

NZ high on confidence

AFP, Mumbai

New Zealand are brimming with new-found confidence after three wins on the trot took them into the quarterfinals of the World Cup, says opener Brendon McCullum.

New Zealand hammered Canada by 97 runs at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday to become the second team from Group A to sail into the last eight.

"We are slowly starting to play how we want to play and we move into the next game knowing that we have played well over the last couple of games," McCullum said.

"The confidence is starting to seep into the team. That is something we desperately need.

"We are proud of what New Zealand teams have been able to achieve in past World Cups -- they consistently gave themselves the opportunity."

The Black Caps made it to the semifinals twice in the last three World Cups in 1999 and 2007 despite starting as underdogs.

Their build-up to this edition was far from encouraging as they suffered series defeats at the hands of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Before Sunday, they had defeated Kenya, Zimbabwe and Pakistan but lost against holders Australia.

The manner of their triumph against Canada has now put them in good stead ahead of their last league outing against a strong Sri Lanka side on Friday.

"It was a key victory (against Canada)," said wicketkeeper-batsman McCullum who posted his first World Cup century to set up his team's emphatic win.

"We were able to play to roles we were trying to play to and execute the kind of skills we were hoping to achieve.

"Anytime you win, anytime you perform well, anytime that you get some confidence out of the game, that certainly helps.

"When we came here we had gone through a pretty tough time back home (a 3-2 defeat to Pakistan). But none of that mattered once we arrived here.

"It was a matter of making sure this team was able to go out and play its best cricket, each of us understood our roles."

McCullum said new coach John Wright had been a huge influence behind the scenes.

"Wright has been instrumental. He has been able to offer that experience and confidence to each player. We have seen this New Zealand team operate with a clear role which you can't say about some New Zealand teams in the past.

"The biggest turnaround is that we are going in with more confidence."

Colly not retiring

AFP, Chennai

England's Paul Collingwood has scotched speculation on his one-day future after coming in to bat at number eight during the World Cup defeat to Bangladesh.

Collingwood quit Tests during the Sydney Test against Australia in January this year to allow himself to focus on one-day internationals and Twenty20 cricket.

The Durham all-rounder, who led England to a famous World Twenty20 triumph last year, has had an unimpressive run in the tournament so far, managing just 61 runs and one wicket from four league matches.

He missed the win over South Africa through injury.

"One reason I retired from Test cricket was to prolong the one-day side of things and I still feel I have major contributions to make," Collingwood, 34, said.

"I'm still the Twenty20 captain. I want to continue that as well. It's not in my mind to even think about things like this (my future)."

Collingwood shrugged off England's topsy-turvy form at the World Cup where they need to beat the West Indies on Thursday to keep up their hopes of a last-eight place.

"I see things developing very much how the Twenty20 did last year in the West Indies. We scraped through the group stages, but once we did we really put our performances together and went on to win it.

"We really need to focus on getting this complete game. You put the whole thing together, and we're a formidable team. We want to do that against the West Indies."

Collingwood said the scheduling of the World Cup, that followed on the heels of a gruelling Ashes and one-day campaign in Australia, was no excuse for their showing so far.



WRECKER-IN-CHIEF: Bangladesh spinner Abdur Razzak bowls during the World Cup match against the Netherlands at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Kallis thinks the world of Steyn

AFP, Kolkata

Jacques Kallis hailed South Africa teammate Dale Steyn as the world's greatest bowler on Monday after the pacesetter's five-wicket performance inspired the crucial World Cup win over India.

Steyn's 5-50 was key to the Proteas' three-wicket win in Nagpur on Saturday after India had been well set for a huge total when they stood at 267-1.

But India lost their last nine wickets for just 29 runs in nine overs to be bowled out for 296.

"It showed why Dale Steyn is the best bowler in the world and has been for a couple of years now," said Kallis.

"What's the difference between a really good bowler and a great one? You can, eventually, subdue a really good bowler and get on top of him, especially as he gets tired.

"You can never do that with Dale. He is as likely to get you out with the new ball as he is with one that is 100-overs old in his sixth spell."

Kallis also admitted that he was relieved to be back among the runs, making 69 against India, having made a total of just 21 in the team's previous three outings.

"It was a relief to contribute some runs for a change after just making 20-odd before," he wrote in a column for the Hindustan Times.

"There's no doubt that conditions changed significantly during the second innings and batting was more awkward."

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
Which has been the most exciting team in this World Cup so far?
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
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What to WATCH

BTV/STAR Sports/ STAR Cricket
ICC Cricket World Cup
South Africa v Ireland
Live from 3:00pm
TEN Action+
UEFA Champions League
Man United v Marseille
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)
TEN Sports
UEFA Champions League
Bayern Munich v Inter Milan

DAY'S EVENT
Bangladesh League
Rahmatganj v Muktiyoddha
Time: 3:00pm
Brothers Union v Sheikh Jamal
Time: 5:30pm
Venue: Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal



Zimbabwe batsman Craig Ervine plays a sweep shot as Pakistan wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal looks on during their World Cup match at the Pallekele International Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan need 162

AFP, Pallekele

Pakistan restricted Zimbabwe to 151-7 in 39.4 overs before a second rain interruption curtailed the first innings of the World Cup Group A match on Monday.

Pakistan, chasing a win to guarantee a quarterfinal berth, need 162 in 38 overs under the Duckworth-Lewis formula. One point from a no result or tie would also be enough for them to qualify for the last eight.

Seamers Umar Gul (3-36), Abdul Razaq (1-24) and Wahab Riaz (1-21) removed the top four for just 43 after Zimbabwe captain Elton Chigumbura won the toss and chose to bat in overcast conditions at Pallekele stadium.

Spinners Shahid Afridi and Mohammad Hafeez, with a wicket each, further derailed Zimbabwe, who at the first rain break were 96-5.

Left-hander Craig Ervine fought a lone battle, hitting a patient 52 off 82 balls with five boundaries for his third ODI fifty, before Hafeez bowled him in his first over.

Chigumbura (32 not out) and Prosper Utseya (18) added 48 for the seventh wicket.

Zimbabwe were off to a disastrous start, losing in-form Brendan Taylor off the fifth ball of the innings, caught off Razaq by wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal.

Gul made it 5-2 when he dismissed Regis Chakabva off the last ball of the second over, before removing Vusumuzi Sibanda (five) shortly afterwards.

Ervine and Tatenda Taibu added 30 for the fourth wicket before Wahab Riaz, in for Shoaib Akhtar, had Taibu caught off a miscued drive at

mid-off by Afridi for 19.

Pakistan left out Umar Akmal, who failed to recover from a finger injury sustained on Thursday. He was replaced by Asad Shafiq.

Zimbabwe also made two changes, leaving out pacemen Christopher Mpofu (injured) and out-of-form Tinashe Panyangara to include Sibanda and Shingirai Masakadza.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of Zimbabwe innings in the rain-shortened World Cup Group A match against Pakistan at Pallekele Stadium on Monday:
ZIMBABWE
Taylor c Kamran b Razaq 4
Chakabva lbw b Gul 0
Taibu c Afridi b Riaz 19
Sibanda c Misbah b Gul 5
Ervine b Hafeez 52
Lamb c & b Afridi 16
Chigumbura not out 32
Utseya c Kamran b Gul 18
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-2) 5
Total: (For seven wickets in 39.4 overs) 151
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-5, 3-13, 4-43, 5-84, 6-103, 7-151.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Razaq	7	1	24	1
Gul	7.4	1	36	3
Riaz	6	0	21	1
Afridi	8	0	33	1
Rehman	8	1	24	0
Hafeez	3	0	11	1

Porterfield cautioned

AFP, New Delhi

Ireland captain William Porterfield was reprimanded on Monday for criticising an umpiring decision after his side's defeat to the West Indies in the World Cup.

Porterfield had criticised the leg before decision handed to Gary Wilson at a crucial juncture during Friday's crunch match in Mohali.

As Porterfield accepted the sanction without contest, there was no need for a hearing, said a press release by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"Although it may not be unusual for a captain to feel aggrieved or frustrated by what he feels is a rough decision, it does not give him any right to criticise the umpire as William did," match-referee Roshan Mahanama said.

Swann sorry, to atone for it

AFP, Chennai

Graeme Swann is eager to atone for his foul-mouthed rant during England's defeat by Bangladesh when they face the West Indies in a must-win World Cup match in Chennai.

England need to beat the Caribbean side on Thursday if they are to have any chance of reaching the quarterfinals and at the same time hope other results go their way.

Swann was caught swearing on air during England's two-wicket loss to Bangladesh on Friday after he became frustrated at being unable to grip the ball properly while bowling because of the late evening dew.

The defeat was the second time in the tournament that England have lost a match they were expected to win after their shock defeat to non-Test nation Ireland.

But in a roller-coaster tournament, England have also tied with co-hosts India and beaten a highly fancied South Africa side.

"If you're completely taking out of the game a facet such as spin bowling, personally I don't see the point of playing day-night cricket in a dew area," Swann said on Monday as he recalled his Bangladesh outburst.

"It's obviously something that's disappointing, what happened, and I'm a bit ashamed about my own behaviour," said

Swann, fined 10 percent of his match fee. Conditions are likely to be far more suited to Swann's liking at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

"I hope the wicket is similar to the South African one, because I loved bowling on that. If I could roll it up and take it around the world with me, I happily would," said Swann, who took 1-29 against the Proteas.

The 31-year-old was at a loss to explain how the bulk of a side that romped to a 3-1 Ashes Test series win in Australia in January was proving so inconsistent in the 50-over format.

"We're just not managing to put both facets of our game together at the minute. That's something we nailed down pretty well in the Test match arena over the last 18 months.

"In one-dayers, we're still searching for that magical elixir."

Kevin Pietersen, whose World Cup was cut short by a hernia injury, has slammed the team's "ridiculous" schedule, saying England's prospects of winning the trophy for the first time had been hit by their hectic schedule.

However, Swann said England were not alone in having to cope with the demands of a relentless schedule.

"It's just the way it falls. The World Cup is always after the toughest (northern hemisphere) winter for us. But it's no excuse. It certainly isn't the reason we're not playing well -- because we're all fit.

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