



More than half of Shikhar Dhawan's runs came through boundaries as the powerful India opener smashed his way to 100 runs against Ireland at Seddon Park yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Another India game, another Dhawan ton

AFP, Hamilton

Shikhar Dhawan hit an aggressive century as defending champions India recorded their fifth victory in a row at the World Cup with a thumping eight-wicket win over Ireland in Hamilton on Tuesday.

Chasing a modest 260-run target, Dhawan raised his second century of the tournament off 84 balls as India lost only two wickets in only 36.5 overs on a batting-friendly Seddon Park pitch.

This latest victory meant India, yet to lose at this World Cup and already into the quarterfinals, were guaranteed to finish on top of Pool B ahead of their last group game against Zimbabwe in Auckland on Saturday.

Ireland, meanwhile, will likely need a win against Pakistan in their last pool match in Adelaide on Sunday to reach the last eight.

"We have put in a lot of yards in the last few weeks. It is all about being fresh for Pakistan. If you can't get up for these games you won't be up for any," said Ireland captain William Porterfield.

Pakistan, Ireland and South Africa, who all have six points in five matches, will vie with the West Indies (four points) for the three remaining quarterfinal spots on offer

from Pool B.

Ireland's Niall O'Brien scored a run-a-ball 75 while Porterfield made a solid 93-ball 67 in Ireland's 259 all out in 49 overs.

India proved their strength in batting yet again as Dhawan and Rohit Sharma (64) put on their team's best World Cup opening stand of 174 against a struggling Irish attack.

Dhawan, who stroked 137 in the win over South Africa, completed his eighth



one-day international hundred with a single off Kevin O'Brien to square leg. He reached three figures off just 84 balls.

But one ball later Dhawan fell to a loose shot off Stuart Thompson.

In all, Dhawan hit 11 fours and five sixes. Rohit was dismissed when he played on to Thompson after hitting three sixes and as many boundaries off 66 deliveries.

Earlier, Ireland failed to capitalise on a good solid start after winning the toss.

# Dhoni's experiment works A lesson for the Irish

AGENCIES, Hamilton

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni took the opportunity to give his pace bowlers a good workout on a slow pitch by delaying the introduction of his spinners in Tuesday's World Cup match against Ireland at Seddon Park.

"Our bowlers are really doing the job for us, they've stepped up -- not just the three fast bowlers, the spinners are complimenting them and when we've used part-timers they've done well," said the captain.

The defending champions have played each of their previous four Pool B matches in Australia and will complete the group stages against Zimbabwe at Eden Park in Auckland on Saturday.

Tuesday's eight-wicket win over Ireland confirmed they will top their group after five successive wins.

On Tuesday, Ireland made a flying start after William Porterfield had won the toss, reaching 89 before losing their first wicket from the final ball of the 15th over.

They were then stifled by the Indian spinners, with Dhoni using Suresh Raina's off spin to back up Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, and were eventually dismissed for an inadequate 259 with an over to spare.

Dhoni said later it was crucial to be flexible over his tactics and he would have introduced spin close to the fourth over had it been a must-win match for his team.

"The few slower ones that were bowled definitely got a bit of bounce and the ball gripped on the surface. So in a really crucial game for us the spinners would have come in really early,"

he told the post-match news conference.

Dhoni said the new ball was coming on nicely to the bat, which was a good learning curve for his fast bowlers.

"Maybe in the next game we will do it slightly different. I think when we play in Auckland the wicket will be very different. This [Seddon Park] is the slowest New Zealand wicket that you will see," he said.

Dhoni praised the bowling of Ashwin, whose first eight overs cost only 19 runs.

"I have pushed him to bowl in the power plays and to use him in difficult situations. He's very confident about his bowling, he understands his bowling well. The good thing about him is he keeps improving," Dhoni said.

"It's obviously good to have him and he's bowling very well."

REUTERS, Hamilton

Ireland captain William Porterfield drew consolation from posting the highest total against defending champions India in the cricket World Cup so far despite a crushing defeat on Tuesday.

India overhauled Ireland's 259 all out in their Pool B match at Seddon Park for the lost of only two wickets in the 37th over. The Irish must win their final match against Pakistan in Adelaide on Sunday to clinch a place in the quarterfinals ahead of West Indies.

"We have been confident with the

bat throughout," said Porterfield, who scored 67 and shared an opening partnership of 89 with Paul Stirling (42).

"We played very well for long periods of that game today. But it just shows how ruthless you have to be the way India batted there.

"You have to kick on and score hundreds. We had a couple of 60s and 70s there. But we've chased down 300 and we've set 330 when we batted first."

Porterfield said Ireland had lost a couple of quick wickets and then managed to lose a wicket every time they

picked up momentum.

"We could probably have put them under a bit of pressure but we didn't want to go too hard too soon especially after losing those couple of wickets.

"We just lost those wickets at crucial times and it slowed us down. We didn't kick on as much as we would have liked but you have to give them credit as well," he said.

Porterfield said the team would "hone up" on Adelaide in the next couple of days.

"We will have everything behind the scenes ready," he said.

POINTS TABLE						
Pool A						
	M	W	L	D	Pts	NRR
New Zealand	5	5	0	0	10	+3.090
Australia	5	3	1	1	7	+1.597
Bangladesh	5	3	1	1	7	+0.211
Sri Lanka	5	3	2	0	6	-0.151
Pool B						
	M	W	L	D	Pts	NRR
England	5	1	4	0	2	-1.001
Afghanistan	5	1	4	0	2	-1.881
Scotland	4	0	4	0	0	-1.423
India	5	5	0	0	10	+2.157
South Africa	5	3	2	0	6	+1.462
Pakistan	5	3	2	0	6	-0.194
Ireland	5	3	2	0	6	-1.014
West Indies	5	2	3	0	4	-0.511
Zimbabwe	5	1	4	0	2	-0.595
UAE	4	0	4	0	0	-1.691

Note: Top four in each group qualify for quarterfinals

## Ariful slams 112

SPORTS REPORTER



A tensed finale is shaping up at Fatullah as league leaders Dhaka, after posting 318 in their first innings reduced Rajshahi to 2216 for 6 on the second day of the seventh round of the National Cricket League.

Young leg spinner Jubair Hossain scalped three wickets to do the damage. Myshukur Rahman top-scored for Rajshahi with 55 and helped them cross the 200-run mark. At ground number two in BKSP, Rangpur posted a mammoth 491, courtesy of an unbeaten century from Ariful Haque. He came in at number seven to hammer 12 sixes in his 56-ball century. He remained unbeaten on a 112. His feisty innings overshadowed Elias Sunny's six-wicket haul. In reply, Dhaka Metro were reduced to 299 for 4 at stumps.

At the other game in the BKSP, Chittagong are headed towards yet another defeat as they were struggling at 45 for 3 at the close of play yesterday. A late century

from Ziaur Rahman, who scored 122, helped Khulna post 369 and take a sizeable first innings lead in the game.

Meanwhile, Sylhet continued their good run in the league as they finished the day on 330 for 8 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium at Mirpur against Barisal yesterday. Veteran Rajin Saleh, remained unbeaten on 96.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**DHAKA:** 318 all out in 106 overs (Shuvagata 111; Muktar 4-76) v **RAJSHAHI**: 216 for 6 (Myshukur 55, Hamidul 42 not out; Jubair 3-86)

**RANGPUR:** 491 all out in 111.2 overs (Ariful 112 not out; Elias Sunny 6-156) v **DHAKA METRO**: 299 for 4 (Mehedi 138, Saykat 88; Shuvo 2-71)

**CHITTAGONG:** 190 all out and 45 for 3 v **KHULNA**: 369 all out in 88.1 overs (Ziaur 122, Mehedi 80; Rana 4-65, 4-77)

**BARISAL:** 167 v **SYLHET:** 330 for 8 (Rajin 96 not out; Nasum 4-112)

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## INFO ZONE

SRI LANKA			SCOTLAND		
M	W	L	M	W	L
Never played before			Never played before		
IN ALL ODIS					
M	W	L	M	W	L
1	1	0	1	0	1

Last Meeting: 13 th Jul 2011 at Edinburgh. Sri Lanka won by 183 runs.

KEY PLAYERS			
<p><b>KUMAR SANGAKKARA</b></p>	41.73	<p><b>KYLE COETZER</b></p>	
	378		BAT AVG
	78.76		INNS
	14065		STRIKE RATE
	169		RUNS
	93		HS
24	50s		
104	100s		
	LAST MATCH	156	

FAN ZONE

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শোভাযাত্রা  
 অসুরত্ব  
 Freshness



Looks like the ICC was inspired by Mahmudullah's shot and created their logo. Indians and Irish bonded in Hamilton, while some lucky fans were given some seats next to the pitch.



Tas Neem: pleasing to see that Dhoni is not sticking to a formula. Reacting to conditions and situation, and doing it well.

Alhamdulillah. Now next mission is to win the quarter final in Sha Allah! #RiseoftheTigers. Anand Vasu: What's well.