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5 facts

AB de Villiers (1,043) needs 106 runs to pass Jacques Kallis (1,148) as South Africa's leading World Cup run-scorer. Herschelle Gibbs has 1,067

Manjula Gurung's 4 for 56 against Pakistan are the second-best figures for United Arab Emirates at World Cups

Quinton de Kock (82.1 per cent) and Andri Berenger (77.1 per cent) have the highest dot ball percentages in the tournament

Krishna Chandran (15 per cent) has played the lowest percentage of attacking shots in the tournament

Khurram Khan is one of three players to score 100-plus runs at World Cups at the age of 40 or more (also Misbahul Haq and Flavio Alphonso)



Skipper AB de Villiers would hope to lead the South Africans from the front when they take on United Arab Emirates at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington today.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Decide on de Kock'

CRICINFO, Wellington

The toughest task facing South Africa's selectors as they approach the quarterfinals is what to do with Quinton de Kock, according to Graeme Smith. While the former national captain endorsed de Kock's long-term future despite his current lean patch, he indicated South Africa seek a quick-fix solution as they go in search of silverware.

"That is the fundamental decision," Smith told South African talk radio station 702. "He is your long-term future and when you go back to South Africa, you are going to pick him but do you in the short term, for the quarterfinal, go for the guy that's in form, that's going to win you the quarterfinal?"

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'We're the best team'

AFP, Wellington

AB de Villiers insisted Wednesday that South Africa were re-energised and had shrugged off their inconsistent early form at the World Cup, boldly declaring "we're the best team in the tournament".

The Proteas skipper was in a bullish mood ahead of South Africa's final Pool B match against the United Arab Emirates in Wellington on Thursday, despite losses to India and Pakistan in the group stages.

He acknowledged South Africa had endured a "rocky road" so far but said the vigour that was lacking when the pre-tournament favourites

slumped to a 29-run loss against Pakistan had returned.

"It's all positive from here on in, I still feel very confident," he said. "I believe 100 per cent we're the best team in the tournament."

"Those two losses in the group stages did hurt us a bit and did hurt me a bit, but we're past that now."

As the knockout stages loom, de Villiers added: "We know we're a few games away from taking that World Cup home."

South Africa have looked strongest when batting first, amassing 400-plus against the West Indies and Ireland, but faltered when chasing against India and Pakistan.

Former captain Graeme Smith has expressed concern rivals will exploit such vulnerability in the knockout stages, although de Villiers said the fears were unfounded.

"As long as we get [the basics] right, then I truly believe we can chase down anything," he said. "It's not a problem. We've done it in the last year a few times under pressure."

"I believe there are a few guys due for big runs, and it's going to happen soon, at the right time."

De Villiers said the UAE tie was a must-win if South Africa wanted to wrap up second spot in Pool B, setting up a likely quarterfinal clash against Sri Lanka.

SOUTH AFRICA V UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
SA seek consistency

AFP, Wellington

AB de Villiers wants consistency and commitment in South Africa's final Pool B match against the United Arab Emirates on Thursday, aware the Proteas' stop-start form cannot continue as the tournament's knockout phase looms.

At their best, de Villiers's men have looked like world beaters, becoming the first team in history to post successive one-day international totals of 400-plus in wins over the West Indies and Ireland.

But they have also been skittled out for 177 and 202 in losses to India and Pakistan respectively, reviving memories of the hated "chokers" tag that has haunted previous World Cup campaigns.

The Proteas were many pundits' tip to lift a maiden World Cup this year but their inconsistency means bookmakers are now ranking them behind co-hosts Australia and New Zealand.

With a quarterfinal against a dangerous Sri Lanka appearing likely, the UAE match presents a final chance for some South African fine-tuning.

It also has the potential to provide crucial practice for seamer Vernon Philander, who has missed the past three games with a hamstring injury.

De Villiers was at a loss to explain the Pakistan defeat and said he wanted to see an improvement against the UAE.

"Nothing was really happening at 100 per cent," de Villiers said after the 29-run loss. "It was almost like a car that's been stuck in second or third gear."

"That's not going to win you cricket games, especially not under pressure and in big tournament's like this. So we need to have a chat about what maybe went wrong... and try to get to fifth gear again against the UAE."

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Victory against the UAE would most likely see South Africa finish second in Pool B behind India, setting up a last eight showdown with Sri Lanka.

The amateurs of the UAE, many of them Pakistani expatriates, are winless so far in the tournament and should not present a hurdle if South Africa are anywhere near their best.

The teams have met only once before, when South Africa posted a 169-run win at the 1996 World Cup.

Pakistan inspire UAE

AFP, Wellington

United Arab Emirates captain Mohammad Tauqir on Wednesday said South Africa's shock loss to Pakistan last week had given them a glimmer of hope as they prepare to face the Proteas.

Tauqir joked before South Africa's 29-run defeat that the only way the UAE could prevent AB de Villiers' men from scoring 400-plus was to win the toss and bat first.

But he said Pakistan's win showed the Proteas were not invincible and UAE had taken note ahead of their Pool B match in Wellington on Thursday.

"We were not expecting South Africa to lose against Pakistan, so it's a funny game. It gave us a bit of hope," he said.

"We have good bowling and fielding. If

we take some early wickets they can be put under pressure. I don't see them scoring 400 runs against us."

While the UAE's emphasis might be on containing South Africa, rather than outright victory, Tauqir said they would play positive cricket.

He said the World Cup had been "a good learning experience for the boys" who are all amateurs and will return to their day jobs after the tournament.

But he echoed calls from other Associate nations for more matches against cricket's major nations, saying it was the only way they could improve their game.

"The more exposure we get, the better we become. We cannot learn by just simply watching them on TV," he said. "We need to play more cricket against them."

'Moores should coach the kids'

REUTERS, London

England coach Peter Moores should be removed from his current position and put in charge of the "kids", according to former captain Michael Vaughan.

Moores, handed a second stint as head coach last April, has come under intense fire since England's defeat by Bangladesh on Monday condemned them to an early return from the World Cup.

Vaughan believes Moores' talents have been wasted.

"Moores was at his best working with the Lions [development team] many years ago," Vaughan said in the Daily Telegraph.

"The job of England coach has become about man management, helping with tactics and picking the right team."

"At international level you do not have time to coach."

"What is the best thing for English cricket going forward? I believe it is time to remove Peter Moores from his current position and put him in a job where he can have the biggest impact on English cricket."

"I always say the best coach works with kids and development programmes between the age of 15 and 20."

Vaughan said England's conservative approach to the one-day game had resulted in them being left behind by the likes of Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and India, while even Ireland, Vaughan said, were playing better one-day cricket.

"England started the tournament by picking a Test match batting line-up for one-day cricket," Vaughan said.

"[Managing director] Paul Downton said last night England needed more players appearing in Twenty20 leagues around the world to gain experience."

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Last and only meeting: at Rawalpindi, 16 February, 1996 where South Africa won by 169 runs.

KEY PLAYERS

| HASHIM AMLA | | SHAIMAN ANWAR | |
|-------------|-------------|---------------|--|
| 109 | INNINGS | 11 | |
| 52.79 | BATTING AVG | 39.9 | |
| 5654 | RUNS | 399 | |
| 90.06 | S/R | 93.22 | |
| 159 | H/S | 106 | |
| 20 | 100s | 1 | |
| 28 | 50s | 3 | |
| 38(27) | LAST MATCH | 62(88) | |

KING REIGNS SUPREME

Viv Richards has been crowned the greatest one-day cricketer ever by a jury of 50 eminent players, commentators and writers assembled by the Cricket Monthly, including icons such as Ian Chappell, Clive Lloyd, Rahul Dravid, Ricky Ponting and Graeme Smith. Vivian Richards won by a landslide collecting almost 60% of the votes.



Vivian Richards 179 pts



Sachin Tendulkar 68 pts

Wasim Akram 66 pts



Adam Gilchrist 29 pts

MS Dhoni 25 pts

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The Scottish fans enjoyed themselves at the the Bellerive Oval although they lost. On the other hand, the Protea supporters are all ready for today's game.



Bryan Habana: Keep on believing AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Dale Steyn and the rest of the team. We are still behind you all the way.
 Dimuth Karunaratne: It will take four centuries to find another player like Kumar Sangakkara. Hats off to you legend.