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Photo: Helge Schütz

**GREAT KNOCK** ... Namibian opening batsman Stephan Baard (centre) received the Man of the Match award from Brand van Zyl of Urban Green (left) while Cricket Namibia president Richard Frankle looked on.

# Namibian campaign off to an electrifying start

• **HELGE SCHÜTZ**

NAMIBIA'S ICC World Cricket League Division 2 campaign got off to a great start on Saturday when they comfortably beat Kenya by five wickets.

The Netherlands and Uganda also recorded victories - the former thrashing Canada by 67 runs, while Nepal only had themselves to blame as they threw away a strong start to lose to Uganda by two runs.

But it was Namibia's match against Kenya that set the tone for a great opening day's play in front of a large crowd at the Wanderers field.

Sarel Burger gave Namibia an electrifying start as he trapped Alex Obanda lbw with the first ball of the match. He followed that up with two more wickets in quick

succession as Kenya crashed to 16 for three wickets after six overs.

Collins Oboyo (20) and Gurdeep Singh (22) led a slight recovery but Gerrie Snyman maintained the pressure, dismissing them both as Kenya crashed to 79 for five.

Kenyan captain Rakep Patel and Nelson Odhiambo led a fine revival with a 78-run partnership, but Craig Williams stopped them in their tracks with two wickets in quick succession. He had Patel caught behind for 39 and then bowled Lucas Ndadason for 3 to peg Kenya back at 167 for seven wickets.

Odhiambo top-scored with 54 runs before he was run out by Raymond van Schoor, while Kenya reached a total of 191 for the loss of eight wickets off their 50 overs.

Nicolaas Scholtz (17 not out) took Namibia to victory as they comfortably reached the target with 10 overs to spare.

The 22-year-old Baard won the man of the match award for his fine knock and admitted afterwards that he was a bit nervous.

"I was a bit nervous because it would have been my first century, but at least it was a good start for the team and myself," he said.

"We had a great crowd and everyone did their part, so I'm very proud of the boys," he added.

At the United field, the Netherlands got off to a strong start as they easily beat Canada by 67 runs.

The Netherlands reached a sizeable 251 for seven wickets off their 50 overs and then dismissed Canada for 184 runs.

All of the Dutch batsmen got among the runs, with wicket keeper Wesley Baressi leading the way with 83 not out off only 61 balls, while Ben Cooper added 57 and Eric Szwarczynski 35.

Canada's response was poor, as they crashed to 71 for five wickets, before Hamza Tariq led a revival. He went on to score 61 off 55 balls, which included eight fours and three sixes, but it was not enough as Canada were all out for 184.

Vivian Kingma (4/32) and Michael Rippon (3/22) were the Netherlands' top bowlers.

At Affies Park, Uganda made a great comeback to beat Nepal by two runs.

Uganda's batsmen never got going as they could only score 146 runs off their 50 overs. Brian Masaba top-scored with 43 runs, while Paras Khadka had great figures of three wickets for 14 runs off nine overs.

Nepal seemed to be heading for victory when they reached 60 for one wicket after 20 overs, but a batting collapse allowed Uganda right back into the game, and they eventually dismissed Nepal for 144 runs to snatch a dramatic victory.

Burger was Namibia's top bowler, taking three wickets for 40 runs, while Williams took 2/20 and Snyman 2/33.

Namibia's chase got off to a great start as Stephan Baard and Gerrie Snyman put on 56 for the first wicket off only 10 overs before Snyman was out for 16.

Nelson Odhiambo dismissed Gerhard Erasmus (12) and Craig Williams (0) within four balls, but Raymond van Schoor joined Baard to put Namibia in control.

Baard went on to reach his 50 off only 52 balls, which included six fours, and with Raymond van Schoor weighing in with some fine strokes, they shared a fourth wicket stand of 85 runs, before Van Schoor was out for 33.

Baard was desperately unlucky to miss out on a century when he was caught on the boundary for 97 which came off 96 balls and included nine fours and one six.

Sarel Burger (9 not out) and

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