

6s
467

4s
2173

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
59



Oz saved their best until last

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia's players said they had saved their best performance until the end of the tournament after beating New Zealand by seven wickets with more than 16 overs to spare in the World Cup final on Sunday.

After their pace attack ripped through the vaunted New Zealand batting to dismiss the co-hosts for 183, skipper Michael Clarke (74) and Steve Smith (56 not out) hit half-centuries to drive Australia to their target and a fifth world title.

"Unbelievable feeling, we said we wanted to play our best game towards the end of the tournament and to win this final three down, I thought the boys were outstanding tonight," said Smith.

"The bowlers really set it up for us. They've done it all tournament."

Coach Darren Lehmann, who won two World Cups as a player, paid tribute to the hard work his players had put in over the tournament.

"They just keep coming up and fronting up day in, day out. They've been fantastic over the six weeks," he said before his players emptied a tub of energy drink over his head.

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ON TOP OF THE WORLD: The Australians dispatched New Zealand in the World Cup final with clinical precision at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday.

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Clarke leaves with Cup in hand

AFP, Melbourne

Skipper Michael Clarke shrugged off fitness fears, talk of rifts with teammates, coach and selectors to spearhead Australia to a fifth World Cup crown.

It was a fitting finale for Clarke, who played his 245th and last one-day international to lead Australia to a comprehensive seven-wicket over New Zealand in Sunday's final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Clarke, 33, went out on a high, finishing with 74 off 72 balls -- taking his career total to 7,981 runs -- after being largely a peripheral figure for the Australian team in the tournament scoring two half-centuries in six knocks although his leadership and on-field strategy have not been questioned.

Clarke was stung when asked at his

ROLL OF HONOUR

YEAR	TEAM
1975	West Indies
1979	West Indies
1983	India
1987	Australia
1992	Pakistan
1996	Sri Lanka
1999	Australia
2003	Australia
2007	Australia
2011	India
2015	Australia

media conference following the 95-win semifinal victory over India if his batting style had become redundant for the modern game now stacked up against the audacious shot-makers in his side -- David Warner, Steve Smith, Glenn Maxwell and Aaron Finch.

"I think I'm doing all right. I think my record is pretty good up against anybody in the world. I think my record holds its place. I'm not concerned at all," retorted Clarke.

Yet his last ODI century came against England in Manchester in September 2013 and up to the World Cup Clarke had played in only six ODIs in the previous year.

Speculation over the state of his fitness also annoyed him after recent battles with hamstring and back problems.

"I think everybody is sick of talking about

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ROAD TO GLORY

Date	Venue	Opponents	Result
Feb 14	Melbourne	England	Win by 111
Feb 21	Brisbane	Bangladesh	no result
Feb 28	Auckland	New Zealand	Lost by 1 wicket
March 4	Perth	Afghanistan	Win by 275 runs
March 8	Sydney	Sri Lanka	Win by 64 runs
March 14	Hobart	Scotland	Win by 7 wickets
QUARTERFINAL			
March 20	Adelaide	Pakistan	Win by 6 wickets
SEMIFINAL			
March 26	Sydney	India	Win by 95 runs
FINAL			
March 29	Melbourne	New Zealand	Win by 7 Wickets

SCAN CEMENT
HEIDELBERGCEMENT

THIRD EYE

Taking back what's theirs

AL-AMIN

The record 93,000-plus crowd in attendance at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday erupted in joy the moment retiring Australia captain Michael Clarke received the World Cup trophy from ICC chairman Narayanaswami Srinivasan.

The watching world, on the other hand, salutes the class of 2015 after yet another professional display from the Aussies who have made cricket's flagship event almost their own after the demise of the once invincible West Indies team. It's a penta for the Aussies, which means they have won more titles than India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka combined (the three other World Cup champions) and three more than West Indies, who won the first two editions.

It's not the title but the manner in which they won it was again in display against a New Zealand team, whose ambition for a maiden glory ended in nightmare. Kiwi captain Brendon McCullum might have sported a big smile on his face after win-



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SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA V NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND	R/B	4/6		
Guptill b Maxwell	15/34	1/1		
McCullum b Starc	0/3	0/0		
Williamson c & b Johnson	12/33	1/0		
Taylor c Haddin b Faulkner	40/72	2/0		
Elliott c Haddin b Faulkner	83/82	7/1		
Anderson b Faulkner	0/2	0/0		
Ronchi c Clarke b Starc	0/4	0/0		
Vettori b Johnson	9/21	1/0		
Southee run out	11/11	0/1		
Henry c Starc b Johnson	0/7	0/0		
Boult not out	0/1	0/0		
Extras: (lb-7, w-6)	13			
Total: (All out in 45 overs)	183			
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-33, 3-39, 4-150, 5-150, 6-151, 7-167, 8-171, 9-182.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Starc	8	0	20	2
Hazlewood	8	2	30	0
Johnson	9	0	30	3
Maxwell	7	0	37	1
Faulkner	9	1	36	3
Watson	4	0	23	0
AUSTRALIA	R/B	4/6		
Warner c Elliott b Henry	45/46	7/0		
Finch c & b Boult	0/5	0/0		
Smith not out	56/71	3/0		
Clarke b Henry	74/72	10/1		
Watson not out	2/5	0/0		
Extras: (lb-3, w-6)	9			
Total: (For 3 wks in 33.1 overs)	186			
Did not bat: Maxwell, Faulkner, Haddin, Johnson, Starc, Hazlewood.				
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-63, 3-175.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Southee	8	0	65	0
Boult	10	0	40	1
Vettori	5	0	25	0
Henry	9.1	0	46	2
Anderson	1	0	7	0
Result: Australia won by 7 wickets and clinched the ICC Cricket World Cup.				

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Man of Steel

MICHAEL CLARKE

Talk about battling against pressure. This was Michael Clarke's last ODI; this was the World Cup final; and this was a man who was yet to hit form in the competition. The Australian triumphed against all odds to put in a splendid 72-ball 74 to guide his side to yet another majestic World Cup title. The hosts had just lost Warner when Clarke had come down to bat and there were talks about a possible stumble in their batting order. Clarke had other ideas, though. A man who thrives on batting under pressure, he wasn't going to let his country down on such an auspicious day. He hit ten fours and a thunderous six to take his side closer to the title. By the time he was bowled by Matt Henry, the Aussies were just eight runs behind and the game was long over.



SPECTACULAR SWAN SONG: Michael Clarke scored 74 against New Zealand in the World Cup final yesterday, giving his team the impetus to go on and win the game.

CLARKE facts

Born: April 2, 1981 at Liverpool, New South Wales

ODI debut: against England in Adelaide in 2003

ODI career: 7,981 runs from 245 matches with eight centuries and 58 half-centuries

Average: 44.58 in ODIs with his highest score of 130 coming against India at Bangalore in 2007

Bowling: Part-time left-arm spinner, has 57 wickets in ODIs

T20: Played 34 Twenty20 Internationals, before quitting the format in 2011 to focus on Tests and ODIs

Captain: He has led Australia in 74 ODIs, of which Australia won 50. Groomed as a future leader, Clarke took over as Australia captain after Ricky Ponting quit after the 2011 World Cup

Fielding: A brilliant slip fielder, he has taken 106 catches in ODIs

GPH GPH ispat

ning the toss and electing to bat first. Unfortunately, it was the only occasion the Kiwi captain did it right in a lop-sided final.

McCullum, who has earned the reputation as a destroyer of any new-ball attack leading up to the final, failed to connect the three balls he faced before being castled by his tormentor Mitchell Starc. After that it was a demonstration of a predator playing with its prey until yet another resounding victory, a victory which was never in doubt once they bowled the Kiwis out for a paltry 183.

183 is a figure that may have evoked memories of the 1983 final when India successfully defended that total against a complacent West Indies. But the Aussies are a different brand and over the years they have earned the reputation as ruthless professionals who never cease to keep on hitting the opposition until a death certificate is issued. Unfortunately for the paying public they were deprived of watching the full fury of Aussie power (especially their batting), that was evident in 1999 against Pakistan, in 2003 against India and in 2007 against Sri Lanka.

The Aussies, who have taken cricket to a new height, not only added another feather to their imposing crown but also looked like a team already starting its campaign for the next edition in 2019.

No need to guess; just replay the last episode of the final with Michael Clarke leaving the ground after scoring a fabulous 74, his last act sporting the famous gold shirt, and more importantly leaving the baton to Steve Smith -- another genius who not only hit the winning runs but also gave the assurance that the Aussie future is even brighter.

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