

Kiwis storm into final, face India on March 9

Williamson, Ravindra shine as New Zealand hammer South Africa by 50 runs in a high-scoring semi-final

PTI, LAHORE: Rachin Ravindra and Kane Williamson struck commanding centuries as New Zealand hammered South Africa by 50 runs in a high-scoring semi-final to set up a summit clash with India in the Champions Trophy, here on Wednesday.



New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra (left) and Kane Williamson run between the wickets during their match against South Africa at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore

Ravindra played a brilliant knock of 108 runs off 101 balls, laced with 13 fours and a six, while Williamson struck 102 off 94 balls, including 10 fours and two sixes, after skipper Mitchell Santner opted to bat.

Daryl Mitchell (49 off 37 balls), Glenn Phillips (49 not out off 27 balls) and Michael Bracewell (16 off 12 balls) then capitalized on the solid foundation, adding 112 runs in the final 10 overs to power New Zealand to a massive total of 362/6 -- the highest score in Champions Trophy history.

Only twice has a higher target been successfully chased in ODIs -- both by South Africa -- but this time it was not to be as the Proteas were restricted to 312 for 9 in pursuit of the record target, despite a scintillating century from

David Miller (100 not out off 67 balls) and fighting fifties by Rassie van der Dussen (69) and skipper Temba Bavuma (56).

Santner (3/43) was the most successful New Zealand bowler, as he, along with the other spinners -- Michael Bracewell (1/53), Glenn Phillips (2/27) and Ravindra (1/20) -- tightened the screws in the middle overs.

New Zealand will now face former champions India in the final on Sunday in Dubai. Wednesday's semi-final marked the end of Champions Trophy matches in Pakistan.

Chasing 363 for a win, South Africa lost Ryan Rickelton early for 17, but Bavuma, who initially struggled, found his rhythm and shared a vital 105-run partnership with van der Dussen, with the duo bringing up the team

century in the 18th over. However, New Zealand

land skipper Santner's three-wicket burst derailed the chase.

The left-arm spinner first broke the stand by removing Bavuma in the 23rd over, before producing a beauty to clean up van der Dussen. Santner then had the dangerous Heinrich Klaasen (3) holed out to Matt Henry.

Ravindra then dismissed Aiden Markram (31) with a caught-and-bowled effort, leaving South Africa at 189 for 5 in the 33rd over. Wiaan Mulder (8), Marco Jansen (3) and Keshav Maharaj (1) followed in quick succession before Miller put up a top-class show with 10 fours and four sixes to reach his hundred in the last ball of the South African run chase.

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND: Will Young c Markram b Ngidi 21, Rachin Ravindra c Klaasen b Rabada 108, Kane Williamson c Ngidi b Mulder 102, Daryl Mitchell c Rabada b Ngidi 49, Tom Latham b Rabada 4, Glenn Phillips not out 49, Michael Bracewell c Rickelton b Ngidi 16, Mitchell Santner not out 2. Extras: 11. Total: 362 for 6. FOW: 48-1, 212-2, 251-3, 257-4, 314-5, 360-6. **Bowling:** Marco Jansen 10-0-79-0, Lungi Ngidi 10-0-72-3, Kagiso Rabada 10-1-70-2, Wiaan Mulder 6-0-48-1, Keshav Maharaj 10-0-65-0, Aiden Markram 4-0-23-0

SOUTH AFRICA: Ryan Rickelton c Bracewell b Henry 17, Temba Bavuma c Williamson b Santner 56, Rassie van der Dussen b Santner 69, Aiden Markram c and b Ravindra 31, Heinrich Klaasen c Henry b Santner 3, David Miller not out 100, Wiaan Mulder c Ravindra b Bracewell 8, Marco Jansen lbw b Phillips 3, Keshav Maharaj c Latham b Phillips 1, Kagiso Rabada c Phillips b Henry 16, Lungi Ngidi not out 1. Extras: 7. Total: 312 for 9. FOW: 20-1, 125-2, 161-3, 167-4, 189-5, 200-6, 212-7, 218-8, 256-9. **Bowling:** Matt Henry 7-0-43-2, Kyle Jamieson 7-1-57-0, William O'Rourke 8-0-69-0, Michael Bracewell 10-0-53-1, Mitchell Santner 10-0-43-3, Rachin Ravindra 5-0-20-1, Glenn Phillips 3-0-27-2

Man-of-the-Match: Rachin Ravindra

Kohli moves up to No 4 in ODI rankings



PTI, DUBAI: India batting superstar Virat Kohli on Wednesday moved up a spot to reach fourth place in the ICC ODI rankings for batters after his match-winning 84 against Australia in Champions Trophy semi-final.

Kohli's rise, however, coincided with skipper Rohit Sharma dropping down two positions to fifth as South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen also moved up one spot to take the third. India vice-captain and opener Shubman Gill continues to hold the top spot followed by Pakistan's Babar Azam at second.

Among other Indians, spin bowling all-rounder Axar Patel and pacer Mohammed Shami also moved up in the rankings for all-rounders and bowlers respectively.

Patel moved up to 13th spot among all-rounders. Shami, meanwhile, moved up three positions to reach 11th with 609 rating points.

Smith bids adieu to ODIs after Australia's CT exit

Says right time to make way

PTI, DUBAI: Australia's stand-in skipper Steve Smith on Wednesday announced his retirement from ODI cricket following his team's four-wicket loss to India in the Champions Trophy semi-final here but the star batter will continue to play Tests and T20 Internationals.

The 35-year-old, who was leading the world champion side in the absence of an injured Pat Cummins, informed his teammates after the match that he would be stepping away from the 50-over format with immediate effect.

Reflecting on his decision, Smith said it was the right time to step aside as Australia builds itself for the 2027 ODI World Cup. "It has been a great ride, and I have loved every minute of it," Smith said. "There have been so many amazing times and wonderful memories. Winning two World Cups was a great highlight along with the many fantastic team-mates who shared the journey," he added in a media release shared by Cricket Australia.

A key member of Australia's victorious 2015 and



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2023 ICC World Cup-winning teams, Smith was named Australia's men's ODI Player of the Year in 2015 and 2021 and earned

a place in the ICC men's ODI Team of the Year in 2015.

He took over the ODI captaincy in 2015 and, fittingly, led the side one last time in his final match.

"Now is a great opportunity for people to start preparing for the 2027 World Cup so it feels like the right time to make way," he said.

The veteran of 170 ODIs said Test cricket remains a priority and he is looking forward to the World Test Championship Final in June.

"I feel I still have a lot to contribute on that stage," he said.

Trying to get my rhythm; more responsibility on me: Shami

PTI, DUBAI: Mohammed Shami conceded that operating as India's lone front-line pacer after coming back from a lengthy injury layoff has been a heavy "responsibility" but said he is trying to regain his 'rhythm' to suit the team's needs in the ongoing Champions Trophy.

Throughout the ICC showpiece here, Shami has shared the new ball duties

with either Harshit Rana or Hardik Pandya because of the injury-forced absence of Jasprit Bumrah.

Rana is still learning the ropes, while Pandya is an all-rounder and delivering 10 overs in an ODI is not precisely his territory. Shami has so far picked eight wickets in the tournament.

"I am trying to get my

rhythm back and contribute more for the team. It is a responsibility when there are no two proper fast bowlers and I have to shoulder more responsibility," Shami said.

Shami said it is an advantage for him that all of India's Champions Trophy matches are being played in Dubai.



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