

SPORT

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT **213** | TOTAL 4s HIT **653**

Most 6s by players: 10, Chris Gayle, Barisal Bulls and Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chittagong Vikings
Most 4s by a player: 34, Kumar Sangakkara, Dhaka Dynamites

BPL PLAYERS' PAYMENT

Dues yet to be cleared

SPORTS REPORTER

Upon the completion of his team's last match in Mirpur yesterday, Sylhet Superstars skipper Shahid Afridi claimed that 'some of the players' haven't received their due payments as yet.

"At the moment some of the other teams' players as well mentioned that they didn't get paid yet," said Afridi, without mentioning any names, when asked whether they were facing any issues regarding payment.

"I think the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has taken the responsibility this time and I must give credit to the BPL and the BCB. They have organised this tournament well and I have personally really enjoyed it.

"If they sorted out the problem of the guys moneywise, each and every player from anywhere will come and enjoy the BPL," he added.

As per the playing conditions, the franchises were supposed to pay 50 percent of the payment at the time of signing of the contract and 25 percent before the completion of the league matches of the respective teams. The remaining payment needs to be cleared within January 15.

According to the owner of the Sylhet Superstars, the franchisee has already made 60 percent of the players' payments.

Convener of the technical committee of BPL Jalal Yunus said that they were satisfied with the payments made by all the franchisees.

"There are many franchisees who have paid more than 75 percent of the players fees. And as for those who have paid 60 percent, they will pay the rest in a day's time.

Regardless, we have taken a bank guarantee of Tk 4.5 crores from the franchisees, so there's nothing to worry about," said Jalal.



Comilla Victorians captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) shakes hands with his Sylhet Superstars counterpart Shahid Afridi, whose BPL tenure came to an end with a 71-run defeat yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Mash sends Afridi home

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a match that the Sylhet Superstars needed to win, preferably by a big margin, in order to keep their hopes of a berth in their last four alive. It was also a game where their captain Shahid Afridi needed to live up to his billing as a game-changer especially after his twin sixes in a dramatic win on Wednesday.

But their dream was shattered in an anticlimactic fashion when they were thrashed by 71 runs in the second last Bangladesh Premier League group league match at the home of cricket in Mirpur yesterday.

Their tormentors were Mashrafe Bin Mortaza led Comilla Victorians, who with this massive win confirmed one of the two Qualifier 1 slots.

The Victorians raced to the biggest win, in terms of runs, of the competition after the Superstars fell in a heap while chasing a competitive 151 to win.

A combined effort led the Victorians to 150 for 4 after being put into bat. While they lost the out-of-form Liton Das early in the game, their middle-order stitched a series of partnerships

POINTS TABLE					
Teams	Mat	W	L	Pts	NR
Comilla Victorians	10	7	3	14	+0.788
Rangpur Riders	10	7	3	14	+0.693
Barisal Bulls	10	7	3	14	+0.063
Dhaka Dynamites	10	4	6	8	-0.010
Sylhet Superstars	10	3	7	6	-0.710
Chittagong Vikings	10	2	8	4	-0.828

to bring them back.

The first was a 68-run stand between Ahmed Shehzad and Imrul Kayes. It came off just 8.4 overs and set the tone for the rest of the innings. Shehzad, who has been brilliant since his arrival, scored 42 off 31 deliveries and dominated the stand.

However, once he was trapped in front by Rubel Hossain, the momentum took a hit. From 75 for 1 in ten overs, Sylhet fell to 86 for 3 by the 12th, as Imrul departed for 27.

However, Ashar Zaidi and Alok Kapali joined forces to build another partnership and take the game from there. They shared a 56-run stand for the fourth wicket and took the score to 150.

Kapali seemed to regain some form, scoring a 26-ball 32 while Ashar Zaidi scored 31 before getting run-out.

After the exchange, a seemingly nervous Sylhet batting order crumbled against Comilla's spinners, who maintained a tidy line and length.

Shuvagata Hom and Zaidi were the most effective as they scalped five wickets in total. While the off-spinner finished with 3 for 8 in three overs, Zaidi took two wickets in his only over.

Shuvagata initiated the carnage by removing Junaid Siddique in the fourth over of the match. Joshua Cobb was dismissed by Naem Islam Jr and by the end of the fifth over Sylhet were poised at 33 for 2.

Ravi Bopara got involved in a mix-up with Mushfiqur Rahim and was consequently run-out in the sixth. The latter departed an over later, getting caught at deep mid-wicket off Shuvagata.

In a sense, the game ended in the ninth over when Shahid Afridi was bowled by a beautiful turner from Zaidi, as Sylhet were reduced to 48 for six.

They were eventually bundled out for 79 in 13.5 overs, crashing out of the BPL as all their hopes they harboured before the game were dashed.

Bulls clinch a dress rehearsal

SPORTS REPORTER

A West Indian had taken Barisal Bulls home in their previous match against the Chittagong Vikings and a West Indian did it again for them yesterday as a late half-century from Rayad Emrit, who smashed 54 off 28 balls, led them to an unbelievable two-wicket victory over Dhaka Dynamites in Mirpur.

For most of the match it seemed as though a defeat for the Bulls was inevitable. Chasing 137, Barisal were struggling at 81 for 7 in 15 overs and they looked done and dusted.

However, that's when Emrit embarked upon his game-changing quest. He first smacked Nabil Samad for two fours in the 16th over and then unleashed two colossal sixes against Mosharraf Hossain. That seemed to shift the momentum, as Barisal required just 29 runs off 18 balls.

That equation went down to 20 off 12 and all of a sudden there were number discussions on the field. In the following over, Forhad Reza was taken for ten runs and the match intensified further.

From nowhere, Barisal were suddenly on the ascendency and needed ten runs off six balls. Emrit edged the first ball off Mohammad Irfan for a four through third-man. He then took a single but got the strike back after a bye. On the fourth ball of the over, needing four runs, Emrit smacked a low full-toss through point for a four.

It might not have been equivalent to a Gayle-classic akin to their previous match, but his knock nevertheless provided an extraordinary finish.

Since there wasn't any possibility of a change in the top four, both teams fielded slightly weaker sides for the game. The Bulls rested Gayle, Seekuge Prasanna and Kevin Cooper, while the Dynamites decided to give Kumar Sangakkara, Mustafizur Rahman and Yasir Shah much needed breaks.

Batting first, nine of Dhaka's eleven batsmen reached double figures, but unfortunately, much like the last few matches, none of them could build on their innings and get a big score.

Mohammad Hafeez, who scored a 27-ball 25, and Mosaddek Hossain, who posted 30 off 31 balls, were the highest run-getters for Dhaka.

For the Bulls, young Canadian off-spinner Nikhil Dutta was the highlight of their bowlers. Playing his first match yesterday, Dutta put in a performance that he would have been extremely proud of as he scalped three crucial wickets with his flighted turners.

The wickets that he took eventually pegged back the opposition. His scalps included Mohammad Hafeez, Nasir Hossain and Malcolm Waller, three batsmen who are vital cogs in their respective country's batting orders.

FINAL PHASE FIXTURES			
MATCH	DAY	TIME	VENUE
Qualifier 1			
Comilla Victorians v Rangpur Riders	Saturday	2:00 PM	SBNCS
Eliminator 1			
Barisal Bulls v Dhaka Dynamites	Saturday	6:30 PM	SBNCS
Eliminator 2			
Losers Q1 v Winners E1	Sunday	6:30 PM	SBNCS
Final			
Winners Q1 v Winners E2	Tuesday	6:30 PM	SBNCS

PREMIER cEMENT

'Together we will do better'

SPORTS REPORTER

With three months to go for the ICC World Twenty20 and two months for the Asia Cup, one of the many objectives of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) was to provide the Tigers as much practice and confidence as possible in the shortest version of the game.

While most of the national players got the opportunity to have played at least ten T20 matches, the confidence column still depicts a dismal picture.

Most of the national players, especially the batsmen, have found life in the league difficult so far and the numbers go on to prove that.

Sabbir Rahman, who is expected to play a big role for the Tigers because of his hitting ability, has scored just 56 runs in six matches. His peers haven't done too well either. Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar average 13.14 and 18 respectively.

Bangladesh's leading pacers haven't been able to do too well since returning from their respective injuries either. While Taskin Ahmed's average hovers around 53, Rubel Hossain has an economy rate of 9.10.

The focus on the other hand has been on the likes of Abu Hider and Mohammad Shahid, who are amongst the top five wicket-takers of the competition.

Despite the poor numbers, Bangladesh T20I skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza isn't concerned.

"I think everything will be alright once the players get back to the national team," Mashrafe said after leading the Comilla Victorians to an easy win against Sylhet Superstars yesterday.

"We [national team] are like a family and we have been through good and bad times. Now there is a gap between us because everybody is separated. Once we get back and start talking about the old memories [the wins in 2015] they will be confident and more relaxed.

"When you play for the national team, the players know that it is their ground and they are relaxed and cool. But with the franchises it's a different case. There are new people, a new environment and even players from outside. So it's different.

"But at the same time, I won't say that this is an excuse. The wicket was difficult to bat on. If batters could have taken their time like Tamim [Iqbal] or [Kumar] Sangakkara, things could have been better," added the skipper.

Mashrafe further said that he had spoken to Soumya, Sabbir and Liton during the course of the competition in order to help them out. He believes that batters require just one good knock to get their mojo back.



The winds of winter brought along with it a flock of visitors to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. The migratory birds, who have made a temporary home in the National Botanical Garden located nearby, are frequent visitors to the ground, especially when the floodlights are on. Here, they are enjoying the BPL yesterday while feasting on the pests present. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Voges, Marsh run riot

AFP, Hobart

Adam Voges and Shaun Marsh pounded tons in a triple-century unbroken stand to crush the dispirited West Indies and put Australia in immediate command of the first Test in Hobart on Thursday.

In a grim foreboding of what lies ahead for the Caribbean tourists in the three-Test series, Australia cruised to 438 for three at stumps on the opening day with the West Australian pair tak-

ing the game away from the Windies.

It was the most runs scored by Australia on an opening day of a Test in 85 years against the West Indies. At the close, Voges was unbeaten on 174 with Marsh not out 139 in an unbeaten fourth-wicket partnership of 317.

Voges slammed the fastest century for Australia in Hobart, his ton coming off 100 balls and eclipsing another West Australian Adam Gilchrist's hundred off 110 balls against Pakistan in 1999.

"It's been a great day," Voges said. "To be able to bat with Shaun for as

long as I have and to be put on over 300, it's been terrific.

"We're obviously good mates as well as teammates so to spend a lot of time out there together was tremendous."

It was Voges's third Test century and second against the West Indies after scoring an unbeaten 130 on his Test debut in Dominica last June.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: First innings 438 for 3 (Burns 33, Warner 64, Voges 174 not out, Marsh 139 not out; Warrican 2-111)