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SANGAKKARA NUMBERS

- 1 the only batsman to score four 100s in a single World Cup.
- 4 consecutive 100s, the first batsman to do so in ODI history.
- 5 World Cup 100s, just one shy of Tendulkar's record 6
- 54 dismissals as a wicketkeeper in World Cup matches, the record highest
- 1025 the first player to score 1000-plus international runs in 2015.

← AFTER YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS! Kumar Sangakkara leads his teammates off the field after his record-breaking exploits helped Sri Lanka to a 148-run victory over Scotland at the Bellerive Oval in Hobart yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

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S'kara sends Scots packing

AFP, Hobart

Kumar Sangakkara became the first batsman to score four consecutive one-day centuries as Sri Lanka thrashed Scotland by 148 runs in the World Cup in Hobart on Wednesday.

The left-hander hit 124 off 95 balls and Tillakaratne Dilshan made 104 as the islanders piled up 363 for nine and then bowled Scotland out for 215 in 43.1 overs in the Pool A match at the Bellerive Oval.

Skipper Preston Mommsen (60) and Freddie Coleman (70) put on 118 for the fourth wicket but they provided the only Scottish challenge as seamers Nuwan Kulasekara and Dushmantha Chameera grabbed three wickets each.

Sangakkara also took two catches to overtake Adam Gilchrist as the most successful World Cup wicketkeeper with 54 dismissals. The Australian had 52 victims to his name.

Sri Lanka ended the league with four wins from six matches and now await an undecided opponent in the first quarterfinal at the Sydney Cricket Ground on March 18.

Scotland's fifth successive defeat means they will take an early flight home after their final league match against Australia at the same venue on Saturday.

Sangakkara, 37, who will retire from one-day cricket after the World Cup, had made 105 not out against Bangladesh, an unbeaten 117 against England and 104 against Australia.

He is the the leading scorer in the ongoing tournament with 496 runs from six games.

Sangakkara leapfrogged six players who had scored three ODI centuries in a row -- Zaheer Abbas and Saeed Anwar, Herschelle Gibbs, AB de Villiers and Quinton de Kock, and Ross Taylor.

Don't go, Mathews begs Sanga

AFP, Hobart

Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews said Wednesday that he has gone down on his knees to beg record-breaking batsman Kumar Sangakkara not to quit after the World Cup.

Sangakkara, 37, will call time on his ODI career at the end of the tournament but he is still in a rich vein of form -- on Wednesday he became the first batsman to score four consecutive one-day centuries as Sri Lanka thrashed Scotland by 148 runs.

The left-hander hit 124 off 95 balls and 38-year-old Tillakaratne Dilshan made 104 as the Islanders piled up 363 for nine and then bowled Scotland out for 215 in the Pool A match at the Bellerive Oval.

Sangakkara had also made 105 not out against Bangladesh, an unbeaten 117 against England and 104 against Australia.

He is also the leading scorer in the ongoing tournament with 496 runs from six games.

If that wasn't enough, Sangakkara also took two catches to overtake Adam Gilchrist as the most successful World Cup wicket-keeper with

54 dismissals. The Australian had 52 victims to his name.

"I've been on my knees asking Kumar not to retire but we have to respect his wishes because we are thankful for all the times he has represented the country," said Mathews.

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The skipper added: "The boys played really well and credit should go to Dilshan and Sangakkara, they are getting better and better with age.

"We have to take one game at a time and play positive cricket. If we can improve our

bowling and fielding, it will be great but the batters have posted 300 four times in a row. That is never easy."

Despite his form, Sangakkara, who has played 403 ODIs and made over 14,000 runs, insisted that there will be no going back on his decision.

"Retirement is not about form, it is about time and place and whether it feels right. It is never about whether you can play or not," he said.

Sri Lanka had already qualified for the quarterfinals and will likely face South Africa in the last eight while Scotland have now lost all five matches.

But the Scots made a fight of it with skipper Preston Mommsen (60) and Freddie Coleman (70) putting on 118 for the fourth wicket.

"Today was a huge learning experience, especially watching some of the best batsmen in the world. We saw how they kept calm under pressure, so we could learn a lot," said Mommsen.

"Sangakkara is definitely No. 1 in terms of the players we have had to play against."

POINTS TABLE

Pool A						
	M	W	L	D	Pts	NRR
New Zealand	5	5	0	0	10	+3.090
Sri Lanka	6	4	2	0	8	+0.371
Australia	5	3	1	1	7	+1.597
Bangladesh	5	3	1	1	7	+0.211
England	5	1	4	0	2	-1.001
Afghanistan	5	1	4	0	2	-1.881
Scotland	5	0	5	0	0	-1.769
Pool B						
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

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JOSH DAVEY

If you were asked who the leading wicket-taker so far of this World Cup is, surely names of Trent Boult, Mitchell Starc or Tim Southee would pop up. You could be in for a shock if someone told you that some Scottish bowler is actually beating these vaunted pacers for the top spot. Yes, that is exactly what little known Josh has achieved so far. With 14 wickets in five matches, the Scotsman leads the two Kiwi bowlers by a wicket and the Aussie by two. Davey has taken a minimum of two wickets in each of the five matches so far at an average of 19.5 and economy rate of 6.06. Not bad for a bowler from an associate member nation, is it? But sadly for Davey, he may not remain in that position for too long, since the Scots will be going home after their match against Australia on March 14.

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WORLD CUP COCKTAIL

In a media talk at Adelaide on Wednesday, Pakistan batting coach Grant Flower said he felt the best was yet to come from the Pakistani batsmen.

"They are yet to fire and I would like to think their best is still to come and if not then we wouldn't go too much further into the tournament," Flower said.

Flower has been with the Pakistan team since last year and batting remains a major concern for the team.

"I expect the top order to show some more spine because that is what the guys are paid for. They are aware that they can bat a lot better than they have. But the signs were there against UAE and they played some positive cricket against a good South African attack."

Scotsman axed for racist tweet

Scotland all-rounder Majid Haq has been thrown out of the World Cup for posting a racial tweet after being dropped from Wednesday's match against Sri Lanka in Hobart and is travelling home from the tournament, the Scottish board confirmed.

Haq, Scotland's leading ODI bowler with 60 wickets and three half-centuries to his name, had played in his team's four previous matches taking just three wickets and making a top-score of 31 against Afghanistan.

"Always tougher when you're in the minority!! #colour #race" tweeted 32-year-old Haq, who is of Pakistani descent.

The post was later deleted.

Williamson hit by bug

Bowlers struggle to do it, but a gastro bug has managed to rip through Kane Williamson, forcing him to miss training at Seddon Park today.

Williamson, along with Daniel Vettori and Grant Elliott suffered illness after the victory over Afghanistan in Napier. Vettori and Elliott had recovered enough to train.

Williamson is not understood to be in danger of missing New Zealand's final pool match against Bangladesh on Friday.

Botham's mood spoilt by England

Cricketing great Sir Ian Botham had a blunt message for the humiliated England team today.

"They're in a good position now: BA (British Airways) - home."

Botham is a guest at the New Zealand Open golf tournament this week and when



asked if the Cricket World Cup had been a tough watch, he replied: "Is there something going on? I must have missed it and so did the England team."

"They were awful, to be quite frank. You get what you deserve in sport and if they want to keep playing in the 1980s style in 50-over cricket, good luck to them. The penny might have dropped - it doesn't work."

'Starc is the most feared'

As far as George Bailey is concerned, right now Australia's Mitchell Starc is more feared than any other bowler.

Only Josh Davey (14), the New Zealand pair of Trent Boult and Tim Southee have taken more wickets (13 each) and they've both played one match more than Starc.

Meanwhile Morkel has 11 wickets for the tournament and Steyn has a mere eight.

"I would say he's more feared," Bailey said, when asked if Starc was now in the same bracket as Steyn and Morkel.

"He's got some really specific skills at the death that very few guys in the world are able to produce. That would be weighing on teams' minds," he added.

- COMPILED