



WHACK! South Africa captain Graeme Smith clatters the ball towards mid-wicket against England during the World Cup Super Eight match at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown on Tuesday.

## 'Prats of the Caribbean'

AFP, London



England cricket coach Duncan Fletcher should be sacked after England were dominated by South Africa in Bridgetown, Barbados, ending their hopes of making it to the World Cup semifinals, as England's press said on Wednesday.

South Africa dismissed England for a paltry 154 before racing to the target with more than 30 overs to spare in what was a must-win Super

Eights match for both teams.

The Sun tabloid, Britain's best-read daily, headlined its back page story on the defeat "Worst Indies" and said "Sunken Duncan" Fletcher's "bubble was puncturing and shredding all around him yesterday (Tuesday) as England suffered World Cup oblivion."

"It was another pathetic batting performance by an England team who have been far and away the most anaemic of the tournament."

According to The Times, the "precise figures have changed from match to match, but the theme of capitulation has remained all too constant."

England's "batsmen never tried

to impose themselves on an attack maintaining stereotypical discipline," the paper said.

For the Daily Mirror, meanwhile, England were the "Prats of the Caribbean," a reference to the blockbuster film, and the country's "cricketers will return in shame at the weekend after their pitifully meek World Cup exit yesterday."

"The nine-wicket defeat ... was the end of the road for their toothless campaign and should also signal the end of the road for Duncan Fletcher as coach," the paper's match report read.

"At no stage during six weeks in the Caribbean have England looked even remotely threatening."

Several other papers also anticipated a resignation, or sacking, for Fletcher, with The Guardian saying that the coach, "sphinx like as ever behind his shades, may well have been mulling over the thought that Saturday's dead rubber against West Indies will be his last game as their coach."

"It is possible Fletcher had already made his mind up to step down, but the humiliating nature of England's nine-wicket defeat to South Africa has surely removed any doubt."

The Daily Telegraph chimed in, as well, saying that "the recriminations for England should be swift."

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



Dancers take part in the carnival to showcase the island's heritage after the World Cup Super Eights match between South Africa and England outside the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown on Tuesday.

## 'Drunk with success'

AFP, Johannesburg



South African skipper Graeme Smith and his "merry men" were toasted by his country's media Wednesday after a blitz on the England team saw them burst into the cricket World Cup semifinals.

A day after being lambasted for partying into the wee hours of the morning following a woeful loss to New Zealand on Saturday, South Africa's press said the Proteas deserved a few drinks after their emphatic nine-wicket victory.

"Proteas drunk with success. Smith's merry men make it to semis as last round is called," read the front-page headline of the Star newspaper.

The Beeld newspaper quipped that Smith had served the English team their final drink.

"If this is how the South Africans play cricket after partying, they can do so after every match," Beeld said.

While reports of a drinking binge by the Proteas -- who have had a few wobbly performances in the world tournament -- had triggered heavy criticism, forgiveness was quick as a World Cup win came back into the team's sights.

A "sobering" thought indeed, said the Star.

"There would have been scores of supporters lining up to buy the South African team a drink last night," read the newspaper.

"After all the criticism they've endured, they would have surely raised a glass or three to their victory over England in Barbados yesterday -- and who would deny them that?"

The English team faced an unstoppable onslaught at Kensington Oval Tuesday, as fast bowler Andrew Hall took what the Citizen newspaper termed a "Five-wicket Hall", and South Africa surpassed England's paltry 154 total with more than 30 overs to spare.

As one South African commentator quipped during the match, the only thing England won was the toss.

Their decision to go in and bat first on the lively Caribbean pitch, which Hall said was very similar to South African conditions, was said

to have backfired horribly.

The South African media, which had played up rivalry between skipper Smith and England's South Africa-born batsman Kevin Pietersen did not let Smith's small victory -- catching Pietersen on three runs -- go unmentioned.

"For a change, Smith won the war of words as well," said the Beeld newspaper.

Smith was unabashed about his team's achievements, saying: "Our skills were superb, and we made our own luck."

The captain himself put on a superb performance, hammering 89 runs off 58 balls, including 13 fours.

Having qualified for the fourth place in the semifinals, all predictions are that South Africa will play Australia in Wednesday's match in St Lucia.

Beeld said the time had come for the Proteas to settle the score with Australia who had an easy victory over them during the first round in St Kitts.

## AND V SOUTH AFRICA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between England and South Africa at the Kensington Oval in Barbados on Tuesday:

| ENGLAND                        | R   | M   | B  | 4s | 6s |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Bell c Prince b Langeveldt     | 7   | 30  | 23 | 1  | 0  |
| Vaughan lbw b Nel              | 17  | 53  | 38 | 3  | 0  |
| Strauss c Smith b Kallis       | 46  | 113 | 67 | 2  | 1  |
| Pietersen c Smith b Nel        | 3   | 20  | 15 | 0  | 0  |
| Collingwood lbw b Hall         | 30  | 75  | 57 | 3  | 0  |
| Flintoff b Hall                | 5   | 14  | 10 | 0  | 0  |
| Bopara not out                 | 27  | 66  | 44 | 4  | 0  |
| Nixon c Boucher b Hall         | 1   | 3   | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Mahmood b Hall                 | 0   | 5   | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| Panesar c Boucher b Nel        | 2   | 30  | 28 | 0  | 0  |
| Anderson lbw b Hall            | 0   | 15  | 6  | 0  | 0  |
| Extras: (b-4, lb-4, w-5, nb-3) | 16  |     |    |    |    |
| Total: (All out in 48 overs)   | 154 |     |    |    |    |

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-37, 3-53, 4-111, 5-115, 6-119, 7-121, 8-121, 9-144, 10-154.

| Bowler     | O  | M | R  | W | NB/W      |
|------------|----|---|----|---|-----------|
| Pollock    | 10 | 2 | 17 | 0 | 1nb-1     |
| Langeveldt | 7  | 1 | 38 | 1 | -         |
| Nel        | 10 | 3 | 35 | 3 | nb-2, w-4 |
| Hall       | 10 | 2 | 18 | 5 | -         |
| Kallis     | 8  | 0 | 22 | 1 | -         |
| Kemp       | 3  | 0 | 16 | 0 | w-1       |

| SOUTH AFRICA                          | R   | M   | B  | 4s | 6s |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| De Villiers c Nixon b Flintoff        | 42  | 45  | 35 | 8  | 0  |
| Smith not out                         | 89  | 100 | 58 | 13 | 0  |
| Kallis not out                        | 17  | 54  | 25 | 2  | 0  |
| Extras: (b-4, w-3, nb-2)              | 9   |     |    |    |    |
| Total: (For one wicket in 19.2 overs) | 157 |     |    |    |    |

Did not bat: Gibbs, Prince, Boucher, Kemp, Pollock, Hall, Nel, Langeveldt.

Fall of wickets: 1-85.

| Bowler   | O   | M | R  | W | NB/W      |
|----------|-----|---|----|---|-----------|
| Anderson | 5   | 0 | 32 | 0 | w-2       |
| Mahmood  | 4.2 | 0 | 49 | 0 | nb-1      |
| Flintoff | 6   | 0 | 36 | 1 | nb-1, w-1 |

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

## Smith sheds chokers tag

AFP, Bridgetown

South Africa captain Graeme Smith believes his team have finally buried their chokers' tag after storming into the World Cup semifinals.

The Proteas raced to a nine-wicket victory over England here on Tuesday to join defending champions Australia, New Zealand and Sri Lanka in the semifinals.

Australia lead the Super Eights table with 12 points from six matches, followed by New Zealand (10/6), Sri Lanka (8/6) and South Africa (8/7).

When asked whether his team had finally shed the chokers' tag, Smith said: "I guess I can say yes. It was a big question (before the game). It was a big pressure day and I think we really demolished it."

South Africa had earned the dubious "chokers" tag after losing pressure matches in the past, but this time they raised the level of their performance when it mattered most.

Smith said his team needed to keep the momentum irrespective of who they play in the semifinal in St Lucia on April 25 where the pitch is expected to be low and slow.

However, it looks more than likely that they will face defending champions Australia for a place in the final.

"A semifinal is a semifinal. It's a big game, no matter who you play. It's one game away from the final and two away from winning the World Cup, so again it'll be another pressure day," he said.

"I guess it (the pitch) is another challenge, a challenge to win on a slow pitch. We just hope we come up with another big performance and get into the final. It's a big game for us."

"The team is on a high now and the momentum is good and dressing-room is really upbeat and positive."

The South African captain said he was confident his side could beat England in the match both the teams needed to win to boost their chances of making it to the semifinals.

"The way we played today we consistently believed that we could beat England. Our skills were superb," said Smith.

"We built pressure from the word go and bowled in the right areas. Andrew Hall's second spell when the ball was reverse-swinging was a great spell."

Fast bowler Hall was named man of the match for his maiden

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5



UEFA President Michel Platini opens the envelope to reveal Poland and the Ukraine as the winners in a bid to co-host the 2012 European Football Championships at a ceremony in Cardiff on Wednesday.

## Poland-Ukraine to co-host Euro 2012

Football

AFP, Cardiff

East European neighbours Poland and Ukraine were chosen in a shock vote by European football's governing body UEFA on Wednesday to jointly host the Euro 2012 championships.

They won the fight to host the quadrennial tournament involving the continent's top nations ahead of favourites Italy and another fancied joint bid from Hungary/Croatia.

It will be the first time that either Poland or Ukraine have hosted a major football championship and will be seen as major boost to the sport in eastern Europe in the face of decades of domination from wealthy western countries.

Next year's Euro 2008 finals will be jointly held by Austria and Switzerland.

The decision, announced by new UEFA president Michel Platini, was a huge shock as world champions Italy had been hot favourites, while

the Polish/Ukraine bid was seen as the rank outsider.

The Italians had been calling for a fresh start following concerns over the match-fixing scandal that rocked their domestic football last year and the crowd violence that halted all play earlier this year.

They boasted the best existing infrastructure and the experience of hosting two previous European championships in 1968 and 1980, and the 1990 World Cup finals and last year's Winter Olympics in Turin.

The quadrennial tournament was jointly hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands in 2000 and will be shared between Austria and Switzerland next year, but organisational problems were raised in the cases of Poland/Ukraine and Hungary/Croatia.

But UEFA officials pushed these concerns aside and instead grabbed the chance to award the finals to former Eastern Bloc countries for the first time since Yugoslavia hosted the 1976 finals.

Poland and Ukraine won in the first round of voting by the UEFA

## Pakistan name new selectors

AFP, Islamabad

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has named a new three-member committee to select a national team following the country's recent shock exit from the World Cup, officials said Wednesday.

Former Test off-spinner Salahuddin Ahmad was appointed as new chief selector, with Shafiq Rana and Saleem Jaffer, also former Test players, both members of the committee.

PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf "in consultation with the ad-hoc committee members has approved the new selection committee for a tenure of two years," a board spokesman told the official Associated Press of Pakistan news agency.

The final team for each match would be picked by a four selection committee comprising the team manager, coach, captain and vice captain, he added.

Pakistan is struggling to recover from its World Cup debacle in the Caribbean and the murder of its coach Bob Woolmer a day after the country lost to minnows Ireland.

They are also looking for a replacement for captain Inzamam-ul-Haq, who stood down after the fiasco. Vice-captain Younis Khan has already turned down the top job.

## Sachin parts bowling tips

PTI, Ahmedabad

Sachin Tendulkar on Wednesday took time out to give a few tips to Mumbai's young left-arm spinner Iqbal Abdulla.

After Mumbai's 44-run victory over Madhya Pradesh in a Twenty20 league match at Sardar Patel stadium in Motera, Tendulkar -- known for his ability to break partnerships -- took to the field with a ball in hand and Abdulla besides him.

The young spinner had caught everybody's attention with a five-wicket haul against Haryana yesterday.

Sachin seemed to be teaching Abdulla how to bowl a quicker one. He was seen instructing Abdulla on the grip and trajectory of the delivery.

Abdulla had finished with figures of five wickets for 10 runs in his four overs against Haryana and was instrumental in restricting the opposition to a low score.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6