

DHAKA TUESDAY OCTOBER 19, 2004

COACH: DAV WHATMORE

Know the Tigers

AL MUSABBIR SADI

In 16 months Day Whatmore has travelled a lot with the Bangladesh team. He has rarely had the time to see his boys play at home. A year after the England series, the Tigers are back on familiar territory. How well Whatmore has prepared for his second home series is the big question, especially after two poor one-day tournaments in Sri Lanka and Eng-

Things have not gone right for the Australian-born Sri Lankan recently but he managed to bring the fire out of the Tigers in Australia, Pakistan and the West Indies. He always said that the graph of performance will never go up in a straight line but it will be on track after a few dips.

Sharing his views about the coming series against the New Zealanders, the 50-year-old said that his boys are prepared to push the opposition hard especially in the Test series. "Preparation has been as good as it could have been. We've had interruptions due to rain but we managed to merge different sessions to accommodate that. The thing we've done a little differently this time is allowing more batting time to players. We also got to use the centre wicket that was very good," Whatmore said.

"Some of the boys got valuable match practice during the three-day match at BKSP, so we are hopeful that we can put up a good fight against New Zealand." when asked about the lack of match practice ahead of the two Tests and three one-dayers.

Whatmore had to train the side without a trainer following Justin Cordy's departure. "It's not easy when you have a valuable member of staff leaving. But he had a long talk with me and has left a programme which John (Gloster) and I tried to implement." It was important to erase memories of the Asia Cup and the

ICC Champions Trophy failures before the series but Whatmore admits that it's going to be a totally different game. "This is the longer different game. game and we've had some encouraging results. It's been 12 months since we've played at home and the boys are pretty glad to play at home. This will be my second series at home and in conditions you are more used to than you are abroad. The boys are looking forward to

doing well. Talking about his limited spin options, Whatmore said that he has a very good weapon in Mohammad Rafique. "Rafique has been supported well by Enamul Haque. But Enam is unavailable for the series due to a knee problem. In his absence, I think our options are really limited but only

for this particular game.' Showing his respect to the Black Caps, the Bangladesh coach said that

they were a very disciplined side. They have got some batsman who can play for a long time and Fleming is one of them. I think Richardson is also another one and Styris is a good player. Oram has been probably the most improved all-rounder, particularly with the bat. Their spinners are disciplined and Vettori is really good. They have showed discipline in the three-day match and I think our batsmen will be tested as you would expect in Test match." Whatmore, who believes that the Tigers have to hit form to be competitive, reminded that Bangladesh looked good against

England in their last Test at home. (Against England) we had a lead in the second innings with four or five wickets in hand but unfortunately we collapsed badly and just left them a handful of runs to get to win the match That was a reasonable effort when you consider that the very first day we won the toss and batted just one over and we had to come and bat 20 minutes before the end of first day which was a bit unusual. And we lost a few wickets. Without that, we would have been in a better position. We will focus more on the positives, enjoy the

game, relax and do well," he said. When asked whether they would be able to carry from where they left off in the West Indies, Whatmore recalled that the wicket at St Lucia was a good and very flat wicket.

"Given those conditions we have shown that we can bat even against a pretty good attack and we are able to bat for more than one day. That's the objective when we bat and we want to continue that. I think the groundsmen here will be providing us good wickets in Dhaka and Chittagong

"We all are working very hard to reverse the recent trend. Oppositions have been very good no question about that but in certain periods of games we let ourselves down. We are aware of that. And we are working hard to overcome that and I reassure everybody in the country that we are on the right track. We are going to show everyone that we are improving.'

There has been talk of reducing matches for teams like Zimbabwe and Bangladesh and recently, the team management and the players were warned by the Board to lift their game But Whatmore was not concerned about any pressure on the cricketers because of it.

"We are mindful of administration and administrative discussions. But my players are focusing on one thing and that is New Zealand," he concluded.



Habibul **Bashar**

A natural strokemaker who is always batting at 60 mph no matter what the situation is. His technique is not a perfectionists' delight but extremely effective as his records show. The pull and hook are his bread and butter shots and his compulsive addiction to those strokes mean he'll get out going after the short ball every now and then. But he is the Tigers' Tendulkar and a pivotal figure in the line-up. Yet to score a Test hundred at home, a record he is desperate to erase. Born: 17 August 1972, Nagakanda, Kushtia RHB/OB

Test Debut: Bangladesh v India at Dhaka, Only Test, 2000/01 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004

TEST STATS M I NO Runs HS Ave SR 10050 Ct St



Javed Omar

An old-fashioned opener more intent on occupying the crease. Can be a pain for the opposition with his dogged resistance. Made a memorable Test debut when he carried his bat for 85 not out, only the third player in history to do so in his first match, against Zimbabwe in 2000/01

Born: 25 November 1976, Dhaka RHB/I B

Test Debut: Bangladesh v Zimbabwe at Bulawayo, 1st Test, 2000/01 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004

TEST STATS NO Runs HS Ave SR 10050 Ct St 1 932 11922.73 34.55 1 4

10 SR Econ 0 - 12.00 Ave BBI 5



against Pakistan last year. Not the most talented individual but an honest hard worker. A grafter and the perfect man for holding the innings together in a notoriously brittle batting order. Strong on the off side. Came in with a reputation of being a brilliant fielder but standards have dropped alarmingly in recent times

Born: 20 November 1983, Sylhet, Bangladesh RHB/OB Test Debut: Bangladesh v Pakistan at Karachi, 1st Test, 2003 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica.

2nd Test, 2004 NO Runs HS Ave SR 100 50 Ct St 9 17 0 472 60 27.76 35.64 0 2

7 0 O M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 344 97 1 97.00 1-9 0 0 204.0

fifties against the mighty Australians on a green-top in Cairns last year. A forgettable tour of the West Indies where he hecame the hunny of Pedro Collins, kept him out of the fold for a while. But he has been recalled as Bangladesh look for a consistent opening pair. A good leaver of the ball. Shuffling towards the off leaving his leg-stump exposed has brought about his doom on more than one occasion. He claims to have tightened up his technique in that area

Hannan

Sarkar

Born: 1 December 1982, Dhaka RHB/RM Test Debut: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at Colombo (PSS), 1st Test, 2002 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at

Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004

I NO Runs HS Ave SR 100 50Ct 16 31 0 661 76 21.32 47.18 0 5



Prodigiously talented. Can make batting look like a walk in the park. On September 8, 2001, at the Sinhalese Sports Club in Colombo, he became the youngest batsman to make a Test century against Muralitharan and Co a day before his 17th birthday. The boy wonder has not lived up to that sensational standards but recent signs are that he is finding his way back. A free strokemaker with every shot in the book but his on drives are out of this world. Born: 9 September 1984, Dhaka RHB/LB

Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004

NO Runs HS Ave SR 10050 Ct St 19 37 1 798 114 22.16 39.40 1 3 0

0 M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 102.25 466 5 93.20 2-42 0 0 122.8 4.55



Probably the most gifted in terms of talent but hasn't transferred that promise on to the playing field as yet. Impeccable timing and quick-silver reflexes are his main virtues. Can play all the shots but he is impulsive and gets himself out rather than the bowler getting him out. Hasn't played a Test in a year due to his erratic form but never far from the mind of the selectors for the potential he possesses. Was regarded more as a leg-spinner when he started off. Infact against Pakistan in August 2003, became the first Bangladeshi bowler to take Born: 1 January 1984, Sylhet, Bangladesh

Test Debut: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at Colombo (SSC), 2nd Test, 2002 Latest Test: Bangladesh v England at Chittagong, 2nd Test, 2003/04

M I NORuns HS Ave SR 10050 Ct St

14 28 1 519 85 19.22 50.73 0 2 4 0

O M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 175.5 15 674 6 112.33 3-3 0 0 175.8 3.83



Short for a paceman but muscular. Bowls from an angle and predominantly and inswinger Born: 10 January 1981, Nababganj, Dhaka RM/RHB

Latest Test: Bangladesh y Zimbabwe at Bulawayo, 2nd Test, 2003/04



Mashud

Probably the most important member of the side apart from Bashar. Always there when the chips are down. Chirpy, witty but fighter to core. Knows his limitations as a batsman and that makes him a hard nut to crack. Often comes in with half the side back in the pavilion and launches the inevitable rescue act. One of the best wicketkeepers around. A former captain.

Born: 8 February 1976, Rajshahi RHB/WK

Test Debut: Bangladesh v India at Dhaka, Only Test, 2000/01 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004 TEST STATS NORuns HS Ave SR10050

27516 873103* 19.40 33.08 1 2 48 5



Rahman

Closest thing to a genuine all-rounder in the Tigers line-up. Swings the ball both ways at medium pace and can be a handful in useful conditions. Bats in the middle or late-order according to the demands of the team and with an efficient batting technique, can be trusted to contribute.

Born: 1 January 1980, Rajshahi RHB/RM

Test Debut: Bangladesh v Zimbabwe at Bulawayo, 1st Test, 2000/01 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004

M I NO Runs HS Ave SR 10050 Ct St 15 2 191 46* 14.69 28.29 0 0

O M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 188.340 65111 59.184-65 0 0 102.8 3.45



The most successful bowler for Bangladesh in Test cricket Bowls an impeccable line and very hard to get away a. Packs a mean arm-ball which gets him a lot of wickets. Had the reputation of a 'Mad Max' in batting but showed every signs of a genuine allrounder in May 2004 when he notched up an amazing 111 coming in at number 9, against the West Indies

est Debut: Bangladesh v India at Dhaka, Only Test, Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies, at Jamaica

I NO Runs HS Ave SR 10050 Ct St 23 4 375 11119.73 55.97 1 0 O M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 566.5 127 1454 46 31 60 6-77 30 73.9 2.56



In the injury-absence of the more glamorous Mashrafee-bin Mortuza and Talha Jubair, Tapash Baisya has emerged as the Tigers' premier quick bowler. An honest, hard working paceman, Baisya can be deceptively quick despite his moderate physique. Aggressive and at the batsman all the time Born: 25 December 1982, Sylhet, Bangladesh

Debut: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at Colombo Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd

M I NO Runs HS Ave SR 100 50 Ct St 15 29 5 251 52* 10.45 42.97 0 1 4 0



a whippy action. His bowling is more suited for the oneday version but can be used as a defensive bowler in Test match situations. Can bat and gets away with murder! He is that lucky when it comes to batting. Nevertheless, makes a valuable contribution at every position.

Born: 4 May 1984, Khulna

Test Debut: Bangladesh v Zimbabwe at Harare, 1st Test, Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd

I NO Runs HS Ave SR 100 50 Ct St 5 1 147 39 36.75 35.00 0 0 O M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 54.2 6 199 2 99.50 2-40 0 0 163.0



Steady seam howler who can swing the ball. The in-cutter is his stock Born: 4 September 1983, Chittagong RM/RHB Test Debut: Bangladesh v West Indies

at Gros Islet, 1st Test, 2004 Latest Test: Bangladesh v West Indies at Jamaica, 2nd Test, 2004 I NO Runs HS Ave SR 100 50 Ct St 4 4 22 10* - 18.64 0 0 1

O M R W Ave BE 48 6 202 1 202.00 288.0 4.20 BBI 5 10 SR Econ



Nafees Iqbal

Already played four ODIs for the Tigers but no Tests. That could all change over the next few weeks. Comes in with a mighty reputation not just for being the nephew of the big man from Chittagong and former Bangladesh captain Akram Khan, but also for the promise and class he has displayed in every step of his development as a batsman. Just 19 but has already played in two Under 19 World Cups. A crowdpleaser who is not shy of going for it if the ball is there to be hit. Born: 31 January 1985, Chittagong

TEST STATS Yet to appear in Tests



M R W Ave BBI 5 10 SR Econ 3 6 221 0 - - 0 0 -43.3 6 221



Test Debut: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at Colombo (PSS) 1st Test 2002

NO Runs HS Ave SR 100 50 4 2.00 9.30 0 0

Time to show character

FROM PAGE 13 There are just a couple of prob-

lems in that theory though. Habibul Bashar, the man

who showed the way with a breathtaking hundred in St. Lucia will not be there, not at least for the opening Test and history is not that favourable either and the Tigers batters will know that the last time they went past 300 in an innings at home (400 against India) was in their first ever Test four years

Also the Windies did not have someone with the guile of a Daniel Vettori under their disposal in that encounter. He had started licking his lips from the moment he boarded the plane to Dhaka.

Another challenge will be

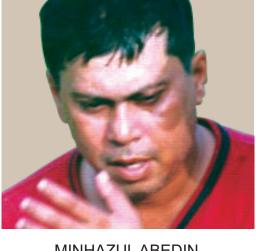
containing the free-stroking genius of the likes of Stephen Fleming and Nathan Astle, no mean task for the best of bowlers. This is one area where prediction is illogical. Bangladesh 's present bowling line-up could be stripped bare or can do a reasonable containing job. It will take something out of the ordinary to bowl the Black Caps out twice.

The Bashar factor is crucial nd someone else has to stand up and take the same initiative he alone had been taking so far. The target for those who will take the field for the home team today should be to put their hands up and be counted and what better place to do that than at the BNS.

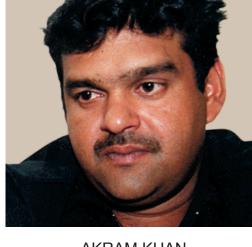
EX-SKIPPERS SPEAK



GAZI ASHRAF HOSSAIN



MINHAZUL ABEDIN







lead the team by example against the Kiwis. "He is our main batsman Bashar should play sensibly to set example for his colleagues. I'm

AMINUL ISLAM

One of the best batsmen in the country and who now plays his

perform against a relatively weak bowling attack. "Bangladesh is playing in their a very good summer in England They should grab the chance to make some kind of defence to the

"I think it is a matter of time before they show their mettle in the

is not right. We are only nursing 15-



NAIMUR RAHMAN

ing skipper," he said.

series.

ance. I think captaincy is a very

important aspect, especially for

Bangladesh, Look at New Zea-

land's Stephen Fleming who has

done a great job to improve his

team's performances since becom-

Naimur suggested that it would

be unwise to adopt an excessively

cautious approach during the

"We should play our natural

certain targets in each session. If

we have control of a session, we

should dominate. I request the

batsmen to check their shots.'

game and concentrate on achieving

BISHWAJIT ROY

These days there are a lot of whisperings regarding Bangla desh's ability to compete at the highest level of the game. The newest member of the Test club has played five home series since the year 2000 but none is more significant than the October-November series featuring Stephen Fleming's New Zealand. It is part of a hectic schedule for Bangladesh as they play host to India in December before Zimbabwe's arrival in January 2005.

reduction in the number of Tests Bangladesh plays in the future, former national captains Gazi Ashraf Hossain, Minhazul Abedin, Akram Khan, Aminul Islam and Naimur Rahman

Amidst growing calls for a

believe the only way to counter the negative campaign is by improved performances on the field.

All the ex-captains admit the task is not beyond the Tigers but the players will have to demonstrate the same kind of qualities they displayed in Australia, Pakistan and West Indies then all will

be forgotten. Ahead of the opening Test against New Zealand the five stalwarts shared their thoughts. **GAZI ASHRAF HOSSAIN** The former national skipper wanted

a cautious approach from the home

Zealand team during the two Tests

tion as manager in Bangladesh's

side to survive against the New

see the team in extensive batting and three one-day internationals. sessions before this series," he "We are not in a position to think about winning. We should concentrate on taking the match into the MINHAZUL ABEDIN fifth day by batting longer. I request all our batsmen to check their shots to survive in the early stages." said Gazi Ashraf. The 44-year-old former cricketer, who had a great contribu-

ICC Trophy triumph, however, branded the team 'too young' "I have little doubt about the potential of our young players but you know, experience is a key factor in international cricket. Yes, they might have played 20 or 25 Tests but most of them still have the mental strength of an under-19

player," he pointed out. The captain of Bangladesh's inaugural one-day internationalmatch against Pakistan

in 1986 said that he had hardly noticed any improvement in the team's batting under the supervision of Australian coach Dav Whatmore. "I think the boys are trying to be

> Bangladesh's 1999 World Cup hero did not expect too much from the present team but believed that the home side would be able to fight against the formidable New Zealand team if only they could stop from playing one too many adventurous

good students but not good cricket-

ers. He gives too much emphasis

on fitness but finally, I'm happy to

shot. "Of course we are capable to compete on the international stage but the present team needs some time to make their mark. Presently we lack quality players to play in the big tournaments but there are some talented players for the future," said Minhazul, arguably the finest batsman of the country

The 39-year old cricketer, whose only regret was not to play Test

cricket, said that there is hardly any room to perform in the international arena without playing adequate cricket in domestic competitions. "The young cricketers don't know

play ambitious shots. I would advise them to show more patience in the series. Although we are only talking about our batting, I think our bowling is not up to the mark also," said the cool customer with the willow. "It is very painful that a potential batsman like Alok Kapali cannot perform. He is a gifted cricketer and In suggest that he bats at number

how to build an innings. I can't

understand why they always try to

such players," he added. Minhazul thought that Whatmore was yet to justify his reputation as a high-profile coach. "Can you give me one example of any batsman improving his skills under his supervision? The time has now come to monitor his performances for the

six consistently. I think Whatmore is

also responsible for the failure of

sake of the country's cricket," he AKRAM KHAN "Yes. we are vet to win a Test

although we have already played 30 matches. But we are not done too badly in the longer-version if you consider Bangladesh's away performances. Actually we are struggling in one-day competitions," said the big man from Chittagong.

The 37-year-old batsman, who

captained the victorious Bangla-

desh team in the 1997 ICC Trophy

in Malaysia that payed the way for

Bangladesh's Test status, said that current top-order is the home side's main worry "Actually it is a very inexperienced side. The tendency to play excessive shots is the main reason behind their regular batting failures. It might be a competitive series if our batsmen can check their shots," said Akram. The experienced crick-

raised questions about commitment of the players. "It is absolutely unfair to start questioning players' commitment when they are struggling. As a player I know everybody tries to give hundred per cent when playing for the country," said Akram.

The dashing batsman also thinks

that captain Habibul Bashar should

eter criticised the persons who have

hopeful that the boys will come back in the series and thus putting behind their dismal showing in the Asia Cup and ICC Champions Trophy," Akram hoped. AMINUL ISLAM

cricket in Australia said that the New

Zealand series was definitely an

opportunity for Bangladesh to

backyard. New Zealand didn't have ICC," said the player who scored a century in Bangladesh's Inaugural

international cricket. But the fact is way we are preparing our players

20 players. Australian batsman Michael Clarke has been playing limited-overs cricket for the last twoand-a-half years and he had to wait that long to get into the Test team. On the other hand, our players get into the Test team straight from high school," he explained. "The first five batsmen need

technique," he added. **NAIMUR RAHMAN** The all-rounder who led Bangladesh in the historic Inaugural Test match against India said that he was surprised at the fuss over Bangladesh's Test status.

more experience, maturity and

"Yes, we are not performing well in recent times but our overall record as a newcomer is not too bad if you consider other teams like New Zealand and Sri Lanka,' said the 30-year-old former cap-

Naimur firmly believed that it was possible to play better cricket against New Zealand with the current bunch of young players "We need proper planning to fight all the way. There are some

really talented cricketers in the

He expressed his satisfaction over the Bangladesh team's preparation for the series. "I'm happy that finally the think-

tank has come to realise that just fitness training is not enough. This time batsmen took part in longer sessions which will help them to correct their mistakes," : he added.