

'All about hard work' Smith keen on world record

BISHWAJIT ROY from Chittagong

WARID Cricket Series

There was no point for any Bangladeshi player to turn out for the press conference after the first day of the second Test match against South Africa at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday, as it was all about their humiliation. They were at the receiving end of their opponents' record-breaking spree, keeping them at bay all day.

It was nothing new for the Bangladesh cricket team that they finished a day without any bowling success as the same team did it once earlier in the same city, though at a different stadium, during their first trip in 2003 and the Tigers have fresh memory of getting the same experience against India in Mirpur only last year.

Still nobody would be inclined to say much when their opponents have drowned them under a score of 405 without any loss at the end of the day's play but the first Test hero Shahadat Hossain was courageous enough in making presence felt in the briefing but what he could say more than 'it was a tough and painful day', 'there was nothing in the pitch' and 'they batted really well' or something like that.

In reality it was a day for South African captain Graeme Smith (223*) and his opening partner Neil McKenzie (169*) to say many things after their record-breaking opening stand. But don't think they were over the moon after achieving so many accolades and being in a position to break some old batting record. The reason may be they were exhausted after spending the entire day in the middle and especially for the double hundred maker Smith, who now holds the record for most double hundreds made by any South African batsman, something not new for him, the left-hander having made four

so far in his Test career. The mighty batsman, who eclipsed late Hansie Cronje's record of leading South Africa for 53 matches yesterday and reached the 5000-run mark, however said that he was looking forward to break the 53-year-old record of highest partnership (413) for the first wicket stand which is held by Indian pair Vinoo Mankad and Pankaj Roy, made against New Zealand in Chennai.

"We are just told about the record. I was involved with Herschelle Gibbs to make a new opening partnership record for our country and now again I made it with another guy. It would be nice if we can take the score to 415 runs tomorrow (Saturday). The main focus for me is to achieve the mark," said a delighted Smith, who earlier added 368 with Gibbs against Pakistan in Cape Town in 2003.

The South African skipper also recalled his memory of watching Jacques Rudolph and Boeta Dippenaar batting for a whole day in 2003 for an endless 429-run third wicket stand on the second day at the MAAZiz Stadium in the port city.

"I remember that and it was only my second game as a captain. I quite remember that it was a hot day and I know that it's different ground. It's always nice to bat all through the day," he recalled.

Smith explained the reasons behind their success yesterday by saying that the wicket was perfect for batting, where they only needed to stay patient.

"For me the wicket played really very well today. It has a little bit more carry than the last one. Once you are set in, it is all about making your runs count. At one stage the bowlers got reverse swing bit but Macky (McKenzie) and I had solid control today. I think if Bangladesh stuck to a plan all day, they could have come up with something and its all about keeping discipline, nothing else," said Smith, who

made his second hundred against Bangladesh after his exact 200 at home in 2002.

"I have got quite a few double hundreds, so I know it's all about hard work. You have to concentrate all through the day if you want to make it big," he added.

But he admitted that the 400-plus runs, which was a world record in terms of opening pair's contribution in a single day, was beyond their expectations although they have talked about a big innings in the team meeting.

"Obviously I didn't expect a 400-plus in a day. It's really great and we are lucky enough we could do it. I enjoyed my game today and we really played well. The wicket was good, outfield was also quick which is nice," he said.

Smith also considered themselves lucky enough to have won the toss to bat first in this kind of a flat track where there was nothing for the bowlers.

"I am happy and I think our bowlers were happier as I won the toss. You know it's always nice to get the opportunity of batting first in the sub-continent," the South African skipper said with a smile.

Smith was not ready to say about their plans particularly the timing of their declaration.

"There's still a lot of time left in this game. We have to see how it goes tomorrow morning. After lunch of the second day, we will take our decision," he informed.

On the other hand, McKenzie praised his skipper highly by saying that it was always nice to bat with the big lad.

"It's always a great experience to bat with Graeme because you will never be under pressure. I never thought that I was struggling in any stage as the scoreboard kept ticking due to Graeme's batting," said the right-hander, who overcame his seven-year itch of getting a Test hundred. He ended his agony by



AN ABJECT LESSON: South Africa captain Graeme Smith (L) and his opening partner Neil McKenzie take a single during their mammoth 405-run unbroken stand on the first day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.



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Geoff Lawson
(Pakistan cricket coach)
"If the IPL and ICL overtake international cricket then there will be problems and it has to be managed very carefully."



BTV & Super Sport 2
Bangladesh v South Africa
Second Test, Day Two
Live from 10:00am

STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
Fulham v Man United
Live from 8:55pm
Man City v Wigan
Live from 11:10pm

Primera Liga
Atletico Madrid v Barcelona
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Arsenal v Aston Villa
Live from 8:55pm



Bangladesh v South Africa
Second Test, Day Two
Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Premier Div Cricket League
Abahani v Surjo Torun
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium

Mohammedan v BKSP
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Sonargaon Cricketers v City Club
Venue: BKSP-2

Some solace for SL

AFP, Melbourne



Australia's Adam Gilchrist smashed a blistering 83 in his farewell appearance at the MCG but his teammates collapsed to hand Sri Lanka an unlikely 13-run win here on Friday.

The tourists, in their final match of the tri-series, made 221, and Australia looked well set when Gilchrist launched an extraordinary attack at the top of the order.

However, in a disappointing performance just two days away from their first tri-series final against India, the home side were dismissed for 208 from 48.1 overs to end a seven-match winning streak against the Sri Lankans.

Gilchrist smashed the Sri Lankan bowlers to all parts of the ground and Australia had already raced to 107 when opening partner James Hopes was controversially bowled for 28 by Muttiah Muralidaran (2-42) in the 15th over.

Although there was confusion over how Hopes was dismissed, it seemed a minor hiccup for his side.

However, the match turned when Gilchrist holed out to a fine catch by Lasith Malinga from the bowling of Nuwan Kulasekara (2-36) at long off for 83 just six runs later.

The veteran left-hander, set to retire at the end of this tournament, faced just 50 balls, belting 11 fours and two sixes and was on target to score Australia's fastest one-day

international hundred.

Sri Lankan veteran Sanath Jayasuriya, who claimed the last Australian wicket, said the dismissal of the Australian wicketkeeper-batsman was the turning point.

"Gilly batted really well, that was the crucial wicket for us," he said.

"After that, I thought the bowlers bowled really well." Gilchrist was named man of the match, but took little delight from the award after the loss, blaming himself for the defeat.

"I feel a bit silly to be honest," he said. "I had that game by the throat, so I feel a bit silly. I got a bit carried away."

With Gilchrist gone, the match turned suddenly as Sri Lanka claimed four more wickets in quick succession, the home side losing 6-16 to slump to 123 for six.

Captain Ricky Ponting was trapped lbw by Kulasekara for one, while Michael Clarke and the struggling Andrew Symonds both fell for ducks, all three batsmen falling with the score on 115.

When Brad Haddin, playing as a batsman with opener Matthew Hayden rested, was trapped lbw by a superb Malinga yorker for seven, Australia were in deep trouble.

Mike Hussey and Brad Hogg

TRI-SERIES STANDINGS

Team	P	W	L	NR	BP	Pts
Australia	8	5	2	1	4	26*
India	8	3	3	2	1	17*
Sri Lanka	8	2	5	1	0	10

steadied the ship briefly, before Chamara Kapugedera curved one through Hussey's defences to remove him for five, leaving Australia 142 for seven.

Brett Lee tried to revive the chase, but any hope of an Australian fightback seemed over when Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene claimed a superb diving catch to remove Mitchell Johnson and give Ishara Amerasinghe (3-44) his third wicket.

Number 11 Nathan Bracken joined Lee and the pair cut the target from 49 to just 14 before Jayawardene sprung a surprise by bringing Jayasuriya on for the 49th over.

With his first ball he clean bowled Lee for 37 to hand Sri Lanka the win.

Earlier, half-centuries from Jayawardene and Tillakaratne Dilshan steered Sri Lanka to 221 after winning the toss.

Jayawardene cracked 50 off 66 balls and Dilshan 62 from 70 balls after they had slumped to 42 for three with the loss of star batsman Kumar Sangakkara for 11.

Left-arm paceman Nathan Bracken finished with 4-29 off 10 overs and Brett Lee claimed two wickets.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard in the tri-series one-day international between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday:

SRI LANKA
Perera lbw b Lee 5
Jayasuriya c Hussey b Bracken 23
Sangakkara c Hussey b Johnson 11

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SOMETHING TO TAKE HOME: Sri Lanka paceman Lasith Malinga (R) is in seventh heaven after getting rid of Australian batsman Brad Haddin during their CB Series match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

Mohammedan face Churchill today

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club will take on Goa's Churchill Brothers in today's IFA Shield match at Howrah.

The match will kick off at 3:30pm (Bangladesh time).

Mohammedan, the Bangladesh B. League runners-up, drew their opening match 0-0 on Thursday with Kolkata Mohammedan, who face Mohun Bagan in today's other Group A match at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.

Churchill, I-League runners-ups, lead the group by virtue of their 1-0 win over Mohun Bagan in the opening match of the 113th edition of the prestigious competition.

Also on Thursday, defending champions Mahindra United lost to South African Premiership side Santos FC 2-0 with Tasleem Paulse scoring in the seventh and 50 minutes.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Mosharef bagged four wickets for 19 to help Young Pegasus B snatch a thrilling five-run win against Dhaka Mariners in yesterday's First Division Cricket League at the Jahangirnagar University ground.

In reply to Pegasus's modest 181-9, Mariners were all out for 176 with four balls remaining.

In other matches, Khelaghar (182-9) trounced Orient (122) by 60 runs at Fatullah Stadium to maintain their four-match winning run, Indira Road (228-6) defeated Kathalagan (200) by 28 runs at BKSP and Rupali Bank (158) recorded a 43-run victory over Dhanmondi (115) at the same venue.

NAT'L WOMEN'S CHESS
Challengers Shamima Akhter Liza and Nazrana Khan Eva shared the lead with holder IWM Rani Hamid in the Aromatic Gold 29th National Women's Chess Championship after seven rounds.

The three won their respective matches -- Rani beat WFM Tanima Parveen, Liza defeated Jahanara Haque Runu and Eva beat Shamima Sharmin Shimmi -- to take their collection to six points.

In other matches, Sharmin Sultana Shirin defeated Masuda Begum, Rokhsana Tidi drew with Arifa Khatun Moni and WFM Shabana Parveen Nipa shared points with Zakia Sultana.

JEAN CUP
Two second-half goals by Ariful Islam in as many minutes gave

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CHITTAGONG CHILLIES

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong



The authority's decision to allow school students free entry into the stadium paid full dividend on the first day of the second Test between Bangladesh and South Africa here at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium (CDS) yesterday.

The only sight from the day's entire episode one can take pride on behalf of Bangladesh was the cheering crowd, constituted largely by school boys, while the Tigers led by Mohammad Ashraf failed miserably to pluck out a single hair off the Proteas scalp.

With non-stop beating of drums, waving of signs of fours and sixes, colourful caps, bands and flutes, the students occupied most parts of the galleries and kept the atmosphere of the stadium vibrant.

Despite Bangladesh's frustrating show on the green centre, the

4,000-plus crowd continued to add sort of liveliness to an otherwise dull, priceless, prolonged day of cricket, the CDS ever seen since it made its debut as Test venue back in February, 2006.

HE GOT IT ALL WRONG

Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraf does not know how to master in tossing the coin. This was invented by a few smart and conscious cricket fans indicating how vital the toss actually was for the home team!

"If you look back from video footage, you would see that Ashraf tossed the coin not only hurriedly but in a most casual manner in the morning that in fact had deprived him off 'toss luck' on a batting paradise," Fahim and Tofayel, two avid cricket fans from city's Chawk Bazar area, told this correspondent.

They went on: "Besides, Ashraf tossed the coin horizontally instead of throwing the coin

upright. As a result, the coin started rolling in favour of South African captain Graeme Smith from the very beginning and finally brought ill luck for Ash," they said.

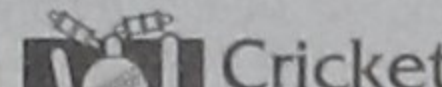
The two fans further observed that the Australians are by nature master craftsmen in the art of tossing the cricket coin to reap benefit from it.

BODY LANGUAGE NOWHERE

On a barren day for Bangladesh, another feature that would frustrate the home crowd was the absence of positive body language either from Ashraf or his guns yesterday.

Ashraf failed to inspire his bowlers and fielders to go for at least some tries against the wall of Smith and Neil McKenzie. Hardly had he been seen motivating any of the bowlers or fielders to show sort of aggression. Instead the skipper stood aloof for most of the proceedings on a bitter first day.

Premier League from today



SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani start defence of their Premier Cricket League title against Surjo Torun today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur Stadium as the prestigious domestic competition begins across the city.

Three matches will be played at different venues but former cricketer Shakil Kasem will declare the 12-team fray open in Mirpur.

Although Mohammedan, Old DOHS and Surjo Torun lodged protests against the fixture, claiming that it was not done properly, the league will continue according to the same fixture.

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, acting member secretary MA Kabir and member Torikul Islam Tito in a meeting yesterday with captains, managers and coaches of the clubs explained the bylaws and playing conditions for the competition.

The CCDM officials also confirmed that the last two year's competition was played in similar format.

"We have told the three clubs that if a better format is available, it would be followed in the future. They have agreed to play according to this fixture," informed Lipu last night.

The suggested minor corrections and changes by the clubs to the bylaws have been accepted and would be incorporated in due process, he added.

Although the big guns will be without the top stars -- on national duty in the ongoing home series against South Africa -- the youth team's return from Malaysia last night after the Under-19 Cricket World Cup will somewhat help the teams fill in a few gaps.

The two teams in top form -- Abahani and Victoria -- are perhaps facing the most difficult opening round fixture. Abahani are pitted against Khaled Mashud's Surjo Torun who faced a couple of days earlier in the semifinal of the Twenty20 League.

Abahani, who won all their five group matches in the shortest version of the game, downed Surjo Torun in the semifinal but the Premiership holders will have to wait long as the date of the final has yet to be slated.

It would be a chance for Torun, who regained their Premiership spot and built a commendable side, to take revenge of their recent defeat. It would also be a personal vendetta for Mashud, who last year led Abahani to their first league title in six seasons but was ignored this time.

Both the sides have also yet to confirm any foreign recruits but most of the others have ensured to go into the first day with an

imported cricketer.

Victoria, still smarting from their semifinal loss to City Club in the Twenty20 competition after winning all the group games, will play Kalabagan Kriha Chakra who missed a place in the semifinals of the same event after a last round debacle.

Victoria have signed Pakistani's Jaffar Qureshi, a tested all-rounder in Dhaka, while Kalabagan have a solid batsman in Shabbaz Butt, also from Pakistan.

Last year's runners-up Mohammedan, who lost all their matches in the T20 competition despite winning the inaugural trophy last season, have roped in Delhi off-spinner Ajit Chandel. The Indian player is expected to take the field against debutants BKSP at the Fatullah Stadium.

BKSP, who shocked Mohammedan in the T20 opener, will not take any foreign cricketer.

Other foreign cricketers likely to play the first round are Hong Kong national team's Pakistani-born left-arm spinner Monir Ahmed (Old DOHS), Rashed Hanif (Partex) and Fahadullah (Sonargaon).

ROUND 1 FIXTURE

March 1: Abahani v Surjo Torun (Mirpur), Mohammedan v BKSP (Fatullah), Sonargaon v City Club (BKSP).

March 2: Biman v Partex (DCS), Victoria v Kalabagan (BKSP), Old DOHS v Young Pegasus (Fatullah).