



Pakistan batsman Haris Sohail pummeled the South African bowling attack, scoring a blistering 59-ball 89, featuring nine fours and three sixes to power his side to a mammoth total of 308 for seven in their World Cup fixture at Lord's yesterday. The Pakistani bowlers then took care of the rest of the job, restricting the Proteas to 259 to notch a 49-run victory.

PHOTO: AFP

'Heartbreaking, but there are positives'

AFP, Manchester

Carlos Brathwaite said on Saturday he would take confidence from his valiant 101 that took West Indies close to victory only to lose the World Cup thriller by five runs against New Zealand.

Brathwaite set up an exciting game with his 82-ball blitz after West Indies slipped to 245 for nine in their chase of 292 at Manchester's Old Trafford.

He smashed five sixes and nine fours for his maiden ODI ton, but fell to paceman Jimmy Neesham in trying to get the winning hit in the penultimate over as Trent Boult took a good catch just inside the long-on boundary.

"Obviously bitter sweet. For me personally, for my confidence," Brathwaite told reporters in the mixed zone. "As a result of all the hard work I've been putting in it's finally good that it comes to fruition."

"Obviously, I'm devastated not to get over the line," said the Barbadian. "I thought it had enough bat on it. I was willing it to go up and up but that was one of the best fielders in the world out there. It's a game of margins. One or two yards more, we would have been victorious tonight (Saturday)."

"For me personally, for my confidence, as a result of all the hard work I've been putting in it's finally good that it comes to fruition," he said. "Obviously, I know I can (do it), I never stopped working so it's good to see your hard work pay off. I am averaging 45 in test cricket so I think I can handle the bat a bit," he said.

"As it is a century in a losing cause it is bittersweet. I'm not going to beat myself up, because the ball should have gone for six and we should have won," he said.

Brathwaite, famous for his four sixes in the final over of England's Ben Stokes in the 2016 World Twenty20 title win in Kolkata, kept his team's hopes alive. He

dominated the last-wicket stand of 41 with Oshane Thomas, who remained unbeaten on nought, to give the Kiwis a real scare.

"Give credit to the lower order. Everyone believed we could get over the line," said Brathwaite. "Obviously

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CARLOS BRATHWAITE
WEST INDIES BATSMAN

heartbreaking to get so close but not get over the line (but) there were some positives. The fight that the lower order showed was commendable."

The 30-year-old sank to his knees after getting out and was consoled by the New Zealand unit led by Kane Williamson.

"The New Zealanders are some of the best people in the world," said Brathwaite. "Fortunate to have shared a dressing room or play against and socialise with them in franchise tournaments. Good friends with a few of them. Good sportsmanship on their behalf. I appreciated the mutual respect the opposition had."

His captain Jason Holder said it would be wrong to criticise Brathwaite's decision to go for a big shot. "We wouldn't have gone down to the penultimate if it wasn't for Carlos as well. He's been playing excellently well up to that point. It's just one of those things," Holder said.

Former kings flatter to deceive once again

AFP, Manchester

The West Indies started their World Cup campaign in style, blowing Pakistan away to revive memories of their glory days of swashbuckling batting and fearsome fast bowling. But, six games in, it is a familiar tale of what-ifs as the two-time former champions contemplate another failed campaign dogged by their old foe -- inconsistency.

Carlos Brathwaite on Saturday exemplified West Indies' fighting spirit and impressive reserves of talent, smashing a breathtaking century to take his side agonisingly close to victory against New Zealand at Old Trafford.

But instead of completing an unlikely and glorious win, Jason Holder's team lost by five runs, effectively ending their hopes of qualifying for the semifinals.

It is a familiar scenario for West Indies sides and former paceman Ian Bishop believes the lack of time the team's core group spends together is one reason for their below-par showing in England and Wales.

"Obviously they are a talented team," Bishop told AFP. "They haven't been together for a long time, unlike teams like England, New Zealand and India, who have had a core group for a long time."

"This team hasn't had that for different reasons, whether it's injury or guys going to different leagues, which is understandable. So I think that has hindered preparation."

West Indies cricket went through huge upheavals after the team cut short their tour of India in 2014 due to a payment dispute between the players and the board. Dwayne Bravo was sacked as ODI captain and Kieron Pollard and Darren Sammy were sidelined.

The enormously talented and charismatic Chris Gayle subsequently became a "gun for

hire", playing in leagues all around the world as coaches came and went.

Bishop said the changing support staff had not helped team-building -- Floyd Reifer was appointed interim head coach after the sacking of Richard Pybus in April while a change in guard at Cricket West Indies saw Ricky Skerritt succeed controversial predecessor Dave Cameron as president in March.

"There have been changes in the selection panel and things like that -- change in coaches, so different philosophies have evolved over the last three or four years," said Bishop, who also called for a shake-up in Caribbean domestic cricket.

"It's not just these guys, -- West Indies cricket has struggled for a fair while now in different formats at different times. In Twenty20 they are kings of the world. Some credit needs to be given there."

The West Indies witnessed an upturn in fortunes on the pitch with a shock 2-1 Test series win over England and 2-2 ODI series draw earlier this year. But the stark truth is that the former undisputed kings of world cricket under Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards have not won an ODI series since 2014.

Remind Holder, who has been captain since 2015, of West Indies' rich legacy and the pressure it might put on the present side and he smilingly says "no pressure."

"We need to be a little bit more consistent in what we're doing," he said after the heartbreaking loss to New Zealand at Old Trafford. "But as I said before, we're really, really proud of the way the guys fought."

West Indies, world champions in 1975 and 1979, started the World Cup with a comprehensive seven-wicket win over Pakistan only to lose steam, with defeats to



West Indies batsman Carlos Brathwaite fell to pitch in despair after holing out as he attempted a match-winning six. However, he was sportingly helped onto his feet after some consolation from the New Zealand players.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Australia, England and Bangladesh.

But they can take heart from good individual batting performances from Shimron Hetmyer, Shai Hope and Brathwaite.

Pacer Oshane Thomas and Sheldon Cottrell have also impressed with their pace and swing

in English conditions and Bishop is more than happy with the talent on tap, saying many of the players are relatively inexperienced.

"So again it goes back to how much experience some of these guys have in this format. You look around, how much India

have, how much England have had," he said.

"How much Australia have had with players such as Mitchell Starc, who is a World Cup winner. So it's an experience thing but domestically more needs to be done to support the players."

BEST QUOTE

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Steve Rhodes
Bangladesh coach



England's two foremost players teamed up during training exercises yesterday ahead of their match against Australia on Tuesday. Joe Root (L) has been in sublime form with scores of 50 or more in all but one World Cup game while Stokes rediscovered his form with the bat in their last outing, a close loss to Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'Dhoni told me I could get a hat-trick'

ICC

A wise word from MS Dhoni inspired Mohammed Shami to bowl the delivery that earned his place in World Cup history.

"There was no time to think, you just had to back yourself and your skills. I didn't want to try variations because that increases the chances of going for runs," said Shami, only the third to claim a hat-trick in World Cup history. "Mahi bhai [Dhoni] told me to keep bowling yorkers, he said 'don't change anything now, you can get a hat-trick'."

"Getting a chance in the team is a bit of luck but I was ready to seize my opportunity. The chance to get a hat-trick is a very rare thing and it's very special for me."

HAPPY MOMENT

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At the age of 40, South Africa leg-spinner Imran Tahir took a magnificent catch to dismiss Pakistan opener Imam-ul-Haq when the left-hander came down the track to play an uppish drive.. Tahir was equal to the task as the ball dipped towards his right, diving full-stretch to complete the catch with his right hand. It was indeed a happy moment for Tahir and the Proteas.