

# NZ annihilate Zimbabwe

AFP, Ahmedabad

New Zealand romped to a clinical 10-wicket victory against Zimbabwe in the World Cup on Friday, boosting their chances of making it to the quarterfinals.

After bowling out the African nation for just 162, the Kiwis rode on unbeaten half-centuries by Martin Guptill and Brendon McCullum to canter to the target with 99 balls to spare in the Group A clash at the Sardar Patel Stadium.

The opening partnership between Guptill (86) and McCullum (76) was the highest for the tournament.

The victory, the second for New Zealand by a 10-wicket margin in the tournament, moved them up in the table with four points from three games. Pakistan lead the charts with three wins from as many matches.

Guptill, named man of the match, launched New Zealand's chase with a bang, carting seven fours and two sixes off 108 balls on way to his 10th ODI half-century.

McCullum was equally belligerent, hitting six fours and two sixes in his 95-ball knock.

"It was a good partnership," said McCullum. "It was definitely made a lot easier by the way we bowled. I

thought we were outstanding with the ball."

"A win like this is very good for confidence."

New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori said the win was a much-needed confidence boost.

"I think it's the performance that we were looking for. Now we've got to replicate that against some of the bigger nations," he said.

Zimbabwe captain Elton Chigumbura cut a sorry figure as he tried to explain his team's capitulation.

"It was a very disappointing game from us from ball one up to the end," he said. "Losing quick wickets is a problem. It's a game we will like to forget quickly and move onto the next one."

Earlier, seamers Tim Southee, Kyle Mills and Scott Styris shared six wickets after Chigumbura won the toss and elected to bat on a benign wicket.

**SCOREBOARD**  
Scoreboard of the World Cup Group A match between New Zealand and Zimbabwe at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad on Friday:

ZIMBABWE	
Taylor lbw b Styris	44
Coventry run out	0
Taibu lbw b Southee	8
Ervine c Ryder b Mills	11

Chigumbura lbw b Vettori	1
Chakabva c Taylor b Vettori	0
Lamb run out	18
Utseya b Southee	36
Cremer c B McCullum b Mills	22
Price lbw b Southee	11
Panyangara not out	4
Extras: (lb-4, w-3)	7
<b>Total: (All out in 46.2 overs)</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-2, 2-27, 3-42, 4-46, 5-46, 6-86, 7-89, 8-122, 9-157	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mills	10	0	29	2
Southee	9.2	3	29	3
Bennett	8	0	37	0
Vettori	10	3	25	2
Styris	4	0	13	1
N McCullum	3	0	15	0
Ryder	2	0	10	0

NEW ZEALAND	
Guptill not out	86
McCullum not out	76
Extras: (lb-1, w-1, nb-2)	4
<b>Total: (For no loss in 33.3 overs)</b>	<b>166</b>

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Panyangara	5.3	0	42	0
Price	7	0	23	0
Utseya	6	0	23	0
Lamb	5	0	18	0
Cremer	7	0	38	0
Chigumbura	3	0	21	0

**Result:** New Zealand won by ten wickets.  
**Man-of-the-match:** Martin Guptill.



New Zealand batsman Martin Guptill plays on the on-side on his way to an unbeaten 86 during their 10-wicket win over Zimbabwe at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Dan basks in big win

AFP, Ahmedabad

New Zealand will look to repeat their Zimbabwe magic against Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the World Cup, captain Daniel Vettori said Friday.

The Kiwis skittled out Zimbabwe for 162 before racing to the target in 33.3 overs to seal an emphatic 10-wicket victory in their key Group A clash at the Sardar Patel Stadium.

The win consolidated New Zealand's hopes of making it to the quarterfinals after having lost to Australia in their previous outing.

The Black Caps had beaten Kenya,

also by 10 wickets, in their opening match.

"This is the performance we were looking for," said Vettori. "We now need to replicate it against the bigger nations."

New Zealand have still to play Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as well as lightweights Canada, in their remaining league matches.

Vettori admitted their batting had been a concern going into the match against Zimbabwe.

"We thought long and hard about batting long. Brendon [McCullum] and Martin [Guptill] stood up and gave no one else an opportunity to bat, that was

great."

McCullum (86) and Guptill (76) plundered runs at will to post the highest opening partnership of the tournament so far.

"It was just about keeping to our game plan today," said Guptill, named man of the match. "Brendon and I did not want to push too hard and we kept going."

McCullum said the good show by their bowlers had made the batsmen's task easier.

"It was a good partnership. It was definitely made a lot easier by the way we bowled. I thought we were outstanding with the ball."

# Pakistan's wake-up call

AFP, Colombo

Captain Shahid Afridi admitted that the 2007 World Cup disaster against Ireland weighed heavy on his mind when Canada gave his team a major fright, saying it served as a good wake-up call for Pakistan.

Pakistan, bowled out for a paltry 184, were indebted to Afridi's one-man show, whose leg-breaks earned figures of 5-23 and helped his team avoid the kind of upset they suffered against Ireland in the Caribbean four years ago.

In the end Pakistan pulled off a 46-run win on Thursday, their third in as many matches to give the 1992 champions six points and top position in Group A, ahead of Sri Lanka and

defending champions Australia.

"Yes, that match in 2007 was on my mind," said Afridi, of Pakistan's infamous three-wicket defeat to Ireland in Jamaica which led to his team's first round exit from the last World Cup.

"I know what would have happened had we lost against Canada," said Afridi, of the possible backlash from the millions of fans back home.

"But I told the players we must play for a win, that we should not be negative and work hard irrespective of the result."

Afridi blamed poor batting for Pakistan's difficulties.

"I think there was poor shot selection and very poor batting," said Afridi of Pakistan's innings which was wrapped up in 43 overs.

## SPORTS POLL

### WEEKLY QUESTION

Who will be Bangladesh's highest run-scorer?

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### BTV/STAR Sports/STAR Cricket

ICC Cricket World Cup  
Sri Lanka v Australia  
Live from 3:00pm

### ESPN

English Premiership  
Birmingham City v West Bromwich  
Live from 7:00pm

Arsenal v Sunderland  
Live from 9:00pm

Man City v Wigan  
Live from 11:30pm

### TEN Action+

La Liga  
Barcelona v Real Zaragoza



### Bangladesh League

Sheikh Russel v Abahani  
Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal

# Barca seek home comfort

AFP, Madrid



League leaders Barcelona look for a third league win in a week as they host strugglers Real Zaragoza at Camp Nou on Saturday.

Barcelona needed a late goal from top-scorer Lionel Messi, who has 27 league goals, to seal a vital 1-0 win at Valencia on Wednesday and the champions are keen to maintain their seven point lead over second-placed Real Madrid.

"The Valencia win was a very important result. Points like these are what could win us the title," said Barcelona midfielder Xavi.

"There are still some difficult games to play. There's a lot at stake. But we're optimistic. We are pleased with the team dynamic, the way we're playing and the attitude."

Spanish international Xavi returned from

a calf injury against Valencia but Barcelona are still without goalkeeper Victor Valdes and captain Carles Puyol who are both doubtful for next Tuesday's Champions League second leg at home to Arsenal.

After difficult away matches at Real Mallorca and Valencia, Barcelona will be glad to be back at home although Zaragoza, two points above the relegation zone, are on a high after a 2-1 win at Athletic Bilbao on Wednesday.

Real Madrid closed back to within seven points of Barcelona with an emphatic 7-0 home win over Malaga on Thursday to maintain their 100 percent home record.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored a hat-trick in Madrid's biggest win of the season and coach Jose Mourinho will hope his side can now improve on their erratic away form - they have dropped 14 points on the road - in Sunday's trip to Racing Santander.

### FIXTURES

Saturday
Real Mallorca v Valencia (1700 GMT), Barcelona v Real Zaragoza (1900 GMT), Atletico Madrid v Villarreal (2100 GMT)
Sunday
all 1600 GMT unless stated Sporting Gijon v Getafe, Hercules v Almeria, Malaga v Osasuna, Levante v Espanyol, Athletic Bilbao v Sevilla (1800 GMT), Racing Santander v Real Madrid (2000 GMT)
Monday
Deportivo La Coruna v Real

# FA charges Ferguson

AFP, London



Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson was charged with improper conduct by the Football Association on Thursday following his criticism of referee Martin Atkinson in the defeat at Chelsea.

Ferguson appeared to question Atkinson's impartiality following United's 2-1 loss at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday, which saw the Red Devils manager hit out at Atkinson's failure to dismiss Blues defender David Luiz.

"The FA has today charged Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson with Improper Conduct relating to media comments," an FA statement said.

Ferguson has until 4pm (1600GMT) on Tuesday, March 8 to respond to the charge,

which could lead to a fine or a touchline ban.

In a scathing post-match tirade broadcast on Manchester United's official television channel, Ferguson gave a damning verdict on Atkinson's display.

"You want a fair ref. I don't know how he got this game. I must say, when I saw who it was, I did fear that," Ferguson told MUTV.

"It's three years in a row that decisions have changed the game here. It was incredible.

"Luiz had done (Javier) Hernandez off the ball and nothing was done. Then he does (Wayne) Rooney, clear as day.

"You are talking about what changed the game in the second half. These are decisions that change the game and he is going to be refereeing every week!

"I'm proud of my players. They endured a lot of bad decisions against them and they have done their best.



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo is about to score his second goal from a penalty during their Primera Liga encounter against Malaga at Bernabeu on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Real's magnificent 7

AFP, Madrid



Cristiano Ronaldo scored a second half hat-trick to make it 27 league goals for the season as Real Madrid crushed hapless Malaga 7-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu on Thursday to close the gap on league leaders Barcelona to seven points.

Ronaldo had gone four games in all competitions without a goal - a drought by his high standards - but the Portuguese star hit the goal trail as Real ran riot.

First half goals from French forward Karim Benzema, Argentine winger Angel di Maria and Brazilian full back Marcelo put Real into a commanding first half lead before Ronaldo took centre stage in the second half to give Manuel Pellegrini a horrid return to the Bernabeu.

Malaga coach Pellegrini guided Real to a record 96 points in the league last season only to be sacked after one season to pave the way for Mourinho's arrival.

Benzema started the match ahead of Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor and repaid the faith by opening the scoring on 27 minutes.

Xabi Alonso delivered a free-kick into the box and Malaga defended it poorly allowing Benzema to stay onside and the Frenchman used the outside of his right boot to steer a volley into the roof of the net.

crashed a left-footed free-kick off the post.

Real were looking menacing and scored again on 35 minutes as Malaga were blitzed on the counter attack.

The visitors were attacking with a corner but Madrid cleared and launched a speedy attack and some woeful defending allowed di Maria to run clean through on goal.

The Argentine showed good composure to side-foot home and then played a key role in the third goal on the stroke of half-time.

Di Maria floated a neat pass to Marcelo and the Brazilian thundered a left-footed volley into the corner as Real went in 3-0 at the break.

The second half belonged to Ronaldo as the world's most expensive player bagged a 26-minute hat-trick.

Ronaldo opened his account in the 50th minute and added his second from the penalty spot on 67 minutes with an emphatic spot-kick.

The Portuguese star completed his hat-trick nine minutes later after a good pass from substitute Sergio Canales and joins Barcelona's Lionel Messi at the top of the goalscoring charts on 27 goals.

Benzema grabbed his second on 61 minutes and could have had a hat-trick himself, while Ronaldo could have scored six or seven against a poor Malaga who stay second from bottom three points from safety.

Earlier Almeria stay rooted to the bottom of the Spanish first division after a 1-1 home draw with 10-man Racing Santander on Thursday.

### RESULTS

Almeria 1 (Crusat 64) Racing Santander 1 (Colsa 37)
<b>Real Madrid 7</b> (Benzema 27, 61, di Maria 35, Marcelo 44, Ronaldo 50, 67-pen, 76) Malaga 0