

Match reports

ICC Europe Division one – Netherlands 7 – 17 June 2017

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ROTTERDAM, JUNE 9

SWEDEN, NORWAY AND GERMANY RECORD WINS AT 2017 ICC WORLD CRICKET LEAGUE – EUROPE DIVISION 1

Overnight rain and solid drizzle in the morning couldn't spoil the first day's play as the opening round of fixtures of the 2017 ICC World Cricket League – Europe Division 1 got off to a successful start.

Sweden, Norway and Germany recorded their first wins in the six team tournament. The winner of the round robin will promote to World Cricket League Division 5, which takes place in South Africa in September.

Norway v Austria

After a delayed start at VOC, the Norwegian captain chose to bat against Austria. Norway made a positive start with openers Raza Iqbal (51) and E Ul Haq (40) putting on a solid partnership of 86 before the loss of Ul Haq. A strong innings from Iqbal came to an end in the 31st over to the off-spin of Mohamad Zalmi.

Norway got to the total of 210/4, with late contributions from RR Shinde and A Iqbal. In the 2nd innings, the Austrian batters kept the scoreboard ticking over despite a regular loss of wickets. LK Arachchinge played some inventive shots for his 78 Runs, taking Austria to within 60 runs of the total.

The scoreboard pressure mounted in the final overs as the Norwegian bowlers applied pressure through the combination of dot balls and wickets. A stunning catch from A Iqbal put an end to Arachchinge's innings and to Austria's hopes of winning the game.

France v Germany

Only one over of play was lost at Voorburg CC where France played Germany in the opening fixture. Germany put on a strong bowling display, bowling out the French for 143. With ME Latif, Mudassar Muhammad and Shahil Momin taking three wickets a piece.

Player of the match Mudassar Muhammad was both economical and devastating taking three wickets for 22 runs in his 10 overs. The German batters made short work of the French total. Openers Daniel Weston (35 off 79) and player of the match Mudassar Muhammad (102 off 62) setting up the win in the 24th over.

Belgium v Sweden

In the closest game of the day, Sweden beat Belgium with two balls left in the last over. Heavy rain delayed the start at Kampong CC in Utrecht and the overs were reduced to 30 before a ball had been bowled. Sweden won the toss and chose to field. Sweden put on a strong display in the field, taking wickets regularly and producing two run outs.

The Belgian batters amassed 132 runs before the fall of the last wicket in the 30th over, with A Raza recording the highest score of 39. The Swedish batters were looking to build partnerships and did so with captain M O'Connor top scoring with 31.

Disciplined bowling from the Belgians meant that the game went right down to the last over. Azam Mohammad hit the winning runs with two balls spare.

FULL SCORECARDS HERE: <https://www.icc-cricket.com/world-cricket-league/europe-division-one/results>

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Rotterdam, June 11

GERMANY AND NORWAY STAY UNDEFEATED ON DAY 2 – WCL EUROPE DIVISION 1

Germany and Norway both recorded their second win of the tournament with France coming back strong on day 2 to defeat Sweden in a close match.

Belgium v Norway

Norway successfully defended a seemingly sub-par total of 142 in an eventful match up in Voorburg. E Ul Haq battled through 80 balls for his 35 runs, top-scoring for the Norwegians. F Khaliq was the most successful bowler for the Belgians with 4-22/10.

The Belgians put 44 runs on the board before lunch was taken. Norway came back from the lunch break with renewed energy and started taking wickets at regular intervals. Syed Waqas Ahmed was crucial for Norway, taking 6-24/10 including the scalp of opening batter A.M. Babarkhail (48). The Belgians lost their final wicket in the 29th over, with the score on 109.

Germany v Austria

Mudassar Mohammed (115) dominated on day two, putting another century to his name in an opening partnership of 176 with Daniel Weston (55). Mohammed was run out in the 34th over, the highlight for the Austrians in the first innings. Late hitting from Amit Sharma (54*) and some missed opportunities in the field contributed to the German total of 310 for 5.

Germany carried their momentum into the second innings with the early wicket of danger-man Lakmal Arachchige. Shadnan Khan (42) showed intent for the Austrians but was taken in by the German spinner Shahil Momin. Momin would go on to claim 5-40/10, leaving the Austrians stranded on 142.

Sweden v France

France came back strong on day two to defeat Sweden in a low scoring thriller. Sweden won the toss and chose to bat, losing early wickets to Usman Shahid (3-18/10) and Usman Khan (3-24/9). Abhijit Venkatesh (69*) stabilized the innings for the Swedish, putting on crucial partnerships with Sweed Ullah (29) and Rahel Khan (21) and pushed the total to 161.

Usman Shahid (106*) carried his bat through the French innings, setting up the close victory in the 45th over. Tight bowling from the Swedish and regular fall of wickets looked to decide the match in Swedish favour, until the 8th wicket partnership between Shahid and Rameez Ishan (9). Ishan came in with the score on 78 for 7 and put on a 42 run partnership with Shahid to get the score to 120 for 8. Sivaran Kannanraj (17*) continued in the same way, putting on another 42 run partnership with Shahid to win the game for the French.

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Amsterdam, June 13

**GERMANY TOP THE TABLE, BELGIUM AND AUSTRIA GET FIRST WINS – WCL EUROPE
DIVISION 1**

Germany beat Norway by 113 runs, while Belgium and Austria recorded their first wins of the tournament.

Norway v Germany

Germany proved too strong for the Norwegians in an all-round effort at VOC in Rotterdam. After winning the toss and deciding to bat, the Germans were put under some pressure by a disciplined Norwegian bowling attack. Mudassar Muhammad (61) played his most patient innings of the tournament, following up his pair of centuries with another half century.

German Vice-captain Amith Sarma (82) showed his class with a steady knock to get the German total to 262 with support from the lower order. Norwegian youngster Junaid Sheikh (3-61/10) put a good effort in with the ball, taking three wickets on debut.

Norway looked strong in the chase, despite the early loss of wickets. German bowler Sajid Liaqat (5-39/10) created big problems for the Norwegians, getting some movement on the ball. His five wickets were instrumental in putting the Germans on top. S. Iftikhar showed some Norwegian grit, and batted positively for his 53 runs, he could not prevent the loss however as the Norwegians were bowled out on 149.

Austria v Sweden

It came down to the last ball in Amstelveen, where Austria successfully defended their score of 252, holding off the Swedes by two runs. Momentum shifted back and forth several times in this thrilling encounter. Shadnan Khan (119) was instrumental for the Austrians, batting for most of the innings and only losing his wicket with three balls left in the last over.

The score of 252 looked imposing for the chasing Swedes as they lost their first wicket on 0. Sadat Sidiqi (36) and A Venkatesh (51) were undeterred, however, and went on to add

97 runs for the second wicket. Sabir Zahoor (50) also contributed with a half century as the Swedish looked to be cruising to victory despite the regular loss of wickets.

Tension was at a maximum with the Swedish number 11 facing the Austrian opening bowler with four runs required. The ball produced a single, leaving the Swedes two runs short of the target.

Belgium v France

Belgium won the toss and elected to bat, hoping to start positively and put up a good score. They were in trouble early, losing their first four wickets for 60 runs. The middle order were up to the challenge with the partnership between F. Khaliq (72) and S Jamil (46) lifting the score to 139. Shaheryar Butt contributed with a blistering cameo as he went on to hit 42 runs of 24 balls, lifting the Belgian score to a respectable 225.

The French were in early trouble with the first wicket going down in the first over. U Shahid(73) who was crucial in the victory over Sweden looked strong, playing shots over the top and into the gaps. His partnership with Usman Khan (45) looked like it would win the game for the French.

The Belgians stuck to their plans with discipline and created some wicket opportunities as the required run rate went up. Some good fielding helped and the French lost their final wicket in the 45th over, 50 runs short of the target. F Khaliq cemented his player of the match award with bowling figures of 4-35/10

**ICC MEDIA RELEASE
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SCHIEDAM, June 15

SWEDEN DEFEAT GERMANY ON DAY 4 TO SET UP FINAL DAY DECIDERS IN WCL EUROPE DIVISION 1

Sweden came back strong from a close loss to Austria the day before, to defeat table-topper Germany. Austria and Norway both recorded convincing wins today, to ensure the tournament stays alive until the final day. The winner of the tournament will be decided on day 5 as several teams are still in contention for the top spot.

Sweden v Germany

Sweden had a point to prove on day 4, coming back from a close defeat the previous day. The German batting order didn't get their usual start and was in trouble with the score on 143 for 7. Opener Daniel Weston (96) managed to stay calm and set up a crucial partnerships with Ahmed Wardak (27) to get the German total to over 200.

In the field it was a similar story as the Swedes stuck to their plans and played nicely in the gaps around the field. Shahid Mustafa (56) contributed a half century and Captain Mitch O'Connor lifted the team with his 70* as the German total came closer and the Swedish fans let themselves be heard. Germany made some mistakes bowling and

fielding which cost them dearly in the end. Despite a late wobble and the loss of a few wickets, the Swedish kept their heads about them and passed the total in the 45th over.

Belgium v Austria

Austria put on a strong display against the Belgians, as they dominated in both innings. Bowling first they applied constant pressure on the Belgian batters, taking wickets at regular intervals and cutting off their opportunities to score. With the score on 143 for 9, Shaheryar Butt (52) unleashed another brutal display of six-hitting to lift the Belgian total to a more respectable 172.

Austria carried their momentum into the second innings, with an opening stand of 107 between Lakmal Arachchige (52) and Mahmmad Zalmi (70). The Austrian middle order finished off a clinical display, passing the Belgian score in the 33rd over.

Norway v France

Norway won the toss and chose to bat at the VRA cricket ground in Amstelveen. The French started off reasonably well with some early pressure from the bowlers. Norway was undeterred however and kept pushing. Raza Iqbal (104) put in a captain's knock, supported by A Iqbal (43) and RR Shinde (63). The Austrian total after 50 overs was 225 for 5.

The French chase was stifled early on by the loss of the first three wickets for only 9 runs. Despite contributions the middle and lower order, the French ended their chase 100 runs short of the total.

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LONDON, June 26

GERMANY GAIN PROMOTION TO WCL 5, SWEDEN DEFEAT NORWAY TO TAKE 2ND PLACE – WCL EUROPE DIVISION 1

In the final round of matches of the WCL Europe Division 1, Germany ensured promotion to WCL division 5 with a win over Belgium, Sweden won the clash of the Scandinavians against Norway. Austria only just managed to hold off a young French side as the high-scoring game went to the very last ball.

Germany v Belgium

The Germans seemed to be on course for an easy win in the first innings against the Belgians, taking the first 8 wickets for just 108 runs. The tail wagged however and the Belgian lower order showed some grit and determination to get the score up to 190. Ashiqullah Said added 46 runs to the score. Some big hits into the parking lot by Reyhan Faiz (31) boosted the Belgian morale even more.

The Belgian bowlers created trouble for the Germans early on, with swing and pace and a loud and active fielding side. After the early wicket of Daniel Weston, the German batters kept their heads down and took no chances, slowly shifting the momentum

back towards Germany. Captain Rishi Pillai (60*) led from the front, supported by Brandon Ess (57*). The winning runs came in the 32nd over and triggered the German celebrations as they secured a place in WCL division 5.

Germany progress to the 2017 ICC World Cricket League 5, to be played in South Africa in September. CEO Brian Mantle is looking forward to the road ahead: 'We are delighted to have won the tournament and achieving our second successive promotion and are very excited about testing ourselves in the World Cricket League. The turnaround is fast so we are actively looking at ways to get the best preparation for success in South Africa in September. We are very confident in our team and backroom staff and are looking to make a mark at the higher level.'

Sweden v Norway

At the start of the day, both Sweden and Norway were still in with a theoretical chance at promotion, so there was still all to play for both Scandinavian teams. The Norwegian innings got off to a reasonable start, despite the early wicket of Raza Iqbal. The top and middle order all got starts and Norway was in a good position to accelerate at 117 for 4 in the 37th over. The Swedes had other ideas as they put on a good display in the field to take the catches and create run out opportunities. Norway was bowled out for 162.

With eight overs remaining before lunch was to be taken, the Swedish batters capitalized on their momentum. Swedish opener A Imtiaz (54) unleashed a ferocious display of hitting, to reach his half century before lunch. Sweden were in a very comfortable position after lunch at 70-0. The Norwegians came back strong however and dismissed Imtiaz in the 1st over after lunch. After this dismissal, the game swung back and forth as Norway took wickets in clusters and Sweden kept scoring runs despite the regular setbacks. Sweed Ullah (45) stabilized the innings and almost saw his team home, losing his wicket with just four runs required. Sweden passed the Norwegian score in the 37th over, for the loss of seven wickets.

Austria v France

The Austrian innings looked in trouble with the score on 98 for 5 in the 21st over. A recovery came through some strong partnerships, set up by I Asif (84) who scored at just over a run a ball. A regular loss of wickets meant that the the Austrians finished their innings on a gettable 238/9.

The French were looking to finish their tournament on a high but looked in trouble early on with the score at a precarious 60 for 4. Undeterred, the French continued their chase and through contributions from AV Ayyavooraju (52), Usman Khan (44) and Zika Ali (33) found themselves within touching distance of a heroic victory, entering the final over with just 8 runs needed to win, with two wickets in hand. the French lower order gave it everything, but in the end fell two runs short of the Austrian total. France's final score 236/9