

SPORT

A PERFECT FINISH

Tigers complete historic 3-0 whitewash



Tigers party sans trophy

SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

As the Tigers celebrated their historic 3-0 Test series victory over Zimbabwe in Chittagong yesterday, the most important accolade was missing from the celebration party. Young batsman Mominul Haque took the player-of-the-match award; Shakib Al Hasan had the player-of-the-series award while left-arm spinner Tajjul Islam got the award of the most valuable player of the series. But as the players posed for photographs with the Winner of the Series board, there was no winners' trophy for the Tigers to celebrate with. The trophy presentation was held back for posterity.

It was learnt that holding back the trophy was not pre-planned, but the Bangladesh Cricket Board is planning to invite Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to present the trophies of both the ODI series and the Test series after the fifth and final ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on December 1.

Hopefully the anticipated presence of the self-confessed cricket loving prime minister will motivate the Tigers to bag the ODI series trophy together with the one they have all but in the bag.

WINNER

Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe Test Series 2014

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong

As soon as umpire Aleem Dar raised his finger to signal the end of

Zimbabwe innings, Bangladesh's close-in fielders went haywire. High-fives were exchanged, stumps were uprooted and the process of forming a celebratory huddle was about to begin.

However, just as the celebrations were about to notch up a gear, it had to be put on hold, for Zimbabwe had decided to review the umpire's decision. Eventually Dar's decision was upheld and the celebrations resumed once more.

This little episode, right before the Tigers completed their historic 3-0 whitewash with a 186-run win, epitomised exactly the kind of year it has been for Bangladesh. There were numerous occasions when they were a mere step away from victory and

yet, at times disbelievably, failed to pack the final punch.

When the DRS was asked for one last time in Chittagong yesterday, for a moment it just felt as though the Tigers were being teased; they were made to wait an extra anxious minute to confirm a deserving win.

And yet, there it finally was. After struggling throughout a year which saw embarrassing defeats, resignation of coaches, captains changed the Tigers have finally achieved something that they could be proud of: a perfect result.

Their task -- getting nine wickets on the final day -- was made easier by the visiting batsmen who attempted risky shots against the spinners and looked out of sorts in the morning session. One would have thought that Zimbabwe would do their best to stick out the 90 overs, but that did not seem to be a part of

The 3-0 whitewash is Bangladesh's best result and the most number of Tests that they have won in a year

This is Bangladesh's seventh win in Test cricket and their second whitewash after their 2-0 win in West Indies in 2009

Shakib Al Hasan, with 251 runs and 18 wickets, became only the second player after Mitchell Johnson to take at least 15 wickets and score more than 250 runs in a series involving three or fewer Tests

Bangladesh's spinners have scalped 49 wickets in this series, one less than the all-time high in a three-match series, set by India and Sri Lanka

This is Bangladesh's first win at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium

their plan.

Hamilton Masakadza got out while attempting an audacious reverse-sweep against part-time off-spinner Shuvagata Hom. His partner Sikandar Raza got out four overs later as he smacked a full-toss straight to the fielder at deep

midwicket. Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor committed the same mistake that he was doing throughout the series and got out while attempting to drive Jubair Hossain's leg-spin through the covers; he edged it to point. Regis Chakabva, despite giv-

ing a couple of opportunities, stayed there till the end with an unbeaten 89. He was by far Zimbabwe's best batsman. He played on the back-foot and that gave him time to negotiate the spin and bounce. A bottom-handed player, Chakabva ensured to punish the bad balls through the mid-wicket region and at the same time put a straight bat to the respectable deliveries. Most of his seven fours came against Shuvagata, who bowled quite a few loose deliveries in the middle.

After seven wickets had fallen, Mushfiqur opted for the new ball with an aim to finish off the tail and that was exactly what happened. Rubel Hossain and Shafiqul Islam returned from the shadows to scalp the last three wickets. They both bowled straight and fast and left the Zimbabwean tail-enders with no answers.

TEST TABLE

Team	M	Pts	Rating
SAfrica	27	3353	124
Australia	35	4088	117
Pakistan	26	2718	105
England	39	4063	104
S Lanka	31	3126	101
India	29	2793	96
N Zealand	30	2787	93
W Indies	26	1962	75
Bangladesh	21	676	32
Zimbabwe	13	228	18

(As on November 16, 2014)



'It hurts'

SPORTS REPORTER from Ctg

A whitewash against your closest competitors is never a good sign for the losing side and as a result it was not a surprise when Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor admitted that the 3-0 series defeat had 'hurt' him and the team.

"Yeah, it certainly hurts as an individual, it hurts the team too. It's tough to comprehend that, but Bangladesh have played better cricket, so we got to give them credit for that. They made it difficult for us, in all three Test matches. We fought pretty hard but the better team held on and got the results," said Taylor at the post-match press conference at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here yesterday.

According to Taylor, the key difference between the teams was the spin factor. He also felt that the result of the first Test, which saw the hosts edge past Zimbabwe by three wickets in a tight contest, paved the way for the rest of the series.

"I think Bangladesh are a slightly better side in their conditions. The difference is in the spin department; it's chalk and cheese really. The first Test match set the tone; in hindsight had we got 20-30 runs more, it could have been a different result. To lose in the fashion we did is tough," explained Taylor.

The Zimbabwean however reckons that the visitors will fight back in the five-match ODI series, which begins on November 21, and start afresh.

'Feels special playing for Bangladesh'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong

If there were an award to be given out this year for the best comeback in cricket, then Shakib Al Hasan would definitely have been nominated. 251 runs and 18 wickets; there's not much more that you can ask for from a player in a series.

Shakib denied having a special aim for this series, his first after his two-and-a-half-month disciplinary ban, but it was quite obvious that the left-hander wanted to put in his best. It therefore was not a surprise when he was given the player-of-the-series award yesterday; his second after Bangladesh's 2-0 series win in West Indies in 2009.

Had he taken two more wickets in this series he would have created another landmark: the first player to score 250 runs and take 20 wickets in three or fewer Tests. However, it was the rest of the bowlers who completed the job for the Tigers on the final day.

Was the left-hander unhappy? Not quite.

"No, there is nothing to feel bad. If you see the first two matches, had I not taken 17 wickets, what then? What if it was just 10? You need luck and it wasn't there for me in this Test so it didn't happen," said the left-hander at the post-match press conference in Chittagong yesterday.

The main thing, the player claimed, was that Bangladesh had won.

"It feels really good that I managed to contribute for the team. I could have batted better perhaps but on the whole I am satis-



PHOTO: STAR

Shakib Al Hasan was adjudged the player-of-the-series for his outstanding performance both with bat and ball.

fied with my performance.

"At the end of the day my mood depends upon how I play and how I contribute. If it's good then I feel good and playing for Bangladesh is always special," said the smiling all-rounder.

BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First innings 503 (Imrul 130, Tamim 109, Shakib 71; Raza 3-123, H Masakadza 2-23, Panyangara 2-70, S Masakadza 2-77)

ZIMBABWE: First innings 374 (Chigumbura 88, Raza 82, H Masakadza 81, Chakabva 65; Jubair 5-96, Shafiqul 2-50)

BANGLADESH: Second innings 319-5 decl (Mominul 131 not out, Tamim 65, Mahmudullah 30, Mushfiqur 46; Panyangara 2-31, M'shangwe 2-77)

ZIMBABWE: Second innings (overnight 71-1) Raza c Tajjul b Shuvagata 65

Charil lbw b Rubel 0

H Masakadza c Mushfiqur b Shuvagata 38

Taylor c Shakib b Jubair 24

Chakabva not out 89

Chigumbura c Imrul b Jubair 5

Ervine lbw b Mahmudullah 16

Mutumbari lbw b Tajjul 2

Panyangara lbw b Rubel 2

S Masakadza b Shafiqul 0

M'shangwe lbw b Shafiqul 0

Extras: (b-14, lb-6, w-1) 21

Total: (All out in 85 overs) 262

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-97, 3-116, 4-165, 5-179, 6-228, 7-237, 8-261, 9-262.

Result: Bangladesh won by 186 runs and sweep series 3-0.

Player-of-the-match: Mominul Haque.

Player-of-the-series: Shakib Al Hasan.

'We won because key players performed'

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong

When a team posts its best ever series result in Test cricket, you would generally expect its captain to be excited. It was rather Mushfiqur Rahim's sobriety that greeted journalists following the epic win at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium here yesterday.

Whether that was due to the ease with which the Tigers had wrapped up the series or the cautionary mental wall that he had built inside following a series of defeats this year, was unknown; the one thing that was obvious was that the traditional dramas that followed a Bangladeshi series win was missing.

"It's nothing unbelievable. This is quite normal for Bangladesh. It was always going to be difficult for them against our spinners. The way they were batting [on Sunday], with so much risk, a wicket was bound to fall and we were waiting for that. Never thought that this match would end as a draw," said Mushfiqur.

"We won because our key players performed. That's why 3-0 was possible. I also want to thank the management for preparing a good pitch, on which we could execute our plans. Hopefully we can carry this momentum into the ODIs and take a winning atmosphere into the World Cup," he added.

About the final day's plans Mushfiqur said, "We had to get their best batsmen out in the morning. And then we were confident about the other wickets. Captain Brendan