

6s
392
4s
1887

WHACK 0 METER
SHAH CEMENT

Most 6s hit by a player
AB de Villiers
 South Africa
20

Most 4s hit by a player
K Sangakkara
 Sri Lanka
57

- 10 facts**
- Eight of the last completed 10 one-day internationals between these sides has been won by the chasing team
 - However, the most recent clash, at Dhaka in June 2014, saw India successfully defend a total of 105, bowling Bangladesh out for 30
 - Virat Kohli (506) needs 87 runs to pass Gautam Gambhir (592) as the leading run-scorer in ODIs between these teams
 - Kohli has reached 50 in five of his six innings against Bangladesh (three of which have been converted into centuries), averaging 126.5 with a strike rate of exactly 100
 - That average of 126.5 is the highest any player holds against an opponent, minimum 500 runs scored
 - All six of the ODIs between these teams at neutral venues have been won by the team that batted second
 - India have won five of these contests, Bangladesh's victory coming at the 2007 World Cup - their only World Cup meeting
 - Since falling for a first ball duck in his first World Cup innings when batting second in 2007, MS Dhoni has hit 281 runs (two dismissals) in six knocks when chasing - India have won all six games
 - No Bangladesh batsman hit a century in any of the teams first 28 matches at World Cups - there have been two in the last two, both recorded by Mahmudullah
 - Since the start of the 2007 World Cup Dhoni has been dismissed once by bowlers in the Bangladesh squad, scoring 142 runs from 155 balls faced



Mahmudullah Riyad (L) stood tall in practice at the MCG yesterday, unfazed by the expectations of a nation weighing on his shoulders, while Rubel Hossain focused solely on the wickets which he will hope to uproot numerous times against India today. PHOTOS: BCB



We'll prove it on the field: Mash

BISHWAJIT ROY from Melbourne

The change that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has brought in the team ever since he took over as captain has been very much visible; not just in terms of the results but also in the side's attitude as a whole.

While Bangladesh's performance in the World Cup thus far might cut them some slack with regards to their dismal show in 2014, one can't entirely forget that year. They had lost 13 out of the first 14 games. They even went down to Afghanistan and Hong Kong in Dhaka.

The captaincy was weak and the Tigers rarely looked aggressive. But all that changed once Mashrafe and Shakib Al Hasan were given the top jobs.

In the matches so far, Mashrafe maintained an aggressive line of attack no matter what position they were in. Against Sri Lanka he ensured that seven fielders were in when Kumar Sangakkara arrived. He kept up the pressure by placing a slip almost throughout the game against England and it paid off.

Shakib too, was right up there. Against New Zealand his decision to take the batting powerplay early forced Brendon McCullum to introduce a new bowler at the death. The New Zealand captain ran out of options!

The decision to open with two left-arm spinners was again a strategy that displayed attacking intent. These were moves and intents that were missing almost throughout 2014.

When Bangladesh take on India today, there's no doubt that Mashrafe will continue to play the same way. Make no mistakes; there won't be any steps taken backwards and that was in a way reflected in the manner he answered a question

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'They can win this one'

SPORTS REPORTER from Melbourne

For the second consecutive time a Faruque Ahmed-led team has managed to achieve Bangladesh's target in a World Cup. Back in 2007, when Faruque was the chief selector, Bangladesh went on to reach the Super Eights in the Caribbean. They even beat South Africa in that round.

Having reached the quarterfinals, there's no doubt that he has been successful; however, the chief selector reckons that this team has a lot more remaining in them.

"What I can assure you is that this team believes in a win," said Faruque, who is with the team in Australia. "I don't see any fear or pressure among the boys."

"Undoubtedly India is the better side in this contest. You have to rate them ahead since they have won all

six of their games so far. But still I will say we have a chance to win this match," he added.

According to Faruque, the Tigers can take inspiration from their previous wins against India in multinational competitions.

"We beat them earlier in the World Cup and the Asia Cup, so it won't be an upset if we can beat them again. Yes, they have a better record against us but winning in the two big events is a huge boost for our boys. India is now in superb form but we are also playing a good brand of cricket which has been noticed by the whole world," said an excited

Faruque.

"The Tigers have been playing as a unit, so personally I am very confident. The fear about the conditions is now a thing of the past. They now just need to play their best cricket on the day," he added.

The former national captain also reckons that India might be under pressure.

"India will be under huge pressure as the Cup is in their mind. But we have nothing to lose. I honestly believe that we are capable of beating this Indian team. I am sure nobody, before the tournament, expected Bangladesh to shoot England out of the tournament," he said.

Indian bowling has been done a decent job so far in the tournament. Their batting too has showed plenty of depth. Faruque however believes

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CLEAR NOTHING TO HIDE

TODAY'S MATCH
India v Bangladesh
 Second Quarterfinal
 Time: 9:30am
 Venue: Melbourne

FRIDAY'S MATCH
Australia v Pakistan
 Third Quarterfinal
 Time: 9:30am
 Venue: Adelaide

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regarding Bangladesh's World Cup win against India in 2007.

"2007 is long way past. I think it's not going to help us; 2011 we lost. It's also not going to help us. Short version cricket depends on the particular day and how you play that day. So we have hope that tomorrow we will come out with a good plan and execute it," a confident Mashrafe said.

It will be one of those rare moments in Bangladesh's cricket when a majority of the fans will be cheering against them. However, that didn't worry the captain at all.

"We know that there will be 95,000 people coming to the ground, and most of them will be Indian supporters, but as a professional cricketer we have to concentrate on cricket. Obviously Bangladesh supporters will be there, we cannot ask for equal number, but hopefully we'll be fine."

"For the last 15 or 17 years they [Bangladesh's fans] have been always with us. Doesn't matter if we win or lose, they

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SCORECARD

SRI LANKA V SOUTH AFRICA

SRI LANKA	R/B	4/6
K Perera c de Kock b Abbott	3/10	0/0
Dilshan c du Plessis b Steyn	0/7	0/0
Sangakkara c Miller b Morkel	45/96	3/0
Thirimanne c & b Tahir	41/48	5/0
Jayawardene c du Plessis b Tahir	4/16	0/0
Mathews c du Plessis b Duminy	19/32	1/0
T Perera c Rossouw b Tahir	0/3	0/0
Kulasekara c de Kock b Duminy	1/2	0/0
Kaushal lbw b Duminy	0/1	0/0
Chameera not out	2/5	0/0
Malinga c Miller b Tahir	3/6	0/0
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, w-7, nb-2)	15	
Total: (All out in 37.2 overs)	133	
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-4, 3-69, 4-81, 5-114, 6-115, 7-116, 8-116, 9-127.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Steyn	7	2	18	1
Abbott	6	1	27	1
Morkel	7	1	27	1
Duminy	9	1	29	3
Tahir	8.2	0	26	4

SOUTH AFRICA	R/B	4/6
Amla c Kulasekara b Malinga	16/23	1/0
De Kock not out	78/57	12/0
Du Plessis not out	21/31	0/0
Extras: (lb-4, w-12, nb-3)	19	
Total: (For 1 wkt in 18 overs)	134	
Did not bat: Rossouw, De Villiers, Miller, Duminy, Steyn, Abbott, Morkel, Tahir.		
Fall of wickets: 1-40.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	6	0	43	1
Dilshan	2	0	10	0
Kulasekara	1	0	13	0
Kaushal	6	0	25	0
Chameera	2	0	29	0
T Perera	1	0	10	0

Result: South Africa won by 9 wickets.
 Player-of-the-match: Imran Tahir.
 Toss: Sri Lanka

শেকড় থেকে শিখারে

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Man of Steel

QUINTON DE KOCK:

Quinton de Kock was considered a prodigy even before he made his ODI debut for the South Africa cricket team in January 2013. The wicket-keeper batsman scored three consecutive hundreds against India at home in December that year to cement his place as the partner of Hashim Amla at the top of South Africa's batting order. But an untimely injury last November had put his World Cup in doubt, only to be included on condition of a speedy recovery. The left-hander did well to recover from the injury but was dreadfully short of form, managing only 53 runs in the first seven matches of the World Cup. He was given probably one last chance against Sri Lanka yesterday and he stepped up on the big occasion. He hit a sublime 78 not out - filled with glorious cover drives - to take his side to a comprehensive nine-wicket victory.

THIRD EYE

History's boys

ATIQUÉ ANAM

For all those cricket lovers, whose first vivid memories of a cricket World Cup are from the one held down under 23 years ago - the one that introduced coloured shirts, day-night matches and an enterprising South Africa side - there is but one image that will last forever and a day: Of a red-faced Brian MacMillan gently stroking the last delivery of the 43rd over from Chris Lewis for a single and of his befuddled teammates looking lost for words at the team balcony of the iconic Sydney Cricket Ground.

That moment, televised across the world and replayed endless time since whenever the Proteas embark on a knock-out phase of the World Cup - had set in motion South Africa's date with destiny; a long and painful one which lasted 23 long years.

In the course of the last 23 years, South Africa had come into five more World Cups with the favourites tag, yet in some uncanny manner - call it choke or bad luck or just coming up

against a better side on the day - they simply failed to get past the knock-out stage. So when they were up against a Sri Lanka side beaming with confidence and pitted at scene of their most tragic moment, many South Africa fans probably feared: All over again. And when AB de Villiers lost the toss and faced the task of batting second, on a deck which had

plenty of turn and bounce on offer - those fears might have become manifold. But credit to the Proteas, those fears and tribulations were put to the bed with a masterful display of spin and pace. The game was all but over by the end of the first innings.

A beaming de Villiers and Co. replaced the awestricken Kepler Wessels and his class. It is only good for world cricket that South Africa,

the team with the best win/loss ratio in ODI cricket and endowed with a long list of iconic players, did shed the unenviable tag of chokers. And how fitting that it came at the Sydney Cricket Ground!

While the South Africans will feel that this is the new beginning for their cricket, could the same be said of the Lankans, who were seeing the last of Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene - the dynamic duo who had propped up Lankan cricket on their broad shoulders for more than a decade?

The Lankan team is in a transitional period and will be there for quite some time to come. Their main bowling weapons - Lasith Malinga and Rangana Herath - have reached the twilight of their careers. In a couple of years, when these two are gone too, the Lankan team could very well drift towards mediocrity, unless they manage to unearth some gems from somewhere.

Times like these had come before for the Lankans. Ever since their

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GPH ispat

Raina says India ready

AFP, Melbourne

India are settled, in winning form and are well accustomed to Australian playing conditions for their pressure World Cup quarterfinal with Bangladesh at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, batsman Suresh Raina said Wednesday.

The defending champions have won all their six Pool B matches, bowled out their opposition in the process taking 60 wickets, and are ready for the knock-out rounds, starting with Thursday's quarterfinal.

Raina, whose unbeaten 110 helped India chase down Zimbabwe's 288-run target for a hard-fought six-wicket win in their concluding pool game in Auckland last weekend, says the Indians are ready to "express themselves."

It's been a marathon buildup for India in defence of their World Cup crown.

But the rewards appear to be coming for Mahendra Singh Dhoni's team.

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