



"A bit of a whirlwind, nice to get the job done and move onto the big dance. Challenging, especially at the start. The way Devon Conway batted through the middle, and Neesh (James Neesham), really helped us. It's a game of momentum, we knew we needed one or two big overs, and the way he struck the ball from ball one... With what's going on in the world, for my dad to travel half way round the world and be here is pretty cool."

DARYL MITCHELL



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'Really chuffed with the heart'

AGENCIES



Daryl Mitchell's unbeaten 72 and Jimmy Neesham's blistering cameo led New Zealand to a dramatic five-wicket victory over England in the first Twenty20 World Cup semi-final on Wednesday.

Set a tricky victory target of 167, New Zealand stumbled early in their chase before Mitchell and Devon Conway (46) put them back on track in a rematch of the 2019 one-day World Cup final.

Neesham then turned the match on its head in the 23-run 17th over, hitting Chris Jordan for two sixes and a four. Mitchell, who was adjudged player-of-the-match, guided New Zealand home with one over to spare.

When Daryl Mitchell arrived at the Twenty20 World Cup, he wasn't even sure if he'd be playing. Now, he's written a piece of New Zealand cricketing history.

Mitchell's unbeaten 73 guided the Black Caps to a superb victory - a victory that doubles as a measure of revenge for the 2019 ODI World Cup final heartbreak. This time, it was the Black Caps who came back from the dead.

When Neesham fell for an 11-ball 27, Mitchell took over. The man who had never opened in any form of cricket until the World Cup warm-up games blasted Chris Woakes for six, then six again, and finished him off with a four through backward square, to remarkably see the Black Caps home with an over to spare.

"We've played each other on a number of occasions, we

GREE

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knew it would be a great game of cricket," captain Kane Williamson said after New Zealand reached their first T20 World Cup final.

"Outstanding from Mitchell at the top, but cashing in on the match-ups [was crucial]. His character stood out today, an incredible knock, not done it a lot at the top of the order. T20 cricket is a game of small margins, depending on the surface, short side... can all be match-defining."

"Really chuffed with the heart that was shown throughout that performance. We had wickets in hand

which was really important. Neesham came out and hit the ball hard, and changed the momentum of the game," Williamson added. England were crowned 50-overs world champions in 2019 via a now-scrapped boundary countback rule after a heart-stopping final against New Zealand at Lord's had ended in a tie.

The rematch two years on brought more drama and New Zealand had the last laugh this time.

Put into bat, England were 67-2 at the halfway stage of their innings and reached the 100-mark in 14 overs, kept in check by New Zealand's tight bowling and sharp fielding. England were forced into rejigging their opening combination having lost Jason Roy to a calf injury and Jonny Bairstow moved up to partner Jos Buttler in a move that did not really pay off.

Bairstow made 18 before driving Adam Milne to mid-off where Williamson demonstrated the sharp catching which has been the hallmark of his team.

Ish Sodhi struck a body blow when he dismissed Buttler, England's leading scorer in the tournament, lbw for 29. Conway spilled Dawid Malan (41) behind the stumps but New Zealand did not make many other errors.

Moeen (51) smashed a couple of sixes in his unbeaten 37-ball knock to take England past the 150-mark.

England fast bowler Chris Woakes wrecked New Zealand's top order, removing the dangerous Martin Guppill and the dependable Williamson in successive overs. Mitchell and Conway rebuilt the innings but England still maintained the upper hand in the see-saw contest until Neesham's late attack.

'We're devastated'

REUTERS, Abu Dhabi

England captain Eoin Morgan was devastated by their loss in the semi-final of the Twenty20 World Cup and said Jimmy Neesham's blistering cameo tilted the see-saw contest in New Zealand's favour.

"We're devastated. To be on the wrong side of a close game is not easy to take," Morgan said after the narrow loss. "We were right in the game probably until Jimmy Neesham came to the wicket, if not ahead of the game."

On a pitch where England's star-studded batting lineup struggled to clear the ropes, Neesham belted three sixes in his audacious late-order assault.

"I think it was a very closely fought game right throughout. I thought Jimmy Neesham was probably the only guy that came out and was showing the ability to strike the ball cleanly from ball one," Morgan said.



"Hitting ability within our squad is quite strong, and the indication that the guys didn't feel like they could clear the ropes due to the nature of the pitch was a good indication that it wasn't coming on to the bat that well. I think that continued throughout the Black Caps' innings until he came to the crease."

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SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND	166 for 4 in 20 overs (Buttler 29, Malan 41, Ali 51 not out, Livingstone 17; Southey 1-24, Milne 1-31, Sodhi 1-32, Neesham 1-18)
NEW ZEALAND	167 for 5 in 19 overs (Mitchell 72 not out, Conway 46, Neesham 27; Woakes 2-36, Livingstone 2-22)
RESULT	New Zealand win by 5 wickets.
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH	Daryl Mitchell.

Hayden's 'unusual' reunion with Langer

AFP, Dubai

Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer, who formed one of Test cricket's most enduring and destructive opening partnerships, will briefly become rivals on Thursday when Pakistan tackle Australia for a place in the Twenty20 World Cup final.

Both now aged 50, their competitive natures have found new outlets -- Hayden as batting consultant with Pakistan and Langer as Australia's head coach. "It's a very unusual feeling," admitted Hayden on Wednesday.

"I was a warrior for Australian cricket over two decades, so that does give me the benefit of having wonderful insights not only into these players but also into the culture of cricket in Australia."

Hayden and Langer were the bedrock of the Australian side for the best part of a decade.

They opened together for the first time at The Oval in 2001 and strode out side-by-side for the final time at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 2007.

In between, they collected 5,655 runs together when opening, a record that included six double-century partnerships. Their average was a shade under 52.

Both men ended their careers with over 100 Tests each and bags of runs -- Hayden smashed 8,625 while Langer hit 7,696.



AUSTRALIA

ROAD TO SEMIFINAL

Beat South Africa by 5 wickets, beat Sri Lanka by 7 wickets, lost to England by 8 wickets, beat Bangladesh by 8 wickets, beat West Indies by 8 wickets

TOP SCORER

David Warner -- 187 runs

TOP WICKET-TAKER

Adam Zampa -- 11 wickets

PAKISTAN

ROAD TO SEMIFINAL

Beat India by 10 wickets, beat New Zealand by 5 wickets, beat Afghanistan by 5 wickets, beat Namibia by 45 runs, beat Scotland by 72 runs

TOP SCORER

Babar Azam -- 264 runs

TOP WICKET-TAKER

Haris Rauf -- 8 wickets

T20S HEAD-TO-HEAD

Australia wins: 9
Pakistan wins: 13 (includes one win on super over after tie)
No result: 1

LAST T20

(International meeting)

Australia routed Pakistan by 10 wickets with 49 balls to spare to clinch the series 2-0 in Perth on November 8, 2019.



Australia look to halt Pakistan juggernaut

AFP, Dubai

Australia are looking to their top-order batting led by the explosive David Warner as well as Adam Zampa's bag of leg-spin tricks to get past a red-hot Pakistan in Thursday's second semi-final of the Twenty20 World Cup.

The Aussies made their first semi-final of the tournament since 2012 with four wins and a better run-rate than South Africa.

But they are up against an unbeaten Pakistan who stormed into the final four with five wins in the Super 12 stage including their first ever in the tournament against rivals India.

Australia have won five 50-over World Cup crowns, including three in a row, but still await a T20 world title in six attempts.

The left-handed Warner has led the charge with 89 not out in Australia's win over West Indies and a quickfire 65 against Sri Lanka, an innings that silenced his critics.

He now has 187 runs for the tournament.

"I was never worried one bit about Dave's form. He's one of the all-time great batsmen of our era," said captain Aaron Finch of his opening partner who came into the World Cup on the back of being dropped from his

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IPL team.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell said the Australian batsmen will not hold back and go for the runs to unsettle the Pakistan attack led by left-arm quick Shaheen Shah Afridi.

"I've seen teams go the other way and try and hold wickets back to make sure they get to go at the back end," said Maxwell.

"But for us it's probably that playing with freedom at the start and really trying to make the most of the powerplay and put the opposition on the back foot."

Zampa is the tournament's joint second-highest wicket-taker with 11 victims but the 29-year-old has gone about his business under the radar.

"I don't think that anyone has underrated him," insisted Finch of Zampa who claimed a tournament-best return of 5-19 against Bangladesh in Dubai.

"He's someone who loves the competitiveness, loves the fight."

Inside the Pakistan camp is Matthew Hayden, the former Australia opener who is the team's batting coach.

Hayden sees the partnership between skipper Babar Azam, the leading run maker at the World Cup ahead of the semi-finals with 264, and Mohammad Rizwan as key.

On facing Australia, Babar said: "You can't take any team lightly in T20 cricket. You have to play good cricket on that day."

Pakistan have got a finisher in Asif Ali who hit four sixes off Afghanistan bowler Karim Janat to get his team the required 25 runs in the penultimate over of their Super 12 clash.

Veteran batsmen Shoaib Malik, who hit an 18-ball 54 in his side's last pool win over Scotland, and Mohammad Hafeez add experience to the batting order.