

SPORT

Streak focused on pitches, grassroots

SPORTS REPORTER



It is not everyday that a newcomer hits the nail at the right spot on his very first day on the job but Bangladesh's new bowling coach Heath Streak, during his first interaction with the media yesterday, seemed as though he had done his homework.

When asked as to what he thought was the main problem in Bangladesh's pace bowling department, Streak pointed towards the unyielding domestic wickets. He also emphasised on the need for implementing special bowling programmes.

"One of the big problems is that the wickets in Bangladesh are very different from those outside and that makes it difficult to develop fast bowlers. That's one of the challenges that we have got.

"But during the World T20 we saw that the wickets were good and it shows that wickets can be prepared to assist the fast bowlers much more here. Hopefully we can do that in the grounds here," said Streak.

The Zimbabwean also hopes to identify a group of pacers who have the potential to play for Bangladesh in the future and start a programme with them.

"It's a part of the challenge. The new coach and I, we have to identify those bowlers for the future. And also put (them) in programmes. We will have to try and convince the BCB and see if they can invest in them so that they can go abroad and gain experience at an early age," said Streak.

"I believe there are a couple of young guys coming through, so I am really keen to look at them.

But we have to get them ready for international level, see how good they are physically. Many youngsters whose bodies are not strong enough can't cope with the international schedule, so that's a key thing that we are going to have to work with," he added.

The key issues addressed by the Zimbabwean -- the condition of the wickets and the need for specific bowling programmes -- have been overlooked by the board for a while now. Dhaka Division captain Mohammad Sharif, after lifting the National Cricket League title, remarked that Bangladesh will not be able to produce a good pacer as long as they continue playing on 'dead' wickets like the ones the last season was played on.

On a similar note, Bangladesh's previous bowling coach Shane Jurgensen said before leaving that he had failed to convince the board to start a bowling programme.

Going by the Zimbabwean's intent he displayed on the first day of work, there is no doubt that Streak is aware of the gravity of the task that lies ahead of him; he is going to take the reins of a team that is yet to produce an established pacer apart from Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

The other thing that the Zimbabwean is aware of is the immense pressure that he will be under -- a common feature in Bangladesh cricket.

"I know there are huge expectations, India is coming soon. But it doesn't matter who you are, it will take time. It doesn't happen overnight. You can't go to the shopping mall and buy experience. Hopefully, by the world cup we can see some consistency with the bowlers," said a cautious Streak.



Bangladesh's new bowling coach Heath Streak enjoys a light moment with national captain Mushfiqur Rahim at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Shakib to return after IPL conquests

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan will return to Dhaka today after putting up a splendid all-round performance in the Indian Premier League and helping his side, the Kolkata Knight Riders, lift the title for the second time in three years.

Shakib, who scored 227 runs and took eleven wickets at an economy rate of 6.68, put in his best ever performance in the IPL this year. He was also awarded the CEAT Best All-rounder award in T20 cricket.

The left-hander put in a number of match-winning performances in the IPL this year and also hit his highest score -- a match-winning 60 against Bangalore.

In the final, Shakib was the most economical bowler for KKR, giving away just 26 runs in his four overs, even as opponents Kings XI Punjab powered to 199.

Eugenie sets up Maria semi Djokovic, Gulbis in last four

AFP, Paris



Maria Sharapova, the 2012 champion, will face rising Canadian star Eugenie Bouchard in the French Open semifinals on Thursday.

The Russian former number one and four-time Grand Slam winner came back from a set down to defeat Spaniard Garbine Muguruza 1-6, 7-5, 6-1

But it was not before she was given an almighty fright by the 20-year-old Muguruza who had knocked out defending champion Serena Williams in the second round.

"There was little I could do in the first set as Garbine was playing so well," said Sharapova who had also dropped the first set of her fourth round tie against Samantha Stosur.

"I needed to pick up my energy and start moving my feet. It was tough losing the final last year and it has given me greater motivation to go one step further this time."

Bouchard was also involved in a dogfight as she became the first

Canadian woman to reach the French Open semi-finals.

She trailed badly in all three sets

'She's like a tea bag!'

AFP, Paris

Maria Sharapova made the French Open semifinals on Tuesday and then found herself bamboozled by a tweet sent by Andy Murray's mother comparing her to a tea bag.

But before responding to questions regarding her semifinal opponent, Eugenie Bouchard, the former world number one was asked to respond to Judy Murray's abstract compliment.

"Sharapova is like a tea bag. Put her into hot water and ul find out how strong she is," tweeted Murray.

The Russian told a press conference: "Sorry. I didn't know who Judy Murray is. I'm a big tea drinker. I don't understand what she means."

before prevailing 7-6 (7/4), 2-6, 7-5 over Spaniard Carla Suarez Navarro in 2hr 22min.

The 20-year-old, is the only woman to reach the last four of both majors this season, after losing to Li Na in the Australian Open semifinals in straight sets.

The only other Canadian to reach a Grand Slam semifinal was Carling Bassett at the US Open in 1984.

Novak Djokovic stayed firmly on course to win his first French Open title as he tamed big serving Canadian Milos Raonic 7-5, 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 to reach the semifinals.

The Serb world number two is only missing the Roland Garros trophy to complete his Grand Slam set but he moved closer towards his dream behind the back of an excellent return of serve.

He will now play 18th seed Ernest Gulbis for a place in the final after the Latvian eliminated Czech Republic sixth seed Tomas Berdych.

The 25-year-old Latvian, better known for his colourful behaviour and outspoken comments off the court than his achievements on it, stormed to a 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 win.

BD A stutter to 56 for 3

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Bangladesh A's poor batting continued when they started their innings on the second day of the second and final four-day match against West Indies High Performance Centre at Bridgetown yesterday.

Left-arm pacer Sheldon Cottrell removed openers Shamsur Rahman and Imrul Kayes as the visitors were reduced to 31 for two. Jonathan Carter then dismissed Mominul Haque for three as the visitors reached 56 for three with Marshal Ayub batting on 10 when the last report was filed.

Shamsur fended a bouncer to slip to be out for four while Kayes was caught down the leg side playing a hook for 21.

Earlier, the home side recovered from a poor start to finish their first innings on 354 courtesy of half-centuries from Leon Johnson and Carter.

FRANCE 1998

The power of Zidane

Three-time winner of FIFA's World Player of the year, French playmaker Zinedine Zidane is perhaps the greatest footballing artist of his era, a man who won every major title on offer.

When he rose to send two bullet-like headers past Brazil's goalkeeper Claudio Taffarel in the 3-0 victory in the final of the 1998 World Cup in Paris, Zidane also won a place in French hearts forever more.

His performance in the final was redemption after he had been sent off in the group stage for stomping on a Saudi Arabian player. That showcased a familiar

aspect of Zidane's character a fiery streak that helped him succeed but also hindered his greatness but endeared him all that much more to the people. His performance alongside his group of close friends, Emanuele Petit, Bixenti Lizarazu and Christoph Dugarry led to press labelling them as the "Four Musketeers." And all four played an integral part as France bought home the trophy that had eluded them forever.

Zidane was born in Marseille in 1972 of Algerian parents and was just 16 when he broke into top-flight football along the Mediterranean coast at Cannes.

Within two years he had broken into the national side, scoring twice on his debut against the Czech Republic in August 1994 to haul France back into a match they had been losing 2-0.

He was part of the Bordeaux side that enjoyed a run to the UEFA Cup final in 1996 before losing to Bayern Munich, putting in performances that inspired Juventus to pay four million dollars for him. There, Zidane tasted real success, winning two Italian championships, two Intercontinental Cups and the European Super Cup.

Zidane-mania reached strato-

spheric heights in 2000 as he inspired France to an unprecedented back-to-back success at Euro 2000. Real Madrid broke the bank with a phenomenal 63.6 million dollars bid for his services in July 2000.

Zidane further established his talents in the world stage when he scored a truly world class goal, a blistering left-footed volley, in the final of the 2002 European Champions League against Bayer Leverkusen.

Unfortunately the 2002 World Cup was a rare disappointment as an injury on the eve of the tournament meant he played just one match as France crashed out. Zidane went into retirement at the age of 32 after Euro 2004, but came out of retirement in 2005 to lead his country to the 2006 World Cup.

The World Cup Final in 2006 proved to one of the most memorable World Cup finals for reasons both good and bad. This was mainly because it showed the two sides of Zidane as he showed his leadership and talent when putting France ahead by scoring an early penalty. A Marco Materazzi equaliser led to extra time which is where the world witnessed the volatile side of Zidane as he headbutted Materazzi in the chest after a war of words with the Italian and was sent off for the offence and this also turned out to be the end of Zidane's international career. Zidane watched from the bowels of Berlin Olympic Stadium as his side lost the final on penalties.



Russia's Maria Sharapova pumps her fist in celebration after beating Spain's Garbine Muguruza in the French Open quarterfinals at the Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Koster returns, De Kruif does not

SPORTS REPORTER



Rene Koster, the assistant coach of the national football team, arrived here yesterday after enjoying eight weeks of vacation in the Netherlands even though the arrival of head coach Lodewijk De Kruif is still uncertain.

The high-ups of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) had briefed the media that both the Dutch coaches would return to Bangladesh in the latter part of May to start work of building up the U-23 team for upcoming Asian Games, but the arrival of De Kruif seems uncertain as the wages for last four months of both coaches has remained unpaid.

"BFF president (Kazi Salahuddin) will talk to De Kruif over phone on Friday and then I can tell you about his return," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

Koster informed that he would sit with the BFF president to place their plans and requirements but they might have to think about alternatives if their wages are not cleared.

Both the coaches, who left Bangladesh on April 6, have been idle for the last seven months since the AFC U-19 Qualifiers in October last year.

BFF to consider Agrani's complaint

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has taken the allegation of a fixed match in the Bangladesh Championship League into consideration after Agrani Bank complained that the match between Farashganj SC and Wari Club was fixed.

"We have taken the matter into consideration and the professional football league committee will discuss the matter tomorrow (Wednesday) and they may refer it to the Match-Fixing Identification Committee (MFIC) to look into it," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

It is the first time that federation has taken the match-fixing issue of the Bangladesh Championship League into consideration even though the federation has yet to resolve the match fixing issue involving Sheikh Jamal DC and Brothers Union of the 5th Bangladesh Premier League.



PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

Zinedine Zidane, almost single-handedly, won the World Cup for France in 1998 and lost it too eight years later.