



# THE GAME WITHIN THE GAME

YOUR EXCLUSIVE BETTING GUIDE  
FOR THE 2019 CRICKET WORLD CUP



# INTRODUCTION

In anticipation of the 2019 Cricket World Cup, Betfair have teamed up with professional punters to preview the entire tournament.

You'll find expert analysis of every team, which two teams to back for the trophy and a surprise roughie to potentially make the Semi Finals. As well as exclusive tips on which two players to take the most wickets and make the most runs.

## BONUS CONTENT

These professional punters will be featured on the [Betfair Hub](#) all tournament long. Providing previews of every match, as well as recommended betting tips. Also, we'll have trading cheat sheets that forecast how each game will play out. Find out when to Back and when to Lay on the [Betfair Exchange](#).

## THE BETFAIR EXCHANGE

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So please enjoy this eBook and our expert previews all tournament long.

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# ENGLAND

The hosts and ICC number one ranked side are also the tournament favourites after completely revamping their approach to the 50-over game since the last World Cup in 2015. A fresh strategy has brought plenty of success, with the Three Lions winning 15 out of 20 series' since the last global showpiece, including 10 of their last 12.

It's also worth noting that their last loss in a series at home came way back in September 2015. So whilst hosting the competition will bring elevated expectations, it is no doubt a significant advantage. One enjoyed by the last two victors.

England's method is underpinned by a long and powerful batting line-up, starting at the top with Jonny Bairstow and Jason Roy. Between them they are averaging 56.80 at a strike-rate of 121.37 in One Day Internationals (ODIs) this year. Joe Root and captain Eoin Morgan provide the steadying influence, before the muscle of Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes, Moeen Ali and a collection of bowling all-rounders administer the brutality at the death.

The major question mark surrounding the hosts is undoubtedly around their bowling as Liam Plunkett, Mark Wood and Chris Woakes can be expensive at times. Although the newly qualified Jofra Archer looms as a wildcard and may yet force his way into the final squad.

In leg-spinner Adil Rashid, the English also boast a proven wicket-taker through the middle of the innings. So while there are concerns around their attack which, at the time of writing, has conceded over 350 in five of their past eight ODIs, it would be foolish not to have them onside given their impressive recent record in this format. Particularly on home soil.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$3.3\***

\*Betfair odds correct at 2pm 16/5/19



The 2015 champions will be looking to claim their third title, although there are a few question marks around the make-up of their side, particularly in the middle-order.

The talented Rishabh Pant and mainstay Ambati Rayudu were somewhat controversially omitted from the 15-man squad, with veteran MS Dhoni retained alongside Dinesh Karthik, Kedar Jadhav and young all-rounder Vijay Shankar.

The top of the order is less problematic for India with the prolific Rohit Sharma joined by Shikhar Dhawan and followed by the indomitable Virat Kohli whose performances seem to align with the magnitude of the occasion.

Their bowling will rely heavily on premium quick Jasprit Bumrah who has had an outstanding 12 months across all formats. While fellow pacemen Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Shami should also enjoy the English conditions. Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja shape as the first-choice spin pair, though Kedar can expect to provide plenty of overs with his unconventional off-spin.

India's record is arguably as strong as the hosts in this format, winning 13 of their past 15 ODI series' and with proven match-winners such as Kohli, Rohit, Bumrah and powerful all-rounder Hardik Pandya they are certainly not a side we wish to oppose. However, there were a few flaws exposed in their recent home series defeat to Australia so whilst we expect them to be right in the mix we would want a bigger price before investing in them to go all the way.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$4.1**



# AUSTRALIA

The five-time champions and reigning cup holders have enjoyed a recent renaissance after a painful period between January 2017 and March this year when they won only four of 26 ODIs, throwing their title defence into disarray. However, they turned things around with a stunning comeback series win over India, recovering from 2-0 down to win 3-2, before whitewashing Pakistan in the UAE.

Their chances are further enhanced by the return of David Warner and Steve Smith from suspension, though on the flipside that has resulted in the omission of Peter Handscomb and Ashton Turner who both contributed strongly to the Aussies' revival. Furthermore, their pace stocks have taken a hit with Josh Hazlewood not risked before the Ashes, while Jhye Richardson has succumbed to a shoulder injury, heaping the pressure on Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins.

In the batting department coach Justin Langer will be tasked with juggling Warner, captain Aaron Finch and the in-form Usman Khawaja at the top of the order with Smith likely to displace Shaun Marsh, before the all-round duo of Glenn Maxwell and Marcus Stoinis apply the finishing touches in the middle-order. There will plenty of responsibility placed on leggie Adam Zampa, while Nathan Coulter-Nile, Jason Behrendorff and Kane Richardson will jostle for the final fast-bowling spot.

Although the defending champions' resurgence is encouraging there remains serious questions over their bowling attack outside of Starc and Cummins. While there is also a query as to whether their batting unit can score at the requisite tempo so we're going to be letting their price go through to the keeper.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$5.6**



# SOUTH AFRICA

Perennial semi-finalists South Africa have perhaps the added advantage of lower expectations this time around, with not too many pundits talking seriously about their chances of claiming a long-awaited first title. That is despite the fact they come into the tournament in strong form, having claimed 10 of their past 12 ODI series', including their last five straight, which has elevated them to third spot in the ICC rankings.

Their batting line-up is littered with class, with 'keeper-batsman Quinton de Kock, veteran Hashim Amla, captain Faf du Plessis and finisher David Miller all proven performers at this level. While the recent performances of stroke-maker Rassie van der Dussen appears to have plugged a hole at number four.

The Proteas have plenty of pace options with the evergreen Dale Steyn joined by 24-year-old sensation Kagiso Rabada and the promising Lungi Ngidi. However excitable leg-spinner Imran Tahir shapes as the ace in the pack, with a superb record this year in ODIs where he has captured 11 wickets at an average of 22.54 and economy rate of just 3.87.

The chief concern surrounding South Africa is injuries with express quick Anrich Nortje already ruled out, while Steyn, Ngidi and experienced middle-order batsman JP Duminy are all on the way back from various complaints which is far from ideal in the lead-up to a big tournament. The Proteas are not to be underestimated and could yet cause a surprise but with so many injuries within the squad and an unflattering record in knockout games we can't be backing them here.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$13**



# NEW ZEALAND

Semi-finalists or better in four of the past six World Cups, the Black Caps have developed a reputation as a specialist tournament team who tend to save their best performances for the bigger competitions. Indeed after going all the way to the final in 2015, they have retained seven players from that squad including key contributors Martin Guptill, Kane Williamson, Ross Taylor, Tim Southee and Trent Boult.

Elegant left-hander Henry Nicholls has been entrusted to join Guptill and Williamson in the top three, while 'keeper-batsman Tom Latham comes into the middle-order alongside all-round options Colin de Grandhomme and Jimmy Neesham. Despite a recent run of outs, destructive left-hander Colin Munro has been retained in the squad. However, the big surprise is uncapped wicket-keeper Tom Blundell who was preferred to Tim Seifert.

The bowling attack will again rely heavily on the swing of Boult and Southee, though Lockie Ferguson does at least provide raw pace. Where the Kiwis do look a bit short is in the slow-bowling department with Mitchell Santner steady but unthreatening, while leg-spinner Ish Sodhi is yet to prove himself at this level. The other major concern for the Black Caps is their ability to win on foreign soil as while they have claimed four of their past seven ODI series', they've won only one of their past six series' away from home. So we'd be looking for a more significant price before getting involved with the plucky New Zealanders.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$13**



# PAKISTAN

Champions Trophy winners Pakistan loom as an attractive dark horse despite tasting little success outside of their victory in the second most prestigious 50-over competition in England two years ago. However it's worth noting that some of their recent form is a bit misleading, with several key players missing in their whitewash defeat to Australia in March, while in their ongoing series with England they have exhibited an ability to go big with the bat despite losing a couple of tight matches.

The capability to score well beyond 300 is an exciting development for Pakistan, having only breached 300 twice in 17 matches against fellow World Cup opposition since the Champions Trophy, until their recent boon against the hosts. At the top of the order swashbuckling left-hander Fakhar Zaman has been a key component, although it is his opening partner Imam-ul-Haq who has been in superlative form this year, averaging in excess of 50. Babar Azam is both precocious and consistent, while Haris Sohail, Shoaib Malik and captain Sarfraz Ahmed all provide some punch to the middle-order.

However, it was Pakistan's bowling attack that carried them to Champions Trophy success and while spearhead Mohammad Amir has been left out due to poor form, player of the tournament Hasan Ali is ready to continue his love affair with English conditions. He's joined by left-armer Junaid Khan and a couple of young tearaways in Shaheen Afridi and Mohammad Hasnain. Shadab Khan and Imad Wasim are both high quality spin options too.

With a well-balanced squad, both in terms of bat and ball as well as youth and experience, on top of previous tournament success in the UK, it's hard to go past the Pakistanis at this price.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$16.5**



# WEST INDIES

The brilliant but unpredictable West Indians will be looking to ruffle some feathers after being forced to qualify for the competition, which they managed to do ahead of the likes of Zimbabwe and Ireland.

They have also been boosted by the inclusion of a couple of high-profile players with Chris Gayle returning to the set-up in style against England in February, while explosive all-rounder Andre Russell will feature for the first time since July off the back of an incredible IPL campaign. Kieron Pollard and Sunil Narine were not considered, however there is plenty of excitement around talented batsmen Shai Hope, Shimron Hetmeyer and Nicholas Pooran with stylish left-hander Darren Bravo set to play the steadying role at first drop.

Jason Holder will lead not just the side, but the bowling attack which features a variety of fast-bowling options including Kemar Roach, Oshane Thomas, Sheldon Cottrell, Shannon Gabriel, Russell and fellow all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite. Experienced leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo has been left out, with Ashley Nurse and Fabian Allen taking up the slow-bowling positions, although there is a lack of part-time spin options with Roston Chase also missing out on selection.

When it comes to the Windies there is little use looking at previous results (they have not won a bilateral ODI series since 2014) but the question is more around whether Holder can galvanise the squad and get them to perform in the same manner as their 2016 World T20 victory. To us, they are short on quality in the spin and death bowling departments which is enough to put us off the Calypso Kings.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$18.5**



# SRI LANKA

It is quite an indictment of just how far they have fallen. Four-time semi-finalists Sri Lanka find themselves at such a big price for the tournament, yet unfortunately we can make little argument that the market has got it wrong here.

Since the last World Cup when they reached the quarter-finals, the Sri Lankans have only been able to celebrate ODI series wins over Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Ireland and the West Indies and unlike the Windies, they don't have the excuse of missing some of their top-performing players.

Leadership has been a huge issue for the Sri Lankans with opening batsman Dimuth Karunaratne named as skipper after Angelo Mathews, Dinesh Chandimal, Upul Tharanga, Chamara Kapugedara. Lasith Malinga and Thisara Perera had all been given a chance at skippering the side at some point over the last two years. Mathews, Malinga and Thisara have been retained in the squad but Chandimal, Tharanga and Kapugedara were omitted. Amongst the younger players Kusal Mendis and Kusal Perera will need to provide the fireworks with the bat after Niroshan Dickwella also missed the cut.

There is a lack of venom about their bowling attack with the experienced Malinga and Suranga Lakmal supported by the injury-prone Nuwan Pradeep and leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay in conjunction with several all-rounders such as Jeevan Mendis, Milinda Siriwardana and Isuru Udana. Unfortunately there is little to get excited about in regards to this Sri Lankan team and a winless tournament would not come as a total shock.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$85**



# BANGLADESH

Bangladesh come into the World Cup with an incredibly experienced squad. Between them they have almost 1,300 ODI appearances, the most of any other side with the exception of India. Their form has been sound too, winning ten of their past 15 matches, albeit against mostly lower-ranked opposition.

Amongst the seasoned campaigners opener Tamim Iqbal is still capable of lighting up an innings, while vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan, former skipper Mushfiqur Rahim and test leader Mahmudullah add steel to a middle-order also featuring the in-form Mohammad Mithun.

Except for Shakib and captain Mashrafe Mortaza there is more youth in their bowling attack with left-arm ace Mustafizur Rahman still only 23, while the uncapped Abu Jayed was a surprise inclusion alongside all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin and crafty off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz.

As the years have progressed there's no doubt that Bangladesh have become a more durable unit, rarely blown away in the fashion that we were so used to seeing in years gone by. Although the weather played a significant part it should not be overlooked that The Tigers reached the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy after pushing England in the tournament opener. The format of the World Cup should dictate that abandoned matches don't have such a big say but rain can still definitely play a part in the make-up of the top four, so with a bit of luck and a few high quality performances it wouldn't surprise us if Bangladesh can sneak into the semis once more.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$95**



# AFGHANISTAN

In their second World Cup the Afghans will rely heavily on their experienced core of captain Gulbadin Naib, former skipper Asghar Afghan, star leg-spinner Rashid Khan, veteran Mohammad Nabi, 'keeper-batsman Mohammad Shahzad and all-rounder Samiullah Shinwari.

Although just 18 years of age there will also be plenty expected of mystery spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman, who like Rashid and Nabi has gained experience playing in some of the premier domestic T20 competitions including the IPL.

Outside of the better-known players, first drop Rahmat Shah, who recently took over the test captaincy, has been in impressive form this year, as has middle-order mainstay Hashmatullah Shahidi, who is averaging 43.66 in ODIs in 2019. Najibullah Zadran has also excelled in the finishing role at number seven, including a remarkable century against Ireland in March.

In the bowling department the spin trio of Rashid, Nabi and Mujeeb will be responsible for many of Afghanistan's overs, though veteran seamer Dawlat Zadran will be called on at either end of the innings, as will fellow quick Hamid Hassan and all-rounder Aftab Ahmed.

It will be a tall order for Afghanistan to compete here and while we fancy they will give a good account of themselves, we expect wins to be few and far between, though they could be decent value against Sri Lanka or even the West Indies.

**WORLD CUP ODDS: \$100**



## TOP RUN SCORER

Openers have typically dominated this market, topping the charts in the last four World Cups and although there won't be as many "free runs" as there have been previously against minnows, the top of the order is still where we will focus our attention.

After a lean 2018 in which he averaged just 32.70 in ODIs, South African 'keeper-batsman Quinton de Kock has got back to his best in 2019, averaging a lofty 58.62. That is more in line with his returns in 2017 (956 runs at 53.11) and 2016 (857 runs at 57.13) where he's exhibited his consistency in the ODI arena. de Kock also can go big, averaging a hundred every nine innings since 2016 which stacks up well with his opposition, and playing in a team that has every chance of going deep in the tournament he ticks enough boxes for us to be backing him at the available price.

## TOP WICKET TAKER

Although some spinners have featured among the top wicket takers in previous World Cups, it's generally the quicks who finish at the summit, mainly because they have the added advantage of bowling at the death where there are cheap wickets to be claimed.

In what shapes as a very open field we will look to take advantage of Australia's injuries in the pace department which have claimed Jhye Richardson and essentially Josh Hazlewood. Spearhead Mitchell Starc is only just working his way back from injury himself which leaves us with Pat Cummins who has shouldered a lot of responsibility for the Aussies in ODIs of late, taking 17 wickets in just six ODIs which is seven clear of the next squad member who bowls pace and just one behind Adam Zampa who has played an additional five matches. The defending champions not only rely on Cummins at the death but also regularly turn to him when they need a wicket so I think he represents good value here to be the top tournament wicket taker.

# CONCLUSION

India, Australia and South Africa all have claims at the title but their various flaws make them under the odds. England are absolutely the team to beat. Whilst they appear short, their batting fire power and home ground advantage make them value.

Of the bigger price teams, Pakistan are overs. The Champions Trophy winners have a balanced side with bat and ball and have tasted success in the UK before. They look overs at \$16+.

Lastly, we think Bangladesh can make the Semi-Finals at tremendous odds.

## **BETTING STRATEGY**

- Back Quinton de Kock Top Run Scorer at 17.00 or bigger for 0.5 units.
- Back Pat Cummins Top Wicket Taker at 20.00 or bigger for 0.5 units.
- Back England at 3.30 or bigger for 2 units.
- Back Pakistan at 16.00 or bigger for 1 unit.
- Back Bangladesh To Reach The Semi Finals at 12.00 or bigger for 1 unit.

Think! About your choices. Stay in Control. Leave before you lose it. Gamble responsibly.  
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