

# Inept batting leaves bowlers helpless

SL take T20I series 2-0

BISHWAJIT ROY

Victory eluded the Tigers yet again as Sri Lanka clinched another last-ball thriller to seal the T20 series 2-0 with a three-wicket win in the second match at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium last night.

There were not many who believed that Bangladesh could pull off a win against the number one side in the newest format after the home team set a mere 121-run target for the visitors following senseless batting after winning the toss.

But the valiant bowling effort led by captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza brought them back in contention before gentle medium pacer Forhad Reza could not keep the Sri Lankans from scoring the nine required to win.

If the batting approach of the Tigers irked supporters, they were perplexed when stopgap captain Mashrafe gave the ball to Forhad Reza with the visitors requiring nine runs off last six balls when a trusted bowler like Shakib Al Hasan had two overs in hand.

Everybody was on their toes when the right-arm paceman started his over and the recalled all-rounder bowled five good deliveries to leave Sri Lanka needing two from the last ball. Inexplicably however, he produced a short delivery that was smacked by Sachithra Senanayake to the square leg fence, thus sealing a cruel end to the match for Mashrafe, who rotated his bowler brilliantly to unsettle Sri Lanka's batting in defence of a meagre total.

Sri Lanka lost wickets at regular intervals but Tigers' bogey-man Kumar Sangakkara was there to keep hopes alive. Pacer Rubel Hossain however seized back the initiative by inducing an outside edge from Sangakkara's bat to short third man where local hero Tamim Iqbal took a good low catch. Sri Lanka were then reduced to 96 for seven leaving the tail-enders to score 25 runs off 20 balls.

Senanayake and Thisara Perera, who was unbeaten on 35, however kept their cool to take their team to a victory with an unbeaten 27-run stand.

After Arafat Sunny, Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad's early success, captain Mashrafe himself snared two scalps of Angelo Perera and Angelo Mathews to swing the game in favour of the Tigers.

In the bigger picture however, the Bangladeshi team management must get answers about the poor batting approach in the match, the Tigers' last T20I before the ICC World Twenty20 at home.

Sri Lanka had started with a dropped catch to give Shamsur Rahman a second chance but the right-hander played a lethargic pull to get out while Tamim was not good enough to clear the fence. The openers' quick dismissals however hardly dented the flamboyant spirit of the two next batsmen Shakib and Anamul Haque.

Anamul, whose good knock went in vain in the first match, entertained the crowd most but it made no sense to play with a motto of hitting every ball after a productive over. Both batsmen were victims of two spectacular catches but they should not have played the extravagant shots in the first place.

Bangladesh batsmen must learn, and that too quickly, that every ball is not to be smashed even in a T20 game.

# 'You need luck sometimes'

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong

The T20 series may have ended with Sri Lanka winning it two-nil, but there was clearly a lot more than what the result reflected, evidenced by Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal's statement after the match.

When asked if the visitors considered themselves a bit lucky to complete a flawless series win, he replied, "Yes. But sometimes we need luck. Bangladesh are good in the shorter formats and we never underestimate them, so I think we do need luck sometimes."

"I am really happy the way we played. As a unit everybody did their part. It was a tough wicket to bat on, especially with the new ball and it also turned a bit. We lost quick wickets but [Kumar] Sangakkara helped us out and at the end Thisara Perera batted brilliantly," he added.

With all of Sri Lanka's group stage matches of the ICC World T20 scheduled to take place at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong, Chandimal believed that the series had done them a lot of good.

"It was a really good opportunity for us to play before the World Cup. We have the advantage now, especially with respect to when the dew factor will come into play and how the wicket behaves, we have something up our sleeves," he said.

Bowler Nuwan Kulasekara, who was declared man of the series for a good run with both bat and ball, took a blinder of a catch in yesterday's game to dismiss Shakib Al Hasan, who was looking dangerous.

Kulasekara, who sprinted from mid-on to long-on and dived full length to dismiss Shakib and then tumble only to stop inches short of the boundary, however, claimed that it was not his best effort!

"I initially thought I would not get that catch. I ran a lot and somehow got it in the end. That was not my best catch; I took a better catch in Dambulla against Bangladesh," he said.



## U-19s primed for Afghan challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

Refreshed from a hundred per cent success rate in the warm-up games, the Bangladesh Under-19s will play their first group match against Afghanistan today in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in Abu Dhabi today.

Bangladesh have been

pitted in Group B along with Australia, Afghanistan and Namibia.

In yesterday's opening day matches,五十 from Ben Duckett and Ed Barnard, followed by a three-wicket haul from seamer Will Rhodes paved the way for England Under-19s' 213-run thrashing of UAE under-19s in Abu Dhabi; a half-century from Sri Lanka Under-19s captain Kusal Mendis helped set up the team's 49-run victory against New Zealand Under-19s in Sharjah; an all-round performance from Tinashe Kamunhukama helped Zimbabwe Under-19s to a six-wicket win against Canada Under-19s in Abu Dhabi; and South Africa Under-19s beat West Indies Under-19s by 94 runs at Dubai.

PHOTOS:  
ANURUP KANTI DAS



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# Dew blurs Mashrafe's vision

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong



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As the tense second T20I entered its last few overs yesterday night, there were two questions that lingered in the minds of those watching: When will Shakib Al Hasan, who had two overs remaining, have a go at the Sri Lankans and why would Forhad Reza, who had bowled just one over before the 20th, be given the last over?

As Mashrafe Bin Mortaza put it, it was ultimately the dew factor that compelled him to take those rather unconventional steps.

"The ball was completely wet due to the dew and he (Shakib) was not able to grip the ball and also it was a left-handed batsman at the crease (Thisara Perera)," said Mashrafe at the post-match press conference.

"We wanted the last over to be tight after me and Rubel bowled. Shakib was out of the ques-

tion from long before because of the dew. The ball slipped out of the pacers' hands as well. At one stage we had to bowl cross seam," he added.

Yet again, it was the last ball that denied the hosts a T20 win. On this occasion, with two runs required off the last ball, Forhad bowled a slower bouncer which was whacked for a four. Despite the criticism, Mashrafe stated that that was a planned delivery.

"We wanted a wicket in the last ball and go for a win instead of giving them that single. And so we thought it would be best to bowl a bouncer and surprise the batsman. Forhad gave his full effort, but unfortunately, the ball was so wet and soft that it slowed down after hitting the wicket," explained Mashrafe.

"The fine-leg fielder was inside to put a little bit of doubt in the batsman's mind, so that he wouldn't expect the bouncer. We were looking for a mis-hit, but unfortunately, it didn't work out," he added.

Mashrafe, who won the toss on both occasions, explained that it was hard to predict the conditions at the ground.

"The last time I chose to bowl I saw that there was no dew in the evening, also the ball stayed low in the second innings. Considering that I chose to bat first today. While the ball did stay low in the second innings, there was plenty of dew unfortunately," said Mashrafe.

Disappointed with the way his batters played, Mashrafe thought that they were 10 to 15 runs short. At the same time however, the captain believed that the hosts showed plenty of vigour to make a game of it.

"I always believed that we could beat Sri Lanka even before the series. We lost due to mistakes that we made. Could have been better if some of our players were not injured, but there are no excuses. We will try to take the positives from this game into the ODIs," said Mashrafe.

### SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH	R	B	45	65
Tamim c Mendis b Kulasekara	2	4	0	0
Chandimal c Dilshan b Dilshan	1	3	0	0
Anamul c Perera b Senanayake	24	17	2	2
Shakib c Kulasekara b Senanayake	12	6	3	0
Nasir c Chandimal b Mendis	8	13	0	0
Sabbir c Kulasekara b Malinga	26	36	2	0
Mahmudullah run out	9	10	1	0
Reza c Chandimal b Kulasekara	9	14	0	0
Mashrafe c Malinga	17	10	4	0
Sunny c Chandimal b Malinga	5	6	1	0
Rubel not out	0	0	0	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-3)	7			
Total: (All out in 19.5 overs)	120			
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-3, 3-35, 4-41, 5-47, 6-59, 7-80, 8-101, 9-120.				

### Bowler

Dilshan	0	M	R	W
Kulasekara	2	0	23	1
Senanayake	4	0	32	2
Malinga	3.5	0	20	3
Mathews	2	0	9	0
Mendis	4	0	21	1

### SRI LANKA

R	B	45	65
Perera lbw b Shakib	21	18	3
Dilshan b Sunny	3	6	0
Chandimal lbw b Mahmudullah	3	8	0
Sangakkara c Tamim b Rubel	37	38	1
K Perera b Mashrafe	4	8	0
Mathews c Anamul b Mashrafe	2	3	0
Kulasekara run out	2	3	0
TPera not out	35	28	3
Senanayake not out	12	9	1
Extras: (b-1, w-2, nb-1)	4		
Total: (For 7 wkt in 20 overs)	123		

### Did not bat: Mendis, Malinga.

Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-25, 3-32, 4-42, 5-46, 6-50, 7-96.

### Bowler

O	M	R	W
Dilshan	2	0	1
Kulasekara	4	0	32
Senanayake	4	0	11
Malinga	3.5	0	20
Mathews	2	0	9
Mendis	4	0	21

### SRI LANKA

R	B	45	65
Perera lbw b Shakib	21	18	3
Dilshan b Sunny	3	6	0
Chandimal lbw b Mahmudullah	3	8	0
Sangakkara c Tamim b Rubel	37	38	1
K Perera b Mashrafe	4	8	0
Mathews c Anamul b Mashrafe	2	3	0
Kulasekara run out	2	3	0
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