

AFC U-19 FOOTBALL Hosts play for pride

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh are looking forward to ending their campaign of the AFC U-19 Championship Qualifiers on a high note as they face Oman in the last match of Group A at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The match gets underway at 7:00pm after the match between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, who will be locking horns in the championship-deciding match.

The Group's last match has become a match to salvage pride for the hosts, after being mauled by Saudi Arabia and Iraq, both of whom have taken the two qualifying spots from the group with three straight victories.

Having won their first match 3-0 against Maldives, Bangladesh went down to Iraq 6-0 and were beaten 4-0 by the Saudis to bid bye to their hopes of qualification.

Oman, too, have a single victory from the three matches, which came against hapless Maldives. So an outright victory in today's match will help the winners finish third in the five-team group.

Oman are definitely

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A TOUGH DAY AHEAD: Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (L) listens to opener Tamim Iqbal as they walk back to the dressing room at close of fourth day's play of the second Test against West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Mountain to climb

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Bangladesh have five batsmen to tackle the enormous fight on their hands on the final day of the second and final Test match against West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim who were unbeaten at stumps on 82 and 33 respectively on Day Four with the Tigers on 164 for three, will be on duty to initiate Bangladesh's most tricky day of cricket in this year so far. Shakib Al Hasan, Naeem Islam and Nasir Hossain will, at some stage today, be asked to share the bulk of playing out the mandatory 90 overs with a whopping 344 runs remaining in the chase. West Indies declared their second innings on 383-5 after Darren Bravo's 391-minute marathon ended on 195 runs; his final slog off Sohrawardi Shuvo being the skier caught by Mushfiqur.

The remaining 344 runs is an anomaly which should be the last thing on the Tigers' mind but their start was nothing like the beginning of a battle that would last 137 overs.

It was in the same vein as in the first innings, the openers actually going at a faster rate (26 in three overs) than they did on the second day. After Marlon Samuels dropped Tamim Iqbal (on 12) at point, Imrul Kayes predictably edged Fidel Edwards in the same over to Kirk Edwards at first slip off a delivery that was slightly short of good length.

The low catch was referred to the third umpire who gave Imrul the marching orders, the opener continuing his low

phase in Test cricket. Shahriar Nafees then had his best 40 minutes at the crease, battling hard against a barrage of back of a length and short-pitched balls dished out by Edwards and Kemar Roach. Just when it seemed Nafees had gotten used to the pace and bounce, his slightly uppish drive was well caught by skipper Darren Sammy who was really pleased with the contribution.

Tamim was still going strong at the other end, taking care of the poor deliveries while also providing the solidity which the Tigers have lacked in the first dig. His early salvo included three successive boundaries off Roach, a glide and an upper-cut after the first which shaved past the stumps. His handling of Devendra Bishoo's leg-spin from around the wicket was encouraging as he mixed caution with two boundaries and a six.

Rokibul Hasan, who was giving Tamim ample support, succumbed to one that bounced more than he anticipated off Marlon Samuels. The previous delivery was a close call for Rokibul who snuck the ball between wicketkeeper Carlton Baugh and Sammy but just like the first innings of the Chittagong Test, the 24-year-old from Jamalpur succumbed in the same over that he got a reprieve.

Mushfiqur remained steadfast with Tamim as the road of a pitch gave no extra help to the bowlers.

Earlier, West Indies added 176 in only 30.3 overs with Bravo being the chief destroyer. He launched into the tired Tigers, hitting a dozen boundaries and five sixes. He added 143 for the fifth wicket with Shivanarine Chanderpaul who enjoyed himself with a stroke-filled unbeaten 59.

Sylhet, Khulna victors

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Sylhet earned their first win in the National Cricket League in nearly five years when they beat Rangpur by an innings and 73 runs at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

It was also Sylhet's first victory by an innings since 2002 in a game that would be a huge boost for their fledgling structure.

Elsewhere, Khulna defeated Dhaka by 91 runs within three days while Dhaka Metro and Rajshahi are well placed in their respective matches going into the final day.

KHULNA-DHAKA

A five-wicket haul from Taposh Ghosh skittled Dhaka out for 194 runs in the second innings after Khulna set them a winning target of 286 at the Shamsul Huda Stadium in Jessore.

The left-arm spinner removed Taibur Parvez (53) and Abul Bashar (49) among his five as Dhaka lost their second game in the competition.

Earlier, Khulna added 66 to their overnight 158 for 6 with Dollar Mahmud scoring a fiery 31 with the help of two sixes and two boundaries.

RANGPUR-SYLHET

Abu Jahed's second excellent performance in the game gave Sylhet a first outright win since 2007.

The seamer took five for 24 as his 13 overs were enough to destroy a depleted Rangpur side for the second time in a row, after they made only 138 in the first innings.

Apart from Jahed, Alok Kapali took two wickets for just 11 runs, somewhat making up for his missed century after he was dismissed nine short of the three-figure mark in the Sylhet first innings.

Earlier, Sylhet declared their only innings on 423 for nine, taking a first innings lead of 285 runs.

CHITTAGONG-RAJSHAHI

Farhad Hossain cracked a career-best 216 in an innings that lasted just five minutes short of nine hours. The 406-ball essay had 18 boundaries and two sixes but more importantly, it got Rajshahi in a position of strength.

The 72-run first innings lead meant that Chittagong, who were well placed after their first innings, had to bat in fading light at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium. They made a meal of it, losing four wickets in only 7.4

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Something special left in the tank?

BISHWAJIT ROY



Where stands the match now? After the fourth day's play, that was the talking point at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Without any doubt West Indies were in a great position to win the match as well as the series after imposing the crushing weight of a 508-run winning target on the home side.

But decent batting from undefeated Tamim Iqbal (82) and Mushfiqur Rahim (33) in the second innings admitted a ray of hope in the Tigers' tent. What can be a possible or realistic chance for the Tigers? Bangladesh will set a new record if they go on to win the match, an unlikely scenario to say the least as they were still trailing by 343 runs with seven wickets in hand at close of play.

On the other hand, a draw is a possibility, in which case also the Tigers will have to put up a special batting performance. But one can't be too optimistic about the second option because the record hardly speaks in favour of Mushfiqur Rahim's men as there has been only one instance in their history when they batted all through the final day, against Zimbabwe in Dhaka back in 2005 to salvage a draw from an almost similar position.

Therefore, everybody was surprised when Naeem Islam said in the press conference: "Our Target is to win the match. The way we have been batting so far it won't be impossible to win."

But Shakib Al Hasan believed that a draw would be the best possible result for them. "In my opinion, a draw is the best possible result because it's easy for the batsmen to stay in the middle on this pitch if he does not gift his wicket

away. On the other hand, scoring run is not so easy here," explained the former national skipper.

The consensus about the condition of the pitch seems to be, as West Indies coach Ottis Gibson also maintained during his press conference, that the surface remains batting-friendly.

Shakib thought that it was a matter of the remaining batsmen applying themselves. "The pitch is still really good for batting. The matter is very simple as we have to apply ourselves there," said Shakib.

"From what I've seen so far, the wicket is not a problem. Batting on it is not difficult," Naeem echoed the sentiment.

"We understand we need to apply ourselves out there in the middle so we need to make sure we go out there and do that. The ball isn't turning here, which I believe is because of the wicket.

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Emily gets the nod

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Zahid Hasan Emily can dream of getting his national boots back as the ace striker was asked to join the training camp of the national football team ahead of the SAFF Championship.

National team's head coach Nikola Ilievski yesterday spoke with Emily and defender Atiqur Rahman Meshu at the BFF House and asked them to join the camp which got underway on October 22, solely for the SAFF Championship which will be held in New Delhi from December 2 to 11.

"I met with the coach today (Tuesday) where he asked me to join the team from tomorrow (Wednesday)," Emily told The Daily Star yesterday.

The National Team Management Committee

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Gibson not complacent

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh may have shown some fight during the fourth day of the second Test against West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, but the visitors are well and truly in the driving seat.

But their coach Ottis Gibson is not willing to take the Tigers lightly.

"We need to get 7 wickets to win and the wicket is still playing well, although we found it difficult to score in the morning," he said at the post-day press conference. "You don't come over to a place like this and expect to blast through the opposition. You need to work hard for your wickets. The Bangladeshi batsmen were a bit reckless in the first innings but you don't expect them to do that twice."

With Tamim Iqbal at the crease on 82, Gibson realises the importance of getting him out as early as possible as he may be the key for Bangladesh. "We know Tamim is still at the crease and he's a quality player, so we're mindful of that."

Nonetheless, Gibson is happy to be in a position of control after a long time in an away Test but is also not taking a victory for the hosts out of the equation, especially since the pitch has shown no signs of being a difficult one to bat on. He

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WHAT HAVE I DONE? West Indies batsman Darren Bravo grimaces in agony after missing what would have been his first double hundred by just five runs. The left-hander himself was only to be blamed for being ambitious; he tried to reach the mark with a second successive six but ended up offering a high catch to Bangladesh wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim on the fourth day of the Mirpur Test.

BD-WI SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and the West Indies on Tuesday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 355 (Edwards 121, Powell 72, Brathwaite 50; Shakib 5-63, Nasir 3-52)

BANGLADESH: First innings 231 (Shakib 73; F Edwards 5-63)

WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight 207-3):

Brathwaite run out	0
Powell c Nasir b Shakib	12
Edwards b Shuvo	86
Bravo c Rahim b Shuvo	195
Roach c Naeem b Shuvo	12
Chanderpaul not out	59
Extras: (b-6, lb-4, nb-4, w-5)	19
Total (For 5 wickets dec. in 111.3 overs)	383
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-33, 3-184, 4-240, 5-63	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rubel	12	2	36	0
Nasir	25	5	78	0
Shakib	21	1	79	1
Naeem	12	2	38	0
Shuvo	26.3	3	73	3
Shahadat	11	0	57	0
Ragibul	4	0	12	0

BANGLADESH: Second innings

Tamim not out	82
Imrul c K Edwards b F Edwards	9
Nafees c & b Sammy	18
Ragibul c Sammy b Samuels	17
Mushfiqur not out	33
Extras: (b-2, lb-1, nb-2)	5
Total: (For 3 wickets in 47 overs)	164
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-73, 3-124	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
F Edwards	9	0	38	1
Roach	8	2	36	0
Sammy	7	2	11	1
Bishoo	11	3	35	0
Samuels	12	2	41	1