

Pride in defeat

Cricket

LENIN GANI AND AL-AMIN

At the end, it was Pakistan who won in Multan. But in hindsight the stage was set for Bangladesh to celebrate their maiden Test victory after 22 defeats and one rain-affected draw.

During the four-day thriller the Tigers with limited yet high-spirited resources dominated their reputed opposition.

However, Pakistan, aided by a fantastic hundred by local boy Inzamamul Haq, turned the match on its head to secure an exciting one-wicket win.

But despite the heart-breaking defeat Khaled Mahmud's men can hold their heads high for what they have achieved after the three-match Test series. Although they lost 3-0, the scoreline did not reflect how close they really fought.

And at the top of it the magnanimous spirit the Tigers showed against all odds made them even prouder in defeat.

Consider the sporting gesture of Mohammad Rafique, who had every opportunity to run Umar Gul out while the tail-ender was out of his crease before the ball was delivered.

But the polite left-arm spinner only warned the silly batsman at a

stage where the fall of another wicket could have taken Bangladesh a step closer to winning their first victory at the 24th attempt.

If that was how the gentleman's game should be played, obviously the message was not relayed to the opposition captain Rashid Latif.

The Pakistan wicketkeeper, who has been preaching honesty since the Pakistan team was caught up in the match-fixing scandals, showed that he was ready to do even insane things to win the match.

On the third day of the Multan Test he shocked millions around the world when he pretended to take a catch behind off Alok Kapali's bat even though he dropped the ball.

This was one of the many instances where not only the Pakistan team but also other elements deceived the naive Bangladeshi cricketers throughout the series.

Right from the first Test in Karachi Bangladesh were the victims of some questionable umpiring decisions. Sri Lankan Ashoka de Silva topped the list of errors, wittingly or unwittingly.

He has been Bangladesh's nightmare since the World Cup match against Kenya. One wonders if his club cricket days in Dhaka had any bearing in his judgement towards Bangladesh.

Already the Aunt Sally of Indian

cricketers, Ashoka has certainly made more foes than friends in Bangladesh with his weird judgements.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. If one delves deeper, then he is sure to be amused at the pitch's change of behaviour overnight. The pitch was producing bounce and swing throughout the third day. But here is the mystery, how did all the life from the pitch be extracted the following day?

The battle was not only fought out in the middle, it was heard in the commentary box when Bangladesh's former opener Athar Ali Khan had to face some outrageous remarks.

His Pakistani counterparts Aamir Sohail and Rameez Raja could hardly be called 'neutral' whenever Bangladesh appeared to have gained the initiative. In an effort to hide their feelings, the pair often poured blame on the umpires.

They even went as far as to say unpleasant words like "Bangladesh are seriously in danger of winning the match."

This is nothing new for the Tigers since they played their first Test in November 2000. Among the host of critics the most outrageous so far has to be David Hookes.

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TURNING POINT: Pakistan's Umar Gul survives a run-out chance on the fourth day of the third and final Test yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Did U Know?

In the 1996 World Cup West Indies bowled out Kenya for 166. Kenya came back to bowl out West Indies for 93, and take home a very memorable victory.



Graeme Smith

(South Africa captain)

"We are a proud and passionate team that play to win at all the time, every time."



What to WATCH

ESPN

Western Union World Football Taped Version at 9:30 am
England vs South Africa
Fifth Test, Day Four
Live at 3:45 pm

STAR Sports

US Open Tennis
Women's Doubles Final
Live at 11:00 pm
&
Men's Singles Final
Live at 2:30 am (Monday)

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 198

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- Who won the Champions Trophy hockey title?
Netherlands Australia Pakistan
- Who clinched the Europa college basketball crown?
Khulna College Westminster Notre Dame
- Bangladesh lost the first Test against Pakistan by:
7 wickets 42 runs 3
- Who became man-of-the-match in the 4th Test between England and South Africa?
Kirsten Ntini Flintoff
- Who won the Spanish Super Cup?
Real Madrid Mallorca Barcelona

Name

Class

School Address

Phone: (if any)

Tendulkar, Sehwag fit for Kiwi series

REUTERS, Bangalore

Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag, who were injured earlier this year, have recovered and will be back in action in a Test series against New Zealand starting next month.

Tendulkar underwent hand surgery in the United States in April and Sehwag was released by his county Leicestershire in July due to a back strain.

"There are no problems at all as far as Sachin is concerned," Indian coach John Wright told reporters after an Indian training camp on Saturday.

"Sehwag has made good progress right through and he's quite confident. There are no issues surrounding these players from the fitness perspective."

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Coach content

Cricket

HASAN MASOOD from Multan

Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore is pleased with the way his charges fought against Pakistan in the third Test although they lost the match by one wicket.

The portly-built Bangladesh coach said this while speaking to reporters after the match at the Multan Cricket Stadium yesterday.

"It was a good platform for future matches for sure. It doesn't matter who you are playing against and I thought the boys worked very hard and showed their top level of commitment and that is what Test cricket requires," Whatmore said.

"The overall picture shows that Bangladesh was on the right track. When you play a game like this, I think, they fought hard enough to get the win but it wasn't to be," he said.

Answering to another question, Whatmore said that he was happy with the way his team performed in the series. But again he thought there was still room for improvement

and hoped his team would come along with those improvements sooner rather than later.

Whatmore pointed out two failures for the defeat. "Firstly, Inzamam played a superb innings. He played such an innings that should be followed by every youngster.

"The other reason was dropping the catch off Shabbir Ahmed and missing the run out chance of Umar Gul at a very crucial moment. We failed to grab those chances. And if you let chances like these go, you are in for trouble."

After being dropped on naught by Hannan Sarkar, Shabbir went on to build a 41-run partnership with Inzamam while Gul shared a 52-run stand after surviving the run out chance. At that point Gul was yet to open his account.

When asked whether team was frustrated after the defeat, the coach said they could be.

"But you have to go through these things to learn, to understand and to get better. To get better as players and to get better as a coach and selector as well," he said.

He also said that this series would help his team to play good

cricket in Bangladesh's home series against England but again they should not be carried away with that.

"Well, England is not an easy side either. Last time they toured this subcontinent, they beat Sri Lanka 2-1. So, I wouldn't be carried away with things from this series and take England lightly."

He however declined to comment on Rashid Latif's controversial catch saying he was under a code of conduct.

But when asked by Mohammad Rafique's sportsmanship, Whatmore boldly supported his left-arm spinner and said his team would never follow Vinu Mankad (former India Test cricketer) to win a match. When the home team was on 212 for eight, Rafique found Gul well out of his crease. Instead of running the tail-ender out, the bowler showed highest level of sportsmanship and asked to get back to the crease.

"Yes, that could have turned the match in our favour but again we don't want to do this. That is not the spirit of the game," he added.

Captain Khaled Mahmud, on the

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Ruling on Latif's catch today

SPORTS REPORTER from Multan

A hearing on Pakistan captain Rashid Latif's controversial catch on Friday was held in Multan yesterday evening with match referee Mike Procter of South Africa in the chair.

Procter summoned the wicketkeeper to answer questions about the catch which saw the back of all-rounder Alok Kapali following an official protest from Bangladesh team on that day.

The protest letter, undersigned by manager Icol MA Latif (retired), stated that the Pakistan captain had breached the Law C-1 and C-2 of Rules of Conduct (Offences and Penalties) of ICC Official Playing Regulation.

The C-1 section states that the players and officials shall at no time engage in conducts unbecoming of their status which could bring the game into disrepute while C-2 says that the players of the teams shall at all the time conduct play with the spirit of the game as well as within the laws of the game and the captains are responsible at all time for ensuring that is adhered to.

A half-an-hour hearing was held in presence of the captain, coach and manager of both the teams. Umpires Ashoka de Silva, Russell Tiffin and Aleem Dar were also present.

The match referee's verdict is expected today at 1:15pm Bangladesh time.

If Rashid is found guilty on both the charges, he might face a punishment ranging from a ban of five Tests/ten ODIs up to life.

PAKISTAN DIARY

HASSAN MASOOD from Multan

Mohammad Rafique completed a personal milestone by becoming the joint highest wicket taker with Pakistan right-arm fast medium bowler Shabbir Ahmed.

Both Rafique and Shabbir took 17 wickets each in the three-match Test series.

But credit goes to Rafique because it was the first time a Bangladeshi bowler emerged as a leading wicket-taking bowler in an away series.

Rafique took five wickets in the Karachi Test (3-76 and 2-61). He also finished with another five-wicket haul (5-118 and 0-34) in the second Test at Peshawar. The slow left-arm bowler reached even higher in the final Test at Multan taking seven wickets (5-36 and 2-80).

Rafique now needs one more wicket to equal left-arm paceman Monjurul Islam as Bangladesh's highest wicket taker in Tests.

Monjurul with his two wickets in the Multan increased his tally to 27. Rafique apart, premier Bangladesh batsman Habibul Bashar also became the highest run-getter in the series. The dashing right-hander amassed 379 runs with a hundred and three fifties.

He scores in six innings were 71, 108, 95, 28, 72 and 3.

It could have easily earned Bashar the man-of-the-series award. But strangely so such award was on offer by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

FANTASTIC FIELDER Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza likes to contribute to the team even if he is

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Inzy's best ever knock

Cricket

AFP, Multan

Inzamamul Haq, who on Saturday guided Pakistan to a one-wicket Test win for the second time in his career, said his unbeaten 138 against Bangladesh was the best innings he has played.

"I think playing an innings like this in a pressure-cooker situation is great and I term this as the best of my career," said Inzamam.

Inzamam, who hails from Multan and has been playing Test cricket for 11 years, batted magnificently for his 138 to grasp victory from the jaws of defeat in his home town.

Pakistan's one-wicket win was their second ever and only the 10th

in Test history. The victory, on the fourth day of play, had looked unlikely when the hosts, chasing a 261-run deficit, slumped to 99-5 on Day Three.

"To say that I was under pressure is an understatement. The pressure of being senior, the pressure of home town and the pressure of leading the side to win all had combined but I am happy that I delivered the results."

The batsman, who took part in a last-wicket stand to thwart Australia in 1994-95, said he was confident of victory after the third day's play.

"We were 148-6 and the match was 50-50 and I was recalling the match that we won against Australia in Karachi in 1994-95," he said.

Pakistan then reached their highest target of 314 through a last-wicket stand of 57, with Inzamam hitting an unbeaten 58 and Mushtaq Ahmed 20 not out.

Inzamam was recalled for this series after being sidelined for four months following his failure in this year's World Cup.

The 33-year-old was the top of the flops in the February-March World Cup in southern Africa as he managed just 19 runs in six matches.

"After that horrible World Cup I was so disappointed, lost my place and even before this series I was so disheartened. This knock has rejuvenated me and career," said Inzamam, who posted his 18th Test hundred in his 88th Test.

Many had written Inzamam's career off after the World Cup debacle but the batsman said he had a good few years in him yet.

"Now I hope to play for another four years and hope I contribute in team's future wins as well," he said.

The Pakistani batsman also praised Bangladesh, who have yet to win in 24 Test matches, for their fighting display during the match.

"They have shown remarkable fighting qualities and proved that a Test win is not far from them," he said.



PHOTO: AFP

INZAMAMUL HULK: The Pakistan batting mainstay shapes up for a cut shot yesterday. His unbeaten 138 won the hosts the third Test.

All-Belgian final



AFP, New York

Justine Henin-Hardenne fought her way into an all-Belgian US Open women's final against Kim Clijsters -- provided she can find the strength to play after a grueling Grand Slam semifinal triumph.

The French Open champion rallied from the brink of defeat to oust US sixth seed Jennifer Capriati 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) here Friday, booking a title match spot here Saturday against world number one Clijsters.

Her epic match lasted three hours and three minutes, exactly two hours more than Clijsters needed to dispatch US third seed Lindsay Davenport 6-2, 6-3.

Henin-Hardenne suffered left leg cramps late in the third set but shrugged off the pain and taunts from a Capriati-backing crowd to win. The second seed reflected after the match that she should have called for aid from a trainer.

"I did a big mistake because I needed the trainer," Henin-Hardenne said. "I think it's the last time I make this kind of mistake. I made a big mistake for sure."

Henin-Hardenne received intravenous fluids to treat her dehydration and was to be examined Saturday before facing Clijsters.

"I'm so tired," Henin-Hardenne said. "I gave everything I had. I was cramping on my serve. I just did my best. It was very close. I don't think much about the final right now. I think I'll have a good rest."

Clijsters is the only world number one without a Grand Slam title, a

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KIM CLIJSTERS

JUSTINE HENIN-HARDENNE

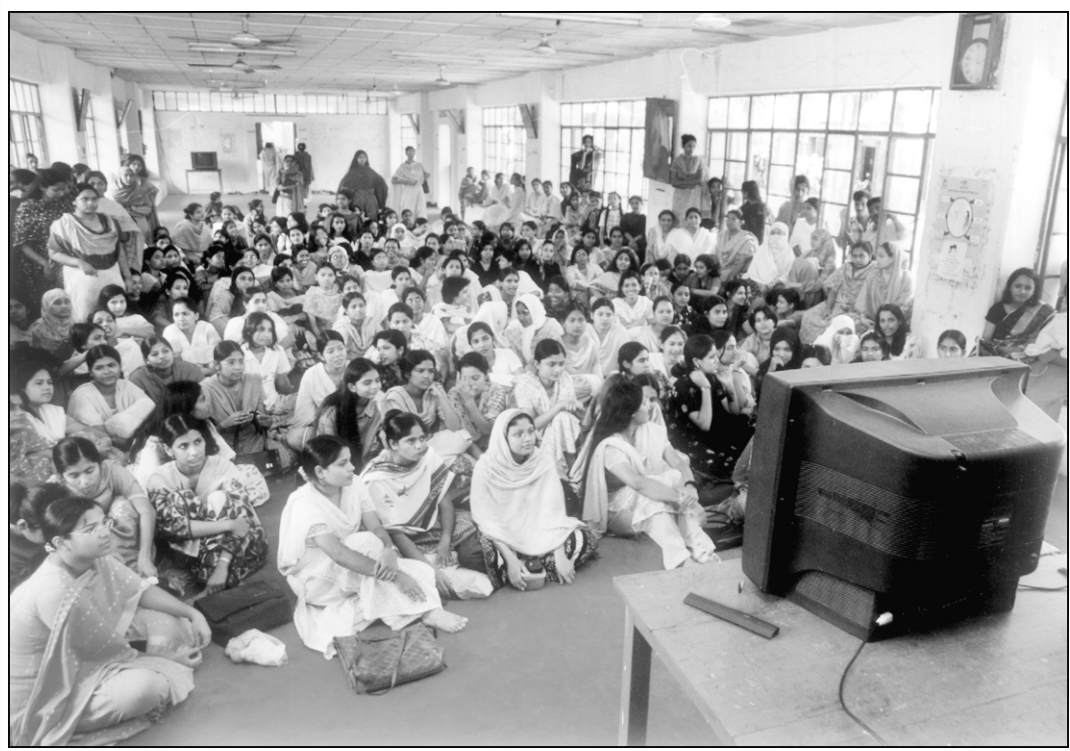


PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PUTTING STUDIES ASIDE: Students of Rokeya Hall of the Dhaka University watch every ball on the fourth day of the Multan Test yesterday.