



Rangpur Riders players were ecstatic after clinching a nail-biting last-ball win against Chittagong Vikings in the opening match of the BRB Cables BPL at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## No rest for Vikings, Riders

NAIMUL KARIM



Prior to the tournament, Misbahul Haq who was a late buy for the Rangpur Riders said that he had decided to take part in the Bangladesh Premier League in order to 'stay motivated' for his future matches.

Truth be told, one couldn't have asked for a better beginning to the third season of the competition. What made the match even better was that Misbah, despite all his elegance and power, had met his match in Mohammad Amir, who finished with 4 for 20 in his four overs.

Rangpur looked down and out after the first five overs. Lendl Simmons could barely penetrate the field while Soumya Sarkar lost his wicket attempting to hit one too many. A rusty Shakib Al Hasan, who had arrived in Dhaka just the day before, was guilty of attempting to cut the ball too often and eventually nicked one.

That's when Mohammad Al-Amin, a 22-year-old all-rounder who has done well in the domestic circuit this year, joined Misbah in the middle and began stitching up a partnership. Al-Amin, initially seemed the more dominant partner, reverse-sweeping and going down the track almost at will. He hit one six and three fours and got out after sharing a crucial 64-run stand with Misbah.

After his dismissal, Misbah, who was joined by Thisara Perera, started to unleash his true self. With 91 runs required off six overs, he smacked Amir for three boundaries in the 15th over. The next over saw Taskin Ahmed got hit for two sixes, first by Misbah and then by Perera.

By then both the batters had understood exactly how good the wicket was and they began smacking those boundaries almost at will; nobody was spared. Shafiq was hit

for 16, Ziaur went for 21 and Tamim Iqbal didn't seem to know what to do.

The plot thickened however once Al-Amin was brought back in the penultimate over with Rangpur requiring 22 runs. He first removed Perera with a slower bouncer and then bowled a brilliant yorker to beat Misbah all ends up.

14 runs required of the last six balls and it came down to battle between Darren Sammy and Shafiq. Sammy was run-out after smashing 13 off the first five, after which Saqlain Sajib scampered for the winning run in the last ball.

Earlier, the Vikings had received a brilliant start with Tamim and Tillakaratne Dilshan putting on 52 in 4.2 overs. Tamim was the highest run-getter scoring 51 off 32 balls. They had raced to 103 for 1 after 10 overs but fell short by a few runs, managing to score just 84 in the

## Dhaka make heavy weather

SPORTS REPORTER



It came as a surprise when Kumar Sangakkara decided to employ Abul Hasan and Farhad Reza up front for the Dhaka Dynamites after being asked to field by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Comilla Victorians.

The reason behind that of course was that they had the lethal Mustafizur Rahman in their arsenal. While the plan worked -- Abul and Farhad managed to scalp three quick wickets -- it took just one Mustafizur-over to make everyone recall his specialty.

He was brought in for the fourth over against the hard-hitting Marlon Samuels. The West Indian, who had never played the bowler before, seemed oblivious to what the left-arter was capable of.

All he could do was swing in despair. The first one, bowled slightly outside the off-stump, deviated ever so slightly to pass the bat. The second swing was even further away as Samuels completely misjudged the slower delivery. The boy from Satkhira bowled two more such deliveries, which left Samuels with a puzzled expression.

What the West Indian perhaps didn't know was that he was being set up for the final delivery. The fifth ball of the over saw Mustafizur bowling the perfect length, a bit outside the leg-stump. Samuels had no idea what to expect; he didn't know how much the ball would turn and in the end, Samuels was bowled. It was an eye-catching display of bowling.

The slower delivery didn't work against everyone though. After 14 overs Comilla were struggling at 66 for 7, courtesy of some good bowling from Abul Hasan, Mosharraf Hossain and Yasir Shah.

Abul finished with figures of 3 for 29 while Mosharraf bowled a tidy spell and had 2 for 15.

Leg-spinner Yasir was the other bowler who impressed. Like Mohammad Amir in the previous match, Yasir began with a maiden over. He continued to trouble the batsmen with his flight and variations. On any other day some of the LBW shouts could have gone his way.

Skipper Mashrafe and Krishmar Santokie attempted to revive the Victorians with a spirited eighth-wicket stand. As a result, Mustafizur was brought back. His slower deliveries though received a whacking from Santokie and Mashrafe. While Santokie hit him for three fours, Mashrafe, supposedly the left-hander's idol, slogged him for a humongous six.

Eventually, the Victorians were restricted to a 110 for 8.

Things weren't as easy as expected after the exchange for Dhaka. Mashrafe removed Shamsur Rahman early, but a 55-run stand between Sangakkara and opener Nasir Jamshed brought the equation down to a comfortable 27 off 39 balls before Jamshed was out. A two-wicket haul from young left-arm Abu Hider ensured that the match would go to the last over with the Dynamites requiring four runs, a target they eventually reached with six wickets and four balls remaining.

## 'A lesson for the locals'

SPORTS REPORTER



Chittagong Vikings skipper Tamim Iqbal said that there was a lot to learn from Misbahul Haq's game-changing innings in the first match of the Bangladesh Premier League at Mirpur yesterday.

Misbah had the near-impossible task of reviving the Rangpur Riders from 23 for 4 during their chase of 188. At the end, he managed to take Rangpur home with help from Mohammad Al Amin and Thisara Perera.

"The way he started, he was very calm. He first took the singles and then played the big shots. When we were batting, we were 100-odd for 1 in 11 overs. Had we just rotated the strike we could have easily reached 200."

"This is a learning (experience) for the local boys. He played an unbelievable innings," said Tamim during the post-match press conference.

"I don't think we are demotivated although we really wanted to win this match. Actually I have no words to say. The way we started we should have scored 20 runs more. There was a bit of a problem in the middle as well as two dropped catches. I think those were the factors that lost

us the game," he added.

Describing yesterday's match as a 'great start' to the Bangladesh Premier League, Misbah said that all he targeted to do was to play the full 20 overs.

"I think my strategy was very simple. The kind of batsmen we had down the order, like Thisara and [Darren] Sammy, we knew what we were capable of. We knew that 80 runs in the last five overs was gettable," said Misbah.

"I played a lot of cricket here. The side-boundaries are slightly small and the wickets are really good so you can really get smashed for boundaries towards the end here," he added.

With a brilliant four-wicket haul, Mohammad Al Amin was the other highlight of the match. Misbah, who was bowled by an absolute stunner, also spoke highly of him.

"It's a match between ball and bat. He bowled a really good yorker. This is what people are here to watch. There's always good competition, that's what cricket is all about."

Tamim echoed Misbah's sentiments. "I don't know if he was excited, but he bowled brilliantly. I was looking forward to him. He is playing this kind of cricket after a long time and I am sure he will get better each day."



Pakistani paceman Mohammad Amir was at his best, with a four-wicket haul for Chittagong Vikings in the opening match of the BPL in Mirpur yesterday. However, it was the brilliance of another Pakistani -- Misbahul Haq -- which eventually settled the tie in favour of Rangpur Riders.

## PREMIER cement

### SCOREBOARDS

VIKINGS VS RIDERS					VICTORIANS VS DYNAMITES				
CHITTAGONG VIKINGS		R/B	4/6	COMILLA VICTORIANS		R/B	4/6		
Tamim c Misbah b Saqlain	51/32	6/1		Imrul c Farhad b Hasan	0/3	0/0			
Dilshan c Arafat b Jayed	29/16	2/3		Liton c Mustafizur b Farhad	3/5	0/0			
Anamul Sammy b Saqlain	36/30	5/0		Samuels b Mustafizur	8/9	1/0			
Mendis run out	39/18	3/3		Shuvagata c Yasir b Hasan	4/3	1/0			
Ziaur lbw b Saqlain	2/5	0/0		Stevens run out	5/14	1/0			
Chigumbura c Shakib b Jayed	1/3	0/0		Mahmudul c Sangakkara					
Asif not out	17/15	2/0		b Mosharraf	22/30	2/0			
Amir run out	1/1	0/0		Arifil st Sangakkara					
Shafiq not out	4/1	1/0		b Mosharraf	13/13	1/0			
Extras: (w-6, nb-1)	7			Mashrafe c Sangakkara					
Total: (For 7 wkts in 20 overs)	187			b Hasan	25/26	0/2			
Did not bat: Enamul, Taskin.				Santokie not out	21/16	3/0			
Fall of wickets: 1-52, 2-117, 3-119, 4-122, 5-134, 6-178, 7-183.				Narine not out	0/1				
Bowler	0	M	R	Extras: (b-1, w-8)	9				
Shakib	2	0	22	Total: (For 8 wkts in 20 overs)	110				
Perera	3	0	38	To bat: Abu Hider					
Arafat	3	0	38	Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-8, 3-21, 4-27, 5-36, 6-59, 7-66, 8-109.					
Jayed	4	0	26	Bowler	0	M	R	W	
Al-Amin	2	0	18	Hasan	4	0	29	3	
Sammy	2	0	19	Farhad	4	0	27	1	
Saqlain	4	0	26	Mustafizur	4	0	24	1	
RANGPUR RIDERS	R/B	4/6		Yasir	4	1	14	0	
Simmons c Tamim b Amir	1/9	0/0		Mosharraf	4	0	15	2	
Soumya lbw b Amir	20/9	3/1		DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	4/6			
Mithun lbw b Taskin	0/3	0/0		Shuvagata c Samuels					
Mishab b Amir	61/39	3/4		Shakib c Mosharraf	19/17	3/0			
Shakib c Anamul b Shafiq	1/6	0/0		Jamshed lbw b Narine	44/44	8/0			
Al-Amin b Chigumbura	38/28	3/1		Sangakkara b Hider	25/29	0/1			
Perera c Mendis b Amir	43/17	4/3		Mosaddeq c Narine b Hider	7/14	0/0			
Sammy run out	18/7	2/1		Taskin Doeschate not out	8/10	0/0			
Arafat not out	1/1	0/0		Narine not out	5/2	1/0			
Saqlain not out	1/1	0/0		Extras: (w-4)	4				
Extras: (lb-1, w-3)	4			Total: (For 4 wkts in 19.2 overs)	112				
Total: (For 8 wkts in 20 overs)	188			Did not bat: Mosharraf Hossain, Farhad Reza, Mustafizur Rahman, Yasir Shah, Abu Hider.					
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-22, 3-22, 4-23, 5-87, 6-167, 7-167, 8-187.									
Bowler	0	M	R						
Amir	4	1	30						
Taskin	4	0	35						
Shafiq	4	0	41						
Enamul	2	0	20						
Mendis	3	0	22						
Ziaur	2	0	30						
Chigumbura	1	0	9						
Result: Rangpur Riders won by 2 wickets.									
Player-of-the-match: Misbahul Haq.									
PHOTO: STAR									



Dhaka Dynamites' Mustafizur Rahman cleaned up Comilla Victorians' Marlon Samuels with a beautiful delivery early in the second BPL match in Mirpur last night.

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