

SPORT



BPL
WHACK-OMETER
TOTAL 6s HIT 122 | **TOTAL 4s HIT 368**
 Most 6s by a player: 8, Tamim Iqbal, Chittagong Vikings; Evin Lewis, Barisal Bulls
 Most 4s by a player: 27, Dilshan Munaweera, Sylhet Superstars

Barisal Bulls' Evin Lewis scored the first century of the third edition of the BPL yesterday with a thunderous 101 not out, a knock punctuated by seven 4s and six 6s. His performance saw his side ease to victory over Dhaka Dynamites.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Lewis lays down the marker

NAIMUR KARIM from Chittagong



It was Brendon Taylor who first introduced Evin Lewis to the Bangladeshi media. During one of the many pre-match press conferences in Dhaka Taylor described Lewis as 'an exciting West Indian who could hit the ball quite hard.'

Lewis was drafted in the squad for the Barisal Bulls on Monday against Chittagong Vikings and while he did drive the second delivery for a four, he got out two balls later. An overstatement; many would have thought.

However, after his pyrotechnics yesterday, everybody in the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium and quite a few who desperately tried to shield themselves from those towering sixes—knew what Taylor was talking about.

After Kumar Sangakkara scored a hard-fought half-century and helped Dhaka Dynamites post 158, it was, naively so, deemed as a decent total by many. However, after Lewis took charge of the innings, that notion was torn into shreds.

He hammered an unbeaten 101 off

65 balls and sped the Bulls to a nine-wicket victory. It was the first century of the competition this year, eighth overall and was easily the most memorable knock in BPL Season 3.

Make no mistake; several sixes and fours hit in the competition till date, however, the sheer power with which Lewis smacked them gave the bowlers real jitters.

While he did reach his half-century in the eleventh over off 39 balls, the highlight of his innings came after that. He clobbered Ryan Ten Doeschate for 26 runs in an over, which witnessed three huge sixes and two fours.

Thanks to Lewis's innings, Barisal's openers also posted the highest opening stand in the BPL this season, 127, surpassing Soumya Sarkar and Jahurul Islam's 102—scored in the first match of the day.

By the time his partner Rony Talukdar got out in the 14th over, the Bulls required just 32 off 37 balls.

It was the perfect setting for the 23-year-old to reach his first ever century in any format of the game. He had understandably slowed down a bit after Talukdar got out.

At 98 he had to fend off over num-

ber 18 against Mustafizur Rahman. While he managed to take single off him early in the over, he seemed a bit nervous while negotiating his cutters.

In the last ball of that over he managed to push one down the leg-side and sprint all the way to the other side to reach his century. He celebrated it in style as he leaped and ran almost towards the boundary, leaving his bat on the ground.

"It feels great man, my first T20 100 it feels great," an excited Lewis told reporters after the match.

A dangerous player on the field, Lewis let out child-like grins during the post-match press conference.

"I think the wicket was pretty decent and I backed myself. I waited on the slower balls and capitalized that was most important," the West Indian explained.

"It feels good you know, in T20 cricket to know that I can score in any part of the ground... that's excellent for me," he added.

The player, who considers Chris Gayle his idol, looks forward to open the innings with the West Indian.

"It's a dream for me to open with him and I hope it comes true. He is my mentor and I like hitting sixes like him," said Lewis.

Vikings keep losing

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



After restricting the Chittagong Vikings to 111 for 8, the Rangpur Riders, instead of heading back to the dressing room immediately, had a five-minute huddle at the centre of the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

While it wasn't clear what skipper Shakib Al Hasan told his teammates, his serious demeanour indicated that he wanted his side to romp to the target. As it so happened, the pep talk worked wonders as the Riders cruised to a comfortable nine-wicket victory.

Both openers — Soumya Sarkar and Jahurul Islam — played with a degree of caution. Sure enough, the boundaries were hit, but, unlike the last few matches, neither batsman attempted to be overly aggressive. Instead, they seemed to analyse the wicket to preci-

sion; something that the Chittagong Vikings failed to do after electing to bat.

The change in Soumya's approach, in particular, was quite noticeable. In the first few matches of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), the left-hander was guilty of attempting to hit every other ball to the fence.

While he hit eight fours and a six in his 56-ball 58 yesterday, some of which were beautifully carved past the inner fielders, he seemed a lot more stable. The duo put on a 102-run stand to ensure a comfortable victory.

Skipper Shakib was back after a one-match ban while Riders dropped Lendl Simmons in favour of Mohammad Nabi as Jahurul was pushed to the top of the order. The changes worked well as Jahurul posted a gritty 47, while Rangpur's spin attack ran through Chittagong's top-order and seemed to catch them unguarded.

Of the eight wickets that Rangpur

took, the slower bowlers claimed seven. Shakib and Arifat Sunny took two each while Saqlain Sajib and Nabi finished with a scalp apiece.

The end to Chittagong's innings was in stark contrast to their confident start. Tamim Iqbal and Tillakaratne Dilshan put on a confident 39-run stand before Dilshan's fall in the seventh over changed complexion of the game dramatically.

Kamran Akmal made his intentions clear by smacking Sunny for a huge six. However, he was bowled three balls later and Anamul Haque soon departed in a similar fashion. Tamim tried hard to revive the Vikings innings, but eventually succumbed to the pressure and got caught in the deep off Nabi.

Shakib removed new entrant Umar Akmal, who was brought in to Chittagong on a helicopter from Dhaka just before the match, for an eight-ball one. From there on it was a downhill spiral for the hosts.

WORLD T20 QUALIFIERS Khadija's five-for leads women to semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER



Khadija Tul Kubra powered the Bangladesh Women's cricket team to the top of Group A in the ICC Women's World Twenty20 Qualifiers, as Bangladesh defeated Papua New Guinea by 41 runs at the Asian Institute of Technology Ground in Bangkok yesterday.

With three wins out of three, Bangladesh qualified as group champions for the next phase, the semifinals, although their batting in the final game was lacklustre. After being sent into bat,

the women scored only 100 runs off their allotted 20 overs. Fargana Hoque was the only decent performer, finishing with 28.

However, it was Khadija who stole the show as Papua New Guinea were bowled out for just 59. With figures of 5 for 11, the 21-year-old shattered her previous best haul of three for 14 and had arguably the best performance by any Bangladeshi woman in the T20 format.

Rumana Ahmed supported her well, taking three wickets for 13, while Jahana Alam and Lata Mondal took one each.

Bangladesh will now face the Zimbabwe Women's cricket team in the first semifinal tomorrow.



KHADIJA ... 5 FOR 11

KOOL-BSJA MEDIA CUP Channel i win title

SPORTS REPORTER

Channel i emerged unbeaten champions in the Kool-BSJA Media Cup Football Tournament beating Jamuna TV 3-0 in the final at the BFF Artificial Turf in Motijheel yesterday.

Arif Hossain Hridoy scored twice while Debashis Roy netted the other for the champions in the final. Hridoy was adjudged the man-of-the-final while he also received the 'Al Mossabir Saadi Man-of-the-Tournament Award'. Gazi TV received the 'Masud Ahmed Rumi Fair Play Trophy'.

BFF's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Murshedy witnessed the final and distributed prizes.

PREMIER cement

SCOREBOARDS

VIKINGS V RIDERS				DYNAMITES V BULLS					
CHITTAGONG VIKINGS	R/B	4/6		DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	4/6			
Tamim c Perera b Nabi	36/43	2/0		Shykat c Rony b Cooper	15/16	2/0			
Dilshan c Jahurul b Arifat	18/19	3/0		Sangakkara c Maruf					
K Akmal b Arifat	12/7	1/1		b Cooper	60/47	7/0			
Anamul c Sammy b Saqlain	14/11	0/1		Thirianne st Rony					
U Akmal c Mithun b Shakib	1/8	0/0		b Mahmudullah	5/5	0/0			
Ziaur c Jahurul b Perera	3/7	0/0		Nasir c Mahmudullah					
Naeem not out	16/16	1/0		b Prasanna	5/6	1/0			
Amir c Sammy b Shakib	2/3	0/0		Hasan st Rony b Prasanna	8/9	0/1			
Shafiqul run out	6/6	1/0		Ten Doeschate not out	45/32	1/3			
Extras: (w-3)	3			Waller not out	10/5	0/1			
Total: (For 8 wks in 20 overs) 111				Extras: (lb-1, w-9)	10				
Fall of wickets: 1-39, 2-56, 3-80, 4-83, 5-84, 6-92, 7-96, 8-111.				Total: (For 5 wks in 20 overs) 158					
				Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-48, 3-64, 4-73, 5-132.					
RANGPUR RIDERS				BARISAL BULLS					
JAHURUL ISLAM	R/B	4/6		Rony c Thirianne	R/B	4/6			
Jahurul c Tamim b Shafiqul	47/44	4/1		b Hasan	38/34	3/1			
Soumya not out	58/56	8/1		Lewis not out	101/65	7/6			
Shakib not out	1/2	0/0		Maruf not out	15/14	1/0			
Extras: (lb-4, w-3)	7			Extras: (w-4, nb-1)	5				
Total: (For 1 wkt in 17 overs) 113				Total: (For 1 wkt in 18.4 overs) 159					
Fall of wickets: 1-102.				Fall of wickets: 1-127.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	Bowler	O	M	R	W
Naeem	4	0	24	0	Nasir	4	0	15	0
Amir	2	0	7	0	Farhad	3.4	0	28	0
Dilshan	3	0	20	0	Hasan	2	0	22	1
Asif	3	0	19	0	Mustafizur	4	0	28	0
Taskin	3	0	17	0	Mosharraf	1	0	11	0
Shafiqul	2	0	22	1	Nabil	2	0	17	0
Result: Rangpur Riders won by 9 wickets.				Ten Doeschate	2	0	38	0	
Player-of-the-match: Soumya Sarkar.				Result: Barisal Bulls won by 9 wickets.					
				Player-of-the-match: Evin Lewis.					



Rangpur Riders' Soumya Sarkar at long last showed his quality with a splendid half-century against Chittagong Vikings at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Soumya's patience pays off

SPORTS REPORTER from Chittagong



When Soumya Sarkar lofted Shafiqul Islam for a boundary over cover in the 16th over yesterday he reached his first half-century in his last 18 outings. While the left-hander didn't seem to celebrate the fifty, there's no doubt that he would have been relieved.

The last time Soumya posted a 50-plus score was back in July when he hammered a fierce 90 against South Africa and led Bangladesh home in the very same ground, the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

However, things haven't been too rosy for the left-hander since that match. In between yesterday's game and the South Africa series, Soumya featured in a number of games for Bangladesh A, besides the Bangladesh

Premier League (BPL) matches. His highest score in those 17 knocks was 43, which he posted against Karnataka in September.

His innings yesterday seemed a lot more polished, as the left-hander displayed a more patient approach.

"We had a smaller target, so I tried to stay at the wicket till the very end. I told myself that I wouldn't leave the wicket early today. That's all I tried to do," said Soumya at the post-match press conference.

"I played fewer shots as well. I think the reason behind that was that I couldn't play more than ten balls in any of the last five matches. Today my target was to play as many balls as possible," he added.

According to Soumya, the change in his approach yesterday was his way of deciphering what he had been doing wrong thus far.

"I have been trying to figure out

what I did wrong in the last few matches. I think I was just hurrying a bit too much because I thought I needed to score quick runs in T20 cricket. I think it will be good for me if I can get out of that mindset.

"I think I faced a similar problem earlier when I used to get out for just 20s and 30s in ODI cricket. I just need to spend some more time [at the crease]," said Soumya.

"There was never any pressure on me from the team as such. But I felt a bit of pressure because I wasn't doing well. I am still not satisfied with myself. I think I should have made the most of my starts in the last five matches," added the 22-year-old.

The left-hander further said that the BPL would be a good opportunity for the national players to strike form ahead of the Asia Cup T20 and the ICC World T20.

BANGABANDHU GOLD CUP Six-team event after SAFF Cup

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has set a tentative timeslot between January 6 and January 20 next year to host the fourth edition of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup International Football Tournament.

The BFF is contemplating hosting the event with six teams including Bangladesh, just like the previous edition which was held in January-February this year, said a senior BFF spokesman yesterday.

"At the sidelines of the AFC Award Night in New Delhi recently, we approached officials of different federations and they have assured us that they would be able to send their teams during the January 6 to January 20 timeslot," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

"We have got verbal assurances from the football federations of Bahrain, Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Five out of those six teams will likely play alongside Bangladesh and we will be trying to involve the senior national in this tournament," Shohag added.

The third edition of the tournament was held in Dhaka and Sylhet from January 29 to February 8 this year, involving six teams -- the national teams of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and the under-22 teams of Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Bahrain. The Malaysia under-22 team lifted the trophy after beating the hosts in an entertaining final, which was held at a jam-packed Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Shohag informed that due to the engagements of Singapore and Myanmar during January 20 to 30, the BFF had to choose the slot between January 6 and 20.

The BFF spokesman, who was present in Delhi along with the federation's president Kazi Salahuddin to receive AFC's Aspiring Award 2015, said that the event will likely be hosted at two venues -- Dhaka and either one between Sylhet and Chittagong.

The tentative schedule of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup means Bangladesh national team will be taking part in the prestigious invitational event right after their participation in the SAFF Championship, branded as Suzuki SAFF Cup 2015, which is scheduled to be held in Kerala from December 23, 2015 to January 3, 2016.