



The cup of OUR LIVES

From the days of all whites in the '70s and '80s through the colourful transition in the '90s and into the rollicking '20s of the new millennium, the ICC ODI World Cup has set new standards with every edition and made new heroes to be worshipped across the cricketing world.

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As the 13th edition of the ICC ODI World Cup kicks off in Ahmedabad today, it is time we took a dive into what makes cricket so special to so many people around the world.

The world of cricket has been blessed with many inspiring stories over centuries: stories of human excellence, of victory against adversity, of bringing social and political change using the power of the game, and of uniting people regardless of their colour, creed, religion and ethnicity.

The meteoric rise of Afghanistan as a cricketing nation is probably one of the most heartwarming stories, not only in cricket, but in global sport in the new millennium.

A battleground of foreign dynasties, colonialists and imperialists through centuries, the rugged terrains of Afghanistan have produced one of the most enterprising teams in cricket's history, bringing enormous joy to the lives of a people in perpetual strife. And it has all happened in the matter of two mere decades, despite the heavy odds

faced by its cricketers and cricket organisers.

And when one considers the fact that this cricketing revolution was set in motion by one of the most tragic episodes of the country's history, the enormity of Afghanistan's cricketing fairytale becomes all the more poignant.

Barring football, no other sport has possibly touched so many lives like cricket, shaping so many dreams and uniting so many people.

It is a sport that brings about that rare evening of fun and frolic for the South Asian diaspora in foreign lands – an occasion to reminisce about the good old days back home.

It is a sport that offers hope to a nation when its political leaders set aside their differences to sing praise of its cricketing icons. It is a sport that set the fire burning through the veins of every neutral fan when a bunch of rugged men from the Caribbeans made their colonial masters grovel in their own game.

Once a symbol of British colonialism and a treasure of the social elite, cricket has long since cast off its colonial cloak and taken its place in the hearts and minds of common people.

And that appeal has been continuously reinforced and emboldened by the ODI World Cup. The quadrennial event sits like a crown jewel in the heart of the sport's ever-evolving and expanding galaxy.

Ever since it came into being in 1975, ICC's showpiece 50-over event has only gained in popularity and

global acceptance, withstanding the pristine charm of Test cricket and the marauding rise of Twenty20.

Of course there are flaws in how the game in general is run by its global body and how the format of the World Cup is altered in almost every other edition, but the appeal of the flagship event has hardly ever shown signs of easing up.

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That is why the best always want to be there in the World Cup; that is why Ben Stokes unretired just a few days ahead of the 13th edition to have a go at one more global glory; that is why Kane Williamson has been carefully recuperated so that he can lead the golden generation of his nation to one last shot at the global crown; that is why an entire nation has been left looking for answers over the exclusion of one of its finest cricketers.

Today in Ahmedabad, at the biggest cricket stadium in the world, the World Cup juggernaut will set off for a long and winding journey across India, and will return to the same venue for one final time 45 days later to find an eventual winner, leaving in its wake many memories, records and stories to be recounted for the next four years and beyond.

GROUP STAGE

| DATE | Match | Time (BST) | Venue |
|--------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| 05-Oct | England-New Zealand | 2:30 PM | Ahmedabad |
| 06-Oct | Netherlands-Pakistan | 2:30 PM | Hyderabad |
| 07-Oct | Afghanistan-Bangladesh | 11:00 AM | Dharamsala |
| 07-Oct | South Africa-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Delhi |
| 08-Oct | India-Australia | 2:30 PM | Chennai |
| 09-Oct | Netherlands-New Zealand | 2:30 PM | Hyderabad |
| 10-Oct | Bangladesh-England | 11:00 AM | Dharamsala |
| 10-Oct | Pakistan-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Hyderabad |
| 11-Oct | India-Afghanistan | 2:30 PM | Delhi |
| 12-Oct | Australia-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Lucknow |
| 13-Oct | Bangladesh-New Zealand | 2:30 PM | Chennai |
| 14-Oct | India-Pakistan | 2:30 PM | Ahmedabad |
| 15-Oct | Afghanistan-England | 2:30 PM | Delhi |
| 16-Oct | Australia-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Lucknow |
| 17-Oct | Netherlands-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Dharamsala |
| 18-Oct | New Zealand-Afghanistan | 2:30 PM | Chennai |
| 19-Oct | India-Bangladesh | 2:30 PM | Pune |
| 20-Oct | Australia-Pakistan | 2:30 PM | Bengaluru |
| 21-Oct | Netherlands-Sri Lanka | 11:00 AM | Lucknow |
| 21-Oct | England-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Mumbai |
| 22-Oct | India-New Zealand | 2:30 PM | Dharamsala |
| 23-Oct | Afghanistan-Pakistan | 2:30 PM | Chennai |
| 24-Oct | Bangladesh-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Mumbai |
| 25-Oct | Australia-Netherlands | 2:30 PM | Delhi |
| 26-Oct | England-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Bengaluru |
| 27-Oct | Pakistan-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Chennai |
| 28-Oct | Australia-New Zealand | 11:00 AM | Dharamsala |
| 28-Oct | Bangladesh-Netherlands | 2:30 PM | Kolkata |
| 29-Oct | India-England | 2:30 PM | Lucknow |
| 30-Oct | Afghanistan-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Pune |
| 31-Oct | Bangladesh-Pakistan | 2:30 PM | Kolkata |
| 01-Nov | New Zealand-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Pune |
| 02-Nov | India-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Mumbai |
| 03-Nov | Afghanistan-Netherlands | 2:30 PM | Lucknow |
| 04-Nov | New Zealand-Pakistan | 11:00 AM | Bengaluru |
| 04-Nov | Australia-England | 2:30 PM | Ahmedabad |
| 05-Nov | India-South Africa | 2:30 PM | Kolkata |
| 06-Nov | Bangladesh-Sri Lanka | 2:30 PM | Delhi |
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SEMIFINALS

| | | | |
|--------|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| 15-Nov | 1st Placed - 4th Placed | 2:30 PM | Mumbai |
| 16-Nov | 2nd Placed - 3rd Placed | 2:30 PM | Kolkata |

FINAL

| | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| 19-Nov | Winner (SF 1) - Winner (SF 2) | 2:30 PM | Ahmedabad |
|--------|-------------------------------|---------|-----------|

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Played in the same format as 2019 World, ten teams will play every other side once in a single round robin format, with the top four teams going on to the semi-finals.
- A scenario with at least three teams on six wins would likely mean a team misses out on net run rate, so seven wins should be the minimum goal for teams vying for the trophy.
- A total of 10 grounds will play host to the 13th edition of the World Cup, from Dharamsala in the north to as far south as Bangalore and Chennai.
- Assuming little to no inclement weather, six wins could place teams in a precarious spot. If teams are level on points, number of total wins is the next tie-breaker, with net run rate the next factor to consider when differentiating teams.
- The winners of the tournament will take home US\$4 million, with the runners-up winning US\$2 million. Teams will also collect US\$40,000 after every group stage win.
- Both semifinals will have a reserve day, as well as the final. Should they need to be taken, matches on reserve days will take place a day after their originally-scheduled match date.

