

Ashraful considers it as his platform



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



MOHAMMAD ASHRAFUL

player to score a Test hundred when he reached three figures against Sri Lanka.

And although he failed to live up to that promise during the Tests against England, Ashraful was pleased by the way he responded to early failures later in the tour by scoring 259 runs in the one-dayers at an average of over 43.

"I was not happy with the Test series against England but I've been happy to come back in the one-dayers and score runs again.

"I had the thinking before that I could score 100 in every innings, so my thinking was not mature – but I

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 A 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	-
Manjarul Islam	2	1	0	2	2	2.00	40.00	-	-	-	-
Mashrafe 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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manjarul Islam	2	13.5	0	83	3	27.66	3-57	-	-	27.6	6.00
Mashrafe Mortuza	6	50	3	261	3	87.00	2-44	-	-	100.0	5.22
Mohammad Ashraful	6	0.1	0	4	0	-	-	-	-	-	24.00
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

Inzy welcomes ODI changes

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq has welcomed the new International Cricket Council (ICC) rules introducing substitutions and amended fielding regulations.

The rules, which come into effect at the end of this month, allow teams to replace one player at any stage of a match and increase the number of overs in which fielding restrictions apply from 15 to 20.

"These changes will make one-day internationals more interesting and competitive," Inzamam told this news agency on Saturday.

"One-day games in recent times have become boring in the middle overs. The captain's job will now be more challenging and there will be more pressure on the bowlers."

Under the new regulations, a substituted player will be ruled out of the rest of the match while the replacement is allowed to assume any remaining batting or bowling duties.



Did U Know?

May Sutton of the United States became the first non-European to clinch the Wimbledon women's singles title in 1905.



David Shepherd

(Revered cricket umpire)
"Any player who stands at the crease knowing he is out is in my book a cheat!"

Super Series sides

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selection panel has been forced to exclude. Missing from the original Test squad of 30 are VVS Laxman, Ramnaresh Sarwan and Chaminda Vaas, while no place could be found for Marcus Trescothick, Sanath Jayasuriya or Darren Gough among the one-day international specialists. The dream of taking on the world champion team has also ended for Andrew Strauss, Harbhajan Singh, Irfan Pathan, Navedul Hasan, Danish Kaneria, Yousuf Youhana, Shoaib Malik and Andre Nel.

"It was an almost impossible task to cut down the original squads to just 20 players," said Gavaskar, the chairman of the selection panel. "To leave out players of the calibre of Laxman, Sarwan, Vaas, Strauss, Trescothick and Harbhajan was very difficult. At the same time we also took current form into account, which is why Chanderpaul came into the Test squad and Steve Harmison forced his way into the reckoning for the one-day games."

While banking on proven performers, the selection panel of Gavaskar, Mike Atherton, Richard Hadlee, Clive Lloyd, Jonny Rhodes and Aravinda de Silva also placed faith in a number of the game's brightest young stars.

Brendon McCullum, Kevin Pietersen and Shahid Afridi have been chosen for their outstanding form in recent months and the impression made on seasoned judges who have monitored their performances.

South Africa has six players across both squads, Pakistan has five, England and India four, West

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.

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), Mahaya Ntini (RSA), Shaun Pollock (RSA), Muttiah Muralitharan (SRI), Brian Lara (WIS)

TEST SQUAD ONLY

Michael Vaughan (ENG), Anil Kumble (IND), Yousif 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)

Roddick sets up repeat

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Sunday's final will be a golden chance for revenge for Roddick who has lost to Federer at the last two Wimbledon - in the semi-finals two years ago and in last year's final.

But the Swiss star holds an 8-1 winning record over the American, including the last four encounters between the two players.

"It was tough - we both played at such a high level. I was giving it everything I had," said Roddick.

"I definitely got lucky in the fourth set tie-break with that ball that trickled over. Credit to him - he played great and I am lucky to get through. I am ecstatic to be playing Roger again. I want to give it another go."

Roddick had endured two tough five-setters to reach the last four and he was stretched to the limit at times against Johansson, the 2002 Australian champion who is back to his best after major knee surgery.

Serves had dominated in the 11 games that were played in the tie on Friday before the rain fell and so it continued on the resumption as Johansson forced the tie-break.

Both players boomed out big

serves in a bid to get the early advantage but it was Johansson who moved ahead when Roddick squandered two set points and then overhit a forehand on the first set point to the 30-year-old Swede.

Roddick took a quick lavatory break and that appeared to do him a power of good as he returned to break Johansson's serve twice in a row and jump out into a 4-0 second set lead.

The American was increasingly on the offensive hitting a high percentage of first serves and coming in to the net behind them. He took the set 6-2 to level the scores.

Whatmore

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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.

Winter sets

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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."

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.

Postcard from

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bad bowlers. But I need a firebrand like Mashrafe 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 Ankur 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.

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 think 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 BFF has already talked with two top clubs and will have discussion with more soon to set the criteria of entering the competition.

The rest of this year will be very busy after the end of the ongoing Premier Football League as three domestic tournaments will begin in September including the National Football League.

The events are the Dhaka Metropolis School Football tournament and the Under-16 nationwide championship sponsored by Japan Football Association.

The national team also have a busy schedule as they will take part in the Asian Cup qualifiers (September-November 2005), the SAFF Football Championship in Pakistan (December 2005), the SA Games in Sri Lanka (April 2006) and the newly introduced AFC Challenge Cup (May 2006).

The calendar also features an international club tournament in February 2006 in Dhaka apart from Pioneer League and Suhrawardy Cup Youth Football Championship ((Dec 2005-Jan 2006), AFC U-17 and U-19 Youth Championships qualifiers (Nov 2005), Independence Day Gold Cup in March, 2006, and AFC Football Festival and Federation Cup in April, 2006.

Victoria back in contention

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club bounced back in the First Division Football League race for Premiership berths next year with a 5-0 drubbing of BRTC at the Bhirshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Sohag netted twice while Bappi, Mithu and Gafur added one each as Victoria registered their fifth win in ten outings to stretch their tally to 18 points. Now at third place, Victoria are behind Rahmatganj and Badda Jagarani who have 25 and 20 points respectively. Three top first division teams will be promoted to the Premier League next year.

BRTC lay third from bottom with nine points.

Bachchu no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Renowned sports journalist Rezaul Haq Bachchu died of heart attack at Mugaltuli here at around 12 noon on Friday. He was 60.

Bachchu left behind three sons and a host of well-wishers to mourn his death.

A three-time national marathon champion of then East Pakistan, Bachchu served as a sports reporter in many national dailies and also was the founder-president of the Chittagong chapter of the Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA).

Mourning the death of Bachchu, BSJA in Dhaka prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed sympathy for the members of the bereaved family.

Bashar's men

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the Live 8 concert. London was so crowded on that day that if you had just landed there and were looking for a modest hotel even at a high price you were unlikely to get one.

Although it was the weekend, the subways were as busy as on weekdays with people scamping into tube stations towards their desired destination.

It was understandable where they were heading by the look of their attire. Those sporting the blue and red England one-day shirt were heading towards St John's Wood, the nearest tube station to reach Lord's. There was a Bangladeshian among the crowd, and he was taking his chance to buy a ticket for the final. He eventually got a ticket for the final from a ticket tout after a successful bargain.

"The face value of the ticket was 55 pounds. But I bought it for 50," said Zakaria, a producer on tour in Europe.

STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships
Men's Singles and Women's Doubles
Finals
Live at 6:30 pm



PHOTO: STAR

Arambagh's Ugandan recruit Patrick (R) fights for the ball with Youngmen's midfielder Chanchal during their Premier Bank Premier Football League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Glazer calls for calm



AFP, Manchester

Joel Glazer, expected to be named as Manchester United's new chairman later this month, has pleaded with Manchester United fans not to make snap judgements on his family's Old Trafford reign.

The 36-year-old son of Tampa Bay Buccaneers owner Malcolm needed to be escorted away from the ground in a police van on Wednesday night as angry fans vented their frustration at the American's 790-million-pound (1.17-billion-euro) purchase of the club.

Almost constantly vilified for the past 18 months by the biggest United fans' groups, Glazer finally spoke out in a 35-minute interview with the Red Devils' in-house television station MUTV last night, and urged the silent majority to give them a chance to prove the club are in safe hands.

"The vilification goes with the territory," he said.

"If you are not prepared for it, you should not get involved. But the passion is part of the attraction. It is frustrating and tough but it has not put us off, it has just made us even more aware of the awesome responsibility that is involved here.

"You would just hope that people give us a chance and not make a

judgement on what has happened today or the last several months.

"I know what we are going to do in the future and I have confidence and faith in what I am saying. But there are many people who do not know me and the only way I can back up my words is with actions and actions take time.

"We understand the high expectations at this club and we have the utmost respect for the history and traditions of Manchester United. If people are patient and give us that time, we are satisfied and confident they will be proud of our ownership."

While Glazer covered a wide range of topics, rejecting outright he has any plan to either sell and lease back Old Trafford, change the United badge, scrap the collective Premier League TV bargaining agreement, limit Alex Ferguson's transfer spending or axe Sir Bobby Charlton from his position on the board, there was no answer to the question fans want answering most of all, namely how the Glazers intend to pay off the 500-million-pound debt they have incurred buying the club.

Instead, Joel emphasised the 270 million pounds of his family's own fortune had been ploughed into the venture, proof enough, he claimed, of their determination to succeed.

"We would not have got involved with Manchester United if we did not feel that, under our ownership, the

Zenden signs for Liverpool

AFP, Liverpool

Experienced Dutch winger Boudewijn Zenden signed for Champions League holders Liverpool from Premiership rivals Middlesbrough on Saturday on a free transfer.

The 28-year-old 53-times capped Dutchman agreed personal terms and passed a medical, and will complete the move on Monday.

The former Barcelona and Chelsea star -- who was influential in Boro's League Cup winning campaign in the 2003-04 season -- will be eligible for Liverpool's Champions League qualification campaign on July 13.

Zenden joined Middlesbrough on a permanent basis last summer after a successful season on loan from Chelsea.

"Bolo Zenden has passed his medical," said Liverpool spokesman Ian Cotton.

"We have reached an agreement with the player and expect the contract to be signed on Monday morning.

"He will then be introduced at a press conference later that afternoon."

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stand of 54 in 89 balls although England remained on top.

And the hosts were rewarded when Symonds eventually lost patience.

After an unusually subdued 71-ball 29 he backed away outside leg-stump and slammed medium-pacer Paul Collingwood to Andrew Strauss at short extra-cover, Australia 147 for six in the 39th over.

Harmison, in his second spell, then reduced Australia to 169 for seven when all Brad Hogg (16) could do against a rising delivery, was glove it to Jones.

Flintoff then took two wickets in two balls at the end of the 46th over, both caught behind by Jones, Brett Lee (three) and Jason Gillespie.

Hussey though kept going, his fifty up in 73 balls with five fours, before last man Glenn McGrath was caught by Collingwood at point off Gough for nought with seven balls of the innings remaining.

Both sides had previously beaten each other once in the tournament, England winning by three wickets at Bristol on June 19 and Australia by 57 runs at Chester-le-Street four days later with Tuesday's game at Edgbaston a no-result wash-out.

TRI-SERIES FINAL SCOREBOARD