

# Finch, Starc shine as Australia edge Sri Lanka

● **Aaron Finch and Mitchell Starc power Australia to victory in World Cup**

● **Australia go top of the World Cup standings**

AFP | London

Australia captain Aaron Finch and pace bowler Mitchell Starc stole the show as the holders eased to an 87-run win over Sri Lanka at the Oval on Saturday.

Finch equalled his career-best one-day international score with a masterful 153 and Steve Smith chipped in with 73 as Australia scored 334-7.

Needing a World Cup record run-chase to claim a shock win, Sri Lanka got off to a flying start thanks to a first-wicket partnership of 115 between captain Dimuth Karunaratne and Kusal Perera.

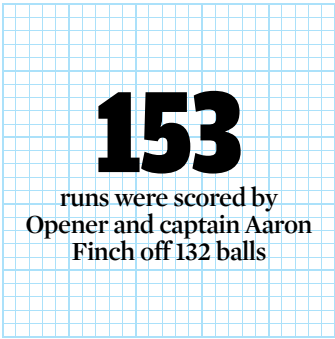
But Perera departed for 52 and when Karunaratne fell on 97 the game swung back in Australia's direction.

Starc was the catalyst with a fiery spell of three wickets in six balls, Australia eventually dismissing Sri Lanka for 247 thanks in large part to his 4-55 from 10 overs.

Kane Williamson added three wickets of his own as Australia made it four wins from their five group matches after previously beating Afghanistan, the West Indies and Pakistan.

Their lone defeat in the 10-team tournament came against India and their latest victory puts them well on course for a semi-final berth.

Sri Lanka, who lost their last seven



Aaron Finch plays a shot

wickets for 42 runs, have only one win from their five matches, a disappointing run that includes two washouts.

They face a struggle to reach the semi-finals with only four matches left, a spell that features encounters with title contenders England and India.

Sri Lanka had briefly looked capable of surpassing the World Cup chase set by Ireland, who made 329-7 to beat England in 2011.

Karunaratne and his opening partner Perera blasted 24 from the first two overs and reached their fifty partnership in just the seventh over.

But Starc bowled Perera and Jason Behrendorff dismissed Lahiru Thirimanne for 16 as Australia hit back.

A six from Kusal Mendis in the 31st over signalled Sri Lanka's intent to get cracking.

But crucially Karunaratne stumbled short of his maiden World Cup century when he carelessly flicked Richardson to Glenn Maxwell at backward point.

That left Sri Lanka 186-3 and set the stage for Starc to turn the screw by dismissing Milinda Siriwardana, Thisara Perera and Mendis in quick succession.

Mendis's mistimed drive off Starc reduced Sri Lanka to 222-7 and shattered their resistance.

Earlier, Finch took the Sri Lanka attack apart with a dazzling display that included 15 fours and five sixes.

He was well-supported by Smith's 73 from 59 balls and the pair put on 173 runs for the third wicket.

Together with opening partner David Warner, Finch took the attack to the Sri Lankans after being put in to bat under cloudy skies in south London.

<b>Australia</b>	
D. Warner b De Silva	26
A. Finch c Karunaratne b Udana	153
U. Khawaja c Udana b De Silva	10
S. Smith b Malinga	73
G. Maxwell not out	46
S. Marsh c Siriwardana b Udana	3
A. Carey run out (Udana)	4
P. Cummins run out (Udana)	0
M. Starc not out	5
Extras (lb4, nb1, w9)	14
Total (seven wickets, 50 overs)	334
<b>New Zealand</b>	
D. Karunaratne c Maxwell b Richardson	97
K. Perera b Starc	52
L. Thirimanne c Carey b Behrendorff	16
K. Mendis c Carey b Starc	30
A. Mathews c Carey b Cummins	9
M. Siriwardana b Starc	3
T. Perera c Warner b Starc	7
D. de Silva not out	16
I. Udana c Finch b Richardson	8
L. Malinga c Khawaja b Richardson	1
N. Pradeep c Carey b Cummins	0
Extras (lb2, w6)	8
Total (all out, 45 overs)	247

## South Africa eye first win after bundling out Afghanistan

AFP | Cardiff

South Africa bowled out Afghanistan for just 125 in a rain-shortened match in Cardiff on Saturday as they fought to keep their faltering World Cup hopes alive.

Faf du Plessis's side have endured a torrid campaign so far, losing their first three matches and then picking up one point from a rain-ruined match against the West Indies.

Afghanistan, who have lost all three of their matches in England and Wales, made a bright start but their middle order collapsed spectacularly and just three of their players reached double figures.

There was little sign of the carnage to come when Hazratullah Zazai and Noor Ali Zadran put on 39 runs for the first wicket.

After a short rain delay Zazai was the first to go, caught by Rassie van der Dussen for 22 off the bowling of paceman Kagiso Rabada.

Chris Morris trapped Rahmat Shah lbw for six and Afghanistan were 69-2 after 20 overs when the heavens opened again and the covers came on, with officials opting to reduce the match to 48 overs a side.



Afghanistan's Rashid Khan plays a shot as South Africa's Quinton de Kock looks on

When play resumed Hashmatullah Shahidi was out without any addition to the score, caught in the slips by Du Plessis off the bowling of Andile Phehlukwayo for eight.

Leg-spinner Tahir bowled Zadran for 32 with his first ball and then caught Asghar Afghan off his own bowling for nought in the same over to plunge Afghanistan into deep trouble.

Mohammad Nabi became the third Afghan batsmen to lose his wicket in

the space of seven balls when he was bowled by Phehlukwayo.

When Gulbadin Naib was caught by Aiden Markram of the bowling of Tahir, Afghanistan were teetering on the brink of disaster at 77-7.

Rashid Khan struck 35 from 25 balls, with six fours, but even his late flourish could only lift the score to 125, which looks hopelessly inadequate.

At the time of closing South Africa scored 87 runs in 19 overs without losing a wicket.

Cricket World Cup 2019 standings							
Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	No result	Run rate	Points
Australia	5	4	1	0	0	0.812	8
New Zealand	4	3	0	0	1	2.163	7
England	3	2	1	0	0	1.307	4
India	3	2	0	0	1	0.539	5
Sri Lanka	5	1	2	0	2	-1.778	4
West Indies	3	1	1	0	1	2.054	3
Bangladesh	4	1	2	0	1	-0.714	3
S Africa	5	1	3	0	1	-0.952	3
Pakistan	3	1	1	0	1	-2.412	3
Afghanistan	4	0	4	0	0	-1.264	0

**Today's match**

**India v Pakistan**

Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester  
12:30pm

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP ENGLAND & WALES 2019

**Rohit Sharma**

- » India is unbeaten and in excellent form but they are going to be without Shikhar Dhawan in this match
- » Pakistan won against England, the favourite to win this tournament, and cannot be counted out. Mohammad Amir is going to be very difficult to face in overcast conditions.
- » India has a very good record against Pakistan in recent times and has never lost a match against them in a World Cup

**India**

India have won 10 out of the 15 completed one-day internationals that they have played this year. With two wins and a wash-out from their first three matches in the ongoing World Cup, the men in blue are sitting on the third spot in the CWC 2019 standings with five points. After registering a six-wicket win over South Africa in their campaign opener at Southampton, they got the better of Australia by 36 runs in their next match at London. India, however, had to share points with New Zealand in their previous game at Nottingham due to abandonment.

**Probable XI**

Lokesh Rahul, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli (c), Vijay Shankar/Dinesh Karthik, MS Dhoni (wk), Hardik Pandya, Kedar Jadhav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami/Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah

**Pakistan**

Pakistan have managed just three wins from the seventeen matches they have played so far this year in the fifty-over format. At the moment, they don't find themselves in a very comfortable position in this World Cup as they are lying in the eighth position on the CWC 2019 points table with just three points from four games. Pakistan began their campaign on a losing note with a heavy seven-wicket loss to the West Indies at Nottingham but came back strongly to stun hosts England by 14 runs at the same venue. Their next fixture against Sri Lanka at Bristol got washed out before they suffered a 41-run defeat against Australia in their previous match at Taunton.

**Probable XI**

Imam-ul-Haq, Fakhar Zaman, Babar Azam, Mohammad Hafeez, Sarfaraz Ahmed (c/wk), Shoaib Malik, Asif Ali, Wahab Riaz, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Amir

**PITCH REPORT**

Everyone is going to have one eye in the sky because rain has already played havoc with the tournament. The weather forecast is not good. There is a lot of rain expected to fall on match day. The current forecast suggests a 50% chance of rain throughout the day. We have to hope for a miracle otherwise the most awaited match of the tournament may be a washout.

**Head to Head**

- India and Pakistan have played 127 completed one-day internationals against each other in the past with the scoreline reading 73-54 in favor of the latter.
- India have beaten Pakistan six times in the last eight ODI encounters between the two nations. India won both their matches against them in last year's Asia Cup at the UAE.
- The two teams have faced each other just once at the Old Trafford in the 50-over format. The match was played at the 1999 ICC Cricket World Cup with India emerging victorious by 47 runs.

## Harbhajan warns India stars to expect sleepless night as Pakistan loom

AFP | London

Harbhajan Singh has warned India's stars to expect a sleepless night ahead of their World Cup showdown with arch rivals Pakistan today.

India legend Harbhajan knows from bitter experience just how stressful it is to take part in one of most fierce rivalries in world sport. The tense political situation between India and Pakistan lends an extra level of animosity whenever the feuding neighbours clash on the cricket pitch.

Their latest meeting comes with the stakes even higher than usual in the World Cup at Old Trafford this weekend and Harbhajan is well aware just how high emotions will be running on the pitch and in the

stands. The 38-year-old spinner played 17 times against Pakistan in a 236-match ODI career for India, including arguably their biggest ever match in the 2011 World Cup semi-finals on home soil in Chandigarh. It was such a critical fixture that Harbhajan lay awake for hours tossing and turning in bed the night before the game as he visualised the furious response from the Indian public if they lost. "The memories of that game was I couldn't sleep the night before, even though I tried my best," Harbhajan said. "I was just worried about what would happen if we lost the game. There were a lot of thoughts coming into my mind.