



## Windies keep Afghanistan winless

AFP, Leeds

Chris Gayle failed with the bat but struck with his tame off-breaks as the West Indies secured just their second win of a chastening World Cup campaign against Afghanistan yesterday. The Caribbean side scored 311 for six in Leeds and although the Afghans put up a brave fight, they ultimately went down by 23 runs. Gayle trapped Afghanistan top-scorer Ikram Alikhil lbw for 86 in the 36th over to put a huge dent in their slim hopes of victory.

"It's good to get over the line, we've had some close encounters where we didn't," said West Indies captain Jason Holder.

"Overall at this tournament, inconsistency let us down, in all three departments," he added. "Our fielding has to improve a lot." Despite the victory, West Indies remain second-bottom of the 10-team table.

Afghanistan have flickered during only their second World Cup but head home with a dispiriting nine defeats out of nine.

The West Indies, who smashed 111 runs of the last 10 overs, had captain Holder and Nicholas Pooran to thank for their acceleration after solid contributions from Evin Lewis (58), man-of-the-match Shai Hope (77) and Shimron Hetmyer (39).

In reply, Alikhil put on 133 for the second wicket with Rahmat Shah (62) and there were contributions from Najibullah Zadran and Asghar Afghan but ultimately Afghanistan did not have the batting firepower to get them over the line.

## NZ need Ferguson boost, says Vettori

REUTERS, Durham

New Zealand sorely missed Lockie Ferguson in Wednesday's comprehensive defeat by England and need the right-arm quick back to lift their bowling in the semifinals of the Cricket World Cup, former captain Daniel Vettori has said.

England got off to a flying start and were 194 for one in 30 overs before a New Zealand attack minus Ferguson, who sat out with a tightness in hamstring, arrested the run flow to restrict the hosts to 305-8.

Ferguson's absence denied skipper Kane Williamson the luxury of using their leading wicket-taker in small bursts to dent their opposition.

"New Zealand missed Lockie Ferguson in Durham, particularly because of the way he fits into the structure of the game," Vettori wrote in his column for the International Cricket Council.

"Kane likes to use his as a first-change bowler in short 2-3 over spells. With him out, that meant they had to shuffle things around a little. If he is back for the semifinal, that will give New Zealand a lot more certainty around how they go about

their 50 overs."

New Zealand, despite their third successive loss, are set to make the semi-finals ahead of Pakistan because of their vastly superior net run rate.

Vettori paid tribute to Trent Boult, who dismissed Joe Root and Jos Buttler to become New Zealand's leading wicket-taker in World Cups with 37 wickets.

"He was fantastic again and the knuckle ball to dismiss Jos Buttler was a highly-skilled piece of bowling," Vettori said.

"At the top of the order he is a left-arm fast swing bowler who can take wickets, and then when Kane needs someone in the middle overs to attack, he turns to Boult.

"He's also got that ability to reverse the ball in the death overs, when he is an attacking and defensive option."

Losing three matches in a row was not ideal but Vettori had no doubt that the 2015 finalists could start afresh.

"I don't think it will affect the team too much, particularly knowing some of the guys well. They have six or seven individuals who can win a game for them, and that is a pretty exciting way to think about it."

## Universe Boss leaves his mark

ICC

They came to see Chris Gayle, instead they had to settle for watching the future of West Indies batting.

Gayle was supposed to be the story at Headingley, playing his final World Cup match. A pair of tantalizing landmarks were within reach. Brian Lara's record number of one-day runs for the West Indies would be beaten with a score of 18. If he reached 47 he would overhaul Lara as the Windies' record run-getter in World Cups.

A nick behind off the bowling of Dawlat Zadran when on just seven ended his hopes of breaking either but Gayle's impact will not be remembered for the numbers.

During a time where West Indian cricket has struggled to hit the heights of the great teams of the 1970s and 1980s, he has been more than just a great entertainer at the top of the order. You just needed to watch the acclaim of the Indian fans before he took to the field against them at Old Trafford to understand Gayle's global appeal.

He has inspired the next generation in the Caribbean and there was tangible proof on show in Leeds. This team no longer relies on Gayle to set a target. He departed early but those who followed him carried the team past 300.

The World Cup has not gone as West Indies would have hoped but the seeds have been sown and may flower in four years' time in India.

It started with Evin Lewis, not quite a facsimile of Gayle, but the closest copy the West Indies currently have. Lewis has the ability to score big hundreds, the prime example being his 176 not out against England at The Oval two years ago.

Here, he smashed a couple of sixes, including one beauty off his hips on the way to 58. If Lewis is a batsman in the mould of the Universe Boss, the same cannot be said of Shai Hope. Coming in at three, the wicket-keeper batsman anchored the innings on his way to 77.

In many ways this Windies batting line-up is hit and Hope. Everyone else hits, and Hope holds it all together. The 25-year-old was involved in two fifty partnerships, first adding 88 with Lewis, then 65 with Shimron Hetmyer.

Hetmyer is another prodigious striker and hit 39 off 31 in a glorious cameo that left the crowd wanting more. With four ODI hundreds already to his name at just 22, they will get it, if not in this World Cup.

Then came Nicholas Pooran, a revelation from a Windies' perspective. He added a second half-century of the tournament to the stunning hundred he scored last time out against Sri Lanka.

That quartet are the future but of course Gayle being Gayle, he was not going to bid farewell to the grandest of stages without a final flourish.

The great showman might have failed with the bat, but a diving catch and then a crucial wicket broke two potentially match-winning partnerships and ensured he finished with a win.

### BEST QUOTE



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Obviously, we are here to win all the matches. We will do our best to win the last game as well to end on a high and we will do our best to achieve that but we need to be realistic, but if Allah helps then miracles can happen. It's like you score 600, 500, 400 on a pitch then you think you can get the other team out for 50 and then win by a 316-run margin. If you think realistically, then we can only try. But the first real thing will be to win the match. If you look at the tournament then, realistically, the tournament is of 280-300 totals.

**Sarfraz Ahmed**  
Pakistan captain

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In a dead rubber between West Indies and Afghanistan, there was not much to cheer about for either side. However, a bizarre fumble by Afghanistan skipper Gulbadin Naib off the last ball of West Indies' innings gave a moment to cheer for the West Indies fans. Carlos Brathwaite went for a slog over long off but the ball got more elevation than distance and Naib, who was standing there, did not have any idea as to where the ball was due to the sun's glare and the ball eventually dropped just next to him and went for a boundary.



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