

Captain Courageous!

BISHWAJIT ROY



Nobody can expect a courageous or simply a right decision from a man who himself is in the lowest ebb of his confidence. So, it might not be surprising that Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar made a titanic blunder at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on Friday

At the end of the first day's play it is now clear that the home skipper gave his Indian counterpart Rahul Dravid a happy gift by inviting the vaunted batting line-up a chance use the surface first, which even the word placid would not do justice to.

True, the grounds curator gave the team management a wrong impression of it being a bouncy and pacy wicket; a fact that even provoked Bangladesh to play three seamers. Yes, followed by heavy overnight rain there was an overcast condition in the morning to inspire a captain to consider the bowling advantages.

But it still bemused everyone how a captain could only believe in those two factors and completely disregard the history of the venue and his own experience of judging the playing conditions. And not to forget that he was also supported by a man like Dav Whatmore.

There was no single player in the India team who could have known about the conditions better than Bashar, who has played a few games in the venue and has inside knowledge of how the pitch here behaved in the four-day games. It is only a matter of associative memory to judge that a pitch does not change its characteristics overnight -- a fact that Bashar overlooked

completely.

Now the question has been raised whether the Bangladesh skipper miscalculated the condition with a pre-committed conception or he simply tried to hide himself and his top-order batting from a possible early hour disaster.

If the intention was to escape then hard times have fallen on Bashar who would then do well not to continue at this level any more. There is no use playing Test matches if you don't have the courage to at least survive some time in the crease in difficult circumstances when you all knew that how it would be difficult to bat second under such immense heat and humidity.

It was impossible to know Bashar's version of the decision as he didn't show the courage to

defend it to the press.

Rather the equally culpable Whatmore appeared in the scene to regret the erroneous decision.

"Oh yes, we regret the decision. Obviously if we knew the wicket was going to behave like that then certainly we would not chose to field first. We knew what the conditions were so we wanted to take the advantage of bowling first in the first session. But that did not work out," explained the outgoing Bangladesh coach.

The portly Australian also tried to save his skipper by saying that it was a collective decision.

Bravo! But then why appoint a

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

BLADESH-INDIA 2ND TEST SCOREBO

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and India at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Friday:					
INDIA: First innings	R	B	4s	6s	
Dinesh Karthik retired hurt	82	153	12	0	
Wasim Jaffer retired hurt	138	229	17	0	
Rahul Dravid not out	88	131	11	1	
Sachin Tendulkar not out	9	31	0	0	
Extras: (lb-4, w-1, nb-4)	9				
Total: (For no loss in 90 overs)	326				
To bat: Sourav Ganguly, Mahendra Dhoni, Ramesh Powar, Zaheer Khan, Anil Kumble, Rudra Pratap Singh, Ishant Sharma.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Mashrafe Bin Mortaza	19.4	4	49	0	nb-1, w-1
Syed Raseel	13.4	0	64	0	nb-1
Mohammad Sharif	13.4	0	56	0	nb-1
Mohammad Rafique	22	2	85	0	nb-1
Shakib Al Hasan	13	1	33	0	-
Mohammad Ashraf	8	0	35	0	-
BANGLADESH: Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Habibul Bashar, Shakib Al Hasan, Mohammad Ashraf, Rajin Saleh, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Rafique, Mohammad Sharif, Syed Raseel.					
Toss: Bangladesh					
Umpires: B Doctrove (West Indies) and D Harper (Australia)					
TV umpire: Nadir Shah					
Match referee: R Mahanama (Sri Lanka)					



Indian opening pair of Wasim Jaffer (R) and Dinesh Karthick are in mid-pitch while running a single during their 175-run opening partnership on the first day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Alessandro Nesta

(AC Milan and Italy defender)

"I have been criticised a lot in the past year. Some people even said that Italy won the World Cup because I was injured. But I have come back and I am delighted we won."

After winning the UEFA Champions League title.



BTV & NEO Sports

Bangladesh v India
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 10:00 am

ESPN

England v West Indies
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 4:00 pm

STAR Sports

Primera Liga
Valencia v Villarreal
Live from 9:55 pm
Real Madrid v Deportivo
Live from 12:00 am (Sunday)
Barcelona v Getafe
Live from 2:00 am (Sunday)

SL row over 'ridiculous' series

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's senior cricket officials on Friday clashed over this week's one-day series against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi, with the chief selector dismissing it as "absolutely ridiculous."

Asantha De Mel said the series was too soon after the World Cup, criticising Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) which organised the lucrative one-day matches.

"I have never heard of a cricket match being played in 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) anywhere in the world," said De Mel.

"It is absolutely ridiculous. The

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

Vaughan's sparkling return Vaas out of Afro-Asia meet



AFP, Leeds

England captain Michael Vaughan was on the verge of marking his comeback to Test cricket with a hundred as the hosts took charge of the second Test against West Indies at Headingley here Friday.

At tea, on the first day, England were 222 for two with Vaughan, who'd won the toss on his Yorkshire home ground, 92 not out and Kevin Pietersen unbeaten on 53.

The duo had so far put on 131 for the third wicket although Pietersen had a huge slick of luck when stumped off a no-ball on 20.

This was Vaughan's first Test in 18 months after he'd been sidelined with a career-threatening knee injury and a hamstring problem before a broken finger sustained while batting against Hampshire three weeks ago kept him out of the drawn series opener at Lord's.

Vaughan, 32, playing his first Test since appearing against Pakistan at Lahore in December 2005, had yet to give a chance.

England 91 for two at lunch, put resumed with Vaughan 25 not out and Pietersen yet to face.

Vaughan turned Corey Collmore for four before Pietersen's first scoring

shot produced a boundary when he leg-glanced medium-pacer Dwayne Bravo.

He then confidently cover-drove, one of his signature shots, Bravo for four.

Then a misfield by opposing captain Ramnaresh Sarwan allowed Vaughan to complete a 94 ball fifty with seven fours.

Pietersen made sure runs came from both ends by disdainfully driving Collmore straight down the ground

He then had a break when Chris Gayle had him stumped with his second ball back by Denesh Ramdin, the batsman yards out, only for umpire Asad Rauf to call no-ball with England 142 for two.

Vaughan then played one of the shots of the match when he cover-drove Powell off the backfoot. And when the paceman overpitched Vaughan dismissively off-drove him for another four.

England's third wicket pair raced to a hundred partnership in 121 balls on a good pitch against an attack where only Gayle provided some variety.

Pietersen's sixth four, off Jerome Taylor, saw him to a 67-ball fifty.

Vaughan earlier put on 53 for the second wicket with Alastair Cook following the loss of Andrew Strauss.

But left-hander Cook - one of England's five centuries at Lord's - was out for 42 to the last ball before lunch, lbw to Gayle.

Strauss, who'd twice cut Powell for four, fell when he edged an attempted cut off the bowler to Ramdin for 15.

Vaughan got off the mark when he turned Powell through square leg and played the shot of the morning when he off-drove Taylor for four. England's other change from Lord's saw Ryan Sidebottom, six years after playing his one and only previous Test, recalled in place of injured quick Matthew Hoggard.

West Indies suffered a blow here Friday when Shivnarine Chanderpaul, their senior batsman who top scored with 74 in the tourists' first innings at Lord's, was ruled out with tendonitis in his right knee.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the second Test between England and West Indies at Headingley on Friday:

ENGLAND: First innings	
Strauss c Ramdin b Powell	15
Cook lbw b Gayle	42
Vaughan not out	92
Pietersen not out	53
Extras: (lb-14, w-1, nb-5)	20
Total: (For 2 wkts in 54 overs)	222

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



England captain Michael Vaughan unleashes a textbook cover drive to the boundary on the first day of the second Test against West Indies at Headingley on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Jaffer battles it out

AL MUSABBIR SADI



Wasim Jaffer showed great spirit to come back from a plunge to become the 15th batsman in the world to shrug off a Test pair with a hundred when the Indian opening batsman hammered 138 before retiring hurt against Bangladesh yesterday.

Dismissed by Tigers pacers Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shahadat Hossain respectively in the two innings of the Chittagong Test before opening his account, the 29-year-old made his fourth Test century in the second and final match in Dhaka under extreme conditions with heat and humidity taking their tolls.

Floored on 40 by left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique off his own bowling in the second ball after lunch, the right-hander concentrated hard to bat fluently to reach the three-figure mark with a boundary on the inside.

Like his opening partner Dinesh Karthik, the Mumbai batsman succumbed to dehydration midway through the final session and sought the cool of the dressing room.

The feat, in his 19th Test, also made him only the third player in history of Test cricket to sandwich a pair with centuries in consecutive

matches.

Jaffer had scored 116 against South Africa in Cape Town before the Chittagong ducks.

His compatriot and now Indian chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar scored 157 not out against West Indies in Kolkata in the 1978-79 home series, following it with a pair in Chennai and a 109 in Delhi.

Late West Indian batsman Clifford Roach did the same at home against England when he made 122 at Bridgetown, followed by two zeroes at Port of Spain and 209 at Georgetown.

Apart from Jaffer and Vengsarkar, fellow Indians Yashpal Sharma and Mohinder Amarnath are also in the 15-member list of batsmen to score hundred after a pair.

The last man before Jaffer do it was Chamara Silva, the Sri Lankan who got a pair on debut and made 61 and 152 not out in the next Test in New Zealand in December 2006.

Expectedly, a tired but smiling Jaffer mentioned that getting a hundred in Test cricket is always pleasing.

"It's nice to come back after a pair and get a 100. I'm always determined no matter what the result is. But obviously I was double determined after a pair," Jaffer told at the post-match conference on Day One.

When asked about local conditions during this time of year, Jaffer said that it was something beyond his control.

"I mean playing and not playing is

not in my hands. The two boards are to decide to keep the matches. But obviously the condition is tough. As you know you can see that both Dinesh and I came with cramps and dizziness. The conditions will be tough for both the teams."

He admitted that there had been some pressure coming to the Dhaka game.

"Getting a pair is obviously not a very good feeling. I was determined to have a good score and I'm really happy. I'm also delighted that I'm playing. If I didn't play I wouldn't have got this score. Thanks to the committee for selecting and giving me a chance," said Jaffer, who now has two century-stands with Karthik.

"We have been doing the opening for the last three Tests and twice, in Cape Town and here, we've got 100 partnerships. We are really good friends. So that helps in having a good partnership.

Jaffer, the only specialist opener in the Test squad in absence of out-of-form Virender Sehwag, said manager Ravi Shastri's advices had also been a great help.

"It was more mental that physically. He was just telling me to be more positive in the mind and told not to worry about the pair because it happens to everybody," added Jaffer who was really surprised to be invited to bat on the surface.

"They (Bangladesh) obviously tried their best but things did not happen because the wicket did not support them."

Sonn remains critically ill



CRICINFO, undated

Percy Sonn remains in a serious condition at the Durbanville Medi-Clinic in Cape Town. "He is in the same condition," George Hector, his personal assistant, said. "He is still serious, stable but unchanged."

According to a report in Thursday's Times, doctors said there was little hope that Sonn would survive. His wife, Sandra, said his condition was "still the same and critical", but declined to comment further.

Hector told Cricinfo that Sonn had suffered complications after being admitted to the Durbanville clinic in Cape Town on Monday to undergo a minor colon operation. The appointment, Hector added, had been scheduled several months prior to the recent World Cup in the Caribbean.

Sonn, 57, the former president of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCB), succeeded Ehsan Mani at the helm of the ICC in June

Nike, Adidas row over Sachin

PTI, New Delhi

Global sports goods giant Adidas today said it has approached MRTPC as it felt its exclusive rights to the use of the name of brand ambassador Sachin Tendulkar was violated by rival Nike.

"MRTPC has issued notices to the respondents," Adidas said in a statement, while declining to get into the details of the controversy saying the matter was pending before the commission.

Nike had launched its cricket range comprising T-shirts "featuring Adidas signed athlete Tendulkar's name and jersey number in 2006," Adidas said, asserting the cricketer and the company had an association for many years.

It, however, said: "We look forward to resolving the issue speedily", while clarifying it had no conflict with Tendulkar or BCCI, both of whom have been issued notices by the commission.

"We have had a long standing association with Tendulkar," it added.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5