



Scotland may not have scored a lot of runs but their bowlers almost made a match out of it by dismissing seven New Zealand batsmen at the University Oval in Dunedin yesterday.

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Kiwis survive Scottish scare

AFP, Dunedin

New Zealand limped to a three-wicket win over Scotland on Tuesday, maintaining World Cup momentum only after the minnows gave the co-hosts' much-vaunted batting line-up a bloody nose.

New Zealand skittled Scotland out for 142 after putting them into bat, effectively ensuring there would be no repeat of Monday's match when Ireland, another non-Test nation, downed the West Indies.

While the Black Caps overhauled their target in 24.5 overs, they could have been in trouble if set a stiffer chase after a strong effort with the ball saw Scotland take seven wickets.

A rash of New Zealand batsmen threw away their wickets chasing glory with wild shots, showing none of the controlled aggression that has made them one of the tournament favourites.

Captain Brendon McCullum said they

could not afford to be so wasteful in Wellington on Friday, when they face an England side desperate to bounce back from a 111-run loss to Australia.

"It was a really good performance with the ball -- with the bat, we showed glimpses but we have to improve," he said.

"England will be a challenge -- they're

The Export Leader



hurting, they'll be tough to beat and we'll have to play incredibly well."

The Black Caps fielded an unchanged line-up from their 98-run win over Sri Lanka, determined not to drop their standards against unfancied opposition.

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MATT MACHAN

Machan may have ended up on the losing side yesterday but there's no doubt as to how threatening he can be throughout the World Cup. At a time when his colleagues departed in a jiffy, Machan consolidated and scored a fighting 57 off 79 deliveries. He was in good touch in the practice matches as well, scoring a 103 against Ireland and helped his side thump their Associate rivals. Thanks to the Scot, the bowlers had a shot at winning the match yesterday, which they almost did as they managed to grab seven New Zealand wickets.

'Associates no side-shows'

AFP, Dunedin

Scotland captain Preston Mommsen said Tuesday his side's stirring display against New Zealand underscored the value of having so-called "second-tier" nations at the World Cup.

The Scots gave the Black Caps a fright at Dunedin's University Oval, taking seven wickets before the co-hosts limped to a three-wicket win in pursuit of a meagre victory target of 143.

Mommsen said his attack had exposed New Zealand's powerful batting line-up, something former world champions Sri Lanka were unable to do when they slumped to a 98-run defeat by the Black Caps in Sunday's opening match of the tournament.

"I think it showed their batters were vulnerable if you're able to keep them under pressure consistently and put the balls in good areas, as any batter is," he said.

Mommsen added he was pleased with the way Scotland responded to a top-order collapse that left his side 12 for four, with half-centuries from Matt Machan (56) and Richie Berrington (50) giving them a glimmer of hope.

"I'm very proud of the fightback and character we showed in the second half," he said.

"I was very disappointed with the first half performance, barring Richie and Matthew... but the fighting charac-

ter, that's something we're proud of."

The Scotland skipper, a strong critic of plans to cut the number of teams at the tournament, said his side had showed "Associate" non-Test playing nations could be competitive.

Combined with fellow non-Test nation Ireland's upset win over the West Indies on Monday, Mommsen said Scotland's display should prompt a rethink of plans to scale back the event.

"Hopefully the performance we put on today, it gets people talking and shows people that Associates belong at World Cups," he said.

There are 14 teams in the current World Cup being staged in Australia and New Zealand.

With the top four teams from each of the two pools of seven qualifying for the quarterfinals, those unhappy with the World Cup's current format argue that it takes far too long to decide what is often an all-too-predictable list of teams for the last eight.

The International Cricket Council has indicated that only 10 nations will contest the 2019 World Cup in England, with the top eight teams in the global rankings joined by the two best sides from a qualifying event a year earlier.

However, critics such as Mommsen argue that this would thwart plans to expand the game beyond its established core nations.



WORLD CUP COCKTAIL

Shane Warne questioned whether he had the swagger to become a quality Test quick but Mitchell Johnson has had little hesitation in endorsing his fellow left-arm, Mitchell Starc, as a future mainstay of the Australian attack in both forms of the game.

"I haven't been surprised (at Starc's form) because his one-day form has been outstanding. I was never worried that he wouldn't perform at one-day cricket," Johnson said.

"He's got everything that it takes to be a spearhead. He's doing all the right things at the moment. He's just going out there and enjoying himself, bowling fast, swinging the ball and that's what it's all about.

"The more cricket he plays, the more he learns. It's good to have some senior guys around to help him out. I'm sure if he continues the way he is he'll be a champion one-day bowler and Test bowler in the future."

Proteas' viral birthday video

The South Africans are well aware of their status as World Cup chokers, and through the power of song they're aiming to ease the pressure on skipper AB De Villiers ahead of their crucial match against India. One of the world's best batsman turned 31 on Tuesday.

For his special day, his teammates put together a rousing rendition of 'happy birthday' in the locker room to mark the occasion. Kyle Abbott joined in the sing-

ing from the shower, David Miller made his contribution from another private corner of the bathroom and Dale Steyn refused to break from shaving to lend his dulcet tones in the video.

Ajmal blasts umpire

Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Ajmal alleged on Monday that third umpire Steve Davis had victimised Pakistan after he ruled Umar Akmal caught behind on a referral decision during their opener against India on Sunday.

"Steve Davis never upheld any appeal when I bowled and I had to always ask for a referral to get a wicket when he was the umpire," Ajmal recalled.

"He has always had issues with us and even when we didn't want him for a match no one listened to us," Ajmal said. "When the snickometer didn't show anything and there was no sound why was Umar given out on referral. Why was the field umpire's original not out decision not upheld," Ajmal questioned.

Dhoni asked to stop collecting bails

Everyone is aware of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's penchant for collecting stumps as souvenirs after every India win but he won't be able to collect any during the ongoing World Cup anymore.

The World Cup in Australia and New Zealand has LED stumps, which are touch-sensitive and blink whenever the bails get whipped off.

Just after India completed their win against Pakistan at the Adelaide Oval, Dhoni took one of the bails but Ian Gould, the umpire, had a chat with him which saw the bail remaining where it was.

The specific reason being that the stumps cost USD 40,000 and the pair of bails costs as much as an iPhone 6.

Wasim feels 'hurt'

Pakistan's former captain Wasim Akram has offered to help the national cricket team salvage its World Cup campaign.

"I am in Australia and New Zealand and I am ready to do my bit to help out the Pakistan team in their World Cup campaign. I know a lot about the current players. But so far no one neither the management nor the board has asked me for assistance," Akram said.

Akram said he was unhappy that fingers were pointed out at him for helping out players from other countries, notably India, and not the Pakistani players.

"What am I supposed to do? Go and stand outside the Gaddafi stadium that please give me employment... I want to do something for Pakistan cricket. How does anyone expect me to get involved with the Pakistan team in the World Cup if no one asks me," he said.

"What hurts me is that no one from the Pakistan camp has thought it fit to ask for my help or advice. I am here and I am willing to help. I have told the PCB time and again I don't want a job, I just want to help out the players," he said. — COMPILED

Boult swung too early

REUTERS, Dunedin

Trent Boult would be used to seeing a field packed with slips and a gully in his first over of a match, particularly for a hat-trick delivery.

Probably not so much in a one-day international.

The 25-year-old had just trapped Scotland's Calum MacLeod and Hamish Gardiner on successive deliveries in New Zealand's World Cup clash with Scotland at University Oval in Dunedin.

With his control of swing and seam position, New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum had packed his field behind the wicket sensing his left-arm could achieve what England's Steven Finn did last Saturday and take a World Cup hat-trick.

The delivery, however, swung too early and Matt Machan was able to leave it and let it go behind to wicketkeeper Luke Ronchi.

"When we get conditions like that where it does swing, and we get that little bit of assistance out of the wicket then the wickets kind of come," Boult told reporters after the tense three-wicket win for New Zealand.

"It's about putting pressure on them and myself in turn trying to keep it as simple as possible."

Boult was named player-of-the match for his opening spell of two for 21 from six overs, though less than six months ago it was debatable whether he would be at the World Cup.

He has been an automatic choice in New Zealand's Test side with his ability to swing the ball both ways at genuine pace.

That seemed to have pigeon holed him as a Test bowler, where he is able to bowl a fuller length and get the ball to do the work for him, and he was picked for just one limited-overs match from November 2012 until October 2014.

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