secured their passes to the Super Eights, but the outcome of the match was vital, since

it allows the World Cup hosts to carry a two-point bonus into the next stage.

"I thought we played solid cricket throughout the three games, Lara said.

"It was a pretty tough group. Ireland played good cricket. Zimbabwe thought they had a chance at some point. We were very consistent."

"We're building to the point where we want to get onto the bigger games, the Australians, the South Africans, the biggest teams in the tournament. So far we've performed really well. I'm proud of the guys."

West Indies will feature in the opening match of the Super Eight stage of the competition, when they face defending champions Australia on Tuesday at the new Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua.

WI on course: Lara

AFP, Kingston

Brian Lara is thrilled with the momentum West Indies are carrying into the Super Eights of the World Cup.

West Indies completed an eight-wicket victory over Ireland in their final Group D match on Friday at Sabina Park which gave them a perfect record of three wins out of three in the first round