

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 could 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 hat-trick 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 hat-trick.

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-arm 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				
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 wkts in 20 overs)				123
Fall of wkts: 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 wickets: 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).



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

PHOTO: AFP



Did U Know?

Badminton premiered as a full-medal Olympic sport at the 1992 Games in Barcelona, Spain.



Mahendra Singh Dhoni

(India's T20 cricket captain)
"I don't want to see a cricket match decided on a bowl-out. The team plays so hard to get a result and it should always be decided on the field."



ESPN
ICC World Twenty20
Pakistan v Sri Lanka
Live from 9:45pm

Vettori gets India in a spin

AFP, Johannesburg



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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New Zealand opener Brendon McCullum places the ball towards backward point during the Super Eights match against India at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangla Games soccer squad named

SPORTS REPORTER

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.

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Perils of Twenty20

INTERNET, undated



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.

And this week the world has woken up to find what was a joke last season now has world cup status.

Then, a few days later, the Twenty20 Champions League announces itself and reveals there's so much money available to this hyper-abbreviated form of the game that state teams can earn more from playing 20 overs of hit and giggle than the Australian team can from winning the World Cup.

If an Australian state side wins

the Twenty20 Champions League play-off it will pocket \$2.4m.

By comparison, a state team stands to win about \$128,000 -- it recently went up from \$75,000 -- for winning the four-day Pura Cup competition.

The lure of the lucre in the new form is so strong it has brought players back from the dead. Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath have both rolled back the stone to make an appearance in the new Indian Premier League and there's talk up in the northern paddocks that Michael Kasprovicz has reclaimed his body -- he'd donated it to science -- and wants to make a comeback as a Twenty20 player.

Now money is a good thing, but everybody knows that it can do strange things to people and to sport.

Former Test captain and the previous Indian coach Greg Chappell has been watching the lantana-like spread of Twenty20 with some concern.

He says that while he is happy with the new game being played as

a fundraiser at the domestic level, he is concerned that it might affect the focus of our most important breeding grounds for Test players -- the states.

Chappell points out that the one-day game has so distracted most of the other cricketing nations that they have fallen away in the five-day game.

He worries that the simplistic Twenty20 form could do further damage.

For a start, he finds the form is naive and needs development. "It's got limitations as a form, it is very one-dimensional," Chappell says. "It's certainly not the panacea for our ills as some consider it."

Chappell says the Twenty20 game lacks depth, that there is no penalty for losing wickets as it's hard to be bowled out and there is little fielding involved as the ball generally sails off into the crowd.

"At this stage it is just about who can hit the ball the furthest and that is not enough to sustain

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Pursuit of perfection



AFP, New Delhi

The moment Rahul Dravid realised the Indian captaincy was proving a distraction from his relentless pursuit of batting perfection, he decided to step down immediately.

The reliable middle-order batsman quit the job on Friday, saying he wanted to focus on his own game.

The move was hardly surprising because Dravid was more of an exemplar than a motivator during his two-year reign, which saw India win eight Tests, including series victories in the West Indies, England and Bangladesh.

When the 34-year-old Dravid failed with the bat, the perfectionist in him had to rebel.

He found it unacceptable that his lofty batting standards had slipped. He averaged 20.83 in South Africa last season and 25.20 in England this

year in three-Test series, far below his overall average of 56.50.

Credit to him for choosing a forthright route to regaining his batting magic. It augurs well for India, as he can now perform without the burden of captaincy to serve his team better.

Nicknamed "The Wall" for his solid defence, Dravid has spent more than

a decade in international cricket striving to improve upon his performance. He has scored 9,492 runs in 112 Tests and 10,534 in 327 one-day internationals.

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell said he was not surprised by Dravid's decision, saying he

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TODAY'S MATCH

Team	Time	Venue
Pakistan v Sri Lanka	9 : 45 p m	