

SPORT

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT **79**
TOTAL 4s HIT **234**

Most 6s hit by a player: 8, Tamim Iqbal, Chittagong Vikings
 Most 4s hit by a player: 21, Dilshan Munaweera, Sylhet Superstars



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

With a virtuoso all-round performance, Shakib Al Hasan led Rangpur Riders to a thrilling six-run win over Sylhet Superstars in yesterday's BPL match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Two-paced wickets causing an uproar

SPORTS REPORTER

Enquiries regarding the slowness of the wicket have become the most common questions during almost every post-match press briefing of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). And the reason behind that is the low-scoring encounters that have been taking place in the last two days. Even from afar, it's difficult to comprehend how the ball is going to behave. With the new ball there seems to be good carry and a bit of swing as well. However, as mid-innings approaches, the bounce gets lower. But it's not the lack of bounce that is the main problem; anything consistent can be adjusted to and dealt with. The main problem it seems is the two-paced nature of the wicket. While some balls are slow off the wicket, there are a few that tend to skid through to the keeper. As a result it becomes difficult for a batsman to know when to go for that attempted hit. Ask the players what the problem is and most of them don't have much of an idea. Confusing and surprising are among the few words that players have used to describe the pitch this week and yesterday was no different. "It's definitely getting lower and the pitch is a little double-paced. Sometimes it skids and

sometimes it comes slowly. That is the only issue that most batters are finding, I am not sure why it's happening. I have played on better tracks in Bangladesh," said Sylhet Superstars' Ravi Bopara after the match. Bopara, who has played in the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) in the past, still managed to give an idea or two about the enigmatic wicket. "To be fair the wickets in the DPL weren't the best, but over there you have 50 overs and you can take your time to get in, but you don't get that time in T20 cricket. "So that's why it's making it hard for batters. As soon as you play a shot, the wicket could misbehave," he said. Shakib echoed Bopara's sentiments and reiterated his stance on the issue and said that the wicket wasn't getting enough rest. BPL technical committee convener Jalal Yunus admitted that there was an issue with the wicket and said that they were disappointed. "Yes it's disappointing in the sense that we wanted more runs in the competition. The matches are actually being held on three different wickets. The remaining wickets are being preserved for future tournaments. "We have received complaints about the wicket and we have planned a meeting with our curator to discuss the issue. We are going to discuss whether something can be done for the matches after the Chittagong leg," said Jalal.

Another Superstars heartbreak

NAIMUL KARIM

Another low-scoring match, another intense finish and yet another teasing defeat for the Sylhet Superstars; the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), so far, hasn't been too kind to Mushfiqur Rahim and co. After a four-wicket haul from Mohammad Shahid helped them restrict Shakib Al Hasan's Rangpur Riders to just 109, they would have thought that this was the game that would break the jinx for them. However, the Rangpur Riders scrambled to a six-wicket win. Skipper Shakib led from the front with a three-wicket haul. He got the crucial wickets of Josh Cobb and Dilshan Munaweera within the first four overs and set the tone after the exchange. Sylhet seemed to be on the verge of a revival when Mominul Haque and Mushfiqur Rahim

were at the crease. Mominul hit a few beautiful drives off Shakib and looked set. However, he was trapped in front off Thisara Perera in the eighth over. Replays though suggested an inside edge. From there on, Sylhet lost wickets consistently. While Mushfiqur did hold his side, he could do little as his partners whizzed by one after the other. By the time the 17th over arrived, Sylhet required 22 runs off 18 balls and were poised at 88 for 7. Nurul Hasan and Mohammad Shahid lost their wickets after hitting a boundary each and that brought number eleven Ajanta Mendis to the crease. With one wicket in hand, Mendis and Mushfiqur needed 10 runs off the last nine balls. Surprisingly enough Mushfiqur allowed Mendis to take a single off the last ball of the 19th over. While that meant that Sylhet required seven runs off the last over, it also meant that Mushfiqur wasn't going to be on strike.

The move eventually backfired as Mendis was caught at long-on with the second ball of the last over and the game was over. "It does not make sense why we took that single, but I guess the two batters out there were guessing every run is crucial," said Sylhet's Ravi Bopara after the match. "But it's not down to the two last batsmen, your top six needs to score. I thought our batting today was terrible," he added. Earlier, a resolute 37-ball 33 from Shakib, helped Rangpur cross the 100-run mark. Shakib, who smacked one six and two fours, looked good but -- except for Thisara Perera's 21 -- he barely received any support from the other end. "I felt good after hitting that six. It didn't even come from the middle of my bat. But yes, the fall of wickets at the other end brought me down. But I think this is an innings that will help me with my recovery because I spent enough time in the middle," said Shakib after the match.

Dynamites ease past Vikings

SPORTS REPORTER

A clash that had the promise of being a thriller ended on a one-sided note as the Dhaka Dynamites raced to a six-wicket victory over the Chittagong Vikings in Mirpur yesterday. When Chittagong were bundled out for 92, not many expected the Dynamites to merely cruise home in 17.1 overs. The reason behind that being the way batsmen have been struggling in the slow and low pitches of the competition. However, Dhaka's batsmen defied that notion and won the match quite convincingly. And the credit for that should go to Dhaka's young openers Saikat Ali and Sadman Islam, the latter making his T20 debut. Both youngsters batted with brilliant composure to overcome almost half the target by the time the fielding restrictions were taken off. While both these batsmen were cautious, they weren't afraid to take the attack to the bowlers when required. Saikat smacked one six and two fours in his 29-ball 23, while Sadman finished on 45. Sadman's innings was similarly classy as the 20-year-old unleashed several well-timed drives. He hit six fours. The duo put on a crucial 45 in 6.1 overs before Saikat was caught in the deep. But by then all Dhaka needed to do was nudge the ball around for singles and they did that with ease. Dhaka lost two more wickets before they reached their target. Naem Islam was Chittagong's key performer finishing with figures of 3 for 7. Earlier a strong bowling effort from the Dynamites did half the job for their side. Tamim Iqbal and co just couldn't recover after losing early wickets. After five overs they were 21 for 3. However, they may consider themselves unlucky as a few crucial decisions went against them. Tamim was deemed out caught-behind in the second over when he tried to flick a delivery bowled down the leg-side for a boundary. The umpire thought there was a nick, but replays suggested otherwise. Anamul Haque was the next one to go as he wrongly judged a Forhad Reza delivery, which rammed into his pads. Anamul attempted to pull that ball, which ended up being knee-length. Wickets fell at a constant rate after that. If Nasir Hossain troubled them with his turners, Mustafizur Rahman left them in tatters with his variations. They took three wickets each. The Vikings were eventually bundled out for 92 in 18.4 overs. It was a match that will probably force the Vikings to re-think their combination. They preferred taking three foreign bowlers and depending a lot more on their all-rounders, keeping Kamran Akmal on the bench.



AUS vs NZ Pink-ball Test starts today

AFP, Adelaide

Rival captains Steve Smith and Brendon McCullum said Thursday they were excited about what the first-ever day-night Test could mean for the future of cricket. Big crowds will be thronging Adelaide Oval for Friday's pink-ball third Test between Australia and New Zealand, with the cricket world watching the first day-night match in 138 years of Tests with keen interest. Just like the advent of one-day internationals in the 1970s and the glitzy Twenty20 format in the last decade, Test cricket stands on the threshold of a game-changer and both skippers are keen to buy into the concept. "People are voting with their feet and they are encouraged by what the pink ball Test has to offer and for us to play in front of 40,000 people in a Test match is pretty amazing," New Zealand skipper McCullum told reporters. "So we're really excited about it and hopefully it goes off brilliantly, with no challenges and no problems."

PREMIER cement

SCOREBOARDS

RIDERS V SUPERSTARS				VIKINGS V DYNAMITES					
RANGPUR RIDERS	R/B	4/6		CHITTAGONG VIKINGS	R/B	4/6			
Simmons run out	13/14	2/0		Tamim c Sangakkara	1/9	0/0			
Soumya c Mushfiqur b Shahid	7/8	1/0		Dilshan lbw b Mosharraf	20/11	2/1			
Shakib c Cobb b Shahid	33/37	2/1		Anamul lbw b Farhad	1/6	0/0			
Mithun c Mushfiqur b Nasum	4/7	0/0		Yasir c Sangakkara	14/10	3/0			
Jahurul run out	8/11	1/0		Naeem not out	29/38	2/1			
Perera b Bopara	21/20	0/2		Amir b Yasir	2/3	0/0			
Sammy hit wkt b Nazmul	5/10	0/0		Mendis lbw b Nasir	1/5	0/0			
Senanayake c Bopara				Ziaur st Sangakkara	9/11	0/1			
b Shahid	7/6	1/0		b Nasir					
Arafat c Mushfiqur b Shahid	3/4	0/0		Shafiqul c Sangakkara					
Saqain not out	0/3	0/0		b Nasir	1/6	0/0			
Jayed not out	0/0	0/0		Enamul c & b Mustafizur	2/7	0/0			
Extras: (lb-3, w-5)	8			Ajmal c Shadman	4/6	1/0			
Total: (For 9 wickets in 20 overs)	109			Extras: (lb-1, w-7)	8				
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-23, 3-37, 4-54, 5-80, 6-90, 7-99, 8-108, 9-100.				Total: (All out in 18.4 overs)	92				
Bowler	O	M	R	W	Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-3, 3-21, 4-41, 5-50, 6-64, 7-75, 8-77, 9-80.				
Shahid	4	1	12	4	Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mendis	4	0	41	0	Farhad	2	0	7	1
Munaweera	4	0	19	0	Hasan	2	0	14	1
Nasum	2	0	15	1	Mustafizur	3	4	14	3
Bopara	4	0	8	1	Mosharraf	3	0	18	1
Nazmul	2	0	11	1	Yasir	4	0	26	1
SYLHET SUPERSTARS	R/B	4/6		Nasir	4	1	12	3	
Munaweera c Perera	17/11	2/1		DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	4/6			
b Shakib	0/1	0/0		Shykat c Ziaur b Shafiqul	23/17	2/1			
Mominul lbw b Perera	29/23	6/0		Shadman b Naeem	45/47	6/0			
Mushfiqur not out	25/34	2/0		Jamshed c Ziaur b Naeem	12/21	1/0			
Nazmul c & b Senanayake	0/5	0/0		Nasir b Naeem	2/8	0/0			
Bopara lbw b Arafat	1/4	0/0		Hasan not out	5/7	1/0			
Nasum c Mithun b Jayed	7/15	1/0		Sangakkara not out	5/3	1/0			
Milon b Shakib	5/6	0/0		Extras: (lb-1, w-3)	4				
Nurul run out	9/9	1/0		Total: (For 4 wickets in 17.1 overs)	96				
Shahid b Sammy	4/3	1/0		Did not bat: Mosharraf Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Farhad Reza, Yasir Shah, MN Waller					
Mendis c Senanayake b Jayed	3/5	0/0		Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-78, 3-84, 4-91.					
Extras: (lb-3, w-2)	3			Bowler	O	M	R	W	
Total: (All out in 19.2 overs)	103			Shakib	4	0	31	3	
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-31, 3-52, 4-53, 5-56, 6-73, 7-85, 8-96, 9-100.				Arafat	4	0	27	1	
Bowler	O	M	R	W	Senanayake	4	0	15	1
Shakib	4	0	31	3	Perera	4	0	11	1
Arafat	4	0	27	1	Saqain	1	0	6	0
Senanayake	4	0	15	1	Jayed	1.2	0	5	2
Perera	4	0	11	1	Sammy	1	0	7	1
Saqain	1	0	6	0					
Jayed	1.2	0	5	2					
Sammy	1	0	7	1					

Lanka to host Indo-Pak series in December

THE TIMES OF INDIA

A couple of hours after reports emerged that Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has given the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) provisional clearance to play India in Sri Lanka, BCCI's Rajeev Shukla all but confirmed that a bilateral series between the two teams has been agreed upon to be hosted by the island nation. "India-Pakistan series will happen tentatively from Dec 15 in Sri Lanka. Both the countries have agreed upon it," Shukla was quoted as saying by ANI on Thursday. "Around five matches will mark the resumption of cricketing ties between India and Pakistan in Sri Lanka," he said.

D/N Test for Tigers in 2016?

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) is formulating plans to play a floodlit Day/Night Test match against Bangladesh in December 2016. The trial will be done in their domestic Plunket Shield next February, and if all goes well then they will present an offer to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to play a pink ball fixture. Lindsay Crocker, New Zealand Cricket's head of cricket, said December was the right time of year for the concept. "We think the best one to try it in would be Bangladesh in December," Crocker told stuff.co.nz. "We think November is a little early so that December series could potentially be one. But we haven't discussed that with them yet. Should this [today's] Adelaide match go successfully and we're satisfied that we can try it, then we would go ahead," Crocker concluded. The BCB said it hadn't been approached yet. "They haven't told us but if it comes up, it will first go to the cricket committee, then we will take a policy decision on the board level," the chief executive Nizamuddin Chowdhury told ESPNcricinfo.

India need 8 wickets

AFP, Nagpur

India seized control of the third Test in Nagpur on Thursday after South Africa, shot out for a record low of 79, fumbled again in their chase of a tough target. Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin finished with five for 32 and Jadeja took four for 33 on a dusty surface at the VCA Stadium to bowl South Africa out in 33.1 overs, giving India a first-innings lead of 136 runs. India were themselves dismissed for 173 runs in their second knock, setting the top-ranked Proteas an improbable target of 310 on a pitch where the ball is turning sharply and keeping low. South Africa, needing a win to level the four-Test series, ended the second day's play on 32 for two, with Dean Elgar unbeaten on 10 and skipper Hashim Amla on three. The tourists will start the third day requiring 278 runs more on a dicey pitch that has already

SA'S LOWEST SCORES

Score	Opposition	Venue	Date
30	England	Port Elizabeth	13 Feb 1896
30	England	Birmingham	14 Jun 1924
36	Australia	Melbourne	12 Feb 1932
35	England	Cape Town	1 Apr 1899
43	England	Cape Town	25 Mar 1889
79	India	Nagpur	25 Nov 2015 (12th lowest)

claimed 32 wickets over the first two days. Starting the day at 11-2, the Proteas suffered a sensational collapse as they lost three wickets for one run in the first four overs to slip to 12-5. **SCORES IN BRIEF**
INDIA: First innings 215
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 79 (Du Plessis 10, Duminy 35, Harmer 13; Ashwin 5-32, Jadeja 4-33)
INDIA: Second innings 173 (Dhawan 39, Pujara 31, Kohli 16, Sharma 23; Morkel 3-19, Tahir 5-38)
SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings 32 for 2 (Elgar 10 not out, Tahir 8;

Remembering Phil Hughes

AGENCIES, Sydney

Under cloudless Australian skies, the Sydney Cricket Ground can feel almost cocooned from the cares of the world. Like all sports grounds, it was built to stage triumphs, not tragedies. But real life intruded in the most brutal fashion, as Philip Hughes passed away from his injuries exactly one year ago today. South Australia batsman Phillip Hughes, 25, was struck on the neck during a Sheffield Shield match on November 25, attempting a hook shot to a head-high bouncer. The ball severed an artery, and Hughes died three days later. The ball that struck him not only felled Hughes; it left an entire cricket community on its knees. For the teammates who shared a changing room, his death was particularly savage. The historic day-night Test against New Zealand will start today in Adelaide today. His family have asked for a low-key



anniversary and he will be honoured simply by players from both sides wearing black armbands, while during the first adjournment a tribute package will be screened at 4:08pm -- referring to Hughes' Test cap number. "It's going to be a really tough day and I think the guys playing are going to do it tough," former Australian captain Michael Clarke, a close friend of Hughes who was a pallbearer at his funeral, told reporters. "I think it's really important that we continue to support the Hughes family and show our respect."