

Bolt smashes 100m indoors record

AGENCIES, Warsaw

Jamaican sprint superstar Usain Bolt set a new best time of 9.98sec for the rarely run 100m indoors at Warsaw's national football stadium on Saturday.

The Olympic champion and world record holder eclipsed the previous best mark for the distance of 10.05 set by Namibian Frankie Fredericks in 1996.

The Warsaw stadium had its roof closed for the event.

"I've never run indoors, I was always too tall," Bolt joked at a news conference on Wednesday. "When I heard there was going to be a roof, I was looking forward to that."

As an avid Manchester United fan, who frequently attends the English Premier League club's games and has even trained with the team, he has plans to try his hand at professional soccer once he leaves the track.

"I always watch football games and see a few players, and I won't say any names, but I could do much better," he said.

Tigers' rapid slide

NAIMUL KARIM



How does one explain Bangladesh's implosion against the West Indies on Friday? Was it Sunil Narine's magic? Did the decision to experiment at the top with two relatively new players in the side -- Imrul Kayes and Shamsur Rahman -- end in disarray? Or-- the more popular opinion among the public -- is this the result of Shakib Al Hasan's absence from the side?

Sporting pundits can go on and on with their analyses and statistics but the fact remains that pointing out a specific reason behind Bangladesh's 177-run defeat -- their largest against the Caribbean outfit -- would be extremely difficult.

That was perhaps the reason why Bangladesh's new head coach, Chandika Hathurusingha, could barely say anything to the players during the post-match meeting. Some say he was stunned, while others reckon that he did not want to further deteriorate the situation. Whatever the reason, one thing is for sure, after Friday's defeat Hathurusingha will consistently be under the scanner -- after all that is the way the Bangladesh Cricket Board works.

Yes, Bangladesh's batsmen seemed absolutely reckless on Friday, but there is

a lot more than Imrul Kayes's unnecessary hook or Mahmudullah Riyad's careless prod to Narine that contributed to this thumping defeat.

It is the overall lack of belief in the team, the belief that they can actually win matches that has probably done the worst damage. The seeds of this problem were sown back in February when Mushfiquur Rahim and co lost to Sri Lanka by 13 runs after reducing them to 67 for eight. The effect of that defeat lasted for the entire Asia Cup, a competition where the Tigers went down to Afghanistan and also threw away a match against Pakistan after posting 326, their highest ever ODI total.

Later in June, their 47-run defeat to an under-strength India, where the hosts were bundled out for just 58 in chase of India's 105, only heaped on the pressure and took confidence to an all-time low.

Including the first ODI against the West Indies on Wednesday -- where the Tigers had the hosts at 34 for five but failed to finish it off -- Bangladesh could have, or rather should have, won at least five of the 12 ODIs they played this year.

What it shows is that they are gradually losing that will to fight it out on the field and win a game, no matter what position they are in.

In vulnerable situations like these,

where the team management cannot exactly point out what their problem is, their decision-making is affected. And in the case of Bangladesh, the results of that are already showing.

Take for instance, the decision to leave Mominul Haque out of the first two ODIs. The left-hander has been nothing less than a revelation for the Tigers in the last two years. He has been Bangladesh's third-highest ODI scorer - after Anamul Haque and Mushfiquur Rahim -- this year and most importantly, scored almost all his runs at the crucial number three position, something that a majority of Bangladesh's batsmen have failed to do.

In Test cricket, he has been Bangladesh's highest run-scorer in the last two years. He has scored 755 runs at an average of 75.50 in the last two years.

The only reason behind his exclusion: his apparent weakness against the short ball. If that is in fact the sole basis of building a team, then his replacements in the side -- either Imrul or Shamsur Shamsur-- have not been doing a great job.

In situations like these, the captain, expectedly so, is the first to be brought under scrutiny. And unfortunately for Mushfiquur, despite his resolute batting, time might just be running out for him.

BPL looking for a way back

SPORTS REPORTER



The dysfunctional governing council of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) has finally come up with a paper to present to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) during the next board meeting to be held on August 26 at the headquarters of the BCB in Mirpur.

This meeting has already assumed high-profile proportions as the board is set to reduce the punishment of all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who is serving a six-month ban from all cricket on disciplinary grounds.

But besides the issue of Shakib's punishment the board will also discuss the possibility of reviving the franchise-based BPL, which in its two editions has already created huge chaos in Bangladesh cricket, but is considered by many as a very useful competition for the betterment of the country's cricket.

"The BPL governing council had a meeting today and we made a presentation paper after a discussion to place during the next board meeting. We are very much interested in hosting the third edition of the tournament because everybody believes

that we desperately need this tournament in our domestic calendar," said governing council member secretary and BCB director IH Mallick yesterday.

"After the verdict from the tribunal one franchise (Dhaka Gladiators) is already disqualified and the remaining six franchises are defaulters. We are also owed Tk 8 to Tk 9 crore by the event management group Game On. Whether we go for legal action against them will now fully depend on the board and we tried to reflect the real situation in our paper so that the board can take a decision," he added.

He also said that they provided the information regarding the slot for the third edition of the tournament. "There are only 15 to 20 days in December in between our international engagements. We have a slot in April next year before the home series against Pakistan and if not we have to think about it in December next year," said Mallick.

An unexpected issue may also come to the fore regarding the captaincy of Mushfiquur Rahim, who is appointed till the 2015 World Cup, as the wicketkeeper-batsman has come under the scanner in the wake of Bangladesh's disastrous results in 2014.



Sprint king Usain Bolt competes with Poland's Karol Zalewski (L) and Jamaican's Sheldon Mitchell (R) in the 100m indoors at the National Stadium in Warsaw last night.

PHOTO: AFP

Defensive worries deepen

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national U-23 football team has given the team management more cause for concern after a sloppy 5-4 win against the Bangladesh Army team in a practice match at the Army Stadium in Banani yesterday. The national team trailed the Army team by 2-4 goals at the end of the first half, thanks to some dreadful defending and horrible goalkeeping, before scoring goals in the second half to eke out a face-saving win.

However, the way the four goals were conceded in the first half against a non-professional outfit like Army will give the team management a lot to worry about ahead of the two friendlies against Nepal U-23 team this month and the Asian Games next month.

During the previous practice match against Army, the national U-23 team looked sloppy in the

second half, resulting in a needless goal conceded. Yesterday, the troubles began in the first half, soon after Wahed Ahmed had put the national team ahead.

A looping header from Army striker Silon Khan caught goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel off-guard before Atiqur Rahman Meshu restored the lead with an easy header.

However, things changed completely afterwards as the national team's defenders -- Yeamin Munna, Kesto Kumar, Tapu Barman and Meshu -- failed to deal with Army's long-ball ploy and aerial supremacy.

Army striker Tarek Aziz soon restored parity before a dreadful back pass from Kesto gifted a goal to Minhazul Abedin. A sliding finish from Silon made it 4-2 before the break.

Rene Koster, the man in charge of the national U-23 team, made a number of changes in the second half, including substituting keeper Sohel with Harunur Rashid Liton and two changes in defence and

succeeded in stopping the rot.

Meshu scored two more goals while substitute Aminur Rahman Sajib scored one as the national team came out with a 5-4 win.

Koster was less than impressed, but found a few excuses for the shambolic performance.

"We had a horrible first half. Defence was poor during that time and also the 'keeper was at fault for some of the goals," said Koster, who is in charge in the absence of head coach Lodewijk de Kruij.

"However, we could not have practice in the last week due to incessant rain. The pitch that this match was played on was also poor, which did not help our passing game, but was rather more suited to their long ball football," said the Dutchman after the game.

The same ground will be used for national U-23 team's first friendly match against Nepal U-23 team on Tuesday. The head coach Lodewijk de Kruij is expected to take charge after arriving on Monday morning.

Women's youth handball

SPORTS REPORTER

BJMC and Panchagarh district moved into the final of the Walton Air Conditioner National Women's Youth Handball Tournament after winning their respective semifinals at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali Stadium yesterday.

BJMC blanked Jamalpur district by 24-0 goals in the first semifinal while Panchagarh defeated neighbours Naogaon by 19-9 goals in the second.

The third-place deciding match will be played at the same venue today.

Prennoy eliminated

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi archer Prennoy Murong was eliminated from the 2nd Youth Olympic Games yesterday after he lost his (1/16) elimination round match against British archer Denny Bradley by 0-6 points.

Prennoy lost all three sets (26-28, 27-30, 28-29) against his British counterpart at the Fangshan Archery Field in Njing, China yesterday.

Pakistan take lead

AFP, Hambantota



Sohaib Maqsood and Fawad Alam put on a 147-run stand as Pakistan recovered from the brink to defeat Sri Lanka by four wickets on Saturday and take the lead in the three-match one-day international series.

The tourists, chasing a Duckworth-Lewis target of 275 in 45 overs, fought back after being 106-5 to scrape home off the penultimate ball of the match in Hambantota.

Maqsood remained unbeaten on a glorious 89 off 73 balls as Shahid Afridi smashed the winning boundary off seamer Nuwan Kulasekara to the point fence.

Alam was dismissed for 62 by Lasith Malinga when 22 still remained for victory off the last three overs, but Maqsood and Afridi battled on to help Pakistan record a good win.

Sri Lanka had made 275-7 after being sent in to bat in overcast conditions, but rain after six overs of their innings reduced the game from a full 50-overs-a-side contest to 45.

Opener Ahmed Shehzad scored 49 but no other top-order batsman settled in to make a big score till Maqsood and Alam turned the game Pakistan's way.

Earlier, Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews smashed 89 off 85 balls and Mahela Jayawardene made 63 to give their side a seemingly commanding total.

Jayawardene, 37, who retired from Tests earlier this week to concentrate on one-day cricket till next year's World Cup, hit eight boundaries in his 73rd half-century in the shorter format.

Sri Lanka slumped to 75-4 by the 18th over before Jayawardene and Mathews put on 116 for the fifth wicket.

Mathews hit nine fours in his best score in one-day cricket, but it was Ashan Priyanjan's unbeaten 39 off 15 balls at the end that boosted the total.

Lanky left-arm fast bowler Mohammad Irfan, who stands at seven feet, one inch (2.16 metres), generated good bounce from the moisture-laden pitch to claim two wickets for 48 runs.

Wahab Riaz, one of the three left-arm seamers for Pakistan alongside Irfan and Junaid Khan, took three for 50.

The tourists were without their top spinner Saeed Ajmal, who has flown to Australia to undergo tests of his bowling action.

Meanwhile, Hambantota will also host the second one-day on Tuesday due to bad weather in Colombo, the original venue.

SCOREBOARD				
SRI LANKA				
Tharanga c Akmal b Riaz	18			
Dilshan lbw b Irfan	6			
Sangakkara c Shehzad b Hafeez	25			
Jayawardene run out	63			
Chandimal c Riaz b Irfan	6			
Mathews b Riaz	89			
Perera b Riaz	13			
Priyanjan not out	39			
Kulasekara not out	3			
Extras: (lb-3, w-10)	13			
Total: (For 7 wkts in 45 overs)	275			
Did not bat: Herath, Malinga				
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-55, 3-55, 4-75, 5-191, 6-228, 7-247				
Bowler				
Irfan	9	0	48	2
Junaid	9	1	75	0
Riaz	9	0	50	3
Hafeez	8	0	32	1
Afridi	9	0	57	0
Alam	1	0	10	0
PAKISTAN				
Shehzad b Perera	49			
Hafeez lbw b Mathews	21			
Younis c Kulasekara b Mathews	3			
Akmal c Malinga b Perera	15			
Misbah c Sangakkara b Herath	13			
Alam c Priyanjan b Malinga	62			
Maqsood not out	89			
Afridi not out	14			
Extras: (b-4, w-7)	11			
Total: (For 6 wkts in 44.5 overs)	277			
Did not bat: Riaz, Irfan, Junaid				
Fall of wickets: 1-39, 2-47, 3-79, 4-94, 5-106, 6-253				
Bowler				
Malinga	9	0	60	1
Kulasekara	8.5	0	56	0
Mathews	9	0	48	2
Perera	7	0	43	2
Herath	9	0	49	1
Dilshan	2	0	17	0
Result: Pakistan won by four wickets - Duckworth-Lewis method.				
Toss: Pakistan.				
Player-of-the-match: Sohaib Maqsood.				

It's now our turn to take home advantage: Narine

CRICINFO, St George's



Sunil Narine does not think there is anything wrong with the Bangladesh batsmen and has said that West Indies are only taking advantage of home conditions.

Narine said that he has tried to keep his spells as simple as possible, but tell that to the Bangladesh batsmen. Despite dominating him in Tests less than two years ago, they now find his deception unfathomable and are facing the danger of spending all of this tour trying to avoid getting tangled by him.

His three-wicket burst in the middle of Bangladesh's 248-run chase in the second ODI on Friday sucked the life out of their batsmen. Narine removed captain Mushfiquur Rahim and Mahmudullah in

successive deliveries before picking up Sohag Gazi in his next over as the visitors were bowled out for just 70.

"I don't think I have done anything differently [than in the past]," Narine said. "Whatever I have been doing in the past 2-3 years that have given me success, I have tried to keep it simple as possible. You sometimes tend to try to do too many things and forget what was working for you.

"When you're on top of your game, it is important to do the basics properly and change only a few things, and move on from there. I didn't get wickets in the first game but I think I bowled pretty well. I was just doing the basics again today."

In the 2012 Test series, Narine went wicketless in three out of four innings, and conceded 343 runs in two matches at an economy-rate of 4.36. Shakib Al

Hasan apparently had come up with the plan to go after him from the start. That plan is possibly back in Dhaka right now, as Bangladesh have played Narine without much purpose.

He, however, felt that West Indies were taking advantage of familiar conditions. "I don't think there's anything wrong with the Bangladesh batsmen. They are very capable. I think it is just our time to be on top of the game. We have had some rough times in Bangladesh where they have home advantage.

"Now we have the home advantage. We are continuing what we are doing and trying to build momentum ahead of the Test matches. I wouldn't think they are rusty. The wickets are not as flat as Bangladeshi wickets, it is more giving. Their bowlers have something to work with. You need to set a foundation and work on it."

Clarke in doubt for 1st ODI

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia captain Michael Clarke has suffered a hamstring injury during Friday's training in Harare and is doubtful for their first one-day international against Zimbabwe on Monday.

Clarke experienced pain in his left hamstring while training, a report on Cricket Australia's website said.

Petra-Magdalena finale

AFP, New Haven



Reigning Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova and Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova advanced to the WTA New Haven hardcourt tournament final Friday

with straight-set triumphs.

Fourth-ranked Kvitova fired 11 aces in defeating Australia's Samantha Stosur 6-3, 6-1 while Rybarikova hit seven aces in a 6-2, 6-4 triumph over Italy's Camila Giorgi at the US Open hardcourt warm-up event.

Second seed Kvitova, the 2012 New Haven

winner who lost to Simona Halep in last year's final, will be the third seed at the US Open.

Rybarikova, ranked 30 spots below her rival at 68th, denied Giorgi on all 11 of her break-point chances to win in 83 minutes at the Yale University hardcourts.

Rybarikova, 25, ousted top-seeded Halep on Tuesday.

She is seeking her fifth WTA title in her sixth career final and first of the year. She captured the 2012 and 2013 Washington titles, the 2011 Memphis crown and her first WTA trophy on Birmingham grass in 2009.

Kvitova is hoping for her 13th career crown and second of the year.