

# Brandishing a broken bat

AFP, Pallekele



AFP, Pallekele  
Birthday boy Ross Taylor destroyed the Pakistan attack in a devastating display of power hitting on Tuesday - and revealed he had done it all with a broken bat.

Taylor, celebrating his 27th birthday, hit 131 in 124 balls with a whopping seven sixes to take his side to a total of 302-7 in their 50 overs at the Pallekele Stadium.

He was helped out by Nathan McCullum, who smashed 19 in just 10 balls, and Jacob Oram, who hit 25 in nine balls, including three sixes, off a shell-shocked Pakistan attack.

Before he had even opened his account, Taylor received a huge let-off when an edge flew between wicketkeeper and first slip, and the same over 'keeper Kamran Akmal put down a straightforward chance behind the stumps when he was on eight.

"I had a bit of luck early on which I put down to my birthday but towards the end there I hit a few boundaries which was pretty sweet," said Taylor.

He said it had been tough going early on.

"They're very good exponents of reverse swing. I played and missed a lot but hopefully we can

learn from the way they bowled and keep them to a minimum."

Towards the end of his innings Taylor signalled for a new bat and he revealed the one he had been using had suffered damage before the match.

"I cracked it in the nets a couple of days ago. It seemed to go OK today but hopefully the new one can be just as good," he said.

Taylor said New Zealand's approach had been to establish themselves before launching a blitz at the end of their innings.

"One of our strengths is the power we have down the bottom and it showed today with the way Nathan McCullum batted and Jake (Oram). We had a bit of impetus to go into it so it was really good."

"I think it's probably a par total from where we were but hopefully we can get some early wickets and you never know," he added.

PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor is pumped up after completing a stupendous century during their World Cup match against Pakistan at Pallekele yesterday.



## What to WATCH

- BTV/STAR Sports/ STAR Cricket**
- ICC Cricket World Cup  
India v Netherlands  
Live from 3:00pm
- ESPN**
- Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 11:30pm
- English Premiership  
Everton v Birmingham City  
Live from 2:00am (Thursday)
- TEN Action+**
- UEFA Champions League  
Tottenham v AC Milan  
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)
- TEN Sports**
- UEFA Champions League  
Schalke v Valencia  
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

## DAY'S EVENT

Pre-Olympic Qualifiers  
Bangladesh v Kuwait  
Time: 5:00pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

## PRE-OLYMPIC QUALIFIER: 2ND LEG TODAY Hosts optimistic, Kuwait confident

### Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U23 football team will be looking for an improved performance when they take on Kuwait in the second-leg of the Pre-Olympic Qualifying tie at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Trailing by 2-0 goals from the first leg, Bangladesh have no option but to win the game by a better margin if they are to qualify for the next round. Coach Robert Rubcic is intent on putting up a good show if not winning the match outright which will be a very tough ask against a side, who have beaten Japan (3-0), Yemen (5-0) and Bahrain (1-0) in practice matches.

"I am looking forward for a good match tomorrow (Wednesday) against Kuwait. They are a very tough side, with six or seven dangerous and speedy players. I am optimistic about a good performance," said Rubcic at a pre-match briefing at the BFF House yesterday.

"Nonetheless, I believe our youngsters will play good football," Rubcic said. "We are not going to play the way we played against them in the away leg; there will definitely be a change in strategy."

Explaining the weakness of the squad, Rubcic said the players cannot run for the course of the 90 minutes and they could not cope up with the speed of the opposition players in the last match. Despite the limitations, the Croat is optimistic about presenting a challenge against Kuwait.

Kuwait, on the other hand, are confident about a win and are looking forward to the next round.

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Kuwait coach Maher Al Shammari (2nd from L) speaks at a press conference at the BFF Bhaban yesterday, ahead of today's Pre-Olympic Qualifier against Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

## Afridi a bowler who bats too!

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi, who is the leading wicket-taker in the ongoing World Cup with 14 wickets, on Monday said his success as a bowler has a lot to do with his changed mindset.

"There is no magic involved in my bowling now it is just that I have now started seeing myself as a bowling all-rounder rather than a batting all-rounder. I am now paying a lot of attention to my bowling since last year and I have worked hard on it and that is why it is getting me results now," Afridi said.

Afridi said the favourable conditions in Sri Lanka, where Pakistan are playing their home matches, have also contributed to his success.

"The pitches are slow but give grip to the wrist spinners and the odd ball tends to jump up from a good length and that is what makes batsmen unsure about what to do next."

Afridi said he had always carried a lot of pressure on himself as a batsman and at times ignored his bowling capabilities.

### SPORTS POLL

#### WEEKLY QUESTION

Who will be Bangladesh's highest run-scorer?

Visit the sports page of [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net) to cast vote

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## Watto welcomes Hussey back

AFP, Bangalore



Australia all-rounder Shane Watson believes the call-up of Michael Hussey is "brilliant" news for the defending champions as they chase a fourth straight World Cup title and fifth in all.

Veteran batsman Hussey, 35, was named in Australia's original 15-man squad but then dropped because of a hamstring injury that needed surgery.

However, he has since recovered and the Western Australia left-hander has got his chance after being summoned to the sub-continent as a replacement for injured fast bowler Doug Bollinger.

Hussey's inclusion will bolster Australia's ability to play spin bowling and he is also a noted 'finisher' of a one-day innings, being particularly adept at rebuilding following the loss of early wickets.

"It's brilliant," said Watson on Tuesday. "I was hoping Mike would come over."

"It's going to give us a huge boost to have someone of his calibre flying in to be a part of our squad and with a very

big chance of playing immediately as well."

Hussey was due to join the squad late on Tuesday local time.

Australia have had to endure an extraordinary schedule at this World Cup, being co-hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

They had to wait eight days to play Sri Lanka last weekend, only for the match to be a no-result washout, and now face a seven-day break before facing Kenya at Bangalore's Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday.

But they then return to the same ground three days later to take on Canada.

"That's the disappointing thing about the last game, that it got washed out and now we've got another week to wait," opening batsman and medium-pacer Watson added. "We're having to fill in the time again."

One consolation for Watson is he has been joined by his wife, Lee Furlong, a presenter with the Australian television channel Fox Sports.

"It definitely makes a difference to the days when women weren't on tour as much. It makes balancing your life a

bit easier."

With few members of Australia's middle-order having spent much time in the middle so far, skipper Ricky Ponting may be tempted to alter his batting order for games against group makeweights Kenya and Canada.

"I've thought about that for the last couple of days actually, but I'm not exactly sure if they (the management) have got anything in mind," Watson said.

"They haven't talked to me about it. We've just got to make sure that everyone is in the best place possible going into the quarterfinals."

"I suppose it could be like our match against Ireland in the 2007 World Cup when Mike Hussey opened the batting and Andrew Symonds batted at three to give him a chance of getting some time in the middle."

Many pundits have predicted this World Cup could be the one that ends Australia's reign as champions but Watson said: "The more I've seen throughout this tournament so far, the more confident I am we've got the team to, at our best, go on to win this tournament."

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