

AUSTRALIA DO IT

England lose World final by seven runs

CALCUTTA, Reuter — AUSTRALIA emerged gloriously from one of the bleakest periods in their cricketing history when they beat England by seven runs in the fourth World Cup cricket final at Eden Gardens on Sunday.

With the majority of the 93,000 crowd apparently adopting Australian citizenship for the day, Allan Border's team were cheered to their first success in the game's one-day championship in a match that was keenly competitive rather than spectacular.

The result continued the sequence of finals being won by the team batting first, Australia's total of 253 for five after Allan Border chose to bat first proving beyond England's reach, but only just.

England needed 75 off the last 10 overs with six wickets in hand. After Phillip DeFreitas slammed Craig McDermott

for 15 in the 48th over, the requirement was 19 off the last two overs with three wickets left.

But then DeFreitas departed without another run added and the 19 needed off the last over proved beyond ninth-wicket pair Neil Foster and Gladstone Small. They did manage to scramble nine of them so that England finished on 246 for eight.

The victory was a fillip Australian cricket badly needed. Without a Test series win since 1983-84 when they defeated Pakistan and beaten on home territory in two one-day tournaments a year ago, there was a general despondency about the state of their game.

Performed With Purpose

But bonded into a determined unit by Border and coach Bobby Simpson, they performed with great purpose throughout this tournament, winning seven times and losing only to India in a group game having beaten the defending champions right at the start of the competition.

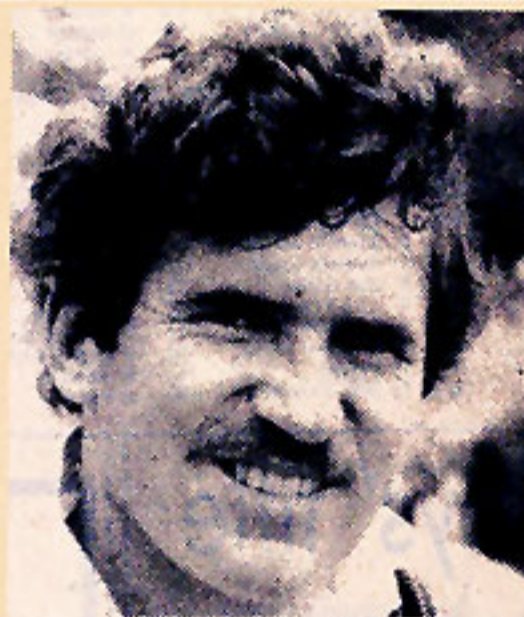
Although Sunday's win over England will have brought them the greatest pleasure, their most towering achievement was to beat favourites Pakistan by 18 runs in the semi-final in Lahore last Wednesday.

Constraints Of Slow Pitches

In both that match and the final, they batted first after Border won the toss and overcame the constraints of slow pitches to challenge their opponents to score at just better than five an over to beat them.

England were always slightly behind the asking rate and throughout their innings lost wickets at vital moments. Perhaps none was more vital than Allan Lamb's dismissal at 218 in the 47th over when with 21 balls left and 36 runs needed England seemed poised to snatch a dramatic victory.

This was the closest finish in a World Cup final in which the team batting sec-



ALLAN BORDER
panicked near end

ond has never managed to win. West Indies beat Australia by 17 runs in 1975 and defeated England by 92 runs four years later. In 1983 India were the winners, upsetting West Indies by 43 runs defending a modest total of 183.

Australia's total on this occasion was a challenging one, more challenging that had seemed likely when they became badly bogged down in mid-innings.

After openers David Boon, to be made Man-of-the-Match for his gritty 75 from 125 balls, and Geoff Marsh had raced to 50 in the first 10 overs against some poor new-ball bowling by DeFreitas and Small, the run rate sagged to fewer than four an over as Foster and spinners John Emburey and Eddie Hemmings produced outstanding spells.

At the mid-point of their innings Australia were 95 for one and between the 37th and the 39th overs subsided from 151 for one to 168 for four. But in the next 10 overs Border and Mike Veletta put on 73 in what was perhaps the most crucial stand of the match.

Ripped Out Off Stump

It was the introduction of Foster that really put a brake on Australia's scoring, the medium-fast bowler giving away just 16 runs in eight overs and ending the first-wicket stand at 75 when he ripped out Marsh's off stump.

Boon and Dean Jones put on 76 but it took them 19 overs during which neither looked particularly comfortable and Jones was out at 151 playing a half-hearted drive off Hemmings to Bill Athey at short mid-wicket.

Craig McDermott, promoted to step up the scoring, slammed 14 of the next 15 runs before being bowled hitting across a ball from Graham Gooch and at 168 Boon's doughty innings ended when he was caught off a top edge sweeping at Hemmings.

But England achieved only one more success when Border was run out by Tim Robinson's throw to the bowler's end in the 49th over.

NEW DELHI, Reuter — WHETHER champions India fly north to Lahore on Sunday or west to Bombay is the great unresolved issue of the World Cup, holding two nations in suspense and the organisers in a state of confusion.

Inderjit Singh Bindra, convenor of the World Cup management committee, said on Wednesday: "It is a problem for us, not knowing until the last minute whether India or Australia win their section. We are having to duplicate arrangements for flights and hotel bookings."

Interest To End

But he added it was a problem he was happy to be saddled with. "It is what is sustaining interest right to the end of the qualifying matches."

With the last round of group matches to come, India and Australia, both assured of semi-final places, are level on points but a difference of .016 of a run per over — or put another way, next to nothing — makes the host nation leaders of their section.

Allan Border, the Australian captain, has said he would prefer to win Group "A" and thus qualify for the Bombay semi-final on November 5, but is not intimidated by the prospect of going to Lahore to play Pakistan the previous day.

SEMI-FINAL VENUE POSES BIG PROBLEM



For India and Pakistan there can be no such indifference.

India, of course, want to play Imran Khan's all-conquering team in the final in Calcutta, while Pakistan would love to "entertain" the champions in their Lahore stronghold where 11 players, a crowd of more than 30,000 inside the Gaddafi Stadium and a few million more outside would strain sinew and willpower to bring down the traditional foe.

Australia's last group match is against Zimbabwe in Cuttack on Friday while India finish against New Zealand in Nagpur the next day. On the premise that Zimbabwe have a less formidable attack than New Zealand, Australia would seem to

have a good chance of stealing ahead of India in the final reckoning.

If they do, Indian captain Kapil Dev may regret his decision to bat second against Zimbabwe in Ahmedabad two days ago.

Improving Rate

The records show that batting first against the weaker teams — the three highest totals of the tournament have been made by sides going in first against Sri Lanka — provides the best prospect of improving run rate.

As it was, India batted second and their run rate dropped. To make matters worse, relations within the team became strained with Kapil Dev sending out a message to Sunil Gavaskar to score

faster. Kapil then came out in a fierce mood and slammed three sixes, including the winning hit, to let off steam and improve the scoring rate just a little.

Slow Pitches

Despite the abundance of one-day cricket that is played now, international players tend to regard three, four and five-day cricket as their proper business and are still coming to terms with how to play the World Cup on mainly slow pitches.

How to pace an innings is the main problem. "While batting one learns to work the ball around in Test cricket. One has to play straight," said Border, whose own attempts to score quickly in this tournament have not been entirely successful.

Border also identified a difference in emphasis in fielding. "For Test cricket one takes a lot of slip catches and short catches. For the one-day game there are a lot of long and running catches."

While Group "A" remains in a state of suspense, the outcome of Group "B" looks done and dusted. Pakistan have won the section and England will finish second — unless, that is, England lose to Sri Lanka and West Indies beat Pakistan on Friday, two improbable conclusions on the evidence so far.