



He will have front row seats to England's destructive batting line-up, but coming into the match on the back of his second World Cup century, Australia opener David Warner (L) will be hoping for another big knock against their archrivals today. However, England will come at Australia with plenty of their own firepower, including the express pace of Jofra Archer (R) and the all-round brilliance of Ben Stokes.

PHOTO: REUTERS/AFP

## INFO ZONE

### HEAD TO HEAD IN WORLD CUP

AUSTRALIA	WIN	ENGLAND
5	2	
2	LOSS	5
0	TIE	0
0	NR	0

### HEAD TO HEAD IN ODIS

AUSTRALIA	WIN	ENGLAND
81	61	
61	LOSS	81
2	TIE	2
3	NR	3

### LAST MEETING

June 24 2018 at Old Trafford in Manchester  
England won by 1 wicket (with 9 balls remaining).

### KEY PLAYERS



AUSTRALIA	ENGLAND
DAVID WARNER	JOFRA ARCHER
45.61/- Bat/Bowl Ave	5.50/20.94
95.60/- Bat/Bowl Strike Rate	68.75/25.6
19 50s	0
16 100s	0
179 HS	7*
8.00 Econ	4.90
- BBM	3/27
4790/0 Runs/Wickets	11/18
166 Last Match	3/52, 3

# On thin ice, England aim to lay down a marker against Australia

AFP, London

Are England just a bunch of "flat-track bullies"? That's the uncomfortable question facing Eoin Morgan's side as they look to get their World Cup campaign back on track against arch-rivals Australia.

Tuesday's match at Lord's was always going to be a showpiece occasion, but it has been given added spice by England's 20-run loss to Sri Lanka.

Faced with a relatively modest target of 233 on a tricky Headingley pitch, England slumped to 212 all out.

Despite their second defeat of the pool phase following an earlier loss to Pakistan, the tournament hosts remained in the top four and on course for a semifinal spot.

But England, bidding to win the World Cup for the first time, cannot afford many more slip-ups in their remaining pool fixtures against Australia, India and New Zealand -- teams they have not defeated at a World Cup since 1992.

England's rise to the top of the ODI rankings since their woeful first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup has been based on aggressive batting. They have twice posted a world record score at this level in the intervening four years, including the current mark of 481-6 against Australia at Trent Bridge just over 12 months ago.

Doubts, however, persist about England's ability to bat in less than ideal conditions for shot-making.

Their problems were summed up against Sri Lanka when Moeen Ali marked his 100th ODI by hitting a six, only to try to repeat the shot next ball and hole out to leave England 170-6.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan was unimpressed, writing in

Britain's Daily Telegraph: "He (Moeen) was there to win the game but it was dumb cricket taking on the man at long off having just hit the ball for six."

According to research by cricket statisticians CricViz, on the 11 toughest one-day pitches for batting England have played on since losing to Pakistan in the 2017 semifinals of the Champions Trophy, they have lost five. By contrast, on the 11 best pitches for batting they have played on since then, Morgan's men have won nine.

England's problems are compounded by the absence of Jason Roy from their past two matches, with a torn hamstring also sidelining the in-form opener from the Australia clash as well.

Yet while former players such as Vaughan bemoaned England's lack of nous against Sri Lanka, Jos Buttler said the problem was they were not aggressive enough.

"I think we were a little bit passive as a group," said Buttler, who made just 10 before becoming the last of four wickets for veteran paceman Lasith Malinga. "That doesn't just mean hitting fours and sixes, that means showing intensity and trying to put pressure back on the bowlers," he said.

By contrast, Australia have been buoyed by the productive opening partnership between captain Aaron Finch and David Warner and are second in the table after five wins from six matches.

Mitchell Starc is the joint-leading wicket-taker at the World Cup but the support bowling has looked vulnerable.

Former Australia captain Allan Border believes the bowlers will be decisive.

"The game will be won and lost in the bowling," he wrote. "If Australia can hold their ground against the onslaught and put pressure back on England, that'll be key."

## FACTS

Australia skipper Aaron Finch has amassed 1153 runs -- most by any player among Australia's current World Cup squad -- in the 25 matches he played against England. He also has an average of 50.13 -- also the highest among the current players of the two sides -- against England.

England opener Jason Roy's 180 that came against Australia in 2018 in Melbourne is the highest individual score by any player of the two sides.

England skipper Eoin Morgan has scored 1815 runs -- most by any player among two sides -- in the 51 matches he played against Australia.

Australia quick Pat Cummins has scalped 22 wickets in 12 matches he played against England. This is the most by any current Australian bowlers against England.

Adil Rashid of England has taken 35 wickets -- most by any players in the two sides' current World Cup squad -- in the 19 matches he played against Australia.

## MR EFFICIENT



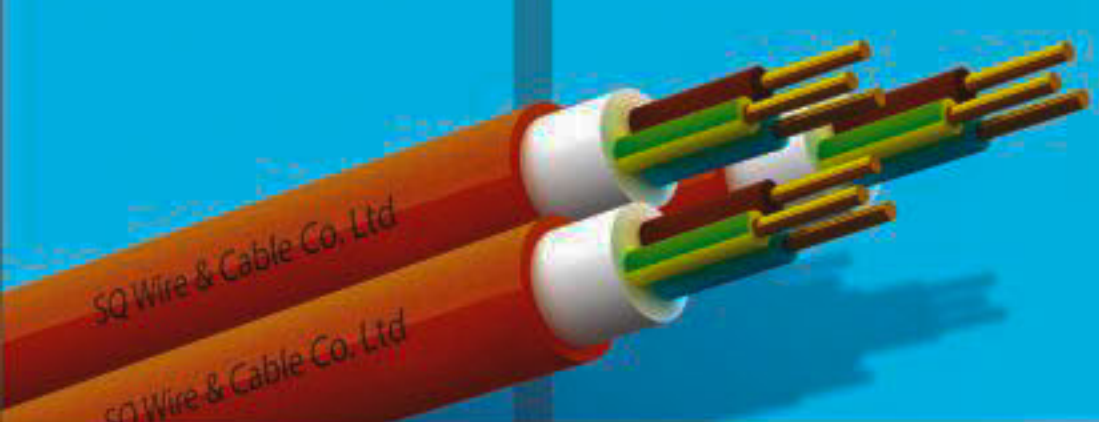
After an unbeaten hundred against Australia in the previous game, Mushfiqur Rahim struck an important 87-ball 83 against Afghanistan yesterday. The dependable batsman took responsibility and ensured Bangladesh would post a challenging total by remaining at the crease until the end of their innings. It was not an easy pitch but the right-hander maintained the tempo by striking four boundaries and a six. Courtesy of the 31-year-old's crucial knock, Bangladesh kept alive their hopes of beating Afghanistan and reaching the semifinals.



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