

## THE BEST INNINGS OF THE WORLD CUP



**AARON FINCH VS ENGLAND:** On a tough pitch against an England attack that wanted to dominate proceedings with pace and bounce, Australia captain Aaron Finch rose to the challenge and made things look easy during a century stand with opening partner David Warner. He had made the difficult pitch look batting-friendly during his ton, and it was only after his dismissal that it became apparent how difficult a track it was to bat on as Australia crumbled before England were bowled out for 221.



**CARLOS BRATHWAITE VS NEW ZEALAND:** In a thrilling game against New Zealand, with Windies' World Cup hopes hanging in the balance, Carlos Brathwaite played the innings of his life and possibly of this World Cup. He brought West Indies back from the jaws of defeat with lower-order batsmen for company and single-handedly almost took Windies to victory, smashing an 82-ball 101. He then became the tragic hero of this World Cup, falling with his team just one hit away.



**SHAKIB AL HASAN AND LITON DAS VS WEST INDIES:** Shakib Al Hasan and Liton Das played possibly their best ODI knocks as Bangladesh chased down the Windies's 321 -- the second-highest successful run chase in World Cup history -- with seven wickets in hand. Shakib was mesmerising against the short deliveries while Liton played the perfect second fiddle. Once the senior reached his ton, Liton turned aggressor to show his own range of shots as Bangladesh assailed the target.



**KANE WILLIAMSON VS SOUTH AFRICA:** The Kiwis were in a spot of bother not only due to the match scenario but also in terms of keeping their push for a top four finish. Tottering at 80 for four in chase of South Africa's 245, Williamson started taking the game away from the Proteas. Wickets fell around him but captain calm kept to his style, dabbing the ball to third man at every opportunity before hitting a six to complete his ton and in the same over take the Kiwis to victory.



**BABAR AZAM VS NEW ZEALAND:** Pakistan's World Cup had been topsy-turvy and it showed no signs of improving as they were staring at the bottom of the barrel before the game against New Zealand, who were hot favourites. The Pakistan bowlers restricted the Kiwis to 237 in favourable circumstances for bowlers. But Babar played with complete authority during his magnificent unbeaten ton, facing up to the likes of Lockie Ferguson and Trent Boult, who were firing on all cylinders, with ease.

## BREAKOUT PERFORMERS AT THE WORLD CUP



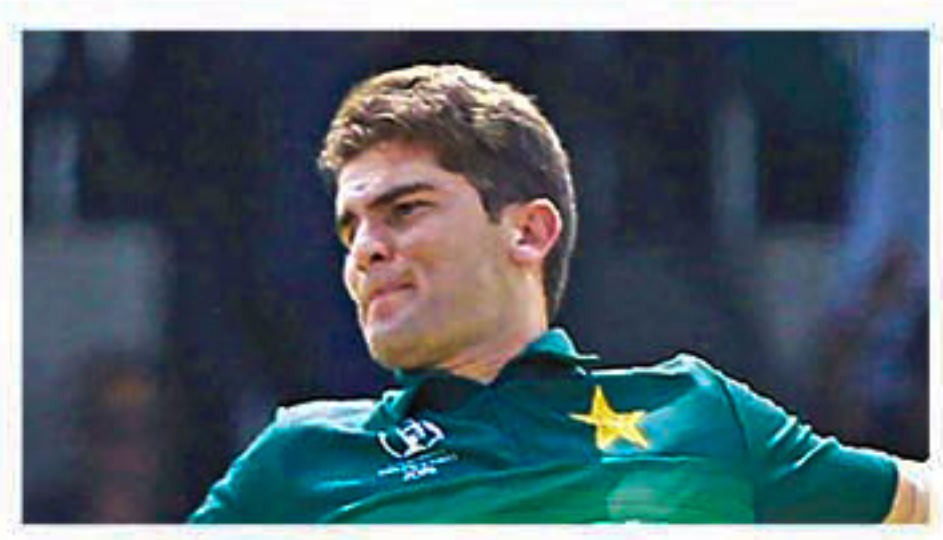
Australia wicketkeeper-batsman Alex Carey rose to every challenge that presented itself throughout the World Cup and with a cool and calm approach that betrayed his inexperience. The Australian middle-order was one of the weakest amongst the teams in the World Cup but, playing in his first major tournament, Carey was instrumental in many games. He scored a crucial 71 against New Zealand in the group stages and was one of few Aussies to deliver in the semifinal against England, where he scored 46. While he was not able to finish off at every opportunity, his composure under pressure makes him one of the stars to watch out for.



Jofra Archer came into the World Cup looking to make a big statement. And he did not disappoint. He unleashed a trial by pace for batsmen from all teams as the man from Barbados -- who was not even named in the initial England squad -- took his country to a World Cup final for the first time since 1992. What sets the 24-year-old apart from other bowlers is the bounce that he can generate from a relatively fuller length while his pace and variations have made batsmen look for cover throughout. He was consistently amongst the wickets and emerged as the biggest rising star of the tournament.



Jason Roy created the ultimate storm with the bat at this World Cup. His aggression and authority at the top of the order set England up for domination against top opponents. After his dominant 153 against Bangladesh, the Englishman missed four games and, underlining his importance to his side, the hosts lost two of those games. He came up with a couple of 60-odd scores that gave England the fast start that they crave, but it was in the crunch semifinal against Australia that his bat talked the talk. He asserted his dominance against a strong Australian pace battery, in particular, taking the game to Mitchell Starc, to take the game away from the five-time world champions.



Pakistan failed to make it to the top four in this edition of the World Cup but a 19-year-old in the form of Shaheen Shah Afridi whipped up a storm late in the tournament with some fantastic spells to keep Pakistan in contention till the end. The left-arter was one of three in the Pakistan line-up but his gifts surpassed his inexperience as he became the youngest bowler to bag five wickets in a World Cup match. He also became the only bowler from Pakistan to scalp six wickets in a World Cup match during the game against Bangladesh. The youngster ended with 16 wickets in the tournament.

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Something outstanding was required from the New Zealand bowlers in defence of a rather modest 242-run target. And the bowlers provided just that as they kept mounting the pressure on the host's batters, keeping their hopes of lifting a maiden World Cup title alive. England were struggling on 71 for three with skipper Eion Morgan and Ben Stokes trying to steady the ship. However, when something extraordinary was required from the Kiwis, they delivered through some brilliant out-field catching by Lockie Ferguson. It was the first ball of James Neesham's spell when Morgan played a lofted shot outside the off stump and the ball flew into the air. Ferguson, who was at the deep cover region, threw himself and clasped both his hands around the ball to complete a magnificent catch. It was undoubtedly the most crucial moment of the game as Morgan walked off the field while New Zealand ebbed closer to their first World Cup title.

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