



The procession never stopped after Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (R) was dismissed in the very first over of their opening T20 International against South Africa at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

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BD-SA SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA		R/B	4/6
De Villiers c Mashrafe b Sunny	2/6	0/0	
De Kock c Litton b Nasir	12/8	0/1	
Du Plessis not out	79/61	8/0	
Duminy c Nasir b Sunny	18/22	2/1	
Miller lbw b Shakib	1/3	0/0	
Rossouw not out	31/21	2/2	
Extras: (lb-2, w-2, nb-1)		5	
Total: (For 4 wkt in 20 overs)	148		
Did not bat: Wiese, Parnell, Abbott, Phangiso, Rabada.			
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-31, 3-77, 4-90.			
Bowler	O	M	R
Sunny	3	0	19
Nasir	4	0	37
Shakib	4	0	24
Mustafizur	4	0	30
Shohag	2	0	16
Mashrafe	3	0	20
			0
BANGLADESH	R/B	4/6	
Tamim c De Kock b Abbott	5/4	1/0	
Soumya c Duminy b Rabada	7/7	1/0	
Shakib c Parnell b Wiese	26/30	1/1	
Mashrafe c De Villiers			
b Dumm	17/19	2/0	
Sabir c De Kock b Duminy	4/7	0/0	
Nasir c Rossouw b Phangiso	1/2	0/0	
Litton c De Villiers b Wiese	22/26	0/1	
Mashrafe c De Villiers			
b Rabada	5/4	1/0	
Shohag run out	3/6	2	
Sunny not out	1/2	0/0	
Mustafizur Parnell	1/6	0/0	
Extras: (lb-2, w-2)	4		
Total: (All out in 18.5 overs)	96		
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-13, 3-50, 4-56, 5-57, 6-71, 7-86, 8-93, 9-94.			
Bowler	O	M	R
Abbott	2	0	10
Rabada	3	0	28
Parnell	2.5	0	12
Wiese	3	0	12
Phangiso	4	0	21
Duminy	4	0	11
			2
Result: South Africa won by 52 runs.			
Player-of-the-match: Faf du Plessis.			

Lost in a hurry

BISHWAJIT ROY



South Africa yesterday gave a strong message to their hosts Bangladesh that they were a hard nut to crack no matter what conditions they were in.

Asked to launch their series on a low and turning wicket yesterday at Mirpur, that resembles a typical sub-continent pitch, the visitors out-batted and out-bowled an impressive Tigers who were increasingly looking a tough team to beat in their own den in recent times that included ODI series wins against Pakistan and India.

Faf du Plessis led the tourists from the front with a composed unbeaten 79-run knock to clinch a 52-run victory in the first T20I of the two-match series.

The margin of defeat may look big, but the home side can feel they missed an opportunity to run down South Africa's 148 after yet another impressive bowling performance from the Tigers. But the batters, who refused to curb their natural aggressive play on a different wicket, eventually joined a long procession towards the dressing room playing expansive shots.

The bowlers, especially the spinners, responded well to the ploy of trapping the Proteas on slow and low wicket. However, the opponents' army of slow bowlers more than matched that on a wicket that offered more help in the second innings where their pacers were also successful with short-ball ploy.

The target of 149 was not a very difficult one

to chase down. What the Tigers needed was someone to play sensibly like South Africa skipper du Plessis, who used his Chennai Super Kings experience to adjust to the conditions. But the local batsmen simply forgot that every ball was not meant to be hit for four or six and even a T20 game is more about the rotation of strikes.

Openers Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar paid the penalty for chasing those short balls. Kyle Abbott made the visitors' intention clear to

Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim looked to take the opportunity, but the latter went down the track against spinner Duminy and whipped it in the air only to find the man at deep midwicket that ended the 37-run stand.

Left-arm spinner Aaron Phangiso and Duminy, who extracted prodigious turn, bowled brilliantly in the middle overs. They gave only 32 runs in their eight overs and took three wickets to kill Bangladesh's hopes.

Earlier, left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny gave Bangladesh a perfect start after South Africa decided to bat as he sent dangerman AB de Villiers back in the very first over of the innings. Off-spinner Nasir Hossain opened the bowling from the other end and dismissed de Kock as South Africa were reduced to 31 for two.

Experienced Duminy then joined his skipper to share 36 runs for the third wicket before Sunny broke the stand. Shakib dismissed David Miller quickly to overtake Abdur Razzaq as the leading Bangladeshi wicket-taker with 45. But Rilee Rossouw along with du Plessis added 58 runs in 6.4 overs in their unbeaten fifth-wicket stand to set a competitive target.

And South Africa skipper credited this partnership behind their success in the first game. "Not the easiest wicket, not a flat T20 wicket, had to graft a lot. Ball was spinning and staying low, we just needed a partnership, and Rilee played really well. That was the match-winning partnership," said du Plessis, who was adjudged player-of-the-match for his 61-ball knock that contained eight boundaries.



attack despite the dead pitch as the right-arm paceman began with a flurry of short balls and got Tamim, who gloved a down-the-leg delivery to keeper Quinton de Kock.

Kagiso Rabada also followed the same strategy from the other end and delivered a bouncer which Soumya tried to pull but could not control and offered a simple catch to JP Duminy at deep square-leg.

After losing two wickets in two overs for 13 runs on the board, Bangladesh desperately needed a partnership and one-down Shakib Al

Mashfiqur Rahim had to come to the crease a lot earlier than expected yesterday after champion batsman AB de Villiers was sent back early. He also had to witness Quinton de Kock depart a few overs later. The visitors were struggling at 31 for 2 at that point of time. Du Plessis though seemed to be the least worried player on the field. He merely whisked away the singles and ensured punishing the bad deliveries. He was probably the only player who judged the slow and low pitch at Mirpur to perfection. He barely tried a forceful hit during his 61-ball innings. All he did was crafting those singles and doubles and the rest happened automatically, a strategy that the Bangladeshi batsmen failed to apply. Du Plessis's unbeaten 79 was the reason why South Africa won the first game at Mirpur convincingly.

SUPERCRETE CEMENT

SUPER PERFORMER OF THE DAY

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FAF du PLESSIS



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U-19s win at Durban

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national team may not have made the best of starts to the South Africa series in Mirpur yesterday, but their juniors raced to a thumping eight-wicket win in the first one-day match over South Africa under-19s at Durban.

After restricting the hosts to a paltry 184 for 9, the Bangladeshi youths, courtesy of half-centuries from openers Joyraz Sheikh and Pinak Ghosh, who also shared a 135-run stand, reached their target in 44.4 overs.

After electing to field, pacer Abdul Halim took three crucial wickets including that of Wiaan Mulder, who top-scored for the hosts with 62. Halim finished with miserly figures of 3 for 22 in seven overs.

Captain Mehedi Hassan Mirza was also amongst the wickets with 2 for 27 in eight overs.

Joyraz scored 50 off 93 balls while Pinak hit 60 off 113. The talented Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Mehedi then ensured that there was no further hiccup as they took the visitors home with 32 balls remaining.

The junior Tigers had earlier beaten the reigning World Cup champions 6-1 at home in a youth ODI series this year. The two teams are scheduled to play six more matches in South Africa throughout this month.

Lucky to bat first

SPORTS REPORTER



South Africa batsman Rilee Rossouw believed that the visitors were 'lucky' to bowl in the second innings since the Mirpur pitch, according to him, had a lot more turn later on in the opening T20I match yesterday.

Rossouw struck a 21-ball 31 and was involved in a crucial partnership with his captain Faf du Plessis, who hit a sublime 79 on a difficult wicket.

"I think both sides bowled really well today [Sunday]. Lucky for us we bowled in the second innings and it spun a bit more. I just thought we had an advantage. But both teams bowled really well," said Rossouw at the post-match press conference.

Despite losing two wickets early, the visitors managed to post 148. Going into the break, Rossouw stated that the visitors were confident of defending that score.

"We looked at the statistics and 150-odd looked a very good score on this ground. We thought we had a good chance of winning the match. And with the ball turning in the second innings, it favoured us. We bowled well and stuck to our guns," said Rossouw.

He also praised his skipper for his outstanding knock. He seemed to have judged the pitch to perfection and was sublime with his batting approach. Rossouw described the innings as 'immaculate'.

"He played really really well. When we lost two early wickets, he was still there and he played his natural aggressive game."

"We wanted a guy to be there till the end of the innings. We targeted the bowlers from the 17th over. Luckily for me the second ball went for a four and the momentum kept going from then on," said Rossouw.

The Rossouw-du Plessis pair added 58 runs in the last 6.4 overs, which included a few hefty blows against Bangladesh's prodigious left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman, who went wicketless in the match.



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (C) has every reason to high-five Mushfiqur Rahim after the departure of South Africa batsman AB de Villiers at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO:
STAR

'Batsmen may have misread the pitch'

NAIMUL KARIM



From the moment Arafat Sunny fired one of his loopy turners against AB de Villiers in the first over there were chants of ooh and ah in the press box. The ball had kept low and even turned a bit.

These were early indications that the Mirpur pitch yesterday was going to be one of those typical slow and low wickets; almost the kind that Bangladesh's players witness in domestic tournaments.

The team management's strategy seemed to be working when Bangladesh's spinners sent both de Villiers and Quinton de Kock back to the pavilion early. However, the bowlers had to deal with a resolute Faf du Plessis who seemed to have the calmest hands on the field. When they were under pressure, du Plessis merely tapped the ball around for ones and twos.

Whenever the deliveries were short or over pitched, they were hammered towards the boundary ropes. He even read Mustafizur Rahman's cutters, a task not many batsmen have been too successful at, as he patiently guided him towards the third-man region.

Du Plessis had scored a brilliant half-century, however, it hadn't exactly ensured a win for the visitors half-way through. One wouldn't always bet on a target of 149 in a T20 game.

However, that notion changed after Bangladesh's batsmen arrived in the second innings.

The previous limited-overs matches saw Bangladesh's batsmen bank on aggressive starts. Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar were ruthless in the last few limited-overs matches that were played on sporting wickets.

However, the wicket yesterday was different, but unfortunately for Bangladesh's fans, the hosts' batting approach wasn't.

The likes of Tamim, Soumya and Mushfiqur Rahim were all sent back to the pavilion after they attempted wild hits, which, considering the circumstances of the game, weren't necessary. It also built pressure on the middle order.

After the match, skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza admitted that the batsmen might have misread the pitch.

"It might have been the case. They were playing on true wickets for a long time. So coming from there to here... the adjustment issue might have been a reason."

But I think that we have played on this kind of wicket for a long time.

"It should have been more difficult for them [South Africa]. But their batsmen saw the innnings out. No matter what kind of a wicket it is, we have to adjust and play," said Mashrafe.

"They have been successful in the past by playing positive cricket. So maybe they wanted to hit the lose balls. That's why not many wanted to change their style of play. I hope we can learn from here and read the situation much better the next time," he added.

When asked if the players were under pressure of maintaining their good run, Mashrafe replied saying that that aspect might have had an effect.

"There's always pressure when you play against a team like South Africa. But what is more important is to see how the players take it. If we don't believe in ourselves,