

The odd pair

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



GrameenPhone Test Series 2003 Bangladesh vs South Africa

Habibul Bashar and Javed Omar seem to have developed a good understanding between themselves. The two most experienced Bangladesh batsmen led the home team fightback against South Africa yesterday with a record 131-run second wicket stand.

It was the second time the pair featured in a 100-run stand. They previously put on 122 runs at the same venue against Zimbabwe in November 2001. Besides, the cohesion between them was demonstrated in the first innings, where the two right handers added 85 runs for the second wicket.

Although their styles are strikingly different with Bashar as his name suggests bashing the ball all the time, a doughty Javed puts a price on his wicket. The odd partners were happy to give Bangladesh something to build on in the Chittagong Test. "We have been playing together for a long time. We know each other and that helps us to do well," said Bashar after the day's play. Bashar scored 75 to with his 62 in the first innings. It was his 11th half-century in 18th Tests. "I always like to play shots. Although after scoring fifty I was thinking of getting a hundred, but I failed to check myself when the short ball came from Pollock," he said adding that it would have been better for his team had he been there for the rest of the day's play. Bashar has only one hundred under his belt. On their way to the record stand

for any wicket, Bashar scored 1174 runs in 36 innings. Javed's 71 in his 11th match helped him to become the fourth Bangladeshi to score more than 500 runs. Al-Shahriar (647) and Aminul Islam (530) were the other members of the 500-club. Javed, who played an extraordinary innings yesterday hitting 13 boundaries, said that he played according to the situation but was unlucky by the way he was out to a short ball from Makhaya Ntini. "It was a good batting pitch and I tried to play the ball according to its merit. But that delivery from Ntini was too fast. I tried to get out of the way, but it brushed my gloves," said Javed. "There is a criticism against me that I don't play shots. Today I have at least disproved that," added Javed who has a career-best 85 not out came against Zimbabwe in April 2001.

and Martin Crowe of New Zealand against Sri Lanka in Wellington in 1990-91. Mudassar Nazar and Javed Minadad scored the second highest partnership of 451 runs for the third wicket against India in Hyderabad (Pakistan) in 1982-83 season. The 429-run partnership was also the ninth 400-plus partnership in the history five-day game.

Rudolph's magnificent double hundred is also the second highest score by a debutant. The young left-hander became only the fifth player in Test cricket to have scored a double century on debut. RE Foster of England scored 287 on debut against Australia in Sydney in December 1903. Besides, Lawrence Rowe of West Indies and Mathew Sinclair of New Zealand scored 214 each on debut against New Zealand and West Indies in 1972 and 1999. Sri Lanka Brandon Kuruppu is the other batsman who scored 201 in his debut against New Zealand in Colombo in 1987. Bangladesh were also not to be denied their chance at making a little history. The second wicket stand of 131 runs between Javed Omar and Habibul Bashar was highest partnership for any wicket. It surpassed the 126-run fifth wicket stand between Mohammad Ashraf and former skipper Aminul Islam during the Colombo Test at the SSC ground in 2002. Besides, Bashar, the only Bangladeshi batsman to have scored more than 1,000 Test runs, also joined his partner as the second player to have hit back-to-back Test half-centuries. He followed up his first innings 60 with 75 on Saturday. Omar achieved the feat with 62 and 85 during the Bulawayo Test in 2001.

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WE COULD'VE SCORED MORE! South Africa heroes Jacques Rudolph (L) and Boeta Dippenaar leave the field after the declaration just before lunch on the third day.

Records come and go

HASAN MASOOD from Chittagong



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PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh half-centurion Javed Omar executes a copybook cover-drive on the third day of the first Test against South Africa at the MA Aziz Stadium at Chittagong yesterday.

Symcox Spins

PATRICK LEONARD SYMCOX, former South African off-spinner and a thinking cricketer, is now in Bangladesh to cover the Proteas' maiden tour to this country as a commentator for Star Sports. Symcox has been kind enough to offer his insight through this exclusive column for the readers of THE DAILY STAR. He will give his expert views on everyday's play in the two-match Test series.

The start of the day saw the familiar figures of Rudolph and Dippenaar start off slowly and settle in once again. One couldn't help but feel pity for some tired fielders who clearly were desperate for a wicket. Again, they never did.

Rudolph and Dippenaar proceeded to break almost every record possible with Rudolph claiming the biggest accolade by not losing his wicket on the way to the second highest score for a debutant in the history of the game. Between them, Dippenaar and Rudolph recorded the highest partnership ever for South Africa and became the new holders of the highest unbroken partnership. It certainly was a morning that kept the statisticians around the world scurrying for more paper!

The declaration came after Rudolph had begun to open up. He had to recover from a terrific blow to the head from a rising delivery from Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza with the new ball. It was a rare moment of success for Bangladesh.

For some reason the South African captain chose to declare with only enough time to bowl four overs before lunch. It was a mystifying decision, as it never left enough time to try anything else other than to bowl two bowlers.

Pollock took the new ball and was a handful from the outset. He took the first wicket. It was very surprising to see the Western Province man, Charl Willoughby take the new ball with the wind blowing across the ground and opposite to the direction that would

allow him to swing the ball into batsmen. Yes he is a swing bowler and needs a decent ball to be able to apply his trade, however, the pitch has uneven bounce and Ntini had to be the man to create doubt in the minds of the Bangladeshi batsmen early on. Once they had settled his effectiveness had dissipated.

Credit has to go to Javed Omar and Bashar for the way they showed courage and plenty of fighting spirit. They attacked the loose ball and defended when necessary. The Proteas then began to show signs of a clear lack of subcontinent conditions. Instead of building pressure by keeping a tight line and length they resorted to trying

B'DESH-S AFRICA SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the GrameenPhone first Test between South Africa and Bangladesh at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong on Saturday: **BANGLADESH:** First innings 173 all out in 65.3 overs (Habibul Bashar 60, Javed Omar 28, Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza 20; Paul Adams 5-37, Allan Dawson 2-37, Makhaya Ntini 2-45) **SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings (overnight 364-2) **R M B 4 6** Graeme Smith c M Salim b T Baishya 16 37 23 1 1 1 Herschelle Gibbs c M Salim b Bin-Mortuza 17 42 29 3 0 0 Jacques Rudolph not out 222 521 383 29 2 2 Boeta Dippenaar not out 178 514 369 25 2 2 Extras: (b-9, lb-5, w-2, nb-21) 37 Total: (For 2 wickets declared in 130.5 overs) 470 Fall of wickets: 1-38 (Smith), 2-41 (Gibbs) Did not bat: Neil McKenzie, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock, Paul Adams, Allan Dawson, Charl Willoughby, Makhaya Ntini

Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza	24	3	108	1	
Khaled Mahmud	17	5	56	0	
Tapas Baishya	23	8	70	1	
Enamul Hoque	33	10	82	0	
Alok Kapali	18.5	2	71	0	
Mohammad Ashraf	8	0	31	0	
Habibul Bashar	7	0	38	0	
BANGLADESH: Second innings	R	M	B	4	6
Javed Omar c M Boucher b M Ntini	71	262	183	13	0
Mehrab Hossain lbw b S Pollock	5	27	20	1	0
Habibul Bashar c M Boucher b S Pollock	75	169	108	13	0
Mohammad Ashraf not out	12	71	1	0	0
Alok Kapali c M Boucher b P Adams	7	25	15	0	0

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(L) President-elect of Bangladesh Football Federation SA Sultan deliberates during the EGM of the federation prior to the polls at the National Sports Council yesterday. (R) Star of yest