

Who will win? England hot pick - Here's what the 10 captains said

Agency
New Delhi May 24,

Who will win the ICC World Cup 2019? The question was asked to the captains of all 10 participating teams on Thursday in the captain's conclave ahead of the tournament. While pretty much everyone agreed that World Cup 2019 will be one of the most competitive tournaments, hosts England appeared to be the hot pick of the captains.

Aaron Finch, Australia captain

"I think, England have been in great form over the last couple of years and along with India, they've probably been the standout performers. So you'd have to say England are definitely the favourites.

Finch also welcomed both David Warner and Steve Smith back as his team looks to defend the title they won in 2015.

"Since Warner and Smith have come back into the set-up they have been fantastic and contributed so much. The morale has been unbelievable. Once it gets underway, particularly against England, and further on for the Ashes, the crowd will play a part but that is expected everywhere in the world. We have plans in place for that, and their squad input and output in terms of the runs they have been making has been fantastic," Finch said.

Virat Kohli, India captain

The way I look at it, there's always going to be a huge fan-base for us anywhere we play in the world. But I have to

agree with Aaron, I think England is probably - in their conditions - the most strong side in this tournament, but I also agree with Morgs, that all ten teams are so well balanced and so strong, and the fact that this is a tournament where we have to play everyone once, makes it all the more challenging. I think that's going to be the best thing about this tournament, I see this as probably one of the most competitive World Cups that people are going to see

Eoin Morgan, England captain
England skipper Eoin Morgan said, "I don't think anyone is ahead and shoulders above anyone else. These are the ten best teams in the world, it will be extraordinarily competitive and some quality cricket will be played so we're really looking forward to it."

"Every captain sitting here would lose their left leg to play in a World Cup final at the home of cricket. It's something every one of us would have dreamed of as a kid. We are as best prepared as we can be. We just want to play that first game now," Morgan added.

Faf du Plessis, South captain
Du Plessis is hoping to become the first man to lead his side to a first-ever World Cup crown, after four semi-final appearances.

"We are all really excited to try out this new tournament, to play every one I think is great. The way we use our resources will be vital, but every team has X-factor bowlers that will have a big say in the successes of the side."

"I think the bowlers will win it, the teams still in it towards

the end of the tournament will be the teams that have done really well with the ball," du Plessis said.

Sarfraz Ahmed, Pakistan captain

Pakistan skipper Sarfraz Ahmed, who led his team when they won the ICC Champions Trophy in England in 2017, said that he is feeling confident.

"All the teams are really balanced. I think people are going to watch some great cricket. Since winning the World Cup in 1992, making the final in 1999 here in England and the Champions Trophy in 2017, we go well in England so we are confident we will do well and challenge," Sarfraz said.

Kane Williamson, New Zealand captain

New Zealand were the runners up four years ago and skipper Kane Williamson hopes his side can go one better this time.

"There are a few guys in the squad from the last World Cup which is great. But four years in between means there are a lot of new players. There has been talk about rankings, favourites, underdogs but what stands out is how balanced it is. Which means anything can happen on the day which is so exciting," Williamson said.

Jason Holder, West Indies captain

Jason Holder said: "It is a very exciting format. In the past, you could play five or six games, and that could be it. To play every side is great for us. We worked hard with the qualifiers to get here, that means it is the top ten in the world, we want to play them

all and give ourselves a shot. The team that wins will definitely deserve it."

Dimuth Karunaratne, Sri Lanka captain

Sri Lanka's new skipper Dimuth Karunaratne said: "We have great experience in England, we came here early to get used to the conditions and we are in good shape, hoping to do our best. It is not going to be easy though. We are confident and taking it each game one by one."

Gulbadin Naib, Afghanistan captain

"We are excited to be here, in front of the cricket world and to play the best teams. To present Afghanistan to the world is great and we are looking forward to it. There will be a huge audience at home in all the different provinces. Cricket is not just a sport now, in Afghanistan it has become something else."

Mashrafe Mortaza, Bangladesh captain

"We have got a great bunch of boys, a good mix of seniors and juniors coming on. Cricket is a game that anyone on their day can beat anybody. If we start well we can hang in there. We are confident that we can go well, but a lot depends on the start," Mortaza said.

The Film Shed in London's trendy East End hosted the 10 captains ahead of the 2019 tournament. The hosts England will kick-off the World Cup against South Africa on May 30 at the Oval. India will open its campaign on June 5 at the Hampshire Bowl against South Africa.

India Open: Mary Kom enters women's 51kg category final



Agency
New Delhi May 24,

In Boxing, six-time world champion Mary Kom has entered the women's 51kg category final by defeating Nikhat Zareen while men pugilists dominated the ring today by making it an all-Indian gold-medal clash in seven categories in the India Open. Mary Kom overcame stiff resistance to beat

promising Nikhat Zareen 4-1 at the Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Indoor Stadium in Guwahati in Assam today. Mary Kom will face Vanlal Duati of Mizoram in the gold-medal bout tomorrow.

In the men's section, 17 Indians stormed into the final in 10 weight categories. Former world youth champion Sachin Siwach registered an upset win over

reigning Commonwealth Games champion Gaurav Solanki to set up a 51kg gold medal clash against Asian Games gold medalist Amit Panghal. Shiva Thapa also remained on course to clinching a gold as he fended off a strong challenge from his Polish opponent D Krysian Sczepanski to emerge 5-0 winner. He will face Manish Kaushik in the 60kg final tomorrow.

Ross Taylor looks to outshine Kane Williamson in possibly his last World Cup

Agency
Wellington May 24,

New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor enters his fourth, and also certainly last, World Cup in the form of his life, raising the prospect he might even outshine Kane Williamson in England and Wales.

The good news for New Zealand fans is that the former captain and his most recent successor in the role will be playing on the same team. They will be expected to provide a formidable three-four combination in the batting lineup.

Both have been in superb form since the Black Caps reached the final of last World Cup but Taylor has overshadowed his 28-year-old skipper and risen to the top three in the International Cricket Council rankings.

The 35-year-old has scored 2,892 ODI runs over those four years, placing him sixth in the list of most prolific batsmen

headed by India captain Virat Kohli (4,306).

Taylor, however, has played fewer games than everyone else above him and his average of 68.85 compares unfavourably with only Kohli's 78.29. It is also significantly better than the seventh-placed Williamson's 47.01.

It is no coincidence that Taylor's batting has improved markedly since he underwent surgery in late 2016 to remove a pterygium a benign growth that was affecting the vision in his left eye.

In the 17 matches from the last World Cup until his operation he scored 692 runs at 62.90. Since the procedure, he has scored 2,200 runs at 70.96 in 42 games.

A change in technique he is less fidgety and squarer on at the crease while his backlift has straightened has also helped and he has been knocking off a number of personal batting milestones. He became the first New

Zealand player to score 20 one-day centuries when he hit 137 against Sri Lanka in Nelson in January.

The following month, he surpassed Stephen Fleming as New Zealand's leading one-day run scorer when he flicked a single off Bangladesh's Mehidy Hassan in Dunedin to move to 8,008 runs, a total which he has now extended to 8,026.

Since the start of the year he has scored 593 runs and only been dismissed in single figures once in his 11 ODI innings a run of form he credits to the work he has put in off the field. Being a World Cup year, I have had a big focus on my one-day game. Taylor told the Middlesex website ahead of the start of a short-term contract for the English county last month.

I am happy with the way things have gone. I'm not trying to put too much pressure on myself. It's about just playing the situation.

TAFE signs on Akshay Kumar as the brand ambassador for Massey Ferguson tractors

From a Correspondent
Chennai May 24,

TAFE - Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited, the third largest tractor manufacturer in the world and second largest in India (by volumes), has announced a brand association with actor Akshay Kumar for Massey Ferguson tractors. Over the past 60 years, TAFE has been reshaping the agricultural landscape of India and the world with a global footprint across 100 countries and a cumulative sale of about 2.5 million tractors to date. The globally renowned Massey Ferguson brand is one of the most iconic tractor brands, especially in India. Reputed for its superior and futuristic technology, international styling and ergonomics, the Massey Ferguson range offers robust performance and uncompromising quality with over 125 products and variants. Acclaimed actor Akshay Kumar has endeared himself to fans across the world with immense mass appeal especially in rural India, where he is considered as the "King of Action" and the compassionate social crusader. His acting style is a fine blend of sensitivity and heroic boldness. His roles range from the rugged hero to being the intelligent social transformer. His innate ability to handle challenging roles to meet the expectations of his fans has distinguished him as one of the most versatile actors of Indian



power-packed high visibility campaigns covering a series of television commercials, advertisements and digital promotions that will spotlight India's favorite Massey Ferguson tractors and the world-renowned actor Akshay Kumar, embarking on a new journey together.

About TAFE: tafe.com

The world's third largest tractor manufacturer and second largest in India by volumes with an annual sale of over 150,000 tractors, TAFE is one of the leading exporters of tractors from India with a turnover in excess of ₹ 93 billion. TAFE manufactures a range of tractors in the sub-100 hp segment in both the air-cooled and water-cooled platforms, and markets them under its four iconic brands - Massey Ferguson, TAFE, Eicher and the recently acquired Serbian tractor and agricultural equipment brand IMT - Industrija Mašinarstva Traktora. TAFE's over 1000 strong distribution network covers the entire length and breadth of India. Apart from India, its products have found excellent acceptance in over 100 countries across the world, including developed countries in Europe and the Americas. Besides tractors and farm machinery, TAFE manufactures diesel engines, silent gensets, agro engines, batteries, hydraulic pumps and cylinders, gears and transmission components, and has business interest in vehicle franchises and plantations.

Cinema. This association between India's iconic Massey Ferguson tractors and Akshay Kumar resonates well with their brand personalities. One rules every terrain and every task with ease, and the other portrays any role and character with absolute confidence and style. Versatile, dynamic and ready to take on challenges, both have withstood the test of time with an ever burgeoning popularity that stands testimony to their performance. Speaking on the association, TR Kesavan, President & COO - Product Strategy and Corporate Relations, TAFE said: "Massey Ferguson tractors with its superior performance and modern engineering is an industry leader in agriculture,

haulage, infrastructure and industrial applications. We believe a dynamic, powerful and accomplished brand ambassador like Akshay will help build a strong connect with our customers." On his association with the Massey Ferguson brand, Bollywood Superstar Akshay Kumar said, "I look forward to my association with the legendary Massey Ferguson tractors from TAFE, one of the pioneers in agriculture mechanization. Driving a Massey Ferguson with a loaded trailer, I could truly understand what makes it India's most loved tractor. It was evident why it enjoys such tremendous loyalty and pride of ownership by our farmers." TAFE's association with Akshay Kumar for Massey Ferguson tractors will feature

Assam's Tonmoy Qualifies For Main Round, To Take On Top Seeded Priyanshu Rajawat In Junior Badminton

From a Correspondent
Chennai, May 24,

Assam's shuttlers sizzled in the qualifying rounds of the Microplex Global and Yonex Sunrise All-India Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament here on Thursday afternoon, Tonmoy Bikash Boruah (in the Under-19 Boys Singles) and Anghuman Gogoi and Dixit Gogoi (in the doubles) advancing to the main round in style even as the top seed in the Under-19 Girls Singles P Gayatri Gopichand began her title quest in style.

In the boys' singles qualifying round match, Tonmoy Bikash Boruah showed great skill and composure to register a comfortable 15-6, 15-11 of

Shivam Mehta of Uttarakhand. He will now face the top seeded Priyanshu Rajawat of MP next.

While Tonmoy sparked in the boys' singles competition, boys' doubles teams in the fray from the state also kept their hopes alive of going deep into the tournament.

The duo of Anghuman Gogoi and Dixit Gogoi got the better of Ambuj Prakash and Navneet Raushan of Bihar 15-12 15-10 to set up main round clash with the fourth seeded Kerala pair of Sankarprasad Udayakumar and Syamprasad Udayakumar.

Subhakar Borboruah of Assam teaming up with Vikehietuo Kense of Nagaland also made it to the main draw with a hard-fought

15-12 12-15 15-4 victory over Varaprasad Kanakala and Vasanta Rayudu Sarikonda of Andhra Pradesh. They will now face Suraj Goala of Assam and Uttar Pradesh's Balleshwari Yadav.

Early Results (Assam) - 12PM

BS U19
R5 Tonmoy Bikash Boruah, ASM, def. Shivam Mehta, UTR, 15-6 15-11.

BD U19
R3 Subhakar Borboruah, ASM, and Vikehietuo Kense, NAG, def. Varaprasad Kanakala and Vasanta Rayudu Sarikonda, AP, 15-12 12-15 15-4. Anghuman Gogoi and Dixit Gogoi, ASM, def. Ambuj Prakash and Navneet Raushan, BHR, 15-12 15-10.