

6s
200
4s
1052

WHACK O METER
SHAH CEMENT

Most 6s hit by a player
Chris Gayle
 West Indies
17

Most 4s hit by a player
K Sangakkara
 Sri Lanka
30



PARTNERS IN CRIME: South Africa opener Hasim Amla (R) and one-down Faf du Plessis put the Irish bowlers to the sword in a one-sided World Cup match in Canberra yesterday. The pair added 247 runs for the second wicket.

Amla, du rock de S Africa

AFP, Canberra

South Africa captain AB de Villiers hailed Hashim Amla as the team's "rock" after the opener cracked 159 in the crushing 201-run World Cup win over Ireland on Tuesday.

Amla reached his 20th one-day international century faster than any batsman, his career-best score coming in his 108th innings, with India's Virat Kohli the next quickest to reach 20 tons, in 133 innings.

"Amla is still the rock and will always be that for us. He was incredible. Hopefully that form can continue for the rest of the tour," said de Villiers, whose team are virtually certain of a place in the quarterfinals after a third win in four matches.

"It was a good game. We did it our way. We follow our game plans and the guys set it up very nicely up top for our middle order.

Amla had made 65 in the 257-run rout of the West Indies and praised his team, who have now racked up two successive totals of 400-plus.

Five different players have also made centuries in South Africa's four games.

David Miller (138 not out) and JP Duminy (115 not out) both reached three figures against Zimbabwe, while de Villiers hit 162 not out against the West Indies before Amla and du Plessis reached three figures on Tuesday.

"Fortunately we got off to a good start. We had wickets in hand so that gave us the luxury of being able to go for it, to see what happened and fortunately it paid off," said Amla.

"Any hundred is a good hundred. I'm just happy to get some runs and set it up for the boys at the back end."

Match facts

Hashim Amla reached his **20th** one-day international century, faster than any batsman, in only his 108th innings.

The Proteas piled up **411** for four, the second-highest total in World Cup history.

Amla and Faf du Plessis (109) put on **247** for the second wicket while fast bowler Kyle Abbott finished with figures of four for 21 at Canberra's Manuka Oval.

5 different players have made centuries in South Africa's four games.

5 Number of times that South Africa have won a World Cup match by a margin of 200 runs or more, the most by any team. Australia are next on the list with four such wins.

5 Number of **400**-plus scores for South Africa in ODIs, the joint-most for any team. India have five as well.

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Proteas overpower Irish

AFP, Canberra

South Africa captain AB de Villiers on Tuesday backed his team to go far in the World Cup following a 201-run romp over hapless Ireland in Canberra to record their third win in Pool B.

Hashim Amla and Faf du Plessis hit centuries while Dale Steyn shone in his 100th one-day international as South Africa showcased their prowess with the rout of Ireland.

Amla scored 159 off 128 balls to become the fastest man to reach 20 ODI centuries and du Plessis made 109 as the Proteas piled up a massive 411 for four after taking first strike at Canberra's Manuka Oval.

Steyn put aside worries of mountain fires near his home in Cape Town as he bowled a hostile opening spell to wreck Ireland with two wickets in his

first three overs.

The fast bowler, who had grabbed just three wickets in South Africa's first three pool matches, finished with two for 39 and Kyle Abbott grabbed four for 21 as Ireland were bundled out for 210 in 45 overs.

The Proteas are often regarded as the best team never to have won cricket's showpiece event, having fallen in the knock-out rounds after cruising through the league stage.

But de Villiers was confident history

could be re-written this time, but preferred not to look too far ahead.

"Look I have believed for the past year that we can win the World Cup, but we are taking it pretty much match by match," de Villiers said.

"I have told the boys to try and not watch other games, just focus on what we have to do. The focus now is to play Pakistan in Auckland on Sunday.

"When we reach the quarterfinals we will think of the opposition and give it our best shot."

South Africa's third win in four matches brought them level on six points with defending champions India, who have played one less match.

Ireland were left with four points from three games and their next game is against Zimbabwe in Hobart, also on Sunday.

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Long live Amla

ATTIQUE ANAM

There are quite a few types of strikers in modern day cricket. There are the McCullums who try to set the pace right from the get go with cuts, pulls, punches and over-the-top hits. There are the de Villierses who come later in the innings, play unconventional and improvised shots like the reverse sweeps, slog sweeps, switch hits and what not to make the runs go sky high. There are the Russells who come deep into the innings and maximise the few deliveries they get with raw power and great timing.

And then there are only a few like Hashim Amla. The quintessential textbook cricketer who hardly plays a shot out of the text or uses extra power to get things moving, yet manages to motor along at a staggering rate of almost 90 in ODIs and 123 in T20s.

Take for instance his innings yesterday against Ireland. The stylish opener blocked the first six balls of the innings from John Mooney as he sussed the nature of the wicket, before milking it through mid-on and point in the very next over. One of those shots was a bit uppish, and after a reprieve courtesy of Kevin O'Brien in the sixth over, Amla middled everything that was thrown his way. Soon the strike rate was oscillating between 90 and 105 before his 21st ODI hundred came in exactly a run-a-ball. The innings hit top gear in the batting powerplays as Amla took Mooney for 27 in the 37th over before getting dis-

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SOUTH AFRICA V IRELAND

SOUTH AFRICA	R/B	4/6		
Amla c Joyce b McBrine	159/128	16/4		
De Kock c Wilson b Mooney	1/4	0/0		
Du Plessis b K O'Brien	109/109	10/1		
De Villiers c N O'Brien b McBrine	24/9	1/2		
Miller not out	46/23	4/2		
Rossouw not out	61/30	6/3		
Extras: (b-1, w-7, nb-3)	11			
Total: (For 4 wks in 50 overs)	411			
Did not bat: Behardien, Steyn, Abbott, Morkel, Tahir.				
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-259, 3-299, 4-301.				
IRELAND	R/B	4/6		
Porterfield c Du Plessis b Abbott	12/17	2/0		
Stirling c De Kock b Steyn	9/6	2/0		
Joyce c Amla b Steyn	0/4	0/0		
N O'Brien c Amla b Abbott	14/9	2/0		
Balbirnie c Rossouw b Morkel	58/71	7/0		
Wilson lbw b Abbott	0/3	0/0		
K O'Brien c Rossouw b Abbott	48/65	3/1		
Mooney b De Villiers	8/15	0/0		
Dockrell b Morkel	25/57	1/1		
Sorensen c De Kock b Morkel	22/19	3/1		
McBrine not out	2/4	0/0		
Extras: (lb-3, w-9)	12			
Total: (All out in 45 overs)	210			
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-21, 3-21, 4-42, 5-48, 6-129, 7-150, 8-167, 9-200.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	8	0	39	2
Abbott	8	0	21	4
Morkel	9	0	34	3
Tahir	10	1	50	0
Behardien	2	0	13	0
Rossouw	2	0	13	0
Du Plessis	4	0	30	0
De Villiers	2	0	7	1

Result: South Africa won by 201 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Hashim Amla.
Toss: South Africa.

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Man of Steel

HASHIM AMLA

159 off 128 balls; when you read Hasim Amla's score out loud you tend to imagine a ferocious innings with cross-batted whips and strokes down-the-track with the player dripping in Canberra's humid conditions. The South African's innings though depicted anything but that. The way Amla casually nudged the singles seemed like magic. It was like watching a calm craftsman at work, with his hands producing a creation ever so special. After reaching his century, courtesy of a gentle push down the ground, Amla gently lifted his bat and acknowledged the crowd. There wasn't any overreaction, no relief and neither was there a fist-thump; and he eventually went on to smack 50 more runs. It's a sign that Amla is hungry for more and that's not particularly good news for the rest of sides.

As fickle as it can get

REUTERS, Canberra

Ireland got an early and painful reminder of what a fickle mistress cricket can be in their 201-run defeat at the hands of South Africa in their third World Cup match on Tuesday.

The Irish, who came into the contest at Manuka Oval with a burgeoning reputation and two victories under their belts, had already removed South Africa opener Quinton de Kock when Kevin O'Brien came on to bowl in the sixth over.

De Kock's partner Hashim Amla, who had scored 10 runs, clipped the first delivery to Ed Joyce at mid-wicket only for the former England batsman to put the catch down on the Manuka Oval turf.

Some 44 overs later and Amla had 159 runs next to his name on the scoreboard and Ireland were chasing a high on impossible target of 412 for victory.

"Obviously it was a big chance there and he obviously made us pay," said Ireland captain William Porterfield.

"He's a fantastic player, we're not going to get too many chances off him, especially in such a good wicket.

"But that's cricket, we've got to move on from that."

Ireland's run chase also started badly as South Africa's pacemen Dale Steyn and Kyle Abbott combined to reduce them to 42 for four in the ninth over.

"When you are four down coming out to 10, you are going to struggle," Porterfield said.

"All credit to the lower order, there was some pretty aggressive bowling out there but they stuck at it. I was very pleased the way we kept going on the field."

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Kevin O'Brien has his own way of celebrating. Here he punches the stumps after clean bowling Faf du Plessis yesterday.

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