

SPORT

BANGLADESH V PAKISTAN PCB NEW ERA BEGINS HERE

The Export Leader

CROWN CEMENT
 FOR SOLID FOUNDATION



Bangladesh pacer Mohammad Shahid picked up two wickets in the second Test against Pakistan yesterday, including the crucial wicket of Younis Khan, who was dismissed two shy of 150.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

WORLD WILL SEE WHEN SILK ADORNS YOUR LIFE

Pakistan thrive on 'gift'

BISHWAJIT ROY
 When you are successful and performing well it doesn't necessarily mean that you have got the licence to do whatever you want. This is exactly what Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim did after winning a good toss in the second Test against Pakistan at Mirpur yesterday.

He chose to field. The decision surprised all and sundry and gave Pakistan a gift which they grabbed with both hands to punish their opposition in every way possible. It is not understandable why Mushfiqur decided against batting first, any captain with a positive frame of mind would have outright rejected without even entertaining the idea of whether his bowling is better than batting.

There might be one lamest of excuses for Mushfiqur that he wanted to exploit the moisture on the wicket, but the baking summer sun has burnt that weird idea associated with a confused captain, who speaks one thing but does exactly the opposite in the middle. If it was the case that he did not want to expose his batting, the

strongest point of the Tigers, then it was better we stopped playing Test cricket which is not meant for cowards.

The decision to field only a few days after a world record second innings 312-run opening stand between Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes in the first Test, belied every conceivable logic.

It also allowed Pakistan to easily overcome that first one hour against a one-legged pace attack to eventually

clutch the ball in the previous delivery, Younis only cut the next ball to reach the safe hands of Shuvagata Hom at gully to miss the 150-run mark only by two runs but his and Azhar's hundreds have steered Pakistan to 323 for 3 at stumps.

Both Younis and Azhar however were lucky as they had lifelines with Shahid and Soumya Sarkar overstepping.

Shahid, who gave early breakthrough by taking the wicket of last match's double-centurion Mohammad Hafeez with an impressive delivery, was very quick to get his second success as he got a thick outside edge to see the batsman land at third slip, but Azhar survived on 18 for overstepping.

IGNITES IN TEST SERIES TOO...

On 78, Younis was caught

at cover but this time Soumya overstepped and thus helping him complete his 29th hundred.

Barring Mushfiqur and vice-captain Tamim, Bangladesh used all their bowlers but only left-arm spinner Taijul Islam was the other bowler after Shahid who got success, but it was batsman Sami Aslam who gifted him the wicket by playing a loose shot on a day which could have been a day for the home side had Mushfiqur applied logic.

Younis Khan and Azhar Ali put the ordinary Bangladesh bowling to the sword during their 250-run third wicket stand in 62 overs.

Pacer Mohammad Shahid, who had to take the bulk of the workload following the departure of injured Shahadat Hossain only after two deliveries, broke the partnership in the 85th over sending Younis back to the dressing room.

After keeper Mushfiqur failed to

A dismal day

NAIMUL KARIM

Bowlers getting injured, chances being let down and catches deemed illegal due to bowlers overstepping; it was just one of those days for the Tigers when barely anything went their way.

While the above instances could be deemed unfortunate, skipper Mushfiqur Rahim's decision to bowl after winning the toss -- despite having eight batsmen in the side and on a wicket that traditionally favours batsmen -- could be termed as anything but a lack of fortune.

The Tigers had everything rolling for them going into the second Test. After white-washing Pakistan, their openers put up a world record stand to bounce back from the jaws of defeat in the first Test; in other words, Pakistan's confidence levels were perhaps at their lowest.

And yet, despite winning the toss and receiving the opportunity to prolong that pressure, the team management thought it would be a better decision to put the visitors in.

Yes, there was grass on the wicket and the pacers did receive some movement from it, but the Tigers went into this game with just two pacers -- one of them has just begun his international career and the other hasn't exactly been a wicket-taker over the years.

In addition, Shakib Al Hasan's bowling in the Test series hasn't been up to the mark. As a result, for Mushfiqur and the team management to believe that they could strike the pins down with this bowling attack wasn't a pragmatic move; if at all that was the plan.

With a day gone, Pakistan now hold the edge after putting in a formidable total which can

now put the pressure on the Tigers on a track where the likes of Wahab Riaz and Yasir Shah are bound to be more threatening.

The only positive aspect for the Tigers on the field yesterday was Mohammad Shaheed. The young pacer bowled his heart out in his first spell, which saw him bowl eight overs on the trot in the scorching heat.

He stuck to his limitations, frequently brought the ball in and was rewarded for his hard work. However, things could have been a lot better for him in the morning session had he not overstepped the line.

His burst with the new ball towards the end of the day was as good as the morning session. He compelled Younis Khan to edge a number of deliveries before eventually getting him caught at slip. He also beat Misbahul Haq with a jaffa which compelled the 40-year-old to give Shaheed a pat on his back.

While Shaheed was happy with his performance, he believed it could have been better had Shahadat Hossain not been injured.

"If Shahadat bhai was there, things would have definitely been better. There was grass on the wicket and the bowlers were getting help from it.

"I enjoyed bowling here a lot more than in Khulna... it was a lot more fun," said Shaheed, who finished with figures of 2 for 43.

"The no-ball opportunities and the other chances made me feel a little frustrated, but then I realised that those chances were done. I tried to focus on the next ball," added the pacesman.

Shaheed is confident that the Tigers can make a comeback today. According to him, all they need to do is to bowl well in the morning session.

Pakistanis in BCL?

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan, who arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday to witness the ongoing second Test, has said that the 'gap' that had been created following the Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision not to send its team to Pakistan in 2012 has been 'covered' and that the two boards are looking for greater progress.

Speaking to reporters at the end of the first day's play yesterday he said, "We had a problem. Bangladesh was supposed to come in 2012, they couldn't for security and other reasons and since then there was a gap. I think this gap has been covered. Bangladesh are willing to reciprocate now and we are quite happy," said Shaharyar.

The last few months witnessed the PCB and BCB negotiate on a number of issues. The BCB had agreed to pay a certain amount of money as compensation to the PCB and also reportedly agreed to send its women's national team to Pakistan.

The growing relationship could also mean a return for the Pakistani players in Bangladesh's domestic Cricket League which, until 2012, featured a number of Pakistani players.

"There is no ban on Pakistan on these cricketers. There won't be an issue [in providing them with no objection certificates]," said Shaharyar.

While the chairman stated that actions with regards to the team would be taken only after the series, he did come down hard on the team's fitness levels.

"Our fitness levels are the lowest internationally. It's much worse than what you see from Bangladesh. The people who meet the standards are the two oldest men, Misbahul Haq and Younis Khan. We need to address this issue," said Shaharyar.

Younis ton for quake victims

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan batsman Younis Khan dedicated his 29th century that put him alongside legendary Sir Don Bradman, to the victims of the devastating earthquake in Nepal, which left more than 7,600 dead.

Speaking to reporters, Younis, who shared a 250-run stand with Azhar Ali to take Pakistan to a dominant position said, "I would like to dedicate my innings to the people who died in Nepal and also to those in India and the people who suffered back home in Pakistan."

Younis's innings came at a time when Pakistan were in desperate need of a boost. Both Younis and Azhar were caught off deliveries which were later deemed no-balls. There were also a few edges which fell inches short of the fielders. However, apart from a few nervous phases, the partnership seemed resolute.

"Sometimes you need those chances. They motivate you and make you more determined. I am glad I was able to score a big one. I love to score, especially when my team is under pressure," said Younis.

When asked if it was a good toss to lose Younis said, "Because of the grass on the wicket, captains tend to look for that early moisture, so the decision to bowl first by Bangladesh wasn't a bad one.

"They bowled well in the first hour and got the wicket of [Mohammad] Hafeez. I don't think it was a bad decision; it's just that we had a good partnership.

"This is a good wicket for both batsmen and bowlers. The outfield is quite quick. If you play properly you have the chance to score," said Younis.

"The way Bangladesh bounced back in the last game, especially in the third and fourth days, it won't be an easy task for us [to determine a good total on this wicket]. The first session on Thursday will be important. I think we have a good chance of winning this game," he added.

THE FINE ART OF BAKING

BANGLADESH-PAKISTAN SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First innings R/B 4/6
 Hafeez c Mushfiqur b Shahid 8/16 1/0
 Aslam c Shahadat b Taijul 19/58 2/0
 Azhar not out 127/258 13/0
 Younis c Shuvagata b Shahid 148/195 11/3
 Misbahul not out 9/18 0/1
 Extras: (lb-6, w-1, nb-5) 12
 Total: (For 3 wkts in 90 overs) 323
 To bat: Shafig, Sarfraz, Riaz, Yasir, Junaid, Imran.
 Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-58, 3-308.

Bowler O M R W
 Shahadat 0.2 0 4 0
 Soumya 11.4 1 32 0
 Shahid 21 6 43 2
 Taijul 30 2 102 1
 Shuvagata 8 0 47 0
 Shakib 14 0 68 0
 Mominul 2 0 8 0
 Mahmudullah 2 0 12 0
 Imrul 1 0 1 0

BANGLADESH: Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Mominul Haque, Mahmudullah, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Soumya Sarkar, Shuvagata Hom, Taijul Islam, Shahadat Hossain, Mohammad Shahid.

Toss: Bangladesh
Umpires: N Llong (England) and P Reiffel (Australia)
TV Umpire: R Martinez (Sri Lanka)
Match referee: J Crowe (New Zealand)
Reserve umpire: Enamul Haque

Shahadat debacle reflects pace problems

AL-AMIN

When Bangladesh won the toss and decided to bowl against Pakistan in the second Test at Mirpur yesterday, it surprised many. The only logical reason might have been that there was moisture on the wicket that the Tigers skipper Mushfiqur Rahim wanted to exploit with his two medium pace bowlers -- Shahadat Hossain and Mohammad Shahid.

But what transpired the moment Shahadat hurled the first ball of the match, after which Shahadat tumbled on the ground and took a painful blow, was more than Mushfiqur's wishful thinking.

After getting some treatment in the middle Shahadat managed to bowl another ball, a strayed delivery down the leg side that was duly punished for a four.

But that was it for the pacer. He left the field to have an assessment of how bad his right knee was and bowled a few deliveries in front of the team's dressing room before returning to the field briefly and even took a good catch at mid-wicket to dismiss Sami Aslam.

As opposed to the general practice, during the lunch break, Shahadat came out to bowl on a practice wicket in the middle. He was in his delivery stride while trying to bowl his fourth ball but suddenly stopped and collapsed on the ground, from where he was carried out on a stretcher. The first report from the dressing room was that Shahadat had 'twisted his right knee' and

probably been ruled out of the match.

The first impression one may get from the Shahadat episode is that it was one of those freak injuries. But someone who has been following the experienced pace bowler in domestic cricket and since the first Test, which he sat out, it was more than just a freak injury. It was something destined to happen to someone who was not match-fit.

There is a tendency that our bowlers hide injuries. Take for instance Rubel Hossain, who was clearly not in any sort of rhythm in the first Test in Khulna. On the third day of the Test, Tamim Iqbal had a plan to give Rubel a five-over spell in the last half an hour or so. Rubel bowled only two overs before being surprisingly removed from the attack. The next morning it was revealed that Rubel had complained of a side-strain and was subsequently dropped from the second Test.

Shahadat was trying to put up a brave face from the moment he tumbled after bowling that first delivery. His whole effort after that was more like a futile exercise of hiding something that perhaps only aggravated things.

At the end of the day it's the team management that plays the role of gatekeeper when it comes to ensuring that it won't allow even a slightly unfit player in any international match, let alone a demanding Test match.

In domestic cricket this season Shahadat has been a face of a struggling bowler compared to a very successful Mohammad Shahid, who is just carrying his domestic form into the Test.



Shahadat Hossain could bowl only two deliveries before he injured himself yesterday, weakening Bangladesh's pace attack.

PHOTO: STAR

Shahid suddenly became the darling of the same captain.


With decent pace Shahid bowled eight overs without a break in his first spell in the morning session when he was denied a deserved second wicket due to overstepping. And by the time the teams went for the tea break, Shahid had bowled 17 overs under the boiling summer sun.

This is perhaps a classic example of how we treat our pace bowlers. When you are playing good cricket, you can hide some glaringly bad things under the carpet. And to be honest, the Tigers' planning with the pace bowlers left a lot to be desired. Shahadat is the latest inclusion of a long list of injured pace bowlers.

And if you want a replacement you will have to search for someone from the freshers pool in the domestic circuit or you will have to live with a 128 kmph Abul Hasan. This certainly portrays a poor picture of our pace bowling department; a sector which looks further deserted with inexplicable exclusion of Al-Amin Hossain, the bowler who was sent back from the World Cup on disciplinary ground.

It's quite clear that the BCB needs to take a decision with regards to the bowler. If he in fact has been punished, the details of it should be made clear, because had it not been for the disciplinary issues, Al-Amin would have definitely found a place in this worn-out pace attack. The uncertainty surrounding the bowler can only make it worse for him.

SUPERCRETE CEMENT
SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY
 Lafarge Surma Cement Ltd.

YOUNIS KHAN

 Younis Khan took 10 deliveries to get off the mark as he arrived at the crease just before the luncheon interval after Pakistan had lost their second wicket for 58 runs. But once back from the break, the veteran batsman began came out of his shell and asserted himself on the bowlers, both pacers and the spinners, with strokes all around the ground. The 37-year-old batsman brought up his 50 off 72 deliveries and his 29th Test match hundred in 142 deliveries, having had a reprieve on 85. But he made most of his life as he raced on to 148 off 190 deliveries before being dismissed by Mohammad Shahid. Younis 62 of his runs in boundaries. At the fag end of his career having already retired from the shorter versions, Younis seems like a lot left in him as he boasts a healthy average of 53.24 in Tests.