

Kiwis fly into semis

AFP, St George's



New Zealand made certain of their place in the World Cup semifinals when they cruised to a five-wicket win over South Africa in their Super Eights match at the Grenada National Stadium Saturday.

"We were desperate to get to the semis," said New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming. "Now we can move forward."

New Zealand bounced back from their defeat against Sri Lanka two days earlier by restricting South Africa to 193 for seven and then reaching the target with ten balls to spare.

Fleming and Scott Styris both made half-centuries.

"We corrected some mistakes and did it very well. We learnt a lot from the last game," said Fleming.

The result left South Africa needing to beat England in their final Super Eights match in Barbados Tuesday to qualify for the semifinals. It also meant that Sri Lanka, already with eight points, qualified for the last four.

But South Africa vice-captain Jacques Kallis said his team remained confident.

England was always a must-win game, so in a way it's not a major thing losing today. It all boils down to England now. It's basically a quarterfinal for us and our fate is still in our hands which is a positive thing.

"We've had one or two bad performances. Losing to Bangladesh was a big loss for us and it could still come down to bite us. But if we can put in three big performances we can still end up with the World Cup in our hands."

New Zealand took full advantage of winning the toss and sending South Africa in to bat on an overcast day in conditions which helped their seam bowlers.

"There was good assistance in the first 15-20 overs and we made good use of it," said Fleming. "Winning the toss was a big advantage for us."

Kallis said the conditions were disappointing.

"It's frustrating when conditions play such a big role. The toss was vital. For the first 20 overs it was like a green Test wicket," he said.

"The guys did well to stick in there and give us a total we could bowl at. The bowlers did a fantastic job. If we had hung on to one or two chances it could have been different. Credit must be given to the bowlers for coming out on a different wicket and

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming (R) works the ball on the leg side as South Africa keeper Mark Boucher looks on during their World Cup Super Eights match at the Grenada National Stadium in St George's on Saturday.

We'll bounce back: Smith

AFP, St George's

South Africa captain Graeme Smith believes his team's greater experience will be crucial when they clash with England in a make-or-break World Cup clash on Tuesday.

South Africa slumped to a five-wicket defeat at the hands of New Zealand here on Saturday to leave their hopes of making the semifinals hanging by a thread.

But if they win the Super Eights clash in Barbados their last four place will be assured where they will join defending champions Australia, New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

"We will bounce back. We have lots of experience and we are looking forward to playing England," said Smith. "It's a crunch game."

South Africa were put into bat on Saturday and struggled to 193-7 with the Black Caps seamers, led by Shane Bond, making the most of the overcast conditions to put the Proteas immediately on the back foot.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

WC grounds need lights and action

AFP, St George's

Caribbean governments have been urged to install floodlights at World Cup grounds to boost their profitability after the tournament ends.

"The thing that all the venues need to do is get stadium lights," said Don Lockerbie, the World Cup's venue development director.

At the moment, only the Beausejour ground in St Lucia and the Vivian Richards stadium in Antigua, which both hosted first round matches, have floodlights.

"Stadium lights for the future should be the next phase for every stadium because that's going to help with night cricket, it's going to help with concerts, that's going to help with other trade shows and special events – church events, other events

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

'SA destiny in own hands'

AFP, St George's

South Africa can still reach the World Cup semifinals, but only if they improve their fielding, said vice-captain Jacques Kallis.

South Africa meet England in their last Super Eights match in Barbados on Tuesday knowing that a win will enable them to snatch the last semifinal place, while a defeat will probably allow England to get in ahead of them.

"It all boils down to England now," said Kallis after his side lost by five wickets to New Zealand at the Grenada National Stadium Saturday.

"It's basically a quarter-final for us and our fate is still in our hands, which is a positive thing."

South Africa put down three catches during a 78-run third wicket partnership between New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming and Scott Styris Saturday, as well as a fourth

RICA V NZEALAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between South Africa and New Zealand at the National Stadium in Grenada on Saturday:

SOUTHAFRICA	R	M	B	4s	6s
Smith c Oram b Bond	1	7	12	0	0
De Villiers lbw b Franklin	0	10	6	0	0
Kallis c Bond b Vettori	22	77	54	1	1
Gibbs b McMillan	60	139	100	2	1
Prince c Patel b McMillan	37	73	57	2	0
Boucher c Fulton b McMillan	16	21	21	1	0
Pollock not out	21	38	26	0	1
Hall c Oram b Bond	17	25	17	1	0
Peterson not out	8	6	8	1	0
Extras: (lb-3, w-7, nb-1)	11				
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	193				
Did not bat: ANel, M Ntini.					
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-3, 3-52, 4-128, 5-143, 6-149, 7-181.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Franklin	7	2	16	1	w-1

SEE PAGE 18 COL 3

chance offered by Craig McMillan when the game was virtually sealed.

"It was unfortunate," Kallis admitted. "When you're defending a total of 193 you need to take every chance. It was unfortunate that it was today. The fielding has been unbelievable up to now."

"We've got to make sure we're on top of our game against England and we have to take those half-chances. It's certainly something the guys will work on in the next few days."

Kallis refused to be drawn on the likely impact of former South African Kevin Pietersen, who has become the world's top-ranked one-day batsman while playing for England.

"They've got a few big match players," he said.

"There are a few guys that we'll have to watch out for. We'll have a few plans. We've had a good look at their side over the years and we know what their strengths and weaknesses are."

New Zealand captain Stephen

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Yousuf ready to captain

Cricket

AFP, London

Mohammad Yousuf said on Saturday that he was willing to succeed Inzamamul Haq as Pakistan skipper, one of the most unforgiving jobs in world cricket.

Though the batsman has not yet been offered the post, he would be one of the leading candidates, along with Shoaib Malik, after current vice-captain Younis Khan turned down the job on Friday.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has not contacted me but I have no problem leading the team," Yousuf told www.cricinfo.com.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

"I don't see any kind of pressure in the job. I think I'm a worthy candidate as in the last year I have really proven myself. It has always been an honour to represent Pakistan and it would be a real pleasure to lead the team at this difficult time."

Yousuf has captained Pakistan in three Tests, winning one against South Africa at Lahore and losing the other two to Australia in 2004-05 at Melbourne and Sydney.

"Whoever is selected, it should be soon. Ideally, a good step would be to appoint an experienced player and allow him to groom a youngster for the role," said Yousuf, one of the Wisden's Cricketers of the Year in 2006.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Until Younis Khan took over as vice-captain, Yousuf had held the post since the 2003 World Cup.

"I'm a senior player now and I have previous leadership experience," Yousuf said.

"We won that Test against South Africa and in Australia as captain, I made a hundred. And before that, I

was vice-captain so I am confident I can do the job justice."

Yousuf said there needs to be a quick decision on the captaincy to help restore confidence to a team which is still suffering from the double shock of Bob Woolmer's murder and their first round World Cup elimination.

"Whoever is selected, it should be soon. Ideally, a good step would be to appoint an experienced player and allow him to groom a youngster for the role," said Yousuf, one of the Wisden's Cricketers of the Year in 2006.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Semis itself a pressure, says Flemo

AFP, St George's

Playing in the World Cup semifinals will put huge pressure on New Zealand, according to captain Stephen Fleming.

Fleming said the players would have a few days off after qualifying for the last four with their five-wicket win over South Africa at the Grenada National Stadium Saturday before preparing for their final Super Eights match against Australia at the same ground Friday.

"The pressure's going to be on the next two or three games is more than any of our players have experienced and that's what we've got to come to grips with," said the Black Caps captain.

Fleming said that playing against Australia before the semifinals was probably a good thing for his team, especially as it came after a five-day break.

"It's always easy to get up for Australia games because they are so important to us," he said.

"So it's good that we're playing them last. It's important that you chill out for a few days and just reflect on what you've done and then rebuild again. If you stay too intense for too long you're going to burn out."

New Zealand have reached the World Cup semifinals four times previously without getting into a final.

"It's one step at a time," said Fleming. "To get to the semis was one step and then you're two games away from winning the World Cup."

"It's a pretty exciting proposition but also one that's uncharted in a way. I think this team is pretty well equipped to deal with the pressure. It's going to be a great occasion for us. I guess it's an opportunity."

Fleming said New Zealand would pick their best available

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Man Utd reach Wembley

Rooney brace in Watford rout

AFP, Birmingham



Manchester United secured a place in the FA Cup final and kept their treble challenge on track with a 4-1 rout of Watford in the semi-finals on Saturday.

Ferguson's perfect record both at Villa Park and in semi-finals with United remained intact at a canter after Wayne Rooney's two goals and strikes from Cristiano Ronaldo and Kieran Richardson ended Watford's dream.

It was nothing to compare with the stunning thrashing of Italians Roma in their midweek Champions League encounter but it was still another step towards Ferguson emulating his achievements of 1999 with triumphs in Europe, the Premiership and FA

Cup. Watford had looked energised away from their difficult struggles in the league campaign and their first half equalised with Hameur Bouazza, together with an impressive start to the second period, had served to create a more interesting tie than many had expected.

But once Rooney had swept in United's third, Ferguson was planning his return to Wembley for the first final staged there since 2000, with either Blackburn or Chelsea -- who play on Sunday -- the opponents that must attempt to halt the Old Trafford juggernaut.

Ferguson claimed Rooney's double had capped his best performance of the season.

"We'll send him for a scan tomorrow," he said. "It's a groin injury. We're hoping it's not too long. We'll get the results in the afternoon."

Ferguson was adamant that United had produced the finest evening at Old Trafford in their illustrious history in the incredible

defeat of Roma in the Champions League.

And they extended their scintillating week in the seventh minute with another spectacular goal. Rooney seized upon fatal hesitancy from the Watford defence to sidestep Adrian Mariappa and hammer an unstoppable shot into the top corner.

It looked as if another rout was likely, with Alan Smith nearly creating a second for Rooney shortly after.

But Watford, whose Premiership existence will be confirmed as over within the next few weeks, seemed to be less anxious without the necessity for league points at stake and were not as overawed as the neutrals had feared.

A sustained period of steady pressure nearly resulted in a shock equaliser, with Bouazza -- the scorer of the winner against Plymouth in the previous round -- nearly catching out Edwin van Der Sar with a long-range effort.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney (L) scores the first goal against Watford in their FA Cup semifinal match at Villa Park on Saturday.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4