

Ravindra's chancy ton powers New Zealand into semis

Before Rachin's hundred, all-rounder Bracewell did the star turn with a four-wicket haul as New Zealand restricted Bangladesh to 236 for 9

PTI, RAWALPINDI: Rachin Ravindra shepherded New Zealand's chase with a timely century as his team recovered from an early wobble to see off Bangladesh by five wickets and secure its place in the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy here on Monday.

Before Ravindra's chancy hundred, all-rounder Michael Bracewell did the star turn with a four-wicket haul as New Zealand restricted Bangladesh to 236 for nine.

In reply, New Zealand were off to a disastrous start as they lost the wickets of Will Young and Kane Williamson with just 15 runs on the board. But they rallied to complete the chase in 46.1 overs, with Ravindra making 112 off 105 balls with the help of 12 fours and a six.

Tom Latham struck 55 in 76 balls, while adding 129 runs for the fourth wicket with Ravindra which sealed the deal in New Zealand's favour. Bangladesh had their moments though with the ball.

Taskin Ahmed got rid of Young with a magnificent inswinger that crashed through the batter's defence to disturb the stumps with New Zealand yet to open their account.

Playing this game after his surprise omission

from the clash against India, express pace bowler Nahid Rana then made short work of Kane Williamson (5), who drove away from his body, got an outside edge, and Mushfiqur Rahim accepted the offering gleefully.

A partnership of 57 runs followed between Devon Conway (30) and Ravindra before the wily left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman got Conway to chop one onto his stumps, leaving the Kiwis at a tricky 72 for three in the 16th over.

Then came the match-winning partnership Ravindra and Latham.

Earlier, Bracewell, the left-handed batter who bowls off-spin, was mealy as well as effective, finishing with excellent figures of 4/26 in 10 overs.

Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto top-scored for Bangladesh with a 77 that came off 110 balls, as the team's specialist batters seemed to have lacked a plan in the middle overs and did not have a target in mind in their must-win game.

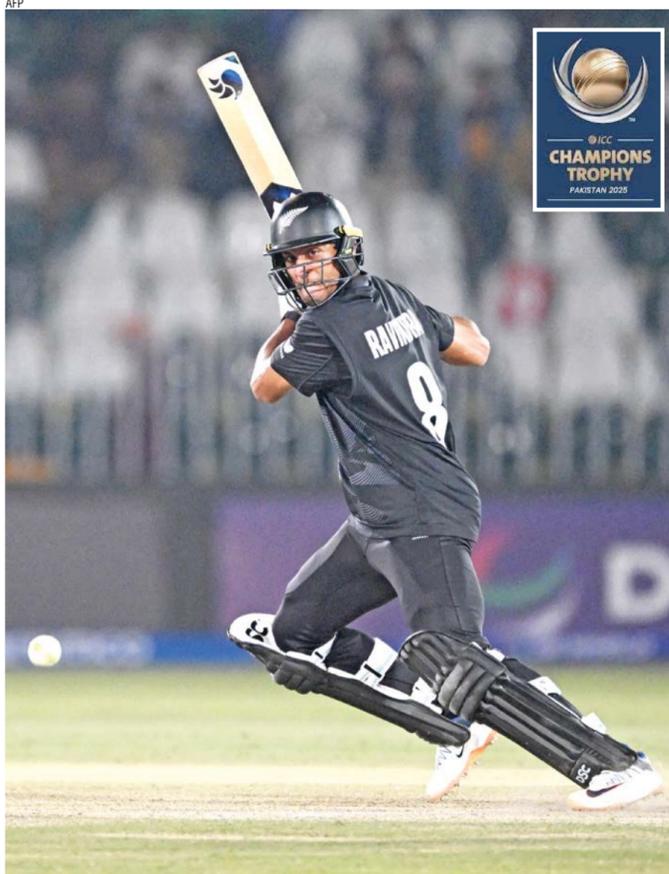
Number seven Jaker Ali chipped in with 45 off 55 balls, giving batting lessons to the ones who failed at the top of the order and in the middle.

SCOREBOARD

Bangladesh: Tanzid Hasan c Williamson b Bracewell 24, *Najmul Hossain Shanto c Bracewell b O'Rourke 77, Mehidy Hasan Miraz c Santner b O'Rourke 13, Towhid Hridoy c Williamson b Bracewell 7, Mushfiqur Rahim c Ravindra b Bracewell 2, Mahmudullah c Williamson b Bracewell 4, Jaker Ali run out (Latham) 45, Rishad Hossain c Santner b Henry 26, Taskin Ahmed c Conway b Jamieson 10, Mustafizur Rahman not out 3, Nahid Rana not out 0. **Extras:** 25. **Total:** 236-9. **Fall of wickets:** 45-1, 64-2, 97-3, 106-4, 118-5, 163-6, 196-7, 231-8, 236-9. **Bowling:** Matt Henry 9-0-57-1, Kyle Jamieson 9-1-48-1, Michael Bracewell 10-0-26-4, William O'Rourke 10-2-48-2, *Mitchell Santner 10-1-44-0, Glenn Phillips 2-0-10-0.

New Zealand: Will Young b Ahmed 0, Devon Conway b Rahman 30, Kane Williamson c Rahman b Rana 5, Rachin Ravindra c (sub) Emon b Hossain 112, Tom Latham run out (Mahmudullah) 55, Glenn Phillips not out 21, Michael Bracewell not out 11. **Extras:** 6. **Total:** 240-5. **Fall of wickets:** 0-1, 15-2, 71-3, 200-4, 214-5. **Bowling:** Taskin Ahmed 7-2-28-1, Nahid Rana 9-0-43-1, Mehidy Hasan Miraz 10-0-53-0, Mustafizur Rahman 10-0-42-1, Rishad Hossain 9-1-0-58-1, *Najmul Hossain Shanto 1-0-12-0, Towhid Hridoy 1-0-9-0.

Man of the match: Michael Bracewell



New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra plays a shot during the ICC Champions Trophy One-Day International match against Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi

sportspopup

England lose Carse to injury ahead of Afghanistan game

LAHORE: England fast bowler Brydon Carse has been ruled out of the Champions Trophy with a toe injury and replaced in the squad by leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed, tournament organisers said Monday. The 29-year-old Carse missed England's training session on Monday, 48 hours before their second Group B match against Afghanistan in Lahore. The ICC said it had approved Ahmed as a replacement for Carse, who took 1-69 in seven overs as Australia chased down a 352-run target to win by five wickets on Saturday.

Ecclestone shines as UP Warriorz beat RCB in WPL's first-ever Super Over

BENGALURU: Sophie Ecclestone produced a superb all-round show to hand UP Warriorz a sensational win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the first-ever Super Over of the Women's Premier League, here, on Monday. Sent into bat, Ellyse Perry and Danni Wyatt-Hodge sparked with the bat to guide RCB 180 for six. Perry smashed an unbeaten 90 off 56 balls while opener Wyatt-Hodge made 57. But Ecclestone, who registered economical figures of 4-0-29-0, showed her prowess with the bat, scoring 33 off 19 balls to help UP Warriorz make a remarkable comeback to tie the match and take it to the Super Over, where they came out on top. UP Warriorz managed just eight runs in the super over bowled by Kim Garth. The onus was then on RCB skipper Smriti Mandhana and Richa Ghosh to chase down the target of nine runs against Ecclestone but the English cricketer came out on top, conceding just four runs. Earlier, RCB lost Mandhana early, bowled by Deepti Sharma in the fourth over. Perry joined hands with Wyatt-Hodge and the duo shared 94 runs in 65 balls for the second wicket to take RCB forward.

Delhi Capitals, Gujarat Giants eye improved batting effort today

BENGALURU: Struggling with batting frailties, Gujarat Giants and Delhi Capitals will look to return to winning ways when they clash in the Women's Premier League here on Tuesday. Both teams head into this fixture on the back of defeats. Gujarat Giants, who finished last in the previous two seasons, remain at the bottom of the points table with just one win in three games. Meanwhile, Delhi Capitals have slipped to third after a 33-run loss to UP Warriorz, their third defeat in five matches. Despite being one of the most consistent teams since the league's inception, Delhi Capitals have endured a patchy run this season. They are yet to live up to their pre-tournament favourites tag, struggling to put together commanding performances. Their batting lineup, in particular, has failed to fire consistently. Openers Shafali Verma and Meg Lanning have shown glimpses of form but haven't capitalised.

Indian women lose 2-4 against Olympic champions Netherlands in Pro League

BHUBANESWAR: The Indian women's hockey team wasted chances galore to lose 2-4 to reigning Olympic champions Netherlands in a FIH Pro League match, here, on Monday. The Indians had the better share of scoring chances -- 13 penalty corners as against Netherlands' just three -- but they couldn't capitalise on the opportunities. Netherlands scored through Emma Reijnen (7th minute), Felice Albers (34th, 47th) and Fay van der Elst (40th) to come out winners. India's both goals came from penalty corner conversions by Uditia (18th, 42nd). India will again play Netherlands in return-leg match here on Tuesday.



India Masters' Sachin Tendulkar during a practice session at DY Patil Stadium, Nerul, in Navi Mumbai, on Monday

CSK rope in Sriram as assistant bowling coach

CHENNAI: Former India all-rounder Sridharan Sriram will be the assistant bowling coach of Chennai Super Kings in the upcoming IPL, the five-time champions announced on Monday. "Say Yellove to our assistant bowling Coach Sriram Sridharan! Brought up from the tracks of Chepaup to a packed portfolio of coaching tenures in Australia and Bangladesh, he embarks on this new journey with the pride!" CSK posted on X, making the announcement. The former left-arm spin bowling all-rounder will work with Stephen Fleming (head coach), Mike Hussey (batting coach) and Eric Simons (bowling consultant). CSK boasts of R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Shreyas Gopal, Noor Ahmad, Deepak Hooda and Rachin Ravindra in their spin bowling lineup. The 49-year-old will fill in the void left by Dwayne Bravo who has now joined defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders as their mentor.

Pakistan interim coach Aaqib, other support staff to be shown door after CT poor show

LAHORE: The backlash due to the poor show in the Champions Trophy, including the humiliating defeat to India, hit the Pakistan team hard and its support staff led by former fast bowler Aaqib Javed is set to be overhauled, according to a cricket Board source. Pakistan lost to arch-rivals India by six wickets in Dubai on Sunday, after their 60-run defeat to New Zealand in the Champions Trophy opener in Karachi on February 19. A well-informed source in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that Aaqib will be relieved of his duties as interim head coach after the Champions Trophy. "Obviously there is backlash over the team's performance in the CT. The Board hasn't decided as yet on whether the team will have separate head coaches (for red and white ball teams) but one thing is certain the current support staff will be overhauled now after the poor show in the Champions Trophy," the source told PTI.

India's semis slot confirmed with NZ's win; Pak, Bangla knocked out

PTI, RAWALPINDI: Title contenders India's slot in the semi-finals of ICC Champions Trophy was confirmed on Monday following New Zealand's victory over Bangladesh, the result also elimi-

nating tournament hosts Pakistan from the event.

Besides India, New Zealand, who have registered two victories in as many matches, also advanced to the last four stage

from Group A.

India won their first two matches in convincing fashion, beating both Bangladesh and Pakistan by identical margin of six wickets.

Having lost their first two

games, Pakistan needed a lot of results to go their way to ensure their qualification for the semi-finals. However, the campaign of Mohammad Rizwan's team came to a premature end after the Ki-

wis chased down a target of 237 against Bangladesh with as many as 23 balls to spare.

This is the first time Pakistan is hosting an ICC tournament since the 1996 World Cup.

Playing cover-drive is 'catch-22', been my weakness as well: Kohli

PTI, DUBAI: Indian batting maestro Virat Kohli admitted that his trademark cover drive puts him in a "catch-22" situation as it has been a weakness lately but playing the shot gives him control over the innings.

Kohli crafted a memorable unbeaten century against Pakistan, steering India to a six-wicket win. His 111-ball masterclass featured the cover drive prominently, a shot that has in recent time led to his downfall but remains a signature weapon in his arsenal.

"It's a 'catch-22'. I mean, it's (cover drive) kind of been my weakness as well over the years, but I've scored a lot of runs on that shot," Kohli said in a video posted by BCCI.

"I think today was just about backing my shots and I think the first couple of boundaries I got were cover drives on the rise, so I really had to just let it go a little bit and take a bit of risk and follow through with my shots."

"Because when I hit that kind of shots, then I feel in control when I bat out



there. So, it was a good innings for me personally and it was a great team win," he added.

An India-Pakistan game is always a blockbuster, but Kohli felt Sunday's clash was even more electrifying,

with Dubai's stands packed with passionate fans from both nations.

"The occasion is a bit more lively when you play against Pakistan, especially in this region because you have an equal number of fans from both countries, yeah, it was a great day for us as a team and for me personally as well."

Delighted to contribute to India's victory once again, Kohli, who became the fastest batter to complete 14,000 ODI runs, said his role at No. 3 has remained unchanged over the years -- minimizing risk, stabilizing the innings, and, when possible, finishing the chase.

"One thing that I've always thought of batting at three is to minimise risk and make sure that I put my team in a winning position and if you have a chance to finish off the game in a chase, obviously, that's much better and I always preferred that kind of a situation.

"My role over the years has remained the same, whatever the demand of the game, I put my head down and try to do that," he added.

Australia, SA promise run fest

PTI, RAWALPINDI: Australia and South Africa, two teams possessing plenty of batting firepower, will look to outmuscle each other here on Tuesday and put one foot in the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy.

Not many were giving a chance to the depleted Australia but their record-breaking chase against England in Lahore has once again shown their penchant for rising to the occasion in ICC events.

PREVIEW

The dew played its part the other night in Lahore and could once again aid the chasing team in Rawalpindi. Australia are bound to miss the pace trio of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood in the tournament but at least in the opener, the audacious batting display compensated for their absence.

Josh Inglis' confidence must be sky high after playing the innings of his life with runs also coming from the bat of Matthew Short, Marnus Labuschagne, Alex Carey and Glenn Maxwell. That leaves out only

skipper Steve Smith and opener Travis Head in the batting department and they could score a big one against the Proteas.

A better bowling effort would be expected from left-arm pacer Spencer Johnson and Maxwell too was on the expensive side against England. The sixth bowler's role is likely to be shared by Labuschagne and Short.

Like Inglis, Ryan Rickleton in the South African dressing room would be beaming with confidence after an attacking hundred against Afghanistan. Number three, four, five striking half-centuries augurs well for the Temba Bavuma-led side.

Heinrich Klaassen missed out on the last game due to injury and his participation in Tuesday's game is not certain.

South Africa's pace attack is certainly stronger than their opponents with Kagiso Rabada leading the charge.

With first choice players not available, South Africa did not have the best of build ups for Champions Trophy but are backing themselves to go all the way.

Modric stunner maintains Real Madrid title charge

AFP, BARCELONA: Luka Modric scored a brilliant goal from long range to help Real Madrid secure a 2-0 win against Girona on Sunday which took them back level with Barcelona at the top of La Liga.

Vinicius Junior wrapped up the win late on as Carlo Ancelotti's side produced a solid display at the Santiago Bernabeu.

After rivals Barcelona and Atletico Madrid, now third, both won on Saturday, the pressure was on for the champions in the extremely tight title race.

Madrid had not won in their prior three league games but flexed their muscles by thrashing Man City in the Champions League in midweek. The Croatian's goal was the highlight of the match.

Madrid were without suspended England international Jude Bellingham after his red card last weekend. Last year's surprise title contenders Girona were hard for Madrid to break down but far less threatening in attack than at their fluent best.

Paulo Gazzaniga saved



Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder #10 Luka Modric celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the Spanish league match against Girona FC at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid

well from Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius let a good at-

his French strike partner.

Earlier Athletic Bilbao hammered bottom side Real Valladolid 7-1 to stay on track for Champions League football next season. Ernesto

Valverde's side, fourth, were rampant at the San Mames with Spain star Nico Williams scoring twice in the win which took them four points clear of Villarreal in fifth.

SPANISH LA LIGA RESULTS

Sunday: Athletic Bilbao 7 (Jauregizar 10, Nico Williams 35, 66, Sannadi 43, Sancet 45+2, Guruzeta 69, Inaki Williams 87) Valladolid 1 (Sylla 47), Real Madrid 2 (Modric 41, Vinicius 83) Girona 0, Getafe 1 (Mayoral 82) Real Betis 2 (Isco 18, 77-pen), Real Sociedad 3 (Zakharyan 12, Kubo 48, Olasagasti 80) Leganes 0. Saturday: Alaves 0 Espanyol 1 (Calero 86), Rayo Vallecano 0 Villarreal 1 (Perez 66), Valencia 0 Atletico Madrid 3 (Alvarez 12, 30, Correa 86), Las Palmas 0 Barcelona 2 (Olmo 62, 90+5). Friday: Celta Vigo 1 (Aspas 69-pen) Osasuna 0

tacking opportunity break down instead of looking for