



England pacer Jofra Archer marked his World Cup debut in terrific fashion, dismantling the South Africa batting line up after fifties from four England batsmen saw the hosts post a solid total during the World Cup opener at the Kennington Oval in London yesterday. England won the match by 104 runs. PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Stokes lifts everybody'

AFP, London

Ben Stokes produced a fine all-round display as England began their quest to win the World Cup with a 104-run thrashing of South Africa in the tournament opener at the Oval on Thursday.

"We were very good today -- we were good as a batting unit even though we couldn't score a considerable total which was our Plan A," said England captain Eoin Morgan.

"Ben Stokes has had a full day, his catch was absolutely outstanding. He is a match-winner and lifts everybody. Jofra Archer bowled fast and accurate on a slow pitch, it was outstanding from a young guy," Morgan added.

**The Export Leader**

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All-rounder Stokes top-scored with 89 in England's 311 for eight, held a brilliant catch and took two for 12, including the last wicket, as England won with 61 balls left.

"To be honest I was in the wrong position. That feeling for about five seconds when I was facing the crowd and everyone was cheering, it was phenomenal," Stokes told the BBC about his stunning catch.

Barbados-born Archer, who only qualified for England in March, made his presence felt even before he had taken a wicket with a bouncer that beat Hashim Amla for pace and crashed into the grille of the helmet, with the veteran opener retiring hurt on five. The fast bowler took three wickets for 27 in seven overs.

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said: "We were outplayed in all three departments... I thought 300 was par, we were bowling cutters, but there were some really good batting performances from England."

## 'The most open WC in some time'

SAKEB SUBHAN from London

The mixed media zone on Wednesday's World Cup opening party, on the eve of yesterday's opener between favourites England and South Africa, was a treasure trove for fans of cricket. Milling about in the enclosure at London's iconic St. James's Park were cricketing luminaries such as England's Kevin Pietersen, Australia's Brett Lee, New Zealand's James Franklin, the venerable David Boon of Australia, South African champion all-rounder Jacques Kallis and, last but not quite the opposite of least, 'King Viv' Richards of the West Indies.

With such a wide sample of superstars, whose respective careers date from the recent past to the mid 1970s, it was a valuable opportunity to get their thoughts on how the game of cricket had changed, their views on this World Cup and of course, Bangladesh's chances.

"Cricket's changed in probably the last three or four years hugely," Kallis, speaking to The Daily Star, said when asked how much the game had changed from the time he played his first World Cup in 1996. "The way batters are playing, it is certainly exciting. Perhaps find a balance between bat and ball again; maybe it has gone too far in the favour of the batters."

"I think the skill of batters has

just improved, there's not a lot you can do as bowlers. Boundaries have become smaller, the guys are training hard now, big and strong, so everything just seems in favour of the batters."

"I think that the brand of cricket that all these guys are playing, I think it's going to be quite ridiculous in terms of the scores," Pietersen said when asked about the expected domination of bat over ball. "I think the wickets are going to be good, and the players are good enough to bring up some big numbers."

"Bowling, you have seen in the shortest format of the game, T20s, that you have to target some of the players and bowl in smart places. The smartest bowlers are those who understand their batters and can go with different options. If you think you can stick to the same old thing you are going to come unstuck."

Lee, one of the fastest bowlers the game had seen, wanted to see something special from the bowlers too.

"I want to see the ball swing, I want to see the ball hoop, to me that's very important."

He was not willing to sound the death knell on fast bowling in these bat-dominated times.

"No, if they prepare rubbish wickets it will," he answered a question about whether fast bowling had died in modern cricket. "We've

got Mitchell Starc, Kumar Roach, Jasprit Bumrah. We've got guys who can bowl fast, fast enough."

Boon, whose first World Cup was Australia's first trophy win in 1987, was philosophical about the game's changes.

"I think cricket is the same as life. Everything has changed enormously. These days 350 is quite regular. As an ex-batsman I love to see the young guys and their skills are amazing, and the game is just becoming more progressively aggressive in many ways."

Boon also thought the 2019 World Cup would be the most open in recent times.

"I think it's the most open World Cup in quite some time. The majority of teams are going to have a chance to do well. The top four sides are going to be the ones that play consistently throughout, with a positive attitude to every game they play and execute their skills the best."

While Boon, as an ICC match referee, was not willing to risk predicting the four semifinalists, Lee and Pietersen were more forthcoming.

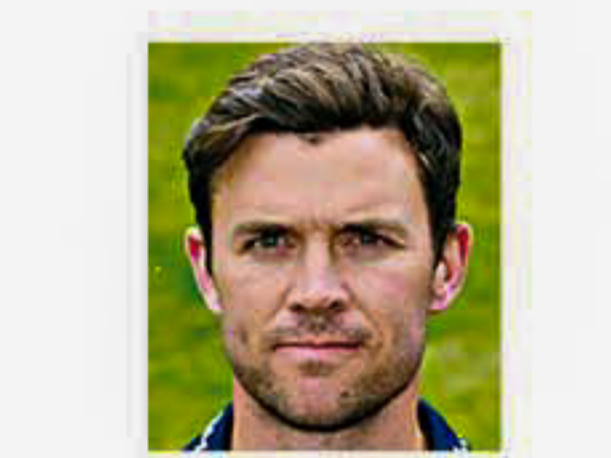
Lee picked Australia, England, India and New Zealand. Pietersen took a bit of a punt. "For me it's going to be England, Australia, India and West Indies. West Indies are very unpredictable."

Everybody's got to think that they've got a chance. There's a lot of skillful, very talented players in the Bangladesh side. If they perform and execute their skills, they will have a chance to do well.



David Boon

I think they've still got a bit of work to do. If they believe in themselves, they've got guys at the top of the order that can bang it. Liton Das is a player who can hit some big sixes. So, they've got key players. Shakib Al Hasan is a key batsman, Iqbal as well. Shakib got a golden duck the other night but it was a pretty good ball.



James Franklin



I do believe that Bangladesh are blessed with some enormous talent. Their batsmen are as good as any. It's an emerging cricketing country. From the passion that I do see, it looks like it can only get better. As you say, if you can beat a Windies team, who won two World Cups -- this means confidence in my opinion. It creates that kind of an environment. Apart from beating West Indies, maybe I can go and beat other teams as well. It's not only West Indies that you'll have to beat, you'll have to beat some of the best teams around the world and if you can accomplish that, then I think that would be a plus. If Bangladesh has come here believing that they can win, that's the top factor.

Viv Richards



They are a dangerous side and you always have to be careful of them. As I said it's a very open tournament, so they will fancy their chances of having a good World Cup.

Jacques Kallis

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### ENG-SA SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND		R/B 4s/6s		
Roy c du Plessis b Phehlukwayo	54/53	8/0		
Bairstow c de Kock b Tahir	0/1	0/0		
Root c Duminy b Rabada	51/59	5/0		
Morgan c Markram b Tahir	57/60	4/3		
Stokes c Amla b Ngidi	89/79	9/0		
Buttler b Ngidi	18/16	0/0		
Moeen c du Plessis b Ngidi	3/9	0/0		
Woakes c du Plessis b Rabada	13/14	1/0		
Plunkett not out	9/6	1/0		
Archer not out	7/3	1/0		
Extras: (lb-2, w-8)	10			
Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs)	311			
Did not bat: Rashid.				
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-107, 3-111, 4-217, 5-247, 6-260, 7-285, 8-300.				
SOUTH AFRICA		R/B 4s/6s		
De Kock c Root b Plunkett	68/74	6/2		
Amla c Buttler b Plunkett	13/23	1/0		
Markram c Root b Archer	11/12	2/0		
Du Plessis c Ali b Archer	5/7	1/0		
Van der Dussen c Ali b Archer	50/61	4/1		
Duminy c Stokes b Ali	8/11	1/0		
Pretorius run out	1/1	0/0		
Phehlukwayo c Stokes				
b Rashid	24/25	4/0		
Rabada c Plunkett b Stokes	11/19	2/0		
Ngidi not out	6/5	0/1		
Tahir c Root b Stokes	0/1	0/0		
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, w-1)	10			
Total: (All out in 39.5 overs)	207			
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-44, 3-129, 4-142, 5-144, 6-167, 7-180, 8-193, 9-207, 10-207.				
Bowler		O M R W		
Woakes	5	0	24	0
Archer	7	1	27	3
Rashid	8	0	35	1
Ali	10	0	63	1
Plunkett	7	0	37	2
Stokes	2.5	0	12	2
Result: England won by 104 runs.				
Player-of-the-match: Ben Stokes.				



**RAHIM STEEL**

Ben Stokes' fluent 89 off 79 deliveries was the highlight of an England's innings that also saw three other batsmen pass the fifty mark. The resilient all-rounder strung an all-important 106-run fourth-wicket partnership with skipper Eoin Morgan to help England post a solid total. After a brilliant knock, the agile all-rounder took a stunning catch and also scalped two wickets to help England register a 104-run victory in the opening game of the World Cup. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Four Englishmen join elite list

AGENCIES, London

Four Englishmen entered the record books after crossing the 50-run mark in their World Cup opener against South Africa at The Oval in London yesterday.

Jason Roy (54), Joe Root (51), Eoin Morgan (57) and Ben Stokes (89) slammed half-centuries to take England to 311 for eight against the Proteas. Courtesy of this show, the four batsmen registered their name in the list of most half-centuries in an innings in the World Cup. This was the 13th such instance and first for England.

But England, who last year set a world record for the highest ODI total of 481-6 and have often blown teams away with the bat, were repeatedly pegged back.

The ball did not always come onto the bat and Root, speaking at the innings break, admitted: "We would've liked more, especially when you're setting a total but that was not your typical one-day pitch in England. It did grip a bit and there is plenty in the pitch for the bowlers."

"You never felt in, you always felt the bowlers were in the game."

Morgan added: "The favourites tag sits with us comfortably. It's been a collective drive. I much prefer going in as favourites."

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