

6s
463
4s
2141

WHACK 0 METER
SHAH CEMENT

Most 6s hit by a player
Chris Gayle
 West Indies
26

Most 4s hit by a player
M Guptill
 New Zealand
58



In the end it's a team game

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

After a World Cup of shimmering individual performances, the teams to contest the final will be those who have proved the greatest collective depth. AB de Villiers, Chris Gayle, Rohit Sharma, Wahab Riaz, Shikhar Dhawan, Sarfraz Ahmed, Mahmudullah and others have burned brightly and flamed out. New Zealand and Australia will meet in Melbourne because they have been the best teams.

When New Zealand lost Brendon McCullum and Kane Williamson in their semifinal on Tuesday, they could turn to Corey Anderson and Grant Elliott. At the Sydney Cricket Ground on Tuesday, every time Australia's Plan A went amiss, they were able to come up with a B, a C, a D and ultimately an M.

On three occasions Australia lost the initiative in the semifinal, and as New Zealand plan for the final they will contemplate how Michael Clarke's team wrested it back. The first was early in the match when David Warner was out playing a shot safer elsewhere than on the bouncy SCG wicket. This was a first test for Australia's composure, as only Clarke and Shane Watson had previously played in a World Cup semifinal.

The Indians' sails were full and the noise was uproarious. Steve Smith and Aaron Finch applied themselves to staunching potential panic as soberly as central bankers. Technically, the pair adapted by getting

up on their toes and sometimes into the air as they got their wrists over the ball. Otherwise they were all contrast: Smith in the form that makes perky centuries commonplace, Finch suffering the many moods of a man working his way back into form in public view. Caught up in the invisible netting of Ravichandran Ashwin's dip and turn, they suffered regular bouts of bat-slapping self-recrimination as they punched at but failed to penetrate the infield. Impatience was their enemy. Twelfth man George Bailey, as busy as Paul

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Australia spearhead Mitchell Johnson takes a flight to Melbourne after destroying the furniture of India opener Rohit Sharma at the SCG yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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Dhoni keeps all guessing

AFP, Sydney

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni refused to give an indication whether he will retire from one-day cricket after his team lost the World Cup semifinal to Australia.

The 33-year-old, asked if he had decided to stay or quit after the defending champions' 95-run defeat at the Sydney Cricket Ground, bounced the question back at the media and asked them to "do research".

"I think you all should do research and whatever you write, the opposite will be the truth," Dhoni said, without elaborating. "I am not that old, so do your research first."

Dhoni made a shock retirement from Test cricket in December after the third Test of the four-match series against Australia, with the decision being announced by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) through a media release.

In the immediate aftermath of Thursday's loss, Dhoni had suggested he would continue to play international cricket at least until the 2016 World Twenty20 tournament which is being played in India.

"I'm 33, I'm still running, still fit. Next year,

T20 World Cup, will be time to decide about the 2019 World Cup," Dhoni told a TV interviewer.

However, Dhoni was unsure if coach Duncan Fletcher, whose three-year contract is due to end after the World Cup, will remain or leave the job.

"That is between the BCCI and Duncan," he said. "I don't know what will happen."

"Duncan's technical knowledge of the game is

But they found Australia too strong at the SCG as the hosts piled up 328 for seven before bowling out the defending champions for 233 despite a run-a-ball 65 from Dhoni.

"Before the World Cup we faced a lot of problems because of the poor form of the players. It seemed nothing was going our way," Dhoni said.

"But the good thing is that the dressing room atmosphere was very pleasant and that made our comeback easier."

"Of course we are disappointed not to be in the final, but then only one team can win. Australia played better cricket today."

Dhoni said the 300-plus target could have been chased if India had wickets in hand, but the Australian fast bowlers seized the initiative with wickets at regular intervals.

"I think the total was chasable because I expected the wicket to get slightly better for batting in the second half. And our batsmen know how to chase 300."

"But hard work was needed to get those runs. Anyway, once three wickets had fallen, I knew we were not going to get there."

Dhoni said failure to defend the title India won under his captaincy in 2011 was part of the

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excellent. I really enjoy his company. He took over at a time when senior players had left and he had to groom the juniors. It was a tough job."

Meanwhile, Dhoni praised his team for a good World Cup campaign despite being knocked out of the tournament.

Dhoni's team had bounced back from a winless Test and one-day tour of Australia prior to the World Cup to reach the last four with seven straight victories.



India captain MS Dhoni fell just short – of his crease and expectations – as he was run-out for 65 at the SCG yesterday.

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SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA V INDIA

AUSTRALIA	R/B	4/6
Finch c Dhawan b Yadav	81/116	7/1
Warner c Kohli b Yadav	12/7	1/1
Smith c R Sharma b Yadav	105/93	11/2
Maxwell c Rahane b Ashwin	23/14	3/1
Watson c Rahane b M Sharma	28/30	2/1
Clarke c R Sharma b M Sharma	10/12	1/0
Faulkner b Yadav	21/12	3/1
Haddin not out	7/7	1/0
Johnson not out	27/9	4/1
Extras: (b-1, lb-7, w-6)	14	
Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs)	328	
Did not bat: Starc, Hazlewood.		
Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-197, 3-232, 4-233, 5-248, 6-284, 7-298.		

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Man of Steel

STEVEN SMITH

Cometh the hour, cometh the man. Steven Smith, who had an absolutely brilliant time against India in the series leading to the World Cup, scored a gem of a century to power his side into the final. The interesting aspect was that while almost all the players in his side failed to get a move on, Smith comfortably hit those boundaries. It was his hundred that took the hosts past the 3000 mark and gave them the edge.

India surrender the baton

AL-AMIN

So we will have a trans-Tasman World Cup final come Sunday. But at the moment the most pressing issue for broadcasters Star Sports Network is to find a more global slogan after the departure of defending champions India with a crushing 95-run defeat at the hands of Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday, where it was not a case of 'won't give it back' but a kind of 'surrender it without a good fight' that was aplenty in the other semifinal at Auckland a couple of days back.

Millions of Indian fans, the best promoter and financier of cricket, expected a miracle from their captain MS Dhoni in the final 10 overs with the run-rate rocketing

up. But a mooted Dhoni thunder never arrived. Interestingly, it ended with a lightning piece of fielding from Glenn Maxwell, who hit the bull's eye with a direct throw from short mid-wicket. As Dhoni, who understandably did not wait for the third umpire's decision, hurtled back to the dressing room, the SCG which was more bluish than gold, literally turned into a sea of blues.

It was coming, which the Indian might not have noticed or were not ready to accept -- to accept the fact that those seven wins before the semifinal will count for nothing against a side that is more superior not only in every department of the game than Dhoni's men but also mentally the toughest unit which

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WHAT THEY SAY

After the conclusion of the second semifinal, many prom-

"Bring on the final!!! Steven Smith classy as per norm!"
 -Glenn Maxwell

"Australia were too strong overall. Steve smith keeps on going. It was always tough for India unless Virat stayed in. Will be a cracker of a final."
 -Kumar Sangakkara

"What a 100 under pressure in a World Cup Semifinal... Smith -- what a champion player"
 -Damien Martyn

"Well done to all the Indian team & fans for making this World Cup special. Unfortunately MS & the boys were outplayed by the Aussies tonight."
 -Shane Warne

"What a match!!!! Well done Australia, you played like champs from the get go. Great opening by India, better luck next time."
 -Shoaib Malik

"Well played Aussies. Steven Smith brilliant 100. Good all round bowling effort, now bring on Kiwis Sunday."
 -Damien Fleming

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