



It was very difficult to sit out of the games but I knew I would get the opportunity and I was backing myself to do well."  
HARIS SOHAIL

# Pastures green

A thumping victory over South Africa ensure that Pakistan get to live another day in the World Cup

**SRIRAM VEERA**  
LORD'S, JUNE 23

EVERYTIME Harris Sohail nailed a four or a six (12 boundaries in all), it seemed like a slap to the team management. Benched for a few games as Pakistan rewound to 90's misplaced nostalgia with Shoaib Malik, Sohail returning with a vengeance. Now we know why Pakistan had been stale, plodding along '90s style, thus far. Because they had a team like that. Attitude like that.

They were helped no doubt by a South African unit, not possessing the talent nor the heart for a fight. But still, what a heart-warming performance it was from Pakistan, who piled up 309 before shutting the door on South Africa who ambled along to 259.

Events that haven't transpired so far happened. Mohammad Amir's inswinger, Wahab Riaz's reverse-curlers, self-awareness from Sarfraz Ahmed to demote himself, Shaheen Afridi bowled fuller and the bowlers were rotated smartly. That they won despite dropping at least 5 catchable chances says a lot about South Africa too – but also, Pakistan bowling was that good. Good things continued, a consistency not always seen with the team: Babar Azam was as classy as ever, Fakhar Zaman and Imam ul Haq gave another solid start.

But make no doubt, amidst all these good things, it was Sohail's game-turning blitz that did the trick. He is a rather interesting character. Such is the shroud of mystery about him that he had to, early this year, refute news reports that he had complained about black magic against him. Not once, but twice. First in 2015, news about a spooky hotel room in Christchurch emerged in the last World Cup and then this year, another supernatural turn came when he returned from a South Africa tour. "Such reports have also disturbed my family a lot. I have faced a knee injury problem again and that is why I had to miss the Test series in South Africa," Sohail said.

And guess what happens. He returns for a World Cup against who else but South Africa, and spooked them with his skills.

Sohail's wasn't a knock of fury. He didn't come and fire away to prove his worth to anyone. There was violence, but understated. It was the classy touches that stood out. Hand waves outside off that had the ball scurrying away, fist punches that had the ball plummeting through gaps. The best tribute possible is that he out-classed Babar Azam – and not many can do it in world cricket.

Sohail is one of the better timers out there – soft punches and push-drives have the ball fleeing to the boundary at some pace. But his game-awareness stood out more on this day. And perhaps his point to prove. Consider his third boundary off the 10th ball he faced.

He had just creamed Kagiso Rabada's full delivery to the straight boundary and anticipated that the next one could well be short. He backed away to the leg side, a slight shuffle, not one of those all-or-nothing moves, and absolutely smacked the short ball over point.

When Chris Morris hurled one fast and full but a tad outside off, the left-hander leaned across, opened the bat-face, and steered it to the backward point boundary. He late cut Andile Phehlukwayo, lofted Imran Tahir inside-out. The chase went nowhere from the moment Mohammad Amir nipped one back into to trap Hashim Amla. Amir hasn't rolled back to pre-ban years yet. Back then, he would have curled the ball back from around off stump. Now, he did that from the leg and middle stump line – but at least his fingers and wrists are beginning to leave an imprint on the ball. So far in the tournament, he had been rather silent with the new ball, working his way through in



Mohammad Amir yet again furnished Pakistan with an early breakthrough, ending the travails of Hashim Amla. AP



Sohail's 59-ball 89 catalysed Pakistan's lofty total. AP

the later spells with his cutters. Good as they are, that's not why we watch Amir. That's not why Pakistan have him in the team. That's not why they couldn't wait for his ban to end. What he does with the new ball would have a great effect on how far Pakistan move in this tournament.

By the end, Riaz had the South Africans explain to one another in the middle how the previous ball reversed late. They would meet mid-pitch and one would tell the other the extent of deviation. Riaz was let down by his teammates again; they dropped two catches off him against Australia and they put down two more in this game. It was apparent from the start that Pakistan were in mood. Zaman and Imam were refreshingly positive from the start until Imran Tahir dragged them down with his skill and spirit. Pity that Tahir's team-mates didn't quite stir themselves.

# Marathon man keeps steaming, but South Africa lose steam

**SRIRAM VEERA**  
LORD'S, JUNE 23

IN ALL the amusement he provides with his celebratory run, childlike open-jawed enthusiasm, it's often forgotten that here is a man with solid skills as a leggie. It shouldn't be but Imran Tahir's theatrics trumps his art. And you can understand why. That run. As if the hangman has loosened the noose around his neck, whisked away into a quiet alley, opened the trap door, and whispered to the bewildered man: you are free. Run.

Of late, he seems to be in command of his art: the legbreak rips, the googly bounces, the balls peel off slowly or whirs across quickly as he tells them to do. Most often, it lands where he wants them to drop. He stirred the comatose South Africans, infused life in them, shook them, made them that all is not lost yet. Just do something. Until then, South Africans had been as flat as beer left open in the Durban sun.

Tahir screamed, appealed, dived, high-fived. And as ever he ran. Such utter delight has been seldom seen on a cricket field. Even by his own delirious past, the moment when he realised the ball had stuck to his hand after Imam ul Haq had driven firmly not only well to his right but pretty low to the ground, he took off. He was brought back by his team-mates – not just then, but in the game as well.

Why were South Africa so muddled in



Imran Tahir breathed life into South Africa's dead campaign, but ended up again on the losing side. Reuters

thinking? Did they have a bowling plan at the start until Tahir came on? They trespassed into every error zone: short, wide, full and they telegraphed their slower ones. In 2019, their slower ones were from the 80's; those off-spun cutters. The world has moved on to knuckle and employing all other fingers and palms of the hands.

Why were their batting so 90's? Almost like the English from that decade in the

ODIs. You could smell timidity from their camp. A sense of meandering dullness.

If South Africa had lost this game, they were out of the tournament. That everyone knew. But considering how patchy they were in the tournament so far, that fact should have liberated them. But they were anchored down, almost timid, looking for someone else to lead them out of the mess. No one really did. At least in the bowling, Tahir tried.

Hashim Amla's struggles have been painful to watch. He has worked hard, trained his best, even took a break from a T20 domestic tournament before the world cup but runs haven't just come. Faf du Plessis turned out one of his meandering knocks that he has produced of late: 20-run gap between runs and balls faced, punches that go straight to fielders followed with the shadow practice of the shot and getting out after settling down. Quinton de Kock's innings too wouldn't have surprised anybody. A slowish start, then a few stunning hits and then almost a tendency to throw his wicket away in a silly way.

Opponents pack the legside arc from square-leg to deep midwicket, keep mid-on in, but he still would keep trying to slog-sweep the spinners away. It would come off couple of times before it all goes bust. Injuries didn't help them of course but still one did expect better fight. At least on the field. The ground fielding was shoddy – in fact, even here, Tahir was one of the best. And that says something.

## SCORECARD >>>

PAK vs SA

Lord's | Toss: Pakistan

PAKISTAN 308/7 IN 50 OV

Imam-ul-Haq c & b Tahir	44	(58b, 6x4)
Fakhar Zaman c Amla b Tahir	44	(50b, 6x4, 1x6)
Babar Azam c Ngidi b Phehlukwayo	69	(80b, 7x4)
Mohammad Hafeez lbw b Markram	20	(33b, 1x6)
Haris Sohail c de Kock b Ngidi	89	(59b, 9x4, 3x6)
Imad Wasim c sub b Ngidi	23	(15b, 3x4)
Wahab Riaz b Ngidi	4	(4b)
Sarfraz Ahmed not out	2	(2)
Shadab Khan not out	1	(1b)

SOUTH AFRICA 259/9 IN 50 OV

H Amla lbw b Amir	2	(3b)
Q de Kock c Imam-ul-Haq b Shadab	47	(60b, 3x4, 2x6)
F du Plessis c Sarfraz b Amir	63	(79b, 5x4)
A Markram b Shadab	7	(16b)
HE van der Dussen c Hafeez b Shadab	36	(47b, 1x4, 1x6)
D Miller b Shaheen Afridi	31	(37b, 3x4)
A Phehlukwayo not out	46	(32b, 6x4)
C Morris b Wahab Riaz	16	(10b, 1x4, 1x6)
K Rabada b Wahab Riaz	3	(7b)
L Ngidi b Wahab Riaz	1	(6b)
Imran Tahir not out	1	(3b)

Extras: (lb 6, nb 1, w 5) 12  
 Fall of wickets: 1-81 (Zaman, 14.5 ov), 2-98 (Imam-ul-Haq, 20.3 ov), 3-143 (Hafeez, 29.6 ov), 4-224 (Azam, 41.2 ov), 5-295 (Wasim, 47.6 ov), 6-304 (Riaz, 49.1 ov), 7-307 (Sohail, 49.5 ov)

K Rabada	10-0-65-0
L Ngidi	9-0-64-3
C Morris	9-0-61-0
A Phehlukwayo	8-0-49-1
Imran Tahir	10-0-41-2
A Markram	4-0-22-1

Pakistan won by 49 runs

Team	M	W	L	T	N/R	PT	NRR
NZ	6	5	0	0	1	11	+1.306
Aus	6	5	1	0	0	10	+0.849
Ind	5	4	0	0	1	9	+0.809
Eng	6	4	2	0	0	8	+1.457
SL	6	2	2	0	2	6	-1.119
Ban	6	2	3	0	1	5	-0.407
Pak	6	2	3	0	1	5	-1.265
WI	6	1	4	0	1	3	+0.919
SA	7	1	5	0	1	3	-0.324
Afg	6	0	6	0	0	0	-1.712

Top 4 teams after the ninth round will qualify for the semis.

# Hat-trick ball: Dhoni proposes, Shami finishes

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
SOUTHAMPTON, JUNE 23

MOHAMMED SHAMI had no second thoughts about bowling a yorker for a hat-trick delivery after Mahendra Singh Dhoni advised the same during India's thrilling World Cup encounter against Afghanistan here. Shami is the second Indian bowler to take a hat-trick in World Cup after Chetan Sharma's feat against New Zealand in the 1987 edition. This is the 10th hat-trick in history of 50-over World Cup. "The plan was simple. To bowl a yorker and even Mahi bhai suggested that. He said, 'Don't change anything now as you have a great chance of getting a hat-trick. It's a rare opportunity and you need to do the same thing. So I did what exactly I was told.' Shami told reporters after returning with figures of 4 for 40.



Dhoni advised Shami to fling in a yorker, which Shami obeyed to become the second Indian to clinch a World Cup hat-trick.

it. As far as hat-trick is concerned, it is a rarity at least in the World Cup. I am happy," he said. Shami said in the final over, there was no time to think and the aim was to execute the plan. "There was no time to think. You have to

back your own skills as you don't have much option otherwise. If you try more variations, chances of going for runs is more. My thought was to execute my plan rather than trying to read batsman's mind," he said.

The Indian bowlers had realised that short ball was a weapon that could be used effectively and both pacers -- Shami and Jasprit Bumrah -- did just that against Afghan batsmen. "We didn't bowl fuller length deliveries as it was coming onto the bat well. We knew they would be circumspect against short balls," he added.

All-rounder Mohammed Nabi had threatened to take the game away with his half-century and Shami said it was important that they don't let the shoulders drop. "There was a point when Nabi's flow was irritating but it's better if you don't show your concern or irritation which the batsman would have gauged," he said.

### No sugar or bread

For someone, who loved his biryani, Shami's new mantra has been fitness which helped him bowl some great spells for India in Test matches last year. "This is a long journey, may be, around two years. Post injury, I had put on weight and I could feel that. After one spell, I would feel tired and there would be tightness.

# After scaring India, Afghanistan look to inflict scars on Bangladesh

Southampton: Eager to keep the semi-final hopes alive, a desperate Bangladesh will have their work cut out when they take on a spirited Afghanistan in a do-or-die World Cup encounter here Monday. England's defeat at the hands of Sri Lanka on Friday breathed air into Bangladesh's hopes of securing a semifinal berth and the 'Tigers' will be keen on making the most of the situation starting with a win over the bottom-placed Afghanistan.

The Mashrafe Mortaza-led side, which is currently placed at sixth spot with five points, has batted pretty well so far in the tournament. After hunting down a target of 322 against West Indies in just 41.3 overs, Bangladesh fought admirably in a 382-run chase against Australia, finishing with an impressive 333/8. The promotion of Shakib Al Hasan up the order has been one of the highlights of the World Cup. The all-rounder is just 22 runs behind Australia's David Warner, who is the tournament's top scorer.

The bowling, however, has been their undoing, as Bangladesh have conceded scores in excess of 320 in each of their last three com-

**LIVE ON STAR SPORTS**

**BAN vs AFG**

3 pm onwards from Southampton

**WEATHER FORECAST**  
Mostly cloudy.

pleted games and the bowlers will have to step up to make life easier for their batsmen. On the other hand, Afghanistan, who are still in search of their maiden win in the tournament, will be drawing a lot of positive from their previous game against India.

The Afghans fell agonisingly short of India's target, losing by 11 runs on Saturday. But the team will take a lot of confidence from the fact that they restricted the famed Indian batting unit to 224 for 8. PTI

### LEADING SCORERS

447 David Warner (AUS), 425 Shakib al Hasan (BAN), 424 Joe Root (ENG)

### LEADING WICKET-TAKERS

15 Mohammad Amir (NZ) 15 Jofra Archer (ENG), 15 Mitchell Starc (AUS),

# Nice guy who came first

**KEEP CALM & CARRY ON LIKE WILLIAMSON**

**706** Number of runs Kane Williamson has scored in World Cups so far, which makes him the highest averaged Black Caps batsman. His 706 runs have come in 18 matches at an average of 64.18. Both his centuries have come in this edition. Glenn Turner, Martin Crowe, Scott Styris and Martin Guptill are some of the other batsmen with an average of more than above 50 in World Cups for the Kiwis.

**186.5** That's Williamson average in this World Cup so far – the highest for any batsman. The next best average is for Bangladesh's Liton Das (114) followed by Rohit Sharma (106.66) and Shakib Al Hasan (106.25). Overall, the New Zealand captain has accrued 373 runs.

**11** Enroute his 148 against West Indies at Old Trafford, the New Zealand captain became the 11th batsman to score ODI centuries against all the 10 Test playing nations (excluding Afghanistan and Ireland).

**4** Williamson now has as many ODI centuries in England (4 in 14 knocks) as he does in New Zealand (4 in 71).

**50** He now has posted 50+ in 10 of his last 11 ODI knocks to have taken place in England and Wales.

**333** The New Zealand captain now holds the record for most runs in a World Cup without being dismissed, surpassing Kumar Sangakkara's haul of 326 runs in 2015.

**SCORES IN ENGLAND SINCE 2015**  
45, 93, 118, 90, 50, 100, 87, 57, 40, 79\*, 106\* and 148 (In ODIs)

Inns	Runs	Avg	100s	50s
12	1013	101.3	4	6

**PAPER CLIPPING**

Following his back-to-back centuries in this World Cup, the British press went on an overdrive lavishing praise on the New Zealand captain. Here's a sample:

**THE GUARDIAN'S** Tanya Aldred described Kane Williamson as the "small bearded man in anonymous black (who) embroidered together an innings of quiet genius".

**SUNDAY TIMES** cricket writer Simon Wilde, said: "In a tournament in which the cream is rising to the top, he is fit to live with the best."



**Gem of a player, Kane Williamson. Composure and class.**

**MIKE ATHERTON**  
@ATHERSMIKE

**SRIRAM VEERA**  
LONDON, JUNE 23

KANE WILLIAMSON visits cemeteries at night. As a kid he once stole a candy. He bunked school. He threw a fit after getting out in a school game — alas there are no such titbits of human frailty or darkness with Williamson. Somewhere, unknown to others, he must be up to something, surely? Can the police check the walls at his homes or backyard please? The people who know him well, since childhood, laugh when you put to them it seems too good to be true.

"He is really that good, no dark bone in his body," laughs Josh Syms, his social science teacher and cricket coach at school. A sentiment shared by his batting coach David Johnston who has known him since he was 10. The cricketing world of course has nothing but respect for him. Not a whisper about him.

If anything, he seems to have coached the grownups, even as a kid. Syms tells a story when Williamson was 14 and playing a school game. A big match and he nicked one down the leg side and even as umpire signalled a wide, he walked. Astonished, Syms strode out. "Why did you walk? You know this is an important game. Look, even the umpire had said wide." The kid looks up and says, "I hit it. So, I am out." Syms turned to his corner, speechless.

Johnston rewinds to a 12-year-old Williamson. He had scored three 100s in a row. His dad was the coach and swapped the batting order next game, sending his son down at No. 6. Williamson hit a century to take the team out of trouble, batting with the no.10 in a match-turning partnership. When they walked off the field, all the boys came out and clapped in admiration.

"He saw that, stopped, let the other kid walk first and clapped him off the field. When I saw that, right then, I understood his character. The sensitivity in a 12-year old to realise the other young boy might feel left out, the need to put his team ahead — that was a defining moment for me. He isn't just a good batsman but a good person," Johnston says.

During an ODI series against India, he came to attend a funeral of a staff member at the club he had played.

"He went quietly through the backdoor, paid his respects and left. No fanfare. New Zealand doesn't really know how good he is," Syms sounds almost emotional. Someone has to be. Williamson doesn't for sure. "Oh, he has this amazing ability to take nuts and bolts off any situation, take the emotion out of it, assess what's the problem and what he can do to solve it," says Syms. "Not just now, on a cricket field, but even back at the classroom. He was always like this."



## DAVID WHO BATS LIKE GOLIATH

This aforementioned description by Martin Crowe perfectly fits Kane Williamson, who has been the backbone of New Zealand's batting for close to a decade. Reuters

cult to talk about himself," Johnston says.

Perhaps it goes back to a newspaper article years ago that had picked up a blog from someone claiming to be Williamson, swagging in print about himself and what he would be in future. The newspaper printed it without confirmation. Williamson has talked about it in the past. "Someone had pretended to be me in a blog saying I was going to be the next Martin Crowe," Williamson said. "It was ridiculous and the words they were using were making me out to be some sort of gangster or something. It was embarrassing."

**He has this amazing ability to take nuts and bolts off any situation, take the emotion out of it, assess what's the problem and what he can do to solve it...not just now, on a cricket field, but even back at the classroom. He was always like this."**

**JOSH SYMS,**  
KANE WILLIAMSON'S SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHER AND CRICKET COACH AT SCHOOL

work was done. "That day the bowlers bowled really well, troubling all batsmen, barring Kane of course. The ball was flying fast. At the end of it, I checked and found that Kane had cut two-three yards — basically making it a shorter pitch so that he can get to face some pacy stuff. He was finding the regular training too boring!"

To this day, every now and then, Johnston and Williamson have net sessions. "Intense, he never wastes a session. First to come, last to leave. Always has a plan, working on some particular shot or line of attack. He has purpose to every net. All he is after is pursuit of excellence."

Johnston cues up a story from the first time he played Daniel Vettori, who was already a star with the national team. "Williamson was 15 then. I was the selector in that game and a bit worried whether I had played him too early. What if a failure scarred him? The first ball he played off Dan, he whipped off the legs and it hit the short-leg

on shoulder. No runs. Second ball, he fell lbw for a duck. As he walked in, I checked on him to see if he is alright, and he goes, "That was good fun playing an international player. I played the right shot but need to play it better" — He wasn't crestfallen, he had already done his analysis, summed it up, I just nodded and went back to sit."

"The thing with him is that he isn't scared of failure. He is not worried or won't let himself be defined by success or failure. If he misses a ball, it's gone. He stays in the moment. Success doesn't change. That ability to stay in the moment is what makes him special. He is good technically, a classicist who can adapt and combined with that skill to stay in the moment, he has gone to another level. All through his career, whenever he has got out, he is not the person to rue it and mop around. He won't say he shouldn't have played that shot but see if it was correct, and if it was, how to play it better. Simple," Johnston says. "Good technically, very very good mentally."

The late Martin Crowe, New Zealand's greatest batsman, was a Kane Williamson fan. The year before he died, he had said, "We are watching the dawn of New Zealand's greatest batsman". In his *Cricinfo* column, he wrote: "While an extremely busy player, it's his quiet defence that stands out. The ball is met with a cushion in his hand, his framework right behind the line, his head staring the action down.

In a Test he will make the bowler pick

up, in an ODI he will slightly angle and delay the stroke and deflect to behind square for a run... Williamson is a difficult player to focus against."

"Due to his humility and lack of ego, it is harder for bowlers and captains to get ramped up about the absolute necessity to remove him. His passive body language gives very little to feed off... Williamson has that x-factor, which no one can quite pin down. Frankly, he is David playing like Goliath. Batting suited him from the minute he picked up his first bat; he had the perfect height, balance, fast-twitch muscles, electric feet, an inquisitive mind. Then he began to grow. Around him was an environment of support and knowledge. He appreciated both and never forgot his origins and roots."

Crowe was a stats-obsessed man, using numbers to motivate himself in a weak team. He had felt "humiliated" in his first few games for his country; his captain Geoff Howarth had called him a "showpony" and as years went by, people in New Zealand didn't quite warm up to him. To them, he was the "brash tall poppy from Auckland", as he was once described. The media hounded him — some even floated rumours about sexuality and it wasn't until 1992 when he received the adulation he craved for. In his last years, he became the country's emotional lodestar.

Kane has had more luck. He is also a different personality — calmer, self-assured and friendly. Syms sums it up aptly: "He is an absolute star in world cricket. But for us in New Zealand, he is just Kane, laidback, modest, and a bloody-good bloke. Just Kane."

1 WORLD CUP • 10 COUNTRIES • 1000 OPINIONS

# Almost a Fergie time comeback

THE DAY before West Indies' must-win, keeping-the-semifinal hopes alive fixture against New Zealand, Carlos Brathwaite made a customary visit to the Theatre of Dreams, just a good stone's throw away from the cricket stadium. A staunch Manchester United supporter from childhood, he says the ground has always lifted his confidence.

In an interview last year to the club's official magazine *Inside United*, he elaborated his love for the English club: "A club with a rich history of comebacks fits my narrative too. I have been on the brink several times and made comebacks. I had several 'Fergie times in my career." He was referring to his knock in 2016 World T20 final. He almost pulled off one against New Zealand too, only to be let down by teammates, prompting a Twitterati to comment: "He was living in Fergie era, but his teammates are in OGS time."

**Kane needs able support**

Despite New Zealand's unbeaten streak, media back home can't shrug off their intrinsic cynicism. *The New Zealand Herald* strikes a striking parallel with the 1992 campaign, wherein they looked invulnerable before stooping to Pakistan in the semifinal. Here they go: "A captain single-handedly winning games and taking New Zealand deep into the tournament feels like 1992 all over again.

Kane Williamson fits the Martin Crowe mould, elegant, determined batsman, waging lone battles. With his wonderfully-trimmed beard and gimlet eyes, he looks like a tragic hero in the making. Unless batting colleagues provide him support, his World Cup could end like Crowe's."

They can't harp over the greasy fingers of their fielders. Wrote *Wellington Post*: "This should be the worst bunch of fielders the country has produced. In one of the matches, they'll let the World Cup slip through their fingers."

**All this Mickey Mouse cricket**

Even when West Indies were cruising, with Shimron Hetmyer and Chris Gayle putting the New Zealand bowlers to sword, Michael Holding had a sniff of the tragedy that was to unravel. In the same over Gayle struck Mitchell Santner for a brace of sixes, he was pleading caution. "Someone please tell them it's a 50-over game. They are kicking along at more than six runs an over and I don't mind if the next five are maiden overs. This is not Mickey Mouse, hide and seek cricket. You need to respect the good balls. The bad balls will come." Vindicating his worst fears, West Indies batsmen committed *hara-kiri*, first Hetmyer, then Jason Holder and in the chaos, Gayle couldn't but wilt.

Mickey Mouse cricket, Holding kept fuming.

**Cricket stops plane**

World Cup matches have the power to bring countries to a standstill. In New Zealand, it even ensured that flights were delayed so that passengers on board could celebrate their team's win. During the Black Caps' tense World Cup encounter against WI, a fully boarded flight from Auckland was made to wait after passengers came up with a strange request: "Please don't start the plane. We are watching NZ-WI match on live streaming and the Black Caps need just one wicket from 12 balls." Kieran McNulty, a New Zealand politician and MP in House of Representatives for the Labour Party, who was on board, shared this story on Twitter. He tweeted, "My @FlyAirNZ flight was fully boarded, the plane loud from all the live streams. 12 balls left, 1 wicket needed. Please don't start the plane. The @BLACKCAPS win! We all erupt in unison. Only then, amongst the cheers, did the plane start to move. It was a beautiful moment. #CWC19"

**Bish you were here**

Trent Boult plucked a stunner out of thin air and the Kiwis celebrated like manics. Carlos

Brathwaite, the tragic hero, sank to his knees. And amid high drama, cricket commentary got its new Richie Benaud.

West Indies were one big hit away from an improbable victory and Brathwaite wheeled at a back-of-a-length delivery from Jimmy Neesham. For a good part of the ball's journey towards the long-on boundary, pause prevailed. As the ball started its descent, Ian Bishop, behind the mic, rose to the occasion. "Down the ground but fielder underneath," was followed by another mini pause... "And taken!" the former West Indies fast bowler-turned-commentator screamed. "New Zealand win," he went on before pausing for a moment. "The dream is diminished for Carlos Brathwaite in Manchester." Bishop paused again before saying: "The most agonising (pause) and deflating end to this contest."

Three years ago, Bishop had asked the global audience to "remember the name", as Brathwaite pulled off a heist in the World T20 final against England at Eden Gardens, hitting four consecutive sixes in the final over. At Old Trafford, Bishop was narrating Brathwaite's glorious failure. And he did it with such grace and objectivity that "Ian Bishop" became a Twitter trend. Current players prefer to keep commentators at arm's length. But Bishop's commentary wowed everybody including Stuart Broad. "That's world class. Cricket at its best. Could listen to Ian Bishop all day long," the England quick tweeted. **ENS**



## HAND FOR HEARTBREAK

Ross Taylor consoles a distraught Carlos Brathwaite. AP