

# Hit for a six: Shubhman, Porel take India to 6th U-19 WC final



Ishan Porel of India (C) is congratulated by team mates after dismissing All Zaryab of Pakistan.

**CHRISTCHURCH, JAN 30** /- India reaffirmed their supremacy in age-group cricket as they wallopped arch-rivals Pakistan by an incredible 203 runs to make it to their sixth ICC U-19 cricket World Cup final in Christchurch on Tuesday.

This is India's biggest win against Pakistan at the age group level as the gulf in standard was way too visible. India have won the tournament in 2000 (under Mohammed Kaif), 2008 (Virat Kohli), 2012 (Ummat Chand) while losing two finals in 2006 (Cheteshwar Pujara) and 2016 (Ishan Kishan).

The immensely talented Shubhman Gill hit classy unbeaten 102 off 94 balls to guide India to 272 for 9 after winning the toss and then seamer Ishan Porel (4/17 in 6 overs) scythed through the Pakistan top-order with a terrific opening



Shubman Gill of India celebrates his century

## Shubman Gill: New 'Yuvraj' of Punjab cricket

**NEW DELHI, JAN 30** /- A heady mixture of silken grace and dollops of brute power has always defined Punjab school of batsmanship and the latest to have emerged from that stable is 18-year-old Shubman Gill.

With an aggregate of 341 runs in the ongoing U-19 World Cup, the teenager from nondescript town of Fazilka in Punjab's Ferozepur district has been the centre of attention, even more than the highly-rated skipper Prithvi Shaw. Strapping with sinewy wrists, Shubman's exciting strokeplay has earned him eyeballs and no wonder he went to Kolkata Knight Riders for a bid of Rs 1.8 crore at the IPL auction. It was around 10 days ago when India were playing their second group league game of the World Cup against Zimbabwe at Mount Maunganui, Shubman pulled rival pacer N Nungu for a six over deep mid-wicket. It was a short-arm jab but more interestingly there was an eerie similarity with a stroke that Virat Kohli had hit during his innings of 150 against England in an ODI in Pune, last January. In fact, the BCCI's official website compared both the strokes and it spoke about the skill and swagger which have been the hallmark of all

great players hailing from North India. During the days of Mohinder Amarathunga and Navjot Singh - Punjab batting was more about grit and power but Yuvraj Singh married both. And now it seems that Shubman is ready to carry that legacy forward. And none other than his senior Punjab team captain Harbhajan Singh who feels that he has got everything to succeed at the highest level. "Obviously, the more he plays quality bowling, he will improve. He will play in different conditions, go through phases where he would know how to score runs in difficult conditions. But make no mistake, I have seen 18-year-olds Yuvraj Singh from close quarters. Shubman is as talented as Yuvraj. Harbhajan gave a fair assessment about the youngster. "His biggest advantage is that he has strokes that all modern day players would like to have. He can hit Dilscop (the lap shot made famous by TM Dilshan), he can hit the ramp shot (guiding over thirdman), inside out lofted shot. "And the toughest of them all - the pull in front of square. Pulling through deep square leg is not difficult but you need to be tall with supple wrists to keep the ball down while pulling in-front of square.

as he worked on the extra bounce. He also played a slog sweep of left-arm spinner Mohammed Taha. "I rate this innings very highly as it was against Pakistan.

The pitch was on the slower side and it was not easy for strokeplay. I am happy to have got the Man of the Match award," Gill said after the match. Having bagged a Rs 1.8 crore deal from Kolkata Knight Riders, Gill was asked about his preferred format. "I would like to play all three formats as adaptability is the key," said the player from Firozpur in Punjab. While defending the total, it was a walk in the park for the Indians as the Pakistanis once again found Shivam Mavi (4-3-6-0) and Kamlesh Nagarkoti (5-1-7-0) pace too hot to handle.

The pressure created by then enabled Porel to get four quick wickets with skipper Shaw taking a couple of brilliant catches at gully. Once Pakistan were 28 for 4, the Indian slow bowlers came into the act with left-arm spinner Sreya Singh (2/20 in 8 overs) and off-break bowler Rryan Das (2/6 in 4 overs) blowing away the opposition lower order to win the match in no time. (PTI)

## BCCI to announce cash award for U-19 World Cup cricketers

**NEW DELHI, JAN 30** /- The BCCI will announce cash award for the Indian players for reaching the final of the U-19 cricket World Cup and also felicitate them, acting president C K Khanna said today.

Congratulating the team for beating Pakistan in the semi-finals in Christchurch in New Zealand today, Khanna said, "I would like to congratulate the entire team and coach Rahul Dravid for this performance. Rahul's contribution in guiding the Gen Next cricketers has been immense. Because of him we now have a talented pool of U-19 cricketers."

"The BCCI will announce cash awards and also felicitate the team," he told PTI. The Indian team today thrashed arch-rivals Pakistan by 203 runs in the semi-finals to enter the final for the sixth time. They will take on Australia in the summit clash on February 3. (PTI)

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## Sidhu hails Indian team's performance

**CHANDIGARH, JAN 30** /- Punjab cabinet minister Navjot Singh Sidhu on Tuesday congratulated the India U-19 cricket team for reaching the final of the ongoing World Cup. The Indian team crushed arch-rivals Pakistan by 203 runs in the semi-final clash of the prestigious tournament in Christchurch. The minister extended his best wishes to

## Gill has always been a dedicated cricketer: Father

**CHANDIGARH, JAN 30** /- India U-19 player Shubman Gill's father is elated at the performance of his son in the ongoing World Cup in New Zealand, saying the youngster has always been a dedicated cricketer. Shubhman has always been dedicated to the game of cricket. I am very happy and proud of my son's performance in the ongoing

World Cup," Gill's father Lakhwinder Singh told PTI today. "We are elated with his century in today's match against Pakistan and defeating the Pakistani team," he said. Asked when Gill showed his inclination towards cricket, Lakhwinder said he had always been passionate about the game since the age of three. "Shubhman never liked any other toy.

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