Victory is sweet

Kazi Sarmad Karim



I am euphoric, ecstatic and a host of other adjectives. Bangladesh is through to the Super eights and I have two words to describe it: simply outstanding.

I just finished watching the match and all the post match commentary, and felt like I had to jot down my perceptions before they are overshadowed by other thoughts. Firstly, a big hand for Bermuda. They really made Bangladesh fight for the victory. Secondly, the post-match commentary was something to behold. All the praise and anguish was reserved for Bermuda, while Bangladesh was relegated to a few rueful mentions. I know that it's an Indian channel and they will support the Indian team. But do they have to be so blatant? I know that some of you reading this will opine that since they are Indians they are within their rights to blatantly support their team. Fair enough, but I also reserve the right to praise my team when they have done something to make the whole country proud.

The most pleasant aspect of Bangladesh's victory is that they worked together as a team. They deserved their victories because they were put under pressure by the opposing team, but coped with it and came out on top. One very popular opinion among the Indian presenters was that Bermuda was unlucky. Batting first put them at a disadvantage, as they did not know it was going to be a 21 over match. Okay, good point. But, was Bangladesh lucky to be batting second on a pitch that had so much help for the seamers? I mean, the two opening bowlers of Bermuda were making the ball swing around like Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis! Shahriar Nafees's wicket was totally due to the movement of the ball.

I really cannot praise the Bangladeshi bowlers enough. They have been the reason that Bangladesh won their matches against India and Bermuda. Mashrafe has developed into a lethal opening bowler who leads from the front. The picture of him knocking Virender Sehwag's stumps out of the ground and his subsequent celebration is still vivid in my mind. Rafique is still fighting the good fight for Bangladesh and getting wickets at critical junctures of the game. Getting the prize wicket of Sourav Ganguly just when he was looking to accelerate the game comes to mind. The left-handed seamer Syed Rasel has also impressed me with his accuracy and ability to swing the ball. Abdur Razzak and Sakibul Hasan are developing into fine support bowlers who can also take wickets.

The find of the tournament for Bangladesh, according to me, has been Shakib Al Hasan. Dare I say we could potentially be witnessing the creation of our very own *desi* 'Michael Bevan'. He has all the right attributes and like Bevan, seems to be 'The Finisher', always taking his team through to victory by staying till the end. He's already done it twice in the World Cup and there's no reason to think he cannot continue doing so. One of my cousins said that Shakib was a very good player even before he was selected in the World Cup squad for Bangladesh. I didn't believe him then, but now I do.

Mohammed Ashraful, the enigma of Bangladeshi cricket. I don't dispute that this guys got talent. However, that he has frequently thrown away his wicket is a fact. I even went as far as to think that maybe leaving him out of the World Cup squad would be a good idea. However, I retract my sentiments after seeing his composed knock against Bermuda. Ashraful showed us another side of his batting today. The responsibility and patience he showed, when coupled with his undeniable talent, makes for a potentially lethal combination. Whoever goaded him into bringing these aspects into his batting: I salute you. Whoever you are, know this that the cricket loving people of Bangladesh are grateful to you.

Musfiqur Rahim is another talented individual. He seems to be the perfect replacement for Khaled Mashud. Though I was not in his bandwagon in the beginning, but after the mature innings he played against India I have definitely become a fan. On Tamim Iqbal, I reserve judgment until I see him play a few more knocks. I have no doubts about his ability to hit the ball, but that he can play sensibly is still to be seen. One thing in his favor is that he is still young and has time to learn. But I am disappointed at Aftab Ahmed's attitude towards his batting. One need only look at India's Virender Sehwag to know that one cannot expect to slog out of trouble. Aftab has to learn to be more patient and try to curtail his attacking approach till he is set at the crease.

Now that Bangladesh is through to the Super eights, I hope they can keep their feet on the ground and just enjoy themselves. They should try to play to their potential and not get awed by the opposition. I know this sounds wishing thinking but I truly believe we can advance past the Super eights stage as well. Just wishful thinking you say? Well, only those who dare to dream make them realities. The Bangladesh cricket team should believe that they can get to the semi-finals. That's the only way they can turn it into reality.