



PHOTO: AFP  
New Zealand opener Peter Fulton launches a sweep shot during his polished 83 as Ireland wicketkeeper Niall O'Brien looks on during their World Cup Super Eights match at the Guyana National Stadium in Georgetown on Monday.

## NZ get top spot

AFP, Georgetown



Peter Fulton hit a solid 83 as New Zealand boosted their chances of qualifying for the World Cup semifinals with an emphatic 129-run win over Ireland in a Super Eights match here on Monday.

The opener's sixth half-century and a rollicking 71-run stand for the eighth wicket by opener Brendon McCullum and James Franklin helped New Zealand reach a challenging 263-8.

Left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori bagged four wickets as New Zealand dismissed debutants Ireland for 134 to post their sixth successive win in the tournament, including three in the first round.

Defending champions Australia and New Zealand are the only unbeaten sides with eight points from four matches. They are followed by Sri Lanka (6/4), South Africa (4/4), England (2/4), the West Indies (2/4) and Bangladesh (2/4).

Ireland never looked like threatening New Zealand's total despite an entertaining 75-run stand for the fourth wicket between Kevin O'Brien (49) and brother Niall O'Brien (30). Kevin smashed three huge sixes in his 45-ball knock.

Fast bowler Shane Bond rocked Ireland with two quick wickets in his lively opening spell,

removing William Porterfield and Jeremy Bray to eventually finish with 2-18 off five overs.

Vettori and off-spinner Jeetan Patel (2-32) kept non-stop pres-

sure on Ireland, who lost their last seven wickets for 24 runs.

Earlier, man-of-the-match Fulton's responsible knock and a late flurry of boundaries from

wicket-keeper McCullum (47) and Franklin (34 not out) put paid to Ireland's hopes of restricting New Zealand to a modest total.

It was New Zealand's depth in batting that thwarted Ireland who reduced the opposition to 189-7 in the 43rd over before losing their way in the closing stages, with 45 coming in the last three overs.

McCullum's 37-ball knock contained a six in the last over that smashed a window-pane in one of the boxes, while Franklin hit one six and three fours in his 22-ball knock.

Seamer Dave Langford-Smith (2-41), and off-spinners Kyle McCallan (2-35) and Andrew White (2-45) had bowled with discipline to raise Ireland's hopes of containing New Zealand despite Fulton's half-century.

The New Zealand opener regained form with a well-paced innings just when his teammates had been struggling for runs against Ireland's disciplined seam-spin combination.

Fulton, a middle-order batsman opening the innings in the World Cup, had made only 62 in his last three matches before playing a valuable innings.

New Zealand were not allowed to build a partnership as Fleming (10), Hamish Marshall (16), Scott Styris (10), Craig McMillan (22) and all-rounder Oram (20) all got starts, but none could play a long knock.

## AND V NEW ZEALAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between New Zealand and Ireland at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on Monday:

	R	M	B	4s	6s
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>					
Fulton lbw b McCullan	83	160	110	9	0
Fleming c Porterfield b Rankin	10	26	11	1	0
Marshall c Morgan b Langford-Smith	16	21	21	2	0
Styris c N O'Brien b Langford-Smith	10	25	15	1	0
McMillan c Johnston b McCullan	22	29	29	1	1
Oram c Morgan b White	20	78	48	0	0
McCullum c Morgan b Johnston	47	49	37	2	1
Vettori c N O'Brien b White	5	6	7	0	0
Franklin not out	34	31	22	3	1
Bond not out	0	1	0	0	0
Extras: (b-3, lb-1, w-12)	16				
Total: (For eight wickets in 50 overs)	263				
Did not bat: Patel					
Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-59, 3-83, 4-118, 5-172, 6-181, 7-189, 8-260.					
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>NB/W</b>
Langford-Smith	10	1	41	2	w-1
Rankin	8	0	55	1	w-7
Johnston	10	0	63	1	w-1
McCullan	10	0	35	2	w-1
White	10	0	45	2	-
KO'Brien	2	0	20	0	-
<b>IRELAND</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>4s</b>	<b>6s</b>

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## Seven days for Sachin, Yuvraj

CRICINFO, undated

Sachin Tendulkar and Yuvraj Singh have been given seven days to explain their conduct to the Indian board for having spoken to the media on former coach Greg Chappell.

"The notices seeking an explanation were sent yesterday and they have been asked to respond within seven days," a BCCI official told Cricinfo.

The two players were issued notices on April 7 asking them to explain their comments to the media which were in violation of the board's Code of Conduct for its players.

On April 4 The Times of India published an interview with Tendulkar in which he said that Indian cricketers would be disappointed with Chappell if he questioned their attitude. "I've given my heart and my soul for 17 years," Tendulkar was quoted as saying. "No coach had mentioned even in passing that my attitude was not correct. Cricket has been my life for all these years and will always be."

"It's not that we are defending ourselves," he added. "We do realise that we played badly and, as a team, we take full responsibility for that. But what hurt us most is if the coach has questioned our attitude."

Yuvraj's comment to a television channel on April 6, that all the players supported Tendulkar, was also deemed a breach of the code.

## Spin to rule: Vettori

AFP, Georgetown



New Zealand's Daniel Vettori backed spinners to have a crucial role in the remainder of the World Cup on the Caribbean's slow pitches.

Vettori took 4-23 while fellow slow bowler Jeetan Patel snagged 2-32 as the Black Caps went to the top of the Super Eights table with a comfortable 129-run win over Ireland on Monday.

"It's nice to see spinners playing an important role and it's good to see us playing two," said Vettori who now has 12 wickets in the competition - the same number as fellow spinners, Australia's Graeme Hogg and Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralidaran.

Vettori and Patel took their wickets late in the Ireland innings as the World Cup debutants collapsed from 110-3 to 134 all out.

New Zealand, like defending champions Australia, have a maximum eight points and are virtually guaranteed a semifinal place although their remaining three Super Eights matches are against Sri Lanka, South Africa and the Australians.

"I'm not a big spinner of the ball, so I mixed up my pace today (Monday) and used some drift. Hopefully I can carry this form into the big matches we've got coming up."

New Zealand made 263-8 from their 50 overs with opener Peter Fulton being named man of the match for his 83 before Brendon McCullum (47) James Franklin (34) accelerated the scoring rate late in the game.

"260 was always going to be tough for them, but we still managed to turn the screw," said Vettori.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming paid tribute to Fulton.

"Fulton's innings was important because things were not going too well around him. I guess his 83 held things together and we were able to

post a competitive score once we got some hitting at the end," he said. "Ireland did exactly what we thought they would do. They put pressure on us and we weren't good enough to get partnerships in the middle."

"Vettori did a terrific job. He's not a massive turner of the ball, but his subtleties with pace and variation are very, very good. And he used that to great effect today (Monday)."

Ireland skipper Trent Johnston admitted the game got away from his team in the closing stages of the New Zealand innings.

"After the first ten overs I thought we bowled particularly well. We kept them down until around the 43rd over and then they got on top of us," said Johnston.

"It's one thing we've been working hard on (death bowling) but we didn't execute those plans today (on Monday). All credit to New Zealand. They are a very good team and will be one of the favourites to win this competition."

## Moni, Brahim rescue Reds



SPORTS REPORTER

Muktijoddha came from a two-goal deficit to hold a spirited Farashganj 2-2 in yesterday's exciting B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

A brace from young Bangladesh international Robin gave home side Farashganj a stunning 2-0 lead against the local giants at the break but Muktijoddha, who showed signs of improvement after a poor start to the competition, snatched early second-half goals through Brahim and Moni to avoid a defeat.

The draw -- the Red's second in six matches -- put them on top of the table by virtue of better goal difference as they came level with Sheikh

Russel on 11 points. However, Russel have played one match less and can regain the lead if they can bag at least one point in today's big match against another title aspirants Brothers Union.

Farashganj, meanwhile, moved one place up to eighth position with six points from five outings.

Muktijoddha, who began the league with a draw and a loss, won their next three matches to recover from the early damage but it was unfortunate for Abu Yusuf's boys to drop valuable points after dominating the whole show.

The riversiders who were without captain Faisal in the central defence, however, successfully created chances on counter attacks with hardworking fullback Arup and midfielder Kabir's lively performance.

It was Kabir who threatened first with a left side cross but Muktijoddha goalkeeper Titumir, who lost the ball, gripped it in his

second attempt to deny a lurking Rony a shot at the goal after 14 minutes.

Muktijoddha reasserted soon and the midfield took a clear-cut edge but Matir Munnas's shot was parried by rival goalie Mamun on the hour before Alfaz hit the sidebar a minute later.

The Reds, who attacked now and again, left wide spaces in their defence in the process to allow Farashganj take the lead five minutes from break. The young striker, chasing a through by Kabir, broke an offside trap laid by Muktijoddha centre-backs Rajani and Ghansah and effortlessly placed the ball past a bemused Titumir.

Robin found the net again on the stroke of half time when he put the ball into an open net after Rony dribbled past two defenders to burst down the left.

Muktijoddha refused to sit back

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PHOTO: STAR  
Muktijoddha Sangsad's Moroccan striker Brahim (L) vies for the ball with Farashganj defender Riyad during their B. League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP  
Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez (C) watches his charges as they drill at the Melwood training complex prior to their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal second leg clash against PSV Eindhoven on Tuesday.

## Reds taking nothing for granted

AFP, Liverpool



If Steven Gerrard leads Liverpool into the Champions League semifinals on Wednesday he shouldn't expect any thanks from Rafa Benitez.

Liverpool manager Benitez has revealed he keeps Gerrard on his toes by offering constructive criticism rather than praise, even when his captain has produced a match-winning display.

Gerrard's combination of perspiration and inspiration has been crucial in both of Liverpool's major successes under Benitez. The England international was heroic in the 2005 Champions League final against AC Milan and last year's FA Cup triumph over West Ham.

He was equally influential in last week's 3-0 Champions League quarterfinal first leg victory over PSV, scoring the opening goal with a powerful header to put Liverpool on course for a last four showdown with Chelsea or Valencia.

The talismanic midfielder is certain to be at the heart of the action when PSV visit Anfield for the return leg on Wednesday.

But, even though Gerrard is known to be slightly put-out by Benitez's tough-love approach to man-management, the Spaniard has no intention of changing his ways.

"I know he wishes I would say well done," Benitez told Liverpool's website. "But I like to put him under pressure. If you think the players can give something more you have to push them sometimes."

"I know he will be disappointed at times but the best thing anyone has ever said about me has come from my former players."

"They talk about me eight or 10 years afterwards. They say: 'I learned this from him'. I think my way is the right way to make Steven an even better player."

"I know he is a fantastic player and a nice person but he can do even better. I think he's more mature now."

"If I play him on the right, he plays well. If I play him in the middle, he plays well and if I play him

on the left, he will probably play well."

"Whatever you ask him to do, you will get 100 per cent. If he needs to play in goal he will do it."

"And there is more to come from him. He can be an even better player. Every year you will see him learn more."

Liverpool are hitting their stride at just the right time. Victory in the Netherlands was sandwiched between Premiership wins over Arsenal and Reading that underlined the Reds' current ruthless streak.

It would take a truly awful performance to allow Ronald Koeman's team to overhaul the first leg deficit, but Benitez knows from personal experience that ruling out a fightback could be fatal.

"We know there have been comebacks from 3-0 down in the Champions League, we did it in Istanbul," Benitez said.

"These kind of games are difficult. Sometimes teams say 'OK, the job is done'. But we have to be careful. We know if they score an early goal they will push forward and we could have problems."

"We must approach the game the same as we did against Barcelona in the last round and try to win. We do not go into the game thinking a draw will be enough. We need to go for a win."

While Benitez is cautious, the Dutch league leaders all but conceded defeat in the aftermath of the chastening loss at the Philips Stadium.

Their morale will hardly have been helped by a 2-1 defeat at NEC Nijmegen on Saturday that left PSV facing a tense struggle to retain their title.

Koeman has also not been helped by his team's lengthy injury list. Ivory Coast striker Arouna Kone is back after missing the first leg, but Michael Reiziger, Alex and Edison Mendez are all likely to miss out.

PSV captain Phillip Cocu admitted those injuries mean the tie is all but over. "We have lost all our aspirations of reaching the semis," he said. "In the Netherlands, squads are smaller compared to those of Liverpool or Arsenal."