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## Australia crush England to reach s-finals

Second straight defeat for England after their shock 20-run loss to S Lanka



LONDON: England's Ben Stokes plays a shot during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between England and Australia at Lord's Cricket Ground in London yesterday. — AFP

**LONDON:** Australia captain Aaron Finch hit a hundred before left-arm quicks Jason Behrendorff and Mitchell Starc shared nine wickets as the reigning champions thumped England by 64 runs at Lord's yesterday to book their place in the semi-finals of the World Cup.

Finch made exactly 100 in a total of 285-7 before England slumped to 221 all out with 32 balls left. The recalled Behrendorff took 5-44 — his first five-wicket haul in a one-day international — while Starc became the leading bowler at the tournament with 19 scalps thanks to a haul of 4-43.

For England, who entered the showpiece event as the top-ranked side in ODI cricket, this was a second straight defeat after their shock 20-run loss to Sri Lanka. The host nation, bidding to win a first World Cup title, can still qualify for the semi-finals but they are likely to need to beat at least one of India and New Zealand in their remaining two group games.

"There are teams that you have confidence playing against but I have had plenty of low scores against England as well," said man-of-the-match Finch.

"It was nipping around first thing. We were as tight as we could be and then took advantage of any width."

England's reply saw them lose a wicket off just the second ball of their chase, with the struggling James Vince-only playing because Jason Roy was out with a hamstring injury-bowled by a Behrendorff inswinger. Starc then took two wickets in nine balls.

Test skipper Joe Root was plumb lbw to an inswinger for eight before England captain Eoin Morgan (four) fell into a hooking trap when a top-edge was held safely by Pat Cummins at fine leg.

Australia, who had lost 10 of their previous 11 ODIs against England, were in complete charge with the hosts now 26-3. England have surged to the top of the ODI rankings on the back of aggressive run-scoring

but the worry for Morgan's men is that too many of their top-order appear to know only one way to bat.

### CARELESS ENGLAND

Jonny Bairstow, for example, fell next to a careless hook off Behrendorff before Stokes and Jos Buttler (25) repaired some of the damage with a fifth-wicket stand of 71. Buttler was well caught by Usman Khawaja, running round and staying just inside the deep square leg boundary off Marcus Stoinis.

Stokes defiantly hit Glenn Maxwell for two sixes in three balls but, shortly before completing his fifty, the all-rounder pulled up with a calf injury.

Starc was brought back to take a key wicket and duly obliged with a thunderbolt yorker, his 18th wicket of the tournament, that ended Stokes's 115-ball innings of 89, including eight fours and two sixes.

Stokes's dismissal left England 177-6 in the 37th

over and effectively ended the contest. Starc ended the match when he dismissed Adil Rashid.

Earlier Finch, dropped on 15, and fellow opener David Warner (53) came through some testing early overs to share a stand of 123 as too many of England's pacemen, with the exception of Chris Woakes, dropped short. The skipper's exit sparked a late flurry of wickets but Australia had enough runs on the board.

Both Warner, the World Cup's leading run-scorer, and Steve Smith were booed as they entered and exited the field following their recent return from year-long bans for ball-tampering.

Finch went to his century thanks to a misfield by Woakes but next ball he miscued a hook off Jofra Archer and Woakes held the catch at fine leg.

The skipper faced 116 balls, with 11 fours and two sixes in his second century of this World Cup following his 153 against Sri Lanka. — AFP

## Tearful Antetokounmpo named NBA's Most Valuable Player

**LOS ANGELES:** Milwaukee Bucks star forward Giannis Antetokounmpo was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player for the 2018-19 regular season on Monday.

The 24-year-old from Greece wept as he accepted the honor at the glitzy NBA Awards show broadcast from Santa Monica, California, becoming the youngest MVP since Derrick Rose was the youngest winner ever in 2011. Antetokounmpo beat out 2018 MVP James Harden of the Houston Rockets and Oklahoma City Thunder forward Paul George for the honor. Antetokounmpo, in his sixth season with the Bucks, averaged 27.7 points and 12.5 rebounds as he led Milwaukee to the best regular-season

record in the league with 60 wins and 22 defeats. They reached the Eastern Conference finals where they fell to the Toronto Raptors, who would go on to lift the title.

"I want to thank my team, my teammates," Antetokounmpo said. "It takes more than one person to win 60 games. Every time I walked to the locker room I saw my teammates were ready to fight, they were ready to go to war with me."

He also thanked a coaching staff led by head coach Mike Budenholzer, who was named Coach of the Year earlier in the evening.

And he cited the management and ownership of the club "for believing in me

when I was 18 years old back in Greece," Antetokounmpo struggled to get the words out as he also gave thanks to his late father, Charles Antetokounmpo, who died in 2017. "Every day I step on the floor, I always think of my dad," he said.

Antetokounmpo became the first Bucks player named MVP since 1974 when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — a three-time MVP in Milwaukee — took home the award. NBA legend Abdul-Jabbar introduced Antetokounmpo as a finalist during the show. Antetokounmpo also joined Hakeem Olajuwon (Nigeria), Tim Duncan (US Virgin Islands), Steve Nash (Canada) and Dirk Nowitzki (Germany) as the only international MVPs.

Slovenia's Luca Doncic won the Rookie of the Year award after a stellar campaign for the Dallas Mavericks. Doncic, 20, joined Jason Kidd as the only Maverick to win Rookie of the Year, Kidd sharing the honor with Detroit's Grant Hill for the

1994-95 season.

Doncic was widely expected to scoop the award despite a late-season surge by Atlanta point guard Trae Young, the player for whom Doncic was traded on draft night in 2018.

Doncic averaged 21.2 points, 7.8 rebounds and 6.0 assists for the 33-49 Mavericks, compared to Young's averages of 19.1 points, 8.1 assists and 3.7 rebounds for the 29-53 Hawks.

He became the second player, after 1961 Rookie of the Year winner Oscar Robertson, to average at least 20 points, seven rebounds and six assists per game in his first year. His eight triple-doubles were third-most by a rookie behind Robertson's 26 and Ben Simmons' 12. Cameroon's Pascal Siakam, who starred in his NBA Finals debut for Toronto, was named Most Improved Player. Siakam, 25, scored a playoff career-best 32 points in powering the Raptors over defending

champions Golden State in a 118-109 game-one victory in the championship series.

Siakam, who beat out D'Angelo Russell and De'Aaron Fox for the award, averaged 16.9 points, 6.9 rebounds and 3.1 assists per game in 2018-19. That was up from 7.3 points per game, 4.5 rebounds per game and 2.0 assists per game the previous season. He made 79 three-pointers in the regular season compared to 29 in the previous campaign.

The Los Angeles Clippers' Lou Williams won the Sixth Man of the Year award as top reserve for the second straight year and third time in his career. He won in 2015 with the Toronto Raptors.

Defensive Player of the Year went to Utah's French center Rudy Gobert. The "Stifle Tower" won the award for the second straight season, beating Antetokounmpo and George in the final voting. — AFP