

Lost and confused

SPORTS REPORTER



Two matches in two days and Bangladesh looked like a confused team.

Having confirmed their Super Eights berth in the ICC Twenty20 World Championship with a stunning victory over the West Indies in their opening game, the Tigers began their second group match on Saturday tremendously but soon lost the momentum to hosts South Africa, who never really lost grip over the game, perhaps in the wake of their loss to Bangladesh in the Cricket World Cup held four months ago.

The start Bangladesh gave against the Proteas -- 54 runs in the first four overs -- only reflected their level of confidence but when young Tamim Iqbal spoke to commentator David Lloyd during the match, he was a few degrees above over-confident.

"I'll take two catches and make three run outs," said Tamim when asked who would make the difference for Bangladesh. These words in the middle of a professional match can only be uttered by an exuberant youth, who has a lot to see.

Anyone would admit that Twenty20 is all about hitting the ball but yesterday, the batsmen's effort to score runs off the Australian bowlers seemed silly.

One cannot send every delivery out of the park and all the Bangladeshi batsmen, who finally totalled an unimpressive 123-8 against the mighty Aussies, looked committed to use muscle power behind every shot. As a result, they got 'big singles'

from deliveries that should have brought twos.

They should have used their head and pick the big percentages -- ones and twos -- to create a base and set the stage for a late assault because a team like Australia hardly give any room for extravagance. And once you try to hit balls that hard and manage singles off them, your confidence for the other shots drop as you keep hitting the fielders.

Once the top order was gone, Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Alok Kapali fell to Brett Lee, who bagged the first hattrick of the Twenty20 to dash all hopes of a Bangladesh revival.

Aftab Ahmed, whose form has been tremendous in the tournament, also played poor cricket. Having skied a ball from Lee, Aftab stood in the middle of the pitch and may have waited for a boundary but the ball had stopped long before and the single taken meant that Shakib was on strike. And what followed was a Brett Lee hattrick.

Tamim and Aftab also failed to make most of four free hits in all. Aftab holed out to fielders in the deep on both occasions by picking up only couples during a relatively slow 34-ball 31. Tamim on the other hand managed to score one bye off Mitchell Johnson when the left-arter bowled two in a row.

With two more matches to go, the young team must regroup and come up with a performance that would remind the critics that their victory over the Caribbeans was just not a flash in the pan.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the World Twenty20 Super Eights match between Bangladesh and Australia at Newlands on Sunday.

Bangladesh and Australia at Newlands on Sunday.

BANGLADESH
Iqbal c Ponting b Clark 32
Nazimuddin c Ponting b Johnson 11
Aftab c Hodge b Bracken 31
Ashraful c Symonds b Clarke 7
Shakib c Gilchrist b Lee 16
Mortaza b Lee 0
Kapali lbw b Lee 0
Reza c Hussey b Bracken 4
Rahim not out 3
Razzak not out 0
Extras: (b-1, lb-2, nb-5, w-11) 19
Total: (For 8 wkt in 20 overs) 123
Fall of wkt: 1-40, 2-65, 3-82, 4-108, 5-108, 6-108, 7-120, 8-120.

Bowler O M R W
Lee 4 0 27 3
Bracken 3 0 14 2
Clark 4 0 13 1
Johnson 4 0 28 1
Symonds 2 0 10 0
Clarke 3 0 28 1
Did not bat: Syed Rasel

AUSTRALIA
Gilchrist run out 43
Hayden not out 73
Ponting not out 6
Extras: (nb-1, w-1) 2
Total: (For 1 wkt in 13.5 overs) 124
Fall of wicket: 1-104.

Bowler O M R W
Mortaza 3.5 0 27 0
Rasel 2 0 25 0
Razzak 4 0 34 0
Shakib 2 0 15 0
Kapali 2 0 23 0
Did not bat: Ponting, Hussey, Hodge, Clarke, Lee, Johnson, Bracken, Clark.

Result: Australia won by nine wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Brett Lee.
Umpires: I Howell (RSA), Asad Rauf (PAK).
TV umpire: A Hill (NZL).
Match referee: R Madugalle (SRI).



PHOTO: AFP

NOT ALWAYS A BATSMEN'S GAME: Australia fast bowler Brett Lee (C) completes his hattrick by trapping Bangladesh batsman Alok Kapali in front during their Super Eights match at the Newlands in Cape Town on Sunday.

Vettori gets India in a spin

AFP, Johannesburg

Did U Know?
Captain Daniel Vettori led from the front as New Zealand brushed aside India by 10 runs in the Super Eights match of the Twenty20 world championships on Sunday.

The left-arm spinner claimed 4-20, took a catch and effected a run out as the Kiwis, bowled out for 190, hit back to restrict India to 180-9 in good batting conditions at the Wanderers here.

India failed to build on a blistering start by openers Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir, who put on 76 for the first wicket from 35 deliveries.

Sehwag struck a typically belligerent 17-ball 40 containing six boundaries and two sixes, while Gambhir top-scored with 51 off 33 with five fours and two sixes.

But once Jacob Oram broke through by having Sehwag caught at mid-wicket, India lost their way and conceded wickets at regular

intervals to hand New Zealand two valuable points.

New Zealand are grouped with South Africa, England and India in group E of the Super Eights.

Group F comprises Australia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh with the top two teams from each group advancing to the semi-finals.

New Zealand's victory was set up by a valiant fightback from the lower order, who plundered 78 runs in the last five overs after they were reduced to 112-5.

Brendon McCullum smashed 45 off 31 balls at the start, before Craig McMillan (44 from 23) and Jacob Oram (35 off 15) bolstered the total by adding 73 in 33 balls for the sixth wicket.

McMillan hit four sixes and Oram three, but New Zealand failed to cross 200 when they lost four wickets in the final over.

"I don't think we bowled well towards the end of the innings, but the target was gettable after we got such a fine start," said Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"But we could not get another

partnership going and lost too many wickets in a heap. There is a lesson to be learnt here and hopefully we will do better in the other games."

"We know we must win both our remaining matches to make the semi-finals. Nothing is impossible in this game."

Vettori said the late batting revival played a key role because he was confident his bowlers could defend a reasonable target.

"The way Yuvraj and Harbhajan bowled in our innings, I knew we could keep the runs down," said Vettori, who last week was appointed New Zealand Test captain in place of the long-serving Stephen Fleming.

"So the efforts of McMillan and Oram were very valuable. It showed the depth in our batting. It was a good all-round performance."

New Zealand, who were struggling at 112-5 in 15 overs after being given first strike by Dhoni, slammed 25 runs in the 16th over bowled by Yuvraj in which Oram hit

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Bangla Games soccer squad named

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The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday named a 30-member preliminary squad for this year's 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Bangla Games to be held in Dhaka.

The under-19 squad was finalised after Friday's open trial at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur with BFF's coaching panel in charge.

However, the football governing body has yet to name a coach for the U-19s, who will start residential camp from September 19, all the BFF coaches are busy with the national team and other age-group sides.

Although the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has yet to disburse fund for the camp, the BFF will start the camp on its own at different venues including the Bangabandhu national Stadium and the Kamalapur Stadium.

If an Australian state side wins

Perils of Twenty20

INTERNET, undated

ICC WORLD TWENTY20 SOUTH AFRICA 2007
Not that long ago Twenty20 was a novelty game

complete with weird wigs and retro costumes at a national level and bug-eyed rugby league players at state level.

It was a form that put the hit and giggle back in the middle, filling a void created since the one-day game began to take itself seriously.

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