

Ashraful considers it as his platform

Cricket

AFP, Canterbury

As Bangladesh prepared to leave England, talented batsman Mohammad Ashraful vowed to use the trip as a springboard for further, more consistent, success.

Although Bangladesh twice went down by an innings in their two Tests against England, they rallied in the one-dayers with Ashraful's run-a-ball hundred setting up their shock five-wicket win against world champions Australia in Cardiff last month.

It is now four years since Ashraful, on the verge of his 17th birthday, became the youngest

am more mature now. I know I can't get a 100 every game but I can continue my form.

"I am more mature now in my thinking and batting. I want to continue being consistent in the next series. I think I can do that against Sri Lanka in our next series.

"If I do that, then I hopefully will have got rid of the inconsistency tag. I don't just want to have scored runs in this series in England. I want to be a success all the time."

Bangladesh's victory against Australia in Cardiff was their lone international success of a tour that featured some heavy defeats.

But an upbeat Ashraful insisted: "I feel Bangladesh can become an even better side. In two or three

years we can challenge anyone. At the moment we get a good start to the innings and don't always catch up in the middle or late order.

"I think this can happen. If we can score runs all the time, then we can challenge anyone."

"To beat Australia gave us a big lift. Before that we were not in good form but after that match everyone was changed mentally. It gave us self-belief."

Meanwhile Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar said several of his players could do well in English county cricket.

"I don't know if they are going to get any offers but I think Mohammad Ashraful, Shahriar Nafees and Aftab Ahmed are capable of playing at

that level.

"I'd be very happy if they get offers and the chance to play in the county games. I hope that the counties have been looking at some of our players."

Nafees, who won the man-of-the-match award for his 75 against Australia at Canterbury on Thursday, and Aftab will be returning to England with the Bangladesh team later this month along with Nafees Iqbal and Nazmul Hossain.

Nafees, 19, said: "We have to take good things out of every game on this tour and work out the areas which went wrong and improve on them. It has been a big learning curve for all of us."

BANGLADESH'S NATWEST SERIES AVERAGES

Batting and Fielding

Name	Mat	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	SR	100	50	Ct	St
Aftab Ahmed	6	6	1	99	51	19.80	80.48	-	1	-	-
Habibul Bashar	6	6	0	122	47	20.33	70.93	-	-	1	-
Javed Omar	6	6	0	175	81	29.16	49.15	-	2	-	-
Khaled Mahmud	2	2	0	22	22	11.00	95.65	-	-	1	-
Khaled Mashud	6	5	2	126	71*	42.00	69.23	-	1	3	-
Manjru Islam	2	1	0	2	2	2.00	40.00	-	-	-	-
Mashrafee Mortuza	6	4	1	30	29*	10.00	78.94	-	-	1	-
Mohammad Ashraful	6	6	0	259	100	43.16	105.71	1	2	-	-
Mohammad Rafique	6	6	2	75	30	18.75	61.98	-	-	1	-
Nafees Iqbal	2	2	0	27	19	13.50	55.10	-	-	1	-
Nazmul Hossain	5	3	2	8	6	8.00	26.66	-	-	-	-
Shahriar Nafees	4	4	0	143	75	35.75	66.20	-	1	1	-
Tapash Baisya	3	1	0	3	3	3.00	50.00	-	-	-	-
Tushar Imran	6	6	0	70	32	11.66	63.63	-	-	1	-

Bowling

Name	Mat	O	M	R	W	Ave	Best	4w	5w	SR	Econ
Aftab Ahmed	6	35.5	0	188	1	188.00	1-65	-	-	215.0	5.24
Habibul Bashar	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Javed Omar	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Khaled Mahmud	2	13	0	93	1	93.00	1-54	-	-	78.0	7.15
Khaled Mashud	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manjru Islam	2	13.5	0	83	3	27.66	3-57	-	-	27.6	6.00
Mashrafee Mortuza	6	50	3	261	3	87.00	2-44	-	-	100.0	5.22
Mohammad Ashraful	6	0.1	0	4	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mohammad Rafique	6	52	1	266	2	133.00	2-44	-	-	156.0	5.11
Nafees Iqbal	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nazmul Hossain	5	37	3	281	4	70.25	3-83	-	-	55.5	7.59
Shahriar Nafees	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tapash Baisya	3	26	1	213	4	53.25	3-69	-	-	39.0	8.19
Tushar Imran	6	3	0	26	0	-	-	-	-	-	8.66

TEST & ODI SQUAD

Andrew Flintoff (ENG), Stephen Harmison (ENG), Rahul Dravid (IND), Virender Sehwag (IND), Sachin Tendulkar (IND), Brendon McCullum (NZL), Daniel Vettori (NZL), Shoaib Akhtar (PAK), Inzamamul Haq (PAK), Jacques Kallis (RSA), Makhaya Ntini (RSA), Shaun Pollock (RSA), Muttiah Muralitharan (SRI), Brian Lara (WIS).

TEST SQUAD ONLY

Michael Vaughan (ENG), Anil Kumble (IND), Younis Khan (PAK), Mark Boucher (RSA), Graeme Smith (RSA), Shivnarine Chanderpaul (WIS).

ODI SQUAD ONLY

Kevin Pietersen (ENG), Shahid Afridi (PAK), Abdul Razzaq (PAK), Herschelle Gibbs (RSA), Kumar Sangakkara (SRI), Chris Gayle (WIS).

Super Series sides

Indies three and New Zealand and Sri Lanka each have two representatives.

With the final squads of 14 for the ODI series and 13 for the Sydney Super Test due to be selected in mid-August, Atherton said there was still time for players to stake a compelling case for inclusion over the next six weeks.

Of the 26 players selected, 14 are named in both the Test and ODI squads, six are included in the Test squad alone and there are six players nominated as ODI specialists. The final squads will be selected and announced in August, when a captain, or captains, will also be named. A World XI coach and management team will also be appointed.

But he was also concerned about the need of a good first-class structure to make an impression in the game.

"We need to explore all the opportunities and we need to introduce a solid system to produce quality players," said de Winter, who had an experience of playing first-class cricket for Tasmania under the captaincy of famous Australian opener David Boon from 1986-90.

As a high performance manager de Winter wants to have equal focus on other areas involving cricket like coaching and umpiring.

"I don't want to see our players at the top level or the coaches and others struggle. I must seriously look after those areas," he promised.

De Winter said that it would be nice if he could share his knowledge with national coach Dav Whatmore.

"I played against Dav in domestic competition. He was playing for Victoria. It will be nice if I can share my knowledge with him but there's nothing wrong in it if it does not happen because we have different jobs," said de Winter who will begin the Under-19 camp in mid-July with 26 cricketers for October's tour of Sri Lanka.

Winter sets

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FROM PAGE 12 picked Richie Richardson at a very early age while India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka do it consistently. If there is a better player we give him the opportunity because it is the selectors' duty to field the best team and it doesn't matter where the player comes from."

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Postcard from

FROM PAGE 12 bad bowlers. But I need a firebrand like Mashrafee who is as good as any bowler in the world."

The Bangladesh skipper also said that he desperately needs a right-arm off-spinner before the next tour in Sri Lanka in September.

Former national captain Khaled Mahmud was one step forward.

"When I return to Dhaka my first task will be to find someone who is six foot tall and has got raw pace."

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has arranged quite a few youth development programmes and is spending a lot for those professionals scouting the budding talents.

But it seems they have lost a small battle against an individual who is selflessly contributing in cricket for over the year.

"I'm a student of Anarki like Ashraful and I can proudly say that Wahid sir is an honest and straight talking guy," said Shahriar Nafees about former national leg-spinner Wahidul Gani.

Many feel it does not necessarily mean the Board should include Wahid in its coaching set up. But it can award this devoted cricketer with something that inspires others to unearth those players the nation needs at the moment.

Whatmore

FROM PAGE 12

that he needed another two weeks

to complete the funeral rites.

"I talked to him today. His father's

body has already been cremated

and the ashes will be scattered over a river after a week," said Ali Asif Khan, vice-chairman of the cricket operations committee on the BCB.

Both players boomed out big

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BFF calendar finally ready

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) looks set to launch its first professional league in May next year, sources at the federation confirmed yesterday.

After a long delay, the BFF finally completed its calendar for 2005-2006, which is awaiting the approval of the executive committee before being sent to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

The professional league will be launched as per demand of the AFC and many thinks that the calendar was hastily chalked out to please the governing body of football in the continent.

Although the structure of the game in the country is not ready to go professional, the