

‘Not an upset’ if Dutch keep winning

AFP, Lucknow

Dutch batsman Teja Nidamanuru believes it will not be an “upset” if his team defeat Sri Lanka on Saturday and keep alive their bid to reach the Cricket World Cup semi-finals.

After stunning South Africa by 38 runs on Tuesday for their first victory over a Test-playing nation at the 50-over global showpiece, the Netherlands turn their attentions to 1996 champions Sri Lanka.

The Asia side are the only country at the 10-team event without a victory following three demoralising defeats.

Sri Lanka beat the Dutch twice in the qualifying tournament staged in Zimbabwe but Nidamanuru says that will only fuel his team’s ambitions on Saturday.

“We’ve competed against Sri Lanka multiple times in the qualifiers, and obviously we fell short in our batting side,” he said.

“We’ve worked extremely hard on that so we are here to play well and win. I wouldn’t call it an upset if I’m honest.”

At the qualifiers, Sri Lanka came out on top by 21 runs and then 128 runs in the final.

Indian-born Nidamanuru was out for a duck in both those games although he cracked a century in the victory over two-time champions West Indies.

For Sri Lanka, spinners Maheesh Theekshana and Wanindu Hasaranga claimed 11 wickets between them in the games in Zimbabwe.

However, leg spinner Hasaranga was ruled out of the World Cup through injury while off-spinner Theekshana has struggled to shake off a hamstring strain in India. He has just one wicket from two games.

“In the final, we kept them down to a good score, we could have chased that, but obviously their spin through



- England and South Africa are almost neck-and-neck in ODI head-to-head. In the 69 matches featuring these two, England claimed wins in 30 while the Proteas came out on top in 33 encounters. One match ended in a tie and five yielded no result.
- South Africa had to play four ODIs between 1992 and 1994 before getting their first win over England in Capetown in 1996.
- The defending champions England, however, have a slight edge in the mega event, with four wins in the seven matches against the Proteas. South Africa won the other three.

The victims of major upsets South Africa and England will be looking to bounce back, with the Proteas pacer Kagiso Rabada hoping to bring his best to the game by using the fresh Mumbai wicket while England will be boosted with the comeback of Ben Stokes to the eleven for their World Cup encounter today.

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Sri Lanka and the Netherlands have met five times in ODI cricket so far, with Sri Lanka winning all of those encounters.

On all of those occasions, Sri Lanka batted first and won by big margins, the biggest being a 202-run victory in their first meeting in Colombo in 2002.

The two teams played two matches in the World Cup Qualifiers earlier this year, with Sri Lanka winning both matches convincingly.

The two sides have never met in a World Cup before.

The Ekana Stadium in Lucknow hosted one match in the World Cup so far, with South Africa scoring 311 batting first and then bowling out Australia for 177 runs.

Need for comeback intensifies

England face South Africa

AGENCIES

The World Cup moves to Mumbai with two of the heavyweights feeling the pressure and needing to bounce back from shock defeats faced in the previous round of the mega event.

England have moved on from their shock 69-run loss to Afghanistan at the World Cup



according to captain Jos Buttler as they prepare to face a South Africa side that suffered a similar stunning defeat by the Netherlands this week.

The heavyweights clash at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday, with the two teams licking their wounds from setbacks that have put in their

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It makes the fixture crucial for both to recover and get their campaign back on track, with the loser facing a

potentially uphill battle to make the final four.

“We have moved on and had some good conversations and the energy and hunger around practice has been very high,” Buttler told reporters on Friday.

“They (South Africa) have been playing some really good cricket, their top six is really strong and they have pace with the ball. Both teams like (to face) pace on the ball, so it should really be a fascinating contest.”

England will welcome the return of all-rounder Stokes, who missed their opening three World Cup matches with a hip injury.

“Ben has trained really well and it is always good to see him back. He brings a lot on the field with his presence and leadership skills. He is always someone to turn too and adds a lot of value,” Buttler said.

With Stokes declaring himself fit for the first time this tournament following a hip problem, someone will have to make way and it could be Chris Woakes, who has been struggling for form in the World Cup.

The 34-year-old seam-bowling all-rounder has struggled to make an impact on Indian pitches and has taken just two wickets across England’s first three games at a hugely expensive average of 67.5.

Meanwhile, the way forward for England is to be positive with bat and ball, says Buttler, and play the style of cricket that won them the World Cup on home soil in 2019.

the middle was something that troubled us.”

Nidamanuru, 29, is desperate to get going with the bat at the World Cup.

So far he has scores of 5, 21 and 20 with his team losing to Pakistan and New Zealand before gaining their first win against South Africa.

“It’s a little bit frustrating. Obviously, I’d love to be contributing more towards the team’s success,” he said.

“I personally feel good. I can feel that it’s around the corner.”

Another win on Saturday may help to push cricket a little higher up the sporting agenda in the Netherlands where it remains a mystery to large parts of the population.



David Warner made Pakistan pay big for their blunder of dropping his catch twice, on 10 and 105, as the left-handed batter went on to smash a 124-ball 163 -- the highest score in this World Cup so far and also Warner's best score in the mega event -- in their game against Pakistan on a batting paradise in Bengaluru yesterday. Warner smoked 14 fours and nine maximums as Australia, also boosted by a century of Mitchell Marsh, posted a mammoth 367 for nine.

PHOTO: AFP

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Butter-fingered Pakistan’s sorry tale

AFP, Bengaluru

When Usama Mir grassed a dolly catch off David Warner in the World Cup match in Bengaluru on Friday, he kept up Pakistan’s unwanted tradition of dropping catches against Australia.

Warner, 10 at the time, punished Pakistan by cracking his 21st ODI century, fifth in all World Cup matches, and went on to score 163 in a total of 367-9.

Warner’s drop continued Pakistan’s sloppiness in crucial Australia matches, starting at the 2015 World Cup.

Australia were in a spot of bother at 83-3 when Rahat Ali grassed a simple catch off Shane Watson’s miscued hook in the quarterfinal at Adelaide.

Watson recovered to hit 64 not out in Australia’s six-wicket win on the way to lifting the World Cup for the fifth time.

Four years later in Taunton, Asif Ali dropped Aaron Finch off Riaz in the slips with the opener on 37. Finch went on to score 82 in Australia’s 41-run win.

In the 2011 Twenty20 World Cup semifinal in Dubai, Pakistan’s Hasan Ali dropped Matthew Wade at deep mid-wicket when Australia needed 22 off the last two overs.

WORLD CUP TIDBITS

Pandya out of NZ clash

AFP, New Delhi

Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya has been ruled out of India’s World Cup clash with New Zealand after suffering an injury in the win over Bangladesh, the BCCI said in a statement Friday.

Pandya twisted his ankle Thursday just three balls into his stint as first change in the ninth over, after being hit for consecutive boundaries by Liton Das.

Following prolonged on-field treatment, he tried running in to bowl but could only hobble towards the crease and eventually limped off the field.

Board of Control for Cricket in India boss Jay Shah said Pandya would not fly to Dharamsala for Sunday’s match with the Kiwis.

He would instead “join the team directly in Lucknow where India play England” for their next match on the following Sunday, Shah said in a statement.

India defeated Bangladesh by seven wickets with Virat Kohli making his 48th ODI century to close in on Sachin Tendulkar’s record of 49 hundreds in the format.



Bavuma’s Tendulkar wish to come true

AFP, Mumbai

Temba Bavuma said he would fulfil a cherished ambition on Saturday when he leads out South Africa in a World Cup match against England at the Wankhede Stadium, the home ground of his boyhood idol Sachin Tendulkar.

One of the Mumbai venue’s most memorable moments came when it staged the 2011 World Cup final, with Tendulkar a member of the India side that defeated Sri Lanka to the delight of his adoring fans.

South Africa captain Bavuma, an admirer of the batting great, told a pre-match press conference on Friday: “I think for me, growing up, idolising a guy like Sachin Tendulkar, the Wankhede was a stadium you always heard about.

“So, to have that opportunity to be playing, that’s another tick off my list as a cricketer.”

By contrast, South Africa’s Quinton de Kock, who has already made hundreds against Sri Lanka and Australia this World Cup, knows the Wankhede well from his time playing for the Mumbai Indians in the T20 Indian Premier League.

“The guys that have played here, JP Duminy, Quinton, they’ve spoken about how it can be a batter’s paradise,” said opening batter Bavuma.

“You get value for your shots and the ball seems to travel further...If it is your day, you can fill your boots.

England star Ben Stokes is set to play his first match of the tournament today. “He is an X-factor player, he’s the guy that can change the course of the game,” Bavuma said of Stokes.