

Hitman shows he is good at the waiting game too

It's time for the other Indian batsmen to join the party, following the sound start provided by Rohit



K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR
LONDON
Cast in the blue shade, Rohit Sharma seems a different persona. His luminous talent was never in doubt but the same potential was never fully harnessed in Tests.
But throw him into an ODI, allow a fast bowler to steam in or a spinner to amble down and just watch Rohit transform. There is assurance in his gait and a nonchalance to the way he plays his strokes all over the park. It is no surprise that he has lorded over the format and has even struck three double hundreds!

Southampton, the opener revealed that he does possess patience too in abundance.
The pursuit wasn't easy, the rival fast bowlers were probing around off-stump and Kagiso Rabada and Chris Morris used the bouncer to telling effect. Rohit played and missed a few, tried to hook some and edged but, importantly for India, he stayed at the crease. This wasn't about being a pretty picture, it was all about lasting the course.
The result was an outstanding 122 spread over 144 deliveries, and studded with 13 fours and two sixes. This seemed more like a Test hundred in the way it was constructed and it turned out to be a match-winning effort during which he shared partnerships ranging from the small to the significantly larger ones with diverse partners like Virat Kohli, K.L. Rahul and M.S. Dhoni.
Rohit kept the scoreboard ticking over, and when the opportunity presented itself, clattered his fours and the odd six.
Though he was watchful, never was he bogged down and that kept the required



New dimension: The zen monk-like version of Rohit Sharma did the job for India in its opener against the Proteas. ■ AP

run-rate under check.

There was game-awareness and fierce focus, and an excited Kohli later termed it as Rohit's finest ever ODI

hundred. "I think in my opinion this is by far his best ODI innings because of the kind of pressure the first game brings from a World Cup

point of view. "And then I know, as a batsman, when you go in and a few balls bounce like that, it's not easy to gather yourself

again and play in a calm manner. A lot of times batsmen tend to hit their way out of the situation. But he was very composed," Kohli said.

Rain mars practice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LONDON
The Indian team woke up to a wet Friday at London.
The rain, largely a persistent drizzle, continued unabated well into the afternoon before the sun peeped out at 2.30 p.m. The inclement weather threw a spanner into the squad's plans to train at the Oval and, consequently, the scheduled practice session in the morning was cancelled.
India will take on Australia here on Sunday but rains have been forecast for the weekend.

Rohit, who first turned out for India in 2007, is among the squad's senior professionals and his ton against the Proteas will help India step in with an extra zing in the games ahead. It is a good trend to nurse especially for a batsman who was not picked for the 2011 World Cup squad and had to subsequently fight his way back into the unit.
He is also part of a feared opening combine with Shikhar Dhawan.
The latter too needs to click and once this duo prospers in the first PowerPlay, India will have a base to launch into a huge score or

commence a fruitful chase. Importantly, the pressure on Kohli, the batsman, will diminish if the rest of the cast contribute handsomely.
Rohit has made a start and it is time for the others to join the party.
Finally, the hit-man has shown that there is joy too in the forward-defensive shot even in the nerve-jangling arena of ODIs.
Rohit the sixth-gear enforcer is a known entity. But this zen monk-like version of his can also be of equal service when the pitches display some life and the bowlers smell a wicket. India will not complain.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka split points after wash out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BRISTOL
Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed was left frustrated after Friday's World Cup match against Sri Lanka was abandoned without a ball being bowled following persistent rain in Bristol.
The game was even called off in the afternoon, with both teams being awarded a point.
It is the first match at the World Cup in England and Wales to be abandoned without a result.
Both teams now have three points, with one win and a loss apiece.
After a couple of inspections, umpires Nigel Long and Ian Gould decided to call off the game at 3:46 p.m. local time.
The sky was still cloudy when the final inspection was held, keeping in mind a 20-over-a-side game.
It was a blow to Pakistan's bid to reach the semifinals and Sarfaraz said: "As a team we really wanted to play this match, especially after gaining momentum with the win against England. It is unfortunate that we were not able to play."
"Our next match is against



Dull sight: Persistent rain ensured that the Pakistan-Sri Lanka match was a non-starter. ■ AFP

Australia. Like other teams in the tournament they are also a tough opponent and they also have momentum as they have won their first two matches."
Pakistan lost to the West

Indies by seven wickets at Trent Bridge before beating England by 14 runs at the same venue on Monday.
Sri Lanka crashed to a 10-wicket defeat against New Zealand before pulling off a

34-run win against Afghanistan in a rain-affected game.
Sarfaraz remains confident Pakistan can still push for a last-four place in the 10-team tournament despite the Sri Lanka washout.

Next assignment
SRI LANKA: June 11 vs Bangladesh, Bristol, 3 p.m.
PAKISTAN: June 12 vs Australia, Taunton, 3 p.m.

Brathwaite questions umpiring decisions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NOTTINGHAM
Carlos Brathwaite said the West Indies were on the wrong end of too much poor umpiring following a 15-run World Cup defeat by champion Australia as Michael Holding slammed an "atrocious" display by the match officials.
West Indies opener Chris Gayle and captain Jason Holder were both twice given out on the field at Trent Bridge on Thursday but, on both sets of occasions, saw their decision to review vin-



Carlos Braithwaite ■ AFP

dictated by the third umpire.
The side's mood was not helped when standing umpire Chris Gaffaney missed a Mitchell Starc no-ball the delivery before the left-arm

quick dismissed Gayle for 21.
Brathwaite accepted Gaffaney and Sri Lanka's Ruchira Palliyaguruge were doing their best, but he made no attempt to hide his annoyance after the West Indies fell short chasing a target of 289 in Nottingham.
"I don't know if I'll be fined for saying it but I just think that the umpiring was a bit frustrating," Brathwaite told reporters.
"Even when we were bowling we thought a few balls close to head height were called wides.
"And obviously three decisions...as far as I can remember being dodgy, it was frustrating and sent ripples through the dressing room," the all-rounder added.
"To lose Chris in a chase of 280, who can probably get 180 of them himself obviously, broke the start that we wanted to have. But the umpires do their job, they try to do it to the best of their ability, we as players go out there to do our job as well, so there was no confrontation between the players and the umpires."

Where they stand

Team	Mat	Won	Lost	NR	PTS	NRR
New Zealand	2	2	0	0	4	2.279
Australia	2	2	0	0	4	1.059
Sri Lanka	3	1	1	1	3	-1.517
Pakistan	3	1	1	1	3	-2.412
West Indies	2	1	1	0	2	2.054
England	2	1	1	0	2	0.900
India	1	1	0	0	2	0.302
Bangladesh	2	1	1	0	2	0.008
South Africa	3	0	3	0	0	-0.952
Afghanistan	2	0	2	0	0	-1.264

*till the Pakistan-Sri Lanka match on June 7

England keen to be back on track

Won't panic, says captain Morgan ahead of Bangladesh clash

PREVIEWS
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARDIFF
Eoin Morgan says England will not panic as it attempts to get its World Cup campaign back on track against Bangladesh following its chastening defeat against Pakistan.
The hosts started its bid to win its first-ever World Cup with a comprehensive 104-run victory against South Africa before it stumbled in the second game, losing by 14 runs.
Captain Morgan said En-

gland would not change their aggressive approach in Saturday's match in Cardiff.
England's tactics have been based on fearless attacking from their powerful batsmen and they are also aggressive as a bowling unit, boasting the pace of Jofra Archer and Mark Wood.
"All we talked about is sticking to what we do well, looking at our strengths," he said in his pre-match press conference in the Welsh capital on Friday.
"Previous to the tournament starting we talked about losing games – how would we react? What would we counter that with?"
"Everything comes back to focusing on ourselves, how we win games of cricket and get the best out of ourselves."
England rotated its attack at Trent Bridge, bringing in

THE FACE-OFF
England vs Bangladesh
CARDIFF
HEAD-TO-HEAD

	MORGAN	MORTAZA
Matches	20	16
Eng	4	0
Ban	1	2
Tied	0	0
NR	0	0
Overall	3	1
World Cup	1	2

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 (SD & HD), 3 P.M.

Mark Wood for Liam Plunkett. Conditions are expected to be more seamer-friendly in Wales, meaning Plunkett could return in place of a spinner.
"We'll see another day where the wicket is under covers," Morgan said. "The pitches here have been a bit greener and more seamer-friendly so that's a potential (option), yeah."
Bangladesh, which has beaten England at the past two World Cups, is in a similar position to England, having followed a win over South Africa with a loss to New Zealand
"It is going to be a difficult game, they're a good side. I think people underestimate them but we certainly don't," Morgan said.
"Their senior players especially have played a lot of games, more so than our senior players. They are a threat but hopefully we can play well and overcome it."

Kiwis ready to counter Afghan spin: Taylor

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TAUNTON
Ross Taylor insists New Zealand is ready for a trial by spin against Afghanistan on Saturday as it looks to keep its winning momentum going in the World Cup.
New Zealand, which was finalist in the 2015 edition, has relied on its paceman to get favourable results, but Taylor believes tackling spin will be key against the Asian minnows at Taunton.

Lot of spin
"I think against Afghanistan, they have a lot of spin there, so something to factor in," said Taylor, who has recorded three 40 plus scores in his last four ODI innings.
"But two from two, that was what we wanted to do and we were able to do it."
Taylor believes that Ferguson, with his express pace, is the key man for the Black Caps. "Lockie, he just gives you that X-factor. Obviously our fastest bowler."
"He is going to be a key

factor for us if we're going to feature in this tournament," said Taylor. "I think he's creating pressure for the guy at the other end (to take wickets)," he added.
Afghanistan, which is playing just its second 50-over World Cup, has lost its two games in the tournament so far but not without a fight.
Leg-spinner Rashid Khan leads the charge with Mohammed Nabi, who returned figures of 4-30 with his off spin in their previous loss against Sri Lanka.
But it's the batting that has let them down as they were dismissed for 152 in their revised chase of 187 in a rain-hit game Cardiff on Tuesday.
Shahzad out of WC
Wicketkeeper-batsman Shahzad was ruled out on Thursday after suffering a recurrence of a nagging knee injury.
Naib admitted losing Mohammad Shahzad for the

rest of the World Cup is a major blow to his side's hopes of upsetting the odds in the tournament.
"Obviously it's a big loss for our side," Naib said on Friday. "Shahzad is a great player for Afghanistan. He did a lot. I'm also upset for him -- the last two, three weeks he's been struggling with his knee."



Main threat: New Zealand has to thwart Rashid Khan & Co. in order to come up trumps. ■ ALEX DAVIDSON/GETTY IMAGES



Key strength: England captain Eoin Morgan said his team's tactics have been based on attacking batting and aggressive bowling. ■ GARETH COPELEY/GETTY IMAGES

THE FACE-OFF
Afghanistan vs New Zealand
TAUNTON
HEAD-TO-HEAD

	NAIB	WILLIAMSON
Matches	1	0
Afg	0	1
NZ	1	0
Tied	0	0
NR	0	0
Overall	1	0
World Cup	1	0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 3, 6 P.M.

