



10 facts

South Africa have won one and lost seven of the nine semifinals they have played in all one-day international tournaments. The other was a tie, against Australia at the 1999 World Cup -- a result that saw them eliminated on lower Super Six table placing

This will be the seventh World Cup meeting between these sides with the Black Caps having won four of the previous six encounters. The only one of these that was a knockout match however was New Zealand's win at the quarterfinal stage at Dhaka in 2011

Daniel Vettori needs one more wicket to become New Zealand's leading wicket taker in World Cup history; he is currently tied with Jacob Oram on 36

South Africa have won three of their last four completed ODIs against New Zealand at Eden Park

The Black Caps have lost the toss in the last 12 ODIs they have played at Eden Park and have been put into bat on nine of these occasions, winning just one of these nine (L5, T1, 2x N/R)

Seven players have hit three consecutive ODI centuries. In this match he will be the third Black Caps player to do so

Two more runs will see Guptill become the first Kiwi to score 500-plus runs in a single World Cup. In 2007, he would become the eighth player from any nation to achieve the feat

Imran Tahir has bowled more balls (404) than any other player at this tournament; he and Vettori are the joint top wicket taking spinners (both 15)

Farhaan Behardien has scored 74 runs off the 36 balls he has faced in the tournament; he has the lowest dot ball percentage of any player (25.00%)

Kane Williamson has scored 53 runs from 51 balls bowled by Morne Morkel in ODIs, never having been dismissed by the South African seamer



Martin Guptill's calm look can be deceiving about his destructive ability. The New Zealand opener is all set for a semifinal flourish against South Africa today after his record-breaking exploit (237 not out) against West Indies in the quarterfinals.

PHOTO: STAR

Tigers to have two weeks off

SPORTS REPORTER

In terms of travelling, the World Cup down under has been a hectic tour for the Tigers. In the two-month tour they had to visit five different venues. According to a number of players, it was the day after the match that was the most tiresome. There was always this quandary between spending an extra day on the same venue and travelling to the next as soon as possible in a bid to get accustomed to the conditions.

Now that they are home, most of them have preferred to just spend some quiet time with their family and basically not think about the game at all for a couple of weeks. However, with the Pakistan series around the corner they won't get much time for themselves.

While the series is expected to begin on April 15, their camp is likely to start in two weeks' time. Coach Chandika Hathurusingha, who is currently in Sydney, is expected to send a plan with regards to the camp very soon. Hathurusingha, along with the rest of the foreign coaching staff are currently on leave.

The official itinerary of the Pakistan tour is yet to be announced. The Pakistan Cricket Board is also expected to send a security team prior to the tour; a move which is considered to be a mere formality. As of now, it seems as though the series will take place in Dhaka and Khulna.

The tour is expected to begin with three ODIs and a T20I, all of which are likely to take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. The players are then expected to go to Khulna to play the first Test and after that they will return to Dhaka to play the final Test.

After the series against Pakistan, the Tigers are also expected to play India, South Africa and Australia, all at home, this year.

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'What matters is Guptill form'

AFP, Auckland

Martin Guptill's double ton was the fillip New Zealand needed heading into their World Cup semifinal against South Africa, according to captain Brendon McCullum.

At stake is an historic first appearance in the World Cup final with neither side having progressed past the semis in the past. New Zealand were forced to hastily rearrange their squad Monday after Adam Milne was ruled out with a left heel injury and Matt Henry was rushed up to Auckland.

But McCullum said they remained confident without their express bowler and the presence of Guptill after his colossal 237 not out against West Indies was an inspiration to the rest of the team.

New Zealand have won four of their six previous World Cup clashes against South Africa, including the last three, but McCullum said history had no bearing on this battle for the right to play the winners of the second semifinal between India and Australia, taking place in Sydney on Thursday.

Much more relevant was the boost to his side of Guptill's return to form.

"To see it in such a crunch game as well and still display the same game plan which he trained so hard for was confirmation that obviously it can be done and that will flow on in terms of confidence for the rest of the squad," he said.

Guptill came into the tournament with a string of disappointing scores including two golden ducks against Sri Lanka but has progressively played his way into form.

His last three innings have been 57, 105 and 237 and McCullum expected more.

"The game throws up its ups and its downs but you need to be able to remain reasonably level and go about your work.

"The way that 'Gup' was able to back up a really good hundred against Bangladesh and then to be able to turn in such an amazing performance as he did the other day shows that he certainly possesses those characteristics.

"He's been a huge player for us in this tournament and I'd suggest he's probably not quite done yet."

Guptill's record against South Africa, however, is relatively poor with a total of 115 runs scored in 11 matches with a highest score of 58 in Napier in 2012.

In five of his last six innings against the Proteas, he has been dismissed for single-figure scores.

McCullum indicated the loss of Milne could cause a rethink of the balance of their line up with weather and pitch conditions to be taken into account.

Mitchell McClenaghan, who stood in for Milne when he injured a shoulder before the Bangladesh game, offers bounce, veteran Kyle Mills brings in a miserly option while replacing Milne with Henry would be a like-for-like move.

McCullum did not expect conditions to be as they were when New Zealand ripped out Australia for 151.

"It was obviously really humid during that game and we saw some high quality swing bowling. Tomorrow is meant to be a little less humid so we probably won't see as much swing."

Mash's adda & Sabbir's cake

SPORTS REPORTER

They say that there's no better feeling than coming back and being amidst your own. And it wasn't a surprise when most of Bangladesh's cricketers, who returned to the country after a gruelling two-month tour on Sunday, preferred spending time with their loved ones.

Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza might have received plenty of acclaim worldwide for his dedication and captaincy during the World Cup, but for the man himself nothing matched the roadside *adda* he enjoys most nearby his place. The Bangladesh team left the airport at around 9:30 pm on Sunday and Mashrafe was spotted at his favourite tea-spot an hour later. As the word spread, people started stretching their necks from the verandas and the terraces in a bid to get a

glance of the local boy. Someone even took the trouble of running to the nearest available bakery and getting a cake for the captain. According to residents of the region, it was like a scene from a movie!

Also in a celebratory mode was the young dasher Sabbir Rahman who, upon arriving in Dhaka, wasted no time in the capital and made his way to his hometown Rajshahi. He spent the entire day indoors with his family and friends. While his mother cooked up his favourite dishes, his friends brought him a neat cake which had his name and the number 184 written on it; signifying the number of runs he scored in the World Cup.

"Since I am the only player from Rajshahi in the national team I have received a lot of love from here," a proud Sabbir said.

"Even when I arrived here there

were lots of people who came to welcome me. For the next ten days I just want to stay away from cricket and spend as much time with my family and friends as possible," he added.

While Sabbir was busy relaxing with his family, the other youngster in the side, Soumya Sarker wasn't so lucky.

With Soumya's parents living in different districts of the country, due to work, they weren't able to spend as much quality time. His immediate relatives, who thronged on him upon his arrival, made up for their absence. Having played just one ODI prior to the World Cup, Soumya, whose name was vividly seen on the posters and the placards, held by the supporters outside the airport, admitted to be slightly taken aback by the huge support he received.

"I haven't changed at all, but yes I can see that more people know my

name right now and know me, which is something new to me. I stayed indoors yesterday with my relatives... we ate a lot of food and just spent some happy times," Soumya gleefully chirped.

Amongst the other players, Tamim Iqbal was seen spending some quality time with his friends at a restaurant in Banani while Nasir Hossain was busy packing his bags to go to his hometown, Rangpur, where his family are eagerly waiting for him.

Spinner Arafat Sunny spent most of his time in bed the last two days and almost nothing could move him! "There was so much travelling this time. We barely had time to stay in one place. So I have decided to just stay here. So that's what I did; ate, distributed gifts from Australia and just talked to my parents for a long time," a relaxed Sunny said.



It was a good battle on the feild (sic). U played well. Wishing u best of luck for the

Special spell from @WahabViki the other night. Very lucky to have come out unscathed #Nohardfeelings#

The cricket world that has seen the duel between Pakistan paceman Wahab Riaz (L) and Australia all-rounder Shane Watson in their World Cup quarterfinal at Adelaide on Friday, will surely remember the on-field bout for a long time. But the 'enemies' are quite good friends off the field, at least their tweets suggest so.

PHOTO: SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

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