

# CRICKET WORLD CUP

## POOL A

Australia  
New Zealand  
England  
Sri Lanka  
Bangladesh  
Afghanistan  
Scotland

## POOL B

India  
South Africa  
Pakistan  
West Indies  
Zimbabwe  
Ireland  
United Arab Emirates

## SHORTTE'S WORLD CUP GUIDE TO THE RUN MACHINES

with David Shortte

The World Cup is upon us and the next six weeks will contain some magnificent contests between some of the globes most talented cricketers.

In recent years these major tournaments have proven punter friendly, particularly when looking at team most runs. The theory behind it is quite simple – generally over a minimum of six games the best players will have enough opportunities to rise to the top. When betting into one off most runs markets your pick can often get a freak delivery or a bad decision but over a bigger period of time those variables tend to even out.

The other reason I like being involved in these markets is the fact you have an interest in most games of the tournament – there will be some one sided contests. These games may well carry a lot more interest if our picks are piling on the runs against some of the lesser known nations.

There is one variable of this World Cup which must be factored in which isn't always necessarily the case in triangular or Test playing nations tournaments. That is the minnows – you don't have to be all that clever to work out that there are some serious run scoring opportunities for openers and top 4 batsmen when the likes of Australia and South Africa take on sides like Afghanistan, Scotland, the UAE and Ireland.

I've taken a look at most of the sides and will take you through my betting strategies, star bets and reasoning behind those selections.

## AUSTRALIA

I've narrowed it down to two key chances in whirlwind opening bat Dave Warner and the form batsman of the summer for Australia Steve Smith.

Warner managed 427 runs at an average of 53.37 during the recent Test series which placed him in second spot behind Smith and it was a carbon copy in the recent Triangular ODI series where he finished second on the Aussie runscore list behind Smith with 163 runs at an average of 54.33. Warner will have the advantage of getting first crack at some of the poorer quality bowling attacks. It's just how many he piles on. He is the warm favourite at \$3.25.

Smith has had an incredible summer. He was the leading runscore for the Test series against India with 769 runs at an average of 128.16 – he finished 342 runs in front of Australia's next best Dave Warner. He then buttered up in the Triangular ODI series with 226 runs at an average of 75.33. He may be at a disadvantage in comparison to Warner given he'll be batting lower down the list in some of the lesser profile matches but his big trump card is that he can make hundreds against any side. Given I rate the Aussies to go deep into the tournament it may be in the finals where he forges his way to the top. He is on the second line of betting at \$4.50.

A brief word on the rest of the key Aussie bats :

**Aaron Finch (\$4.50)** He has the luxury of opening and can be damaging but he is not going anywhere as well this summer as he was this time last year.

**Shane Watson (\$6.00)** Rarely goes on to make the big scores – can get nice 50s.

**Michael Clarke (\$7.50)** A superstar when fit and firing but there have to be question marks given his lack of recent cricket and his ability to get through a tournament injury free.

**Glenn Maxwell (\$8.00)** Looks to be hitting form at the right time and can score heavily quickly. My main concern is the fact he'll be seeing a lot less balls than his top order counterparts.

**George Bailey (\$13)** Looks most likely to be carrying drinks given his recent form slump.

**Mitchell Marsh (\$34)** Extreme talent and sure to make some nice scores but may well be starved of opportunities down the batting list.

**Brad Haddin (\$51)** Quality campaigner but likely to be getting pad rash in many of the games watching the boys in front of him pile on the runs.

**STRATEGY** I'll be betting 60% of my stake on Steve Smith at \$4.50 for a nice result and 40% on Dave Warner for a small win at \$3.25. Warner's run scoring in the games against the poorer nations is likely to determine the outcome – if he misses out Smithy looks the one.

## ENGLAND

My star bet of the tournament comes up here in the form of Ian Bell at \$3.50.

He was the leading runscore of the tournament in the recently completed ODI Triangular series against Australia and India with 247 runs at an average of 61.75 – it placed him 100 runs clear of his next best team mate. Importantly he has been to Australia and made runs in the past and to my naked eye he simply looks to be on another level to his team mates in regards to comfort levels at the crease. He has the added luxury of being an opening batsmen which in the games against the lesser lights could well see him piling on some very big numbers. From just 7 innings since arriving in Australia he has made a 187 versus the Prime Minister's XI, 141 against Australia in Hobart and an 88 not out against India. He gets three separate ticks – he is their best batsman, at the top of the order and in top form. This looks fill-up material.

In looking for alternatives Morgan, Ali, Taylor, Root and Buttler are all capable but none of them stand out to me.

**STRATEGY** Press all in on Bell at \$3.50. He makes big scores when he gets set and will have access to all 50 overs to get the job done in most games.



Steve Smith  
Australia

## INDIA

India started the summer in strong fashion with a very competitive Test series against Australia but their form in the Triangular series was poor. They look to be feeling the effects of a long summer.

There are two players that interest me Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

Kohli was exceptional in the Test series racking up 692 runs at an average of 86.5 – simply stunning. But then came the ODI series against Australia and England – his return 24 runs in 4 games at an average of 6. His best is brilliant but I can't recommend you fall into the \$3.25 on offer about a player in that sort of form. Can he turn it around? Absolutely but I don't want to be taking \$3.25 to find out if he does or not.

Onto Rohit Sharma, he was forced to miss most of the ODI series with injury but the one game we saw him he exploded with a stylish innings of 138 against Australia at the MCG. Back in November he produced one of the all time great ODI knocks of 264 against Sri Lanka. He played in a warm up game earlier in the week which would suggest he is on track to be fit for the tournament. He opens which gives him a great chance to cash in on some of the lesser known attacks in world cricket. He's no moral but he looks to be worth a little speck.

**STRATEGY** A small speck on Rohit Sharma at \$3.50. If he gets going he can make very big scores in slick time.

## NEW ZEALAND

The co-hosts come into this tournament in very good form and can go deep into this World Cup.

I've again narrowed it down to two key bats for the black caps.

The first is dynamic opening batsman Brendon McCullum. He is one of my favourite players in the game today. He takes on the new ball at all costs and while this can at times bring him undone when it comes off it is a pleasure to watch. He has had a productive summer finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> on New Zealand's run list in their Test series against Sri Lanka with 217 runs at an average of 72.33 and then NZ's 3<sup>rd</sup> best in the ODI series with 232 at 38.66. He will open up which is a bonus and he has shown an ability to make big hundreds which is of particular value. Of small concern is the fact he has failed to make a 50 at his last 7 innings.

The more reliable option is Kane Williamson who has been in unbelievable form. He managed a series best 396 runs at an average of 198 in their Test series against Sri Lanka and backed it up with NZ's best of 295 runs at an average of 59 in the ODI series. He has emerged as one of the premier batsmen in the world right now and in his current form on home soil he should keep churning out the runs.

**STRATEGY** Williamson looks the goods. I'll have 70% of my stake on him at \$3.00 for a nice result and I don't want McCullum against me - 30% on McCullum at \$3.25 to get my money back.

## PAKISTAN

Quite simply the most enigmatic nation. Their best can match any country but working out when they will produce it is a genuine challenge.

It is similar with their batting stocks they have some quality players in Shehzad, Khan, Ul-Haq, Akmal and even old Shahid Afridi but I'm not confident enough to invest here.

If forced to pick one maybe Misbah ul-Haq at the \$5.50 looks reasonable value but it's not tempting enough to get me over the line.

**STRATEGY** Pass

## SOUTH AFRICA

In my opinion the biggest danger to Australia. It's similar to the Aussie betting strategy but for South Africa it's opening bat Hashim Amla and middle order bat AB de Villiers.

Amla is in a very rich vein of form. In his last 9 international innings his lowest score is 33 and in that run of innings he has managed three fifties, a 133, a 153 not out and a 208. Fair to say he is seeing them pretty well. He was top runscore in both the Test series as well as their one day series over the summer. He has been very well backed and now sits as the \$2.75 favourite.

Onto the man who probably lays claims to being the best batsman in the world right now in AB de Villiers. He has had a stellar summer with 310 runs at an average of 103.33 in the Test series before managing 249 in just 3 ODI innings at an average of 83. He is an absolute genius. It is likely he will fill the spot at number four for South Africa which is not too bad but in their three matches against the poorer quality sides will Amla cash in?

**STRATEGY** In my eyes it's a two horse race and both Amla and de Villiers are exceptional. How do you split them? With great difficulty! At slightly better odds and given how well AB played when last in Australia I'll have 60% on de Villiers at \$3.00 and the other 40% on Amla at \$2.75.

## SRI LANKA

For a long time Sri Lanka have had the three pronged attack of Sangakkarra, Jayawardene and Dilshan to score the bulk of their runs.

In their recent ODI series against New Zealand Dilshan was leading runscore with 397 at 66.16, Sangakkarra was second with 321 at 64.2 and Jayawardene was third with 278 runs at 46.33.

I don't think there's much between them but the market is too tight to be backing all of them.

**STRATEGY** A small speck on Dilshan at \$4.00. He was leading runscore in their recent series and will be opening the batting.

## WEST INDIES

The first man that comes to mind when you think West Indies cricket is Chris Gayle.

He is now the \$2.85 favourite to be the leading runscore for the Windies but before you dive in let me take you through his recent form. He has not played an awful lot of international cricket over the last 12 months. He did however return to represent his homeland in the recent series against South Africa. He looked good in the two T20 games scoring 77 and 90 but since then in his 6 ODI innings he has managed an average of 12.

Accordingly I am shopping for value and I am sticking with the form man in Marlon Samuels. Samuels made 268 runs at an average of 53.6 against a very strong South African side in the Test series. He then went on to be leading runscore again for the Windies in the ODI series making 196 runs at 39.2. He comes into this World Cup as their most reliable player and if Gayle doesn't recapture his best I think Marlon can land a result at the \$5.00.

**STRATEGY** 60% on Samuels for a handy earn at the \$5.00 with the other 40% on Gayle.



Brendon McCullum  
New Zealand

## THE REST

To be truthful I simply have not seen enough of Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Scotland, Ireland, Afghanistan or the UAE to be giving an in depth analysis on who might or might not measure up at this level.

However, I've researched the recent triangular series between Afghanistan, Ireland and Scotland and here were the standouts :

### AFGHANISTAN

Their best performer with the willow was right hander Javed Ahmadi. He managed 189 in 4 innings with a high score of 81 at an average of 47.25. He finished 60 runs clear of Najibullah Zadran who made 129 at an average of 43.

**STRATEGY** A very small speck on Javed Ahmadi at \$5.50.

### IRELAND

One of the stalwarts of Irish cricket in Niall O'Brien was their form player in the recent series making 135 runs at an average of 67.5 with a high score of 80 not out. Former England international Ed Joyce managed 77 from his 3 innings.

**STRATEGY** Another very small speck bet, this time on Niall O'Brien at \$6.50.

### SCOTLAND

There wasn't much separating Scotland's top batsmen in the series with Machan making 123 at 41, Gardiner, 101 at 50.5 and Berrington 95 at 31.66.

**STRATEGY** Too close to call – pass.