



England will be looking to throw everything and the kitchen sink at the West Indies, as Chris Woakes (C) perhaps geared up for in training, but the Windies will be hoping their pace arsenal -- and a daunting batting line-up featuring firebrand Chris Gayle (L) -- can outdo the English in their home conditions today. PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

FACTS

Chris Gayle amassed 1596 runs from the 35 matches he played against England, the most by any player on either team.

Evin Lewis' unbeaten 176 against West Indies back in 2017 at the Oval in London remains the highest individual score by any player on the two sides' current World Cup squads. This is also the highest ODI score of his career.

Joe Root has scored 704 runs -- the most by any batsmen on England's current World Cup squad -- in the 16 matches he played against West Indies.

Liam Plunkett has scalped 25 wickets -- the most by any bowler on the two teams' current World Cup squads -- in the 15 matches he played against West Indies.

West Indies right-arm quick Oshane Thomas' five for 21, which came against England when two sides last met in March this year, remains the best figures by any bowler among the current World Cup players on both sides.

Must be smart to topple England, says Holder

AFP, Southampton
England and West Indies will carry their intense rivalry from the Caribbean into the Rose Bowl Southampton Friday with Barbados-born pace sensation Jofra Archer adding spice to the World Cup contest. West Indies captain Jason Holder says his resurgent side are using their brains as well as brawn ahead of their clash. The West Indies have already shown what they are capable of, bowling Pakistan out for just 105 thanks to a barrage of bouncers on the way to a seven-wicket win in their opening game. The two-time World Cup champions

has sparked an upturn in form since the 2015 World Cup -- a four-year period in which they did not win an ODI series. "We have always got wickets with the new ball," he said in his pre-match press conference on Thursday. "But previously we haven't been able to get wickets in the middle overs. "And it's been the talking point over the last couple of months in one-day cricket and now in this tournament we have been able to get wickets in the middle overs, which has definitely broken the back of most teams." Following the South Africa no result, the England game has taken on even greater importance for the West Indies. But Holder is not worried yet and, with all-rounder Russell likely to be fit following a knee injury, he expects his side to throw all they have at the hosts. "I think the brand of cricket we have been playing so far in this World Cup, you know what to expect of West Indies now," he said. "For us, we are not going to back down from the challenge. Most of our guys are always up for the challenge and it is just a matter for us to be smart. "And I don't think there is anything else to be said, just be smart and play the brand of cricket we want to play," he added. Both teams ended at 2-2 in their high-scoring five-match ODI series in February with one game being a washout. The series, which took place in the Caribbean islands, saw sensational performances from Chris Gayle, who smashed 39 sixes and amassed 424 run.



lost narrowly to Australia after being well-placed to beat the reigning title-holders, before rain wrecked their match against South Africa, with the sides taking a point each. But they will enter their match against England in Southampton with confidence as the only team at the World Cup not to have lost their previous one-day international series to Eoin Morgan's men, drawing 2-2 in the Caribbean earlier this year. With pace in abundance from the likes of Oshane Thomas, Andre Russell, Sheldon Cottrell, as well as Holder himself, the West Indies have an attack to worry every team. But Holder believes it is their ability to outfox batsmen in the middle overs that

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Border backs Aus to keep momentum

REUTERS, Taunton
Australia's knack for grinding out wins despite not playing at their best is helping them build momentum for a strong tilt at the World Cup title, former skipper Allan Border has said. "Australia aren't playing at their best but they are winning matches. That's the way I saw the win over Pakistan," Border wrote in a column for the ICC. "In the early stages of the World Cup, you want to be amongst the pacesetters after four rounds and Australia very much are. "They are building nicely and all the teams will feel the total package is still in them. They'll talk about being relentless and consistent... and they can create momentum for some of the big teams they still have to play."

INFO ZONE

HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUP		
ENGLAND		WEST INDIES
5	WIN	1
1	LOSS	5
0	TIE	0
0	NR	0

HEAD TO HEAD IN ODIS		
ENGLAND		WEST INDIES
51	WIN	44
44	LOSS	51
0	TIE	0
6	NR	6

LAST MEETING
March 2 2019 at the Darren Sammy National Cricket Stadium in Gros Islet
West Indies won by 7 wickets (with 227 balls remaining).

KEY PLAYERS



ENGLAND		WEST INDIES
Jason Roy		Chris Gayle
42.04	Bat Avg	38.14
107.06	Bat Strike rate	87.36
15	50s	52
9	100s	25
180	HS	215
3153	Runs	10222
153	Last Match	--



Wood not up for WI encounter?

REUTERS, London
England fast bowler Mark Wood is a doubt for Friday's World Cup clash with West Indies at Southampton because of a flare-up of an ankle injury, captain Eoin Morgan said on Thursday. Wood, who has taken four wickets in England's three matches, has struggled since Saturday. "Jos is fully fit," Morgan told reporters on Thursday. "Mark Wood will have a fitness test in the morning. "His ankle is swollen. He has not bowled for two days so we will see how he is, if he is sore then we may not take the risk. "Mo's wife gave birth to a baby girl, all healthy and well, so it is great to see him back."



Tim Southee and Kane Williamson (R) sport looks of disappointments as they turn their eyes towards the heavens, wondering if the rain will let up. It did not, and fans were denied the chance to see the two superstars get to work against India yesterday. PHOTO: NZC

Finch the best captain tactically: Vaughan

AGENCIES, London
Former England skipper Michael Vaughan has praised the tactical acumen of Aaron Finch after the Australian captain was rewarded for some bold gambles late in his side's tense win over Pakistan in Taunton. Australia's victory margin of 41 runs looked comfortable enough, but in reality, the match was firmly in the balance heading into the final six overs of Pakistan's run chase. With Pakistan needing 44 runs to win from 35 balls and three wickets in hand, Finch persisted with spearhead Mitchell Starc, who produced two pivotal breakthroughs in the 45th over to give Australia the upper hand. The first of those was the dismissal of a rampant Wahab Riaz, who was given caught behind after Finch called for a review of the umpire's not out decision. With just four frontline fast bowlers to choose from along with the off-spin of Glenn Maxwell, Finch was forced to bowl two overs himself, a move that produced the key wicket of Mohammad Hafeez. "I have to say Aaron Finch, so far in this tournament, for me he has been the best captain tactically," Vaughan told the BBC. "I think he maneuvered his team against the West Indies well to win that game. And just over the last hour (against Pakistan), when it started to get a little bit panicky, he maneuvered his bowling attack knowing that he had to get these overs of spin (in). "He left one (over of spin) late because he wanted to go for the glory with (Pat Cummins and Starc, and it paid off. That's what you have to do as a captain. "It was his instinct to go for that review. I don't think he felt it was out, but right at the last minute he thought 'you know what, we have to gamble, we have to try and get Wahab Riaz out.' He gambled on the review. "He got a lot of things right in the field in terms of squeezing at the right time, putting the catches in at the right time and then spreading them out when a partnership started to develop. I thought he was outstanding as a captain." With six overs remaining, Finch was unable to call on Cummins or Starc and had to call on Nathan Coulter-Nile and Kane Richardson, but his tactical gambles were rewarded with a third win. Both Vaughan and 1987 World Cup winning skipper Allan Border believe Finch's side has been well below their best so far in the tournament, but have scope to improve for the knockout stages. "I can't see how they won't be in the semi-finals," Vaughan said. "The good thing for Australia is they've won three out of four and I don't think they've clicked. And the other good thing is they've won two quite tight matches. "Can they win the World Cup playing to the standard they played today? I don't think so. But do they have enough in the locker to improve and win when it really matters? Absolutely." Border echoed Vaughan's sentiments, while he also called for Steve Smith to be given a chance with the ball.