

SPORT

'Didn't expect them to take it so lightly'

SPORTS REPORTER



India have saddened many by picking an under-strength side for next month's three-match ODI series and Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim believes that the only possible reply will have to be given on the field of play.

"It is not that I am upset to see this team but I didn't expect them to take this series so lightly. Hope we can reply on the field. Nothing would be better than that," said the Tigers skipper yesterday in Mirpur while he was commenting on the 15-member India squad, which was without eight regular players including captain MS Dhoni and batting sensation Virat Kohli.

The little man however recognised that the expectations would be greater now that they would be playing an Indian side without their big guns.

"After seeing their team, I realised that there will more expectation on us. But pressure is always there when we play against India, even when they had Dhoni. Everyone wants us to beat them. We could not play our best cricket in the last three months and I believe we have the ability to beat their best side if we can play our best cricket," said a confident Mushfiqur, who joined the preparation camp for the series yesterday.

Mushfiqur however was not ready to consider India's weakened squad an added advantage because he is confident that they would have had a chance even if India sent their best team.

"We have defeated their best team in the past. They have a young team but one should not forget that if they lose, India will lose, not India A. The pressure will be on them. I know most of them, and have seen them play. Even though I haven't played against them, I have some idea. Shakib [Al Hasan] has played against all of them, so we can take some ideas from him. In these days, it is hard not to have knowledge on a player," explained the wicketkeeper-batsman.

Above everything however, Mushfiqur chose to place emphasis on how the Tigers can overcome their recent poor form in the upcoming three-match ODI series which will be held on June 15, 17 and 19.

"True, name-wise their big cricketers are not coming but it doesn't mean that their team is bad. They made the team with their best IPL performers. I my opinion our focus should be on whether we can play our best cricket rather than against whom we are going to play. We have struggled in the last few months. If we can play to our potential, it is not impossible to beat their team regardless of whether there is Dhoni or Kohli. But once again, though this (India's) is a young team, it's a balanced side," he said.



Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim walks off the field after his first day of training with the Tigers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday, ahead of the three-match ODI series against India starting on June 15. PHOTO: STAR

Brothers back to winning ways

SPORTS REPORTER



Brothers Union returned to winning ways in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-1 win over a 10-man Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The overall eighth win in 18 matches put Brothers in fourth position with 29 points while BJMC remain glued to sixth position in the 10-team table with 19 points from 18 outings.

Brothers, who at the halfway stage secured 19 points from nine matches -- second only to leaders Sheikh Jamal's 21 at the same stage -- came into the match on the back of a 2-1 defeat to Mohammedan. The All Oranges however showed signs of improvement at the start of the match before coming close to taking a lead in the 10th minute, but BJMC goalkeeper Arifuzzamal Himel frustrated Nigerian Simon Ezeodika.

BJMC regrouped to launch a couple of attacks but Felix was denied by the woodwork in the 14th minute while Guinean Ismail Bangoura failed to tap in despite beating the Brothers goalkeeper in the 16th minute.

Brothers took a lead against the run of play when their Nigerian recruit Simon suddenly volleyed from 25 yards to defeat Himel, who was later sent off after handling the ball outside the danger zone in the 50th minute.

Five minutes from time, young striker Rubel Mia doubled the margin with a superb solo move that started from the centre of the ground before completing it inside the box after dancing past four players, including substitute goalkeeper Ariful Islam.

BJMC pulled one goal back in stoppage time through Samson Illiaus but they could not avert the ninth defeat in 18 matches.

IPL QUALIFIER 2 Chennai to face Punjab today

PTI, Mumbai

Buoyed by their convincing seven-wicket win over title holders Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings will take on Kings XI Punjab in their second IPL knockout game inside three days in Mumbai on Friday with swashbuckling batsman Glenn Maxwell being a major threat to their chances.

Riding on the 25-year-old Australian batsman's incandescent 90-plus run knocks in Abu Dhabi and Cuttack in the group stage of the T20 League, Kings XI Punjab had flattened two-time champions Chennai Super Kings.

Friday's Qualifier 2, the penultimate IPL-7 match, at the Wankhede Stadium will provide Chennai a great platform to avenge those two defeats and leapfrog into the June 1 summit clash against Kolkata Knight Riders at Bangalore.

ITALY 1990 Joy and sorrow, under Italian sky



Cameroon's run to the quarterfinals gave the audience some relief during an otherwise dull and at times ugly World Cup. PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

The 1990 World Cup saw a lot of defensive football, a paucity of goals and a spate of shocking incidents that led to red cards, not to mention the dulllest final ever. Yet it produced moments of unbridled joy and sorrow, played out to the incomparable theme song 'To Be Number One'.

The tournament opened sensationally as holders Argentina fell victim to one of the greatest shocks in the tournament's history, as they lost against nine-man Cameroon, thanks to the tamest of headers from Francois Oman-Biyik that crept under the body of the hapless Nery Pumpido in the Argentine goal.

Milla stepped off the bench in their second game against Romania, scored twice, danced jubilantly by the corner flag and ensured a legend was born.

Meanwhile, some of the bigger teams were

struggling. Argentina recovered enough to squeeze into the last 16, Euro 1988 champions the Netherlands were similarly unconvincing and hosts Italy began nervously, only edging past Austria in their opening game thanks to their very own super sub Salvatore Schillaci.

The second round provided plenty of thrills and spills as David Platt's stunning volley earned England a 119th-minute win over Belgium, Milla took advantage of Colombia keeper Rene Higuita's moment of madness to fire Cameroon into the last eight and the genius of Maradona secured Argentina victory over Brazil as he teed up Claudio Caniggia to score the winner.

In the last 16, Netherlands made a tame exit at the hands of West Germany where Frank Rijkaard spitted (more than once) at Rudi Voeller, before and after both players were dis-

missed. Gary Lineker's two penalties gave England a semifinal berth, at the expense of Cameroon. Argentina and West Germany sneaked through while Schillaci kept on scoring and providing some eye-popping celebration.

The Sicilian was calm enough to score an Italian opener in their semifinal against Argentina, but it wasn't enough as Caniggia levelled and the hosts went out on penalties. The Italians were inconsolable while against all odds, the holders made it back to the final.

A day later in Turin, it was England's turn to cry. Andy Brehme's deflected free-kick gave West Germany the lead, before Lineker drew level 10 minutes from time. Gascoigne lunged in on Thomas Berthold, was shown a yellow card and immediately realised he would be banned for the final, should England make it. The 23-year-old midfielder's bottom lip started to quiver and the iconic tears began to fall. Penalties followed, and after Stuart Pearce's effort was saved and Chris Waddle blazed over, England, shattering, were out.

The final was a tawdry exhibition of gamesmanship in which West Germany dominated but failed to convert their chances. Jurgen Klinsmann's theatrical response to a Monzon foul saw the Argentine duly dismissed, and five minutes from the end, Voeller went down in a heap from a Sensini challenge, for which the Germans were somewhat generously awarded a penalty.

Brehme converted, and there was still time for Dezotti to be sent off before coach Franz Beckenbauer became the first man to captain and then manage World Cup-winning teams.

FACTS & FIGURES

Winners: West Germany
Runners-up: Argentina
Leading Scorer: Salvatore Schillaci (ITA)--6
Teams: 24
Matches: 52
Goals: 115
Attendance: 2,516,348

Committee for DFAs' govt recognition

SPORTS REPORTER

In a bid to provide government recognition to District and Divisional Football Associations (DFAs), the National Sports Council (NSC) decided to form a committee which will come up with suggestions within the next two months.

The decision was taken at the 21st Annual General Meeting of the NSC at the NSC Tower with state minister for youth and sports Biren Sikder chairing the meeting.

The officials of District Sports Associations (DSAs), affiliated organisations of NSC, opposed the proposal when Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin gave a presentation on the need for government recognition. The members later requested the minister to form a committee comprising members from NSC, BFF and the DSAs to assess the BFF proposal and take actions in line with the suggestions of the committee.

BD A crash and burn

SPORTS REPORTER



The first four-day match ended with a day to spare on Wednesday as Bangladesh A had no answer in their second innings too as they fell to a huge 351-run defeat against Sagico High Performance Centre at Windward Park in Barbados.

The result is disheartening considering that the team contains so many national players, but national skipper Mushfiqur Rahim was hopeful that the boys, led by national all-rounder Nasir Hossain, will come back in the second four-dayer starting from June 2 against the same opponents at Bridgetown.

"It's not easy to play good cricket in West Indies from the beginning. I hope they will come back quickly as there is a series for the national team coming up (the three-ODI series against India in June) and a number of national team players are there," said Mushfiqur.

With a 504-run target, the visitors had only one way to draw the match -- by showing their batting prowess in the second innings after being dismissed for a paltry 145 in the first innings, but they suffered a steady loss of wickets and were eventually bowled out for 152 in 38.2 overs. Cummins was the pick of the bowlers this time, taking four wickets.

According to Cricinfo, to compound Bangladesh A's woes, pacer Subashis Roy suffered a right shoulder injury while fielding and is currently under observation.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SAGICO HIGH PERFORMANCE CENTRE: 292 (Blackwood 140) and 351-8 dec (Kraigg Braithwaite 164)
BANGLADESH A: 145 and 152 (Kayes 5, Shamsur 33, Marshal 18, Momtunul 22, Naeem 0, Nasir 3, Hasan 23, Ali 20; Cummins 4-40).
Result: Sagico won by 351 runs.

Nadal, Murray thru'

AFP, Paris



Defending champion Rafael Nadal handed out a bruising lesson to highly-rated Austrian Dominic Thiem on Thursday as a 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 victory took the Spaniard into the French Open third round.

Eight-time winner Nadal, bidding to be the first man to clinch five Roland Garros titles in a row, had been expected to face a severe test from the 20-year-old world number 57.

But Thiem, who trains for big matches by running through forests carrying tree trunks to build stamina, ran out of steam on Philippe Chatrier court despite showing occasional glimpses of potential. Nadal took his career record in Paris to 61 wins against a single loss and goes on to face either Leonardo Mayer of Argentina or Russia's Teymuraz Gabashvili.

Nadal's compatriot David Ferrer, the fifth seed and last year's runner-up, cruised past Italy's Simone Bolelli 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 and next faces either Italy's Andreas Seppi or Juan Monaco of Argentina.

Seventh seeded Andy Murray reached the third round with a 6-3, 6-1, 6-3 over Australia's Marinko Matosevic.

Wimbledon champion Murray, who made the semifinals at Roland Garros in 2011, faces Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber for a place in the last 16.



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