



West Indies players celebrate the dismissal of England opener Dom Sibley on the first morning of the third and deciding Test at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday. Having won the toss, West Indies decided to bowl and reduced the hosts to two for 66 at lunch. PHOTO: REUTERS

The long road to Sanjida's success

While much fandom surrounds Bangladesh's male cricketers, the story is not the same for women cricketers who have nevertheless been growing in stature on the international arena. Since the halt in cricketing activities, The Daily Star has been talking to women cricketers to learn stories of their early days. In today's instalment, we talk to right-handed batter Sanjida Islam, who represented Bangladesh in four world cups since her debut in 2012.

MOSTAFA SHABUI



For most people, sport is mere entertainment during their early age. It may later turn into a profession, but that usually depends on a lot of factors. However, for Bangladesh batter Sanjida Islam, even during her childhood, sport was more a necessity than a form of entertainment.

Unlike most students, Sanjida could only make it into high school because of her interest in sports. "Since childhood, I was a very mischievous girl who always used to go out and play. I somehow managed to cross primary school. But to enter high school required money for admission and other necessities which my family could not afford. But fortunately, we came to know about a girls' school in our locality which allowed girls who would play regularly to study for free. I joined that school and started by playing volleyball and handball," said the now 24-year-old.

It is a very common scenario in our country to see girls being discouraged by their families to pursue a career in sport but although Sanjida had her family's support, the thing she lacked was the financial capability to help her in her pursuit.

"When I was in sixth grade, we came to know that the BKSP was trying to form a women's cricket team. My father had to toil

hard to arrange the money that I needed to go for a trial at BKSP in Dhaka. I went to the trial and eventually got selected," reminisced Sanjida.

But still, Sanjida's days of hardship were far from over. Sanjida and her family, who had returned from Dhaka with high hopes, saw their dreams shatter when they finally received long-awaited letter from the BKSP.

"My family and I were eagerly waiting for the letter from BKSP after returning from Dhaka. But our hopes dimmed after not receiving a letter for several days. However, suddenly one day the most awaited letter came to our address but what we found out after reading the 26- or 27-page letter would only shatter all our hopes.

"We came to know that it would require Tk 5000 and a lot of other things including school dress, sports jerseys, sports equipment in order to get admitted to the BKSP. But my father did not give up. He went from door to door with the BKSP's letter and was able to gather the fund I required," recalled Sanjida.

Sanjida's life has turned around since then. Known as a T20 specialist, Sanjida has now represented Bangladesh Women's team in 54 T20Is and 16 ODIs till date. However, the right-hander's only regret is that her father, for whom she has made it this far, could not live to witness the success of her daughter.

'If we respect one another, these things do not matter'

AFP, London

Almost half a century on from when cricket legends Ian Botham and Viv Richards made their county debut for Somerset their bond is as strong as ever, they explained in media interviews on Friday.

England all-rounder Botham, 64, earned the respect and eternal friendship of 68-year-old West Indies batsman Richards for never turning his back on him even when the Englishman received hate mail during the halcyon days at the county.

Their bond has been recognised with the announcement that future Test series between England and the West Indies will be called the Richards-Botham Trophy.

Between them they made a combined 223 Test appearances, totalled 13,740 runs and 415 wickets.

"What I can say to Ian? I can thank him so much for being in my



corner," Richards told Sky Sports. "We just represented what I think people should be representing: that we're all human beings, and that's the most important thing."

Botham and Richards in their prime were targeted by South Africa to persuade them to go on rebel tours during the time when sporting links were cut due to the apartheid regime.

Both declined but other England stars did go whilst the West Indies also toured there.

"The thing that finally finished me with all that was when they turned round to Viv and said: 'We'll make you an honorary white man.' I said: 'Hang on, where's this going?'" Botham told the Daily Mail in a joint interview. "He's black and he's proud and magnificent

and a great guy. "He doesn't want to be an honorary white man any more than I want to be an honorary black man."

Richards agreed with Botham over his statement that all lives matter. The pair stressed that it was not a rejection of the Black Lives Matter movement which was born out of the death of unarmed African-American man George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of police officers in May.

"I most certainly agree with Ian when he says all lives matter," said Richards. "It's been highlighted now because of the events we've seen played out in America -- this hate towards our colour."

"If we have respect for one another, these things wouldn't come into the equation. Look at Covid. We are not in control. This warfare is hitting everyone -- not just black or white, but every race and every country on earth. We should all just sit back and reflect on where we'd like to be."



Cristiano Ronaldo leaves the pitch dejected after Juventus were handed a 2-1 defeat by Udinese on Thursday. (Inset) Lazio's Ciro Immobile celebrates his winning goal against Cagliari. The Lazio striker leads Ronaldo by one goal in Serie A's top-scorer's race.

Immobile drives Lazio as Juventus made to wait

AFP, Milan

Seko Fofana scored the winner as Juventus fell to a shock 2-1 defeat at struggling Udinese on Thursday to miss the chance to seal the Serie A title for the ninth time in a row.

Dutch defender Matthijs de Ligt had put the defending champions ahead three minutes before the break in Udine. But a diving Ilija Nestorovski header seven minutes after the interval got Udinese level, with Fofana completing a comeback in injury time.

Juventus remain six points ahead of second-placed Atalanta with three games left to play, and have another

chance to seal the title for the 36th time on the pitch at home against 14th-placed Sampdoria on Sunday.

"We paid for a lack of order after a good first half because we wanted to win at all costs," said Sarri.

"In this way we took the game to a dangerous level, and after the 90th minute, we lost it."

Juventus's performance against the minnows was worrying ahead of their crunch Champions League last 16 game against Lyon on August 7.

"At the moment I am not thinking about the Champions League, in my mind there is only Sampdoria," added Sarri.

The three points were precious for Udinese, who move up to 15th, seven points clear of the relegation zone.

"Juventus wanted to win the championship, but we had a great game," said Fofana.

Lazio came from a goal down to defeat Cagliari 2-1 to move to within a point of third-placed Inter Milan.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic got Lazio back into the game just after the break with Ciro Immobile connecting with a Luis Alberto cross for the winner after an hour in Sardinia.

It was Immobile's 31st goal this season and moves the Italian back ahead of Ronaldo in the battle for the top Serie A scorer this season.

Simone Inzaghi's side ended their five-match winless run with a victory which leaves them with a slim chance of winning the title, as they sit eight points behind Juventus.

FOOTGOLF gaining a foothold

AFP, Shah Alam

Her eyes fixed on the flag in the distance, Jamiatul Akmal Abdul Jabar takes a run-up past her cheering friends and kicks a football down a golf course in Malaysia.

This is "footgolf", a novel fusion of two of popular sports that is growing fast and attracting people to the fairways. It follows the rules of golf, but players leave their clubs at home and instead tee off with their feet try to complete each hole in as few kicks as possible.

Jamiatul was having a go at the sport with her friends on a converted course with 21-inch holes outside the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. The 38-year-old said she had considered golf "such a boring game" but was rather taken by footgolf.

"You feel that this is something new, something to experience," Jamiatul, an avid futsal player, told AFP. "I'm planning to book another (session)."

Thousands of players are now kicking balls on footgolf courses in about 36 countries, and the sport has been governed by an international federation since 2012.

Several World Cups have been staged, although the 2020 edition originally due to take place in Japan has been postponed to next year due to the coronavirus.

The sport's origins aren't clear, but one of the earliest recorded tournaments was in the Netherlands in 2008.

In Malaysia, people started playing footgolf in 2018 at the Bukit Jelutong

course outside the capital Kuala Lumpur, which had been abandoned but was given a makeover by Footgolf Malaysia.

Jeffrey Cottam, who co-founded the organisation, said initial attempts to start the sport were resisted by course owners who balked at the idea of letting footballers onto their greens.

But he finally managed to set up at Bukit Jelutong, and the company now manages two footgolf courses in Malaysia -- the second is in the southern state of Johor -- with a third on the way.

More than 2,000 people play each month in Malaysia, Cottam said.

"Footgolf, like golf, isn't about strength and how young you are," he told AFP. "It's more technical... It's not about beating people. It's about beating the course."

He also hoped the growing popularity of the sport could give some help to ailing courses. Golf has fallen out of favour in many countries, with young people largely uninterested and few having the time to spend a whole day playing the sport, leading to many courses closing.

But footgolf is giving them some much-needed revenue -- in the US, for instance, the sport is now played on more than 500 courses.

Danny Chia, a Malaysian professional golfer who plays on the Asian Tour, also said footgolf might help courses.

"There are a lot of golf courses out there that are not doing very well," he told AFP. "This could be a new avenue for them."

This picture taken on June 21, 2020 shows Sabrina Joan (L) smiling after her "foot-putt" went into the hole on a footgolf course in Shah Alam, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

PHOTO: AFP



Henderson voted best in England

REUTERS

Liverpool's Premier League title winning captain Jordan Henderson was named England's Footballer of the Year on Friday in the annual vote of the Football Writers' Association (FWA).

Manchester City's Kevin De Bruyne, Manchester United's Marcus Rashford and Liverpool pair Virgil van Dijk and Sadio Mane made up the rest of the top five.

Henderson has been central to Liverpool's success under Juergen Klopp through his leadership and tireless midfield work.



"As grateful as I am I don't feel like I can accept this on my own. I don't feel like anything I've achieved this season or in fact during my whole career has been done on my own," the 30-year-old said.

"I owe a lot to so many different people -- but none more so than my current teammates -- who have just been incredible and deserve this every bit as much as I do," he said.

Henderson has played in 30 of Liverpool's league matches so far this season and scored four goals.

Two other Liverpool players -- right back Trent Alexander-Arnold and goalkeeper Alisson Becker -- also received votes.