

SPORTS

TIGERS

moving towards clean sweep

BISHWAJIT ROY
Anamul Haque might be ruing his missed century but captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza should be the happiest man after the way the Tigers secured the series against Zimbabwe with two matches in hand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur last night in front of a near-capacity crowd.

The home side were near-perfect in all three departments on their way to a massive 124-run victory in the third ODI, barring the individual milestone from someone at the top of the order, as Anamul and Tamim Iqbal carried on their good form to set it up for the bowlers to finish off the job.

There were a lot of similarities with the second ODI except for the late surge which improved a lot to increase the total. Like the second game, a hundred-plus opening partnership was again broken by a freakish run-out of Tamim while Mashrafe and Arafat Sunny were the stars with the ball.

Zimbabwe only won the toss to send their opponents in first, but everything else was won by the hosts who recorded their biggest win over their southern African rivals in terms of runs.

The Tigers kept improving with the series' progression and made their opponents look poorer on way to taking the 3-0 winning lead as the visitors were bowled out for 173 with 10.1 overs left in their chase of a mammoth 298 runs.

When Bangladesh piled up a total close to three hundred runs, the result was already written on the wall for the Zimbabweans. The fans started to leave the ground as soon as Brendan Taylor was trapped in front by left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan, his only scalp of the match after a quick 33-ball 40, with the scoreboard reading 82 for five.

Player-of-the-match Anamul might have guided the innings with his 95 that featured nine boundaries, but almost everybody played their part except for a struggling Mominul Haque.

Tamim and Anamul started watchfully like the previous match. The 121-run partnership ended after Tamim (40) had dropped his bat and jumped to reach the popping crease. Hamilton Masakadza broke the stumps at the non-striker's end as the batsman's foot was still in the air.

A 72-run fourth-wicket partnership between Shakib and Mushfiqur Rahim in just eight overs upped the tempo before Mahmudullah Riyad and Shabbir Rahman provided the final flourish as Bangladesh collected 103 runs from the last ten overs.

Mashrafe Once more led from the front by taking the first two wickets to initiate the collapse. After that it was left-arm spinner Sunny, who for the second successive game, finished with four wickets to mop up the tail.



The third ODI in Mirpur was almost a replay of the second in Chittagong. After the Tigers had thrived on a century partnership between openers Anamul Haque and Tamim Iqbal to post a massive total, captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) made sure the Zimbabwe innings doesn't take off with two early blows.

| BD-ZIM SCOREBOARD | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|-----|----|----|
| BANGLADESH | | R | B | 4s | 6s |
| Tamim run out | | 40 | 63 | 2 | 1 |
| Anamul c sub (S Masakadza) | | 95 | 120 | 9 | 0 |
| b Kamungozi | | 15 | 24 | 0 | 0 |
| Mominul c Maruma | | 40 | 33 | 4 | 0 |
| b H Masakadza | | 33 | 22 | 3 | 1 |
| Shakib c Chigumbura | | 33 | 26 | 5 | 0 |
| b Panyangara | | 22 | 13 | 3 | 0 |
| b Madziva | | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Mashrafe not out | | 17 | | | |
| Extras: (lb-10, w-4, nb-3) | | 297 | | | |
| Total: (For 6 wks in 50 overs) | | 297 | | | |
| Did not bat: Sunny, Rubel, Shafiqur | | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-121, 2-160, 3-167, 4-239, 5-244, 6-290. | | | | | |
| Bowler | | O | M | R | W |
| Panyangara | | 10 | 0 | 54 | 2 |
| Madziva | | 9 | 0 | 60 | 1 |
| Chigumbura | | 3 | 0 | 18 | 0 |
| Kamungozi | | 10 | 0 | 40 | 1 |
| Maruma | | 2 | 0 | 15 | 0 |
| Sibanda | | 10 | 0 | 64 | 0 |
| H Masakadza | | 5 | 0 | 25 | 1 |
| Mire | | 1 | 0 | 11 | 0 |
| ZIMBABWE | | R | B | 4s | 6s |
| b Mashrafe | | 12 | 15 | 1 | 1 |
| Sibanda c Sunny b Mashrafe | | 9 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Maruma c Mashrafe b Rubel | | 8 | 16 | 2 | 0 |
| Taylor lbw b Shakib | | 28 | 40 | 5 | 0 |
| Mire st Mushfiqur b Sunny | | 12 | 33 | 1 | 0 |
| Chakabva b Mahmudullah | | 14 | 38 | 0 | 0 |
| Chigumbura not out | | 53 | 46 | 4 | 2 |
| Moor lbw b Rubel | | 2 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Madziva c sub (Imrul) | | | | | |
| b Sunny | | 11 | 24 | 1 | 0 |
| Panyangara b Sunny | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Kamungozi b Sunny | | 4 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Extras: (b-8, lb-1, w-11) | | 20 | | | |
| Total: (All out in 39.5 overs) | | 173 | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-22, 3-39, 4-80, 5-82, 6-119, 7-126, 8-153, 9-153. | | | | | |
| Bowler | | O | M | R | W |
| Mashrafe | | 7 | 2 | 24 | 2 |
| Shafiqur | | 2.1 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| Rubel | | 5.5 | 0 | 22 | 2 |
| Sabbir | | 2 | 0 | 16 | 0 |
| Sunny | | 8.5 | 0 | 27 | 4 |
| Shakib | | 7 | 1 | 19 | 1 |
| Mahmudullah | | 5 | 0 | 29 | 1 |

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Anamul paves his way

NAIMUL KARIM

Anamul Haque is not necessarily the greatest of players to watch. He often lacks the finesse shown by his opening partner Tamim Iqbal, neither does he seem as compact as Mushfiqur Rahim.

And yet, despite his apparent flaws, he has managed to hold on to a consistent rhythm. Such has been the extent of his consistency that he has ended up scoring the highest number of runs by a Bangladeshi player after 25 one-day matches.

His resilient 95 yesterday took his overall tally to 879 runs in 25 matches. What makes Anamul's consistency more special is his batting position. The Tigers have been struggling to find a worthwhile opener to partner Tamim Iqbal for a while now and, at the moment, Anamul seems to be filling that gap well in this format.

His grittiness to stay alive at the crease has been the most attractive aspect of his batting. There are times

RUNS SCORED AFTER THEIR FIRST 25 MATCHES

| Batsman | Runs | Inns |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Anamul Haque | 879 | 23 |
| Shakib Al Hasan | 796 | 24 |
| Shahriar Nafees | 787 | 25 |
| Imrul Kayes | 774 | 25 |
| Nasir Hossain | 771 | 22 |

*Nasir scored 819 runs after 25 innings, while

when he seems clueless, with the deliveries flying past his outside edge; but when he does manage to stick it out, he ensures runs on the board. The fact that all his six 50-plus scores are above 75 reflect his hunger. And that's one reason why he was especially disappointed yesterday.

"I deserved a century today. When a batsman gets out in the 90s, it's not a good feeling. The effect is a bit more because I had never been out in the 90s before," said Anamul at the post-match press conference yesterday.

On the flipside, there have been times when Anamul has been criticised

for not dealing in singles or being more focused on completing his century; and these are aspects that he will no doubt be looking to improve on. However, the fact that he has managed to hold one end for long periods is something not many Bangladeshi openers have done.

"I am still learning how to play bigger innings, how to rotate the strike. Every batsman has a few problems and so do I. I am learning to fix those. I am talking to my coaches. I am only 22, hopefully I can rectify these mistakes before I turn 23," admitted Anamul.

Prior to the start of the second Test in Khulna, when Anamul was drafted in the squad midway through the series, his technique and style of play were questioned.

His reply was a confident one: "There have been many batsmen in the world who have scored despite not having a conventional technique. I am still working on mine."

So far, Anamul's approach seems to be working and for the sake of the Tigers, one would hope that he can continue to grit it out.

Sk Jamal up against Sony

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League champions Sheikh Jamal DC will look to ensure their semifinal berth in the King's Cup by getting the better of their former star Sony Norde

as they take on Mohun Bagan in the final match of Group A today. The match begins at 5:00pm the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu.

Sheikh Jamal will need a draw today to qualify but they are aware of the threat from Sony, who moved to the Kolkata giants at the end of last season. The Haitian forward, who had powered the Dhanmondi outfit to a 1-0 win over Mohun Bagan in the IFA Shield earlier this year, has not lost any of sharpness as he has already scored twice for the Green and Maroons during the King's Cup. Sheikh Jamal coach Maruful Haque admitted they have a plan to contain the Haitian.

"My players have very good idea about

the ability of Sony (Norde) and they have been reminded once again. However, if they can implement my plans accordingly, Sony will not be able to do any damage," Maruful told reporters yesterday.

Having played two matches each, Sheikh Jamal and Mohun Bagan have equal four points while Nakhon Ratchasima of Thailand, too, have four points, but they have already played all three of their matches. As things stand, a win would help Sheikh Jamal emerge group champions while a draw would see them qualify behind Mohun Bagan. A defeat, however, would bring Nakhon into the equation and, in that case, either Sheikh Jamal or Nakhon would go through along with Mohun Bagan, depending on the number of goals scored.

Maruful claimed they would go for an outright victory in this battle of pride. Maruful's counterpart, Shubhash Bhowmick of Mohun Bagan, said that they are only thinking of semifinal berth rather than revenge for their IFA Shield defeat.

Abul, Taijul in for 4th ODI

SPORTS REPORTER

The selectors made two changes to the team for the fourth ODI of the five-match series against Zimbabwe to be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur tomorrow. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam replaced Arafat Sunny, who took ten wickets in the first three matches, while pacer Abul Hasan replaced the injured Shafiqur Islam, who left the field during the second innings of the third match with a thigh injury. These changes are believed to have been made to prepare the relative newcomers ahead of the World Cup, as Bangladesh have already sealed the five-match series.

Hughes still critical

AFP, Sydney

Australian batsman Phillip Hughes remained in a critical condition Wednesday after surgery to relieve pressure on his brain, as players rallied around the bowler who inflicted the damage.

The 25-year-old, who was pressing for a Test recall, was knocked out by a Sean Abbott bouncer in a freak incident at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Tuesday, crumbling to the ground unconscious after the heavy blow to the lower head.

He underwent emergency surgery and was in an induced coma in intensive care at St Vincent's Hospital.

"Philip's condition is unchanged and he remains critical," Australian team doctor Peter Brukner said in a brief statement on Wednesday afternoon.

Test captain Michael Clarke was one of the first to arrive at the hospital on Wednesday, resuming a vigil at his close friend's bedside and comforting Hughes's mother and sister.

Hughes made his Test debut in South Africa in 2009, where he made 75 in the second innings at Johannesburg.



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