

Full of Ashraful

Cricket

AL-AMIN from Trent Bridge

The July 2005 edition of the Wisden Cricketer magazine published a list of the scariest batsmen in contemporary cricket based on the opinion of the top 26 bowlers. England fast bowler Steve Harmison said that Australian wicket-keeper batsman Adam Gilchrist and West Indies' Brian Lara were the most difficult batsmen for him.

But had the opinion been sought after the Bangladesh-England NatWest series match at Trent Bridge on Tuesday, the Durham and England fast bowler might have been tempted to put another name in after what Mohammad Ashraful did to him.

Harmison, one of the feared bowlers, came to the Trent Bridge match with a deserving 5-35 in 10 overs against Australia in the previous game. And there was every reason to believe that it would be a walk on the park for him when he came to bowl as first change on a wicket that was offering extra bounce and a massive total of 391 to defend.

But then he was awestruck by the terrific assault from Ashraful, who clobbered 18 runs in an over that produced 19. Ashraful gave little indication of a thunderstorm when he luckily survived the first ball

he faced from England debutant Chris Tremlett - the ball bounced over the turf after hitting his bat and kissed the leg stump bails without dislodging it. He also drove and missed Harmison's first ball in the next over.

But after that the Trent Bridge crowd witnessed an innings they had never seen before. Ashraful hooked the next ball over the square leg boundary for six, hit a four through the covers and again pulled another magnificent six over mid-on.

When Harmison completed his third over, his figures read 3-0-37-0 and England captain pulled him out of the Ash-firing line. Ashraful raced to his 50 in just 21 balls that contained another massive six against Andrew Flintoff and six sweetly timed hits across the rope. It was a feat no Bangladeshi cricketer had done before. It was also the seventh quickest fifty in the history of one-day cricket.

Ashraful, who hit his maiden one-day hundred at Sophia Gardens in Bangladesh's greatest triumph against Australia, was tantalizingly close to getting his second hundred inside three days but was only to be denied by a slower delivery from Collingwood.

He was out for 94 off 52 balls that contained another five fours. It was an innings to behold and gave Bangladesh something to cheer

despite one of their biggest defeats in one-day cricket.

"It was surprising the way he played. Every shot he played he milled it quite nicely. His innings will definitely auger well in the progress of Bangladesh," said England all-rounder Collingwood, who became the only the second cricketer after West Indies great Viv Richards to score a hundred and take five wickets in a one-day match. Collingwood scored 112 not out in England's 391-4, which is the second highest innings in one-day cricket after Sri Lanka's 398-5 against Kenya in the 1996 World Cup at Kandy.

The journeyman of Durham also took 6-31 as Bangladesh collapsed to 223 all

out in 45.2 overs. It was a great sight when the Trent Bridge crowd saluted Ashraful while he was trudging back to the dressing room.

"You have done the right thing dost (friend). You hit back at them the way they hit us. You have hit Harmison for 19 runs and now I'm feeling good that I have conceded 13 in an over. I loved every bit of it," was what Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza said when Ashraful entered the dressing room.

Although Bangladesh lost the game by 186 runs, Ashraful's blazing knock was an achievement in itself in the context that England even resorted to a defensive bowl-

ing with four fielders in the deep despite having a mind boggling total at their disposal.

"When I walked in the middle fear gripped me since I was not scoring runs against England both in the Test and the first one-day. It was also in the back of my mind that I got out cheaply the next match I have played after a good innings", said Ashraful recalling the moment when he came out to bat after Tushar Imran was out for a first-ball duck and left him to survive the hat-trick ball of Tremlett.

"Javed bhai told me to play it defensively and I did that. But again like the second ball of the previous game that I had barely escaped missed the stump. So, I have decided not to show any undue respect that I have been showing against Harmison or Flintoff in the Tests", continued Ashraful.

"After I hit Harmison for a six I started to see the ball well. Although there was a little bit of extra bounce on the wickets, I played freely because of no sideways movement.

"I was amazed when I looked at the scoreboard and saw that I have scored 50 in just 21 balls. I thought that was funny as I had played against the same side before and barely scored a run," said Ashraful.

The pocket-size atom and arguably one of the most exciting

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Bangladesh's Mohammad Ashraful sets himself up for a sweep during the NatWest Series one day international against England at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Tuesday.

PHOTO: INTERNET



Biggies' dull draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Leaders Mohammedan Sporting Club and second-placed Brothers Union produced the first goalless match of the Premier Football League yesterday and held on to their respective positions.

The draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium served a depleted Mohammedan's purpose as they crossed the last major hurdle with one point before facing the bottom table teams but a 12,000-strong crowd was frustrated by boring and substandard football from the two top teams of the country.

It also opened up a chance for title chasers Muktiyodha Sangsod or surprise package Farashganj Sporting Club, who share the third place with 12 points, to storm to the lead in the sixth round.

Still unbeaten Mohammedan, who have picked up two wins and two draws in four big matches, pushed their collection to 14 points while holders Brothers remained one point behind.

With captain Alfaz and Sierra Leone striker Donald out to injury, no one had given the Black and Whites much chance against a full strength Brothers. But the defending champions, yet to recover from a stunning defeat to Arambagh in the previous round, were so ordinary that they even failed to take a single

Wari record second win

SPORTS REPORTER

Wari Club managed a solitary goal victory against Badda Jagarani to register their second win in the First Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Nazmul struck the match-decider in the 44th minute.

With the outcome the old Dhaka outfit improved their tally to eight points from as many matches while Badda remained on third spot with 14 points from eight matches following their second loss.

shot on their rivals' goal.

In an even first half, Monwar's freekick unsettled an otherwise compact Mohammedan backline -- featuring debutant Nigerian stopper Peter beside Nazrul and Hassan -- but Moroccan midfielder Hicham Inani's header went wide. That was, perhaps, the only time Mohammedan goalkeeper Biplab had to sweat as he was not required to make a single save afterwards.

Despite making two tactical changes in the first half, Brothers failed to raise their game and survived a close call two minutes before the short whistle when Mohammed-dan forward Manju nodded a centre by Kamal just wide of the far post.

Kamal, who worked hard at the Mohammedan right flank after switching from the left early in the match following Rony's injury, once again provided a chance for Manju in the 52nd minute but the slow mover failed to keep his header on target. Mohammedan pressed hard and Manju's header was denied by the woodwork four minutes later.

Manju, who was finally replaced after 70 minutes, could have had left the field with his head high but a minute before walking out, the forward put another headed effort wide after Faisal had set him up from the right.

Yellow cards: Hassan (Mohammedan) and Hicham (Brothers)

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Nazrul, Peter, Hassan, Rony (Mintu), Munna (Khokon), Arman Aziz, Asad, Kamal, Faisal and Manju (Zahid).

BROTHERS: Tariq, Sujan Jewel, Masud Rana (Shuvra), Siraji, Monwar, Hicham, Liton, Parvez Babu, Edward (Tapu) and Khokon (Emily).

Referee: Mansoor Azad.



Mohammedan's stand-in captain Faisal Mahmud dribbles past Brothers midfielder Hicham Inani (R) during their Premier Bank Premier Football League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

A forgettable day

Cricket

AL-AMIN from Nottingham

After yet another heavy defeat against England, this time by 168 runs after their 10-wicket thrashing in the opening game of the NatWest Series, Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore said that his boys lost the match in the first ten overs.

"It was a very good wicket to bat on, but we bowled too short in the first ten overs and paid the price," said Whatmore after England scored a mammoth 391-4, the second highest total in a one-day match.

"We had a good match against Australia but it was ordinary against England. I have been saying when you are improving that does not

mean that it will go in a straight line. You will have more performance like that but we want to reduce these sorts of performances," said the Bangladesh coach.

Ashraful's blazing 94 off 52 balls was the only highlight for Bangladesh in a match where almost all sorts of records were made against them.

Skipper Habibul Bashar employed five bowlers and each of them was hit all around the park by openers Marcus Trescothick and Andrew Strauss and man-of-the-match Paul Collingwood.

The England assault was at its brutal best but the Bangladeshi bowlers also contributed to the cause while trying to do too many things on a wicket they needed to bowl straight.

"It was the toughest day on the field in my life. We did not bowl well

in the first 15 overs and I tried a lot of things to stop the flow of runs, but to no avail. At times I felt helpless," said Bashar.

Tapash Baisya was the most expensive conceding 87 runs in just seven overs, the most expensive figures for a Bangladeshi bowler in a one-day match. Earlier, Khaled Mahmud held the dubious record of conceding 82 runs in the 2000 Asia Cup match against Pakistan at Dhaka.

Nazmul Hossain, the most successful bowler in terms of wickets on the day, also leapfrogged Mahmud with figures of 10-0-83-3.

Mashrafe also had a bad day on the field and all the fast bowlers considered it a nightmare for them.

"It happened only once before that I was beaten badly at the hand of Tatenda Taibu," said Mashrafe, who was not in a mood to talk.

The home side almost threatened to go past the 400-mark when they were delicately placed at 386-3 after 49 overs, but were denied by young right-armed Nazmul who conceded five runs in his last six deliveries.

The young paceman later said that he took it as a challenge not to allow England cross the 400-mark. Despite the depleted bowling, Bangladesh's batting also looked a sorry card apart from Ashraful's knock and Javed Omar's gritty 59.

The rest of the batting scored 58 runs with Mohammad Rafique being the third highest scorer with 19. Nobody had expected Bangladesh to chase England's total, but after Ashraful was out in the 26th over leaving the scoreboard

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Sachin Tendulkar

(India's star batsman)
"It is great honour. Surrey is my favourite ground where I played my hundredth Test. It was a special moment for me."

After inaugurating the 'India Room' in the new stand at The



ESPN
England vs Australia (D/N)
NatWest Series, 5th ODI
Live at 7:30 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 11:00 pm
STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championships
Second Round
Live at 5:00 pm



Premier Football League
Sheikh Russel vs Muktiyodha (5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Miandad may not be given Indian visa anymore

CRICINFO, undated

Javed Miandad is unlikely to be granted a visa to visit India again after it was announced that his son, Junaid, will marry Mahroq, the daughter of Dawood Ibrahim, who is still wanted in India in connection with the Mumbai blasts of 1993.

The wedding is to take place in Karachi, with a reception in Dubai. The decision to deny Miandad a visa in future was taken at a meeting of officials from India's Ministry of External Affairs, according to an article in the Mumbai Mirror. Though it was agreed that officially declaring Miandad persona non grata would provoke a response from Pakistan, the officials have apparently decided that any requests for a visa from his side in the future would be politely turned down.

Miandad has visited India several times in the recent past to watch matches and offer his views on TV analysis shows. But with this marriage alliance queering the pitch as far as India is concerned, it could be a long time before he appears on Indian TV screens again.

A satisfying stalemate

AFP, Nuremberg



Hosts Germany go into the semi-finals of the Confederations Cup as Group A winners despite twice surrendering the lead in a 2-2 draw with Argentina here on Tuesday.

Goals from Brazilian-born striker Kevin Kuranyi (29min) and Gerald Asamoah (51) saw Germany forge ahead but Argentina twice replied through Juan Roman Riquelme (32) and Esteban Cambiasso (74) to deny the hosts.

"I am content as we have won the group," said Germany manager Jurgen Klinsmann. "A lot of people thought it was beyond us - but we did not."

Argentina also qualify for the last four of the competition finishing as runners-up on goal difference - although neither team know their semi-final opponent.

Mexico have qualified from Group B but Brazil and Japan face off on Wednesday for the other spot. Klinsmann will be delighted to be

two games from winning the trophy but will rue a glorious chance to end their miserable run against the big teams.

"I think Argentina are the best team in the world at the moment," said Kuranyi. "It is just a shame we did not manage to get a win against one of the top teams."

Not since October 2000 have Germany defeated a recognised top team when England fell 1-0 in the final game at Wembley Stadium.

Klinsmann chose to rest captain

Michael Ballack, scorer of two penalties in the competition so far, with Bernd Schneider taking over the captain's armband.

"Ballack was rested but it was a chance for other players to take on more responsibility and I think they did," Klinsmann said.

The hosts started the more promising but Argentina should have scored in the 16th minute when Carlos Tevez crossed brilliantly from

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Ghosts scare Aussies

Cricket

AFP, London

Australia's world champion cricketers have been spooked by the legend of 700-year-old ghosts at their ancient Durham hotel.

All-rounder Shane Watson was so rattled he slept on the floor of Brett Lee's room.

Ricky Ponting's team are staying at the historic Lumley Castle hotel in Chester-le-Street where the West Indies touring team in 2000 were so scared that three of them checked out.

Local folklore says the hotel is haunted by the ghost of a 14th century aristocrat who was murdered by Catholic priests.

Australia players and management reported seeing or hearing unusual things during the night.

"Several of the players were uneasy although a lot of them in the morning said they were fine ... but maybe they were just trying to be brave," Australia media officer Belinda Denenett told the Sun.

"I saw ghosts. I swear I'm telling the truth.

"I closed the blind in my room before I went to bed. But when I was woken at 4am by my phone, the blind was up again," she added.

"I looked out of the window and saw a procession of white people walking past. It was amazing, very scary.

"Then I returned to bed and the blind went up again -- and there was someone looking in through the window.

"I know I wasn't dreaming because I wrote down the message from my phone and the time. Certainly, when I started to tell my story, a lot of them didn't want to know the details."

The hotel, which overlooks the cricket ground, is where lady of the manor Lily Lumley was reputedly thrown down a well by a pair of priests when she rejected the Catholic church.

The hotel is full of dark corridors and the medieval atmosphere is enhanced by the staff dressing in period costume.