

SPORT

Victoria & Brothers still short-changing players

SPORTS REPORTER

With just a week to go for the Dhaka Premier League clubs to complete their payments to their respective players, cricketers from two clubs are still yet to get 70 per cent of their payments. Players of Brothers Union and Victoria Sporting Club have just received 30 per cent of their payments this season, when they should have gotten at least 60 per cent by now. While players from the 10 other clubs will be expecting to get their last instalment -- 30 per cent -- by next week, Brothers and Victoria are not even sure if they will receive half of what they were promised.

A week before Eid, there were two other clubs, Kalabagan Cricket Academy and Cricket Coaching School, along with Brothers and Victoria, who had not received their second instalment -- 30 per cent -- in time. The Bangladesh Cricket Board stepped in and paid the players of Kalabagan and

Cricket Coaching School.

Victoria and Brothers though, have not been as lucky. "We were told that we would get the payment after Eid. I think the BCB opened just this week so it's taking some time. We may contact the board next week. Let's see what happens," Shahriar Nafees from Brothers Union told The Daily Star yesterday.

Victoria's Nadif Chowdhury shared a similar sentiment. "There are several players in our team who keep calling me regarding our payments and I really don't know what to say to them. Some of them are really dependent on this money and it feels sad. I hope the board does something now that Eid is over," he told The Daily Star.

As per the rules of the tournament, the clubs should have paid the players 60 per cent of their payments by June 12.

Such is the dire scenario of the payment situation that the players have stopped contacting the clubs and in a sense have lost hope. They are now

hoping that the BCB bails them out.

This is not the first time that the players' payment issue has come up in Bangladesh's domestic cricket. The BCB faced plenty of embarrassment during the first season of the Bangladesh Premier League when a number of players, both foreign and local, complained of not having received their payments.

Following the first season of the BPL, the player-by-choice system was introduced for the Dhaka Premier League, the country's premier 50-over competition, which has proved to be a disadvantage for the players.

Prior to that the players had the opportunity to directly negotiate with the clubs and receive almost their full payments before the end of the competition. However, with the new system came about a new payment system. Clubs now have to pay 30 per cent before the start, 30 per cent before the end of the league and the final 40 within one month after the final game.

The players have struggled to receive their wages under the new system.

Saintfiet keen to take Emily, Rony

SPORTS REPORTER

Belgian coach Tom Saintfiet yesterday expressed his desire to meet injured strikers Zahid Hasan Emily and Shakhawat Hossain Rony to learn their current condition in a bid to increasing his options ahead of the ties against Bhutan in September and October.

Saintfiet has only two centre-forwards -- Nabib Newaj Jibon and Rashed Hasan Turjo -- in his 32-member preliminary squad for the Asian Cup qualifying play-offs against Bhutan as both Emily and Rony were in a rehabilitation programme to cure their knee injuries.

"Scoring is a big problem for us and we will have to overcome it," Saintfiet told reporters yesterday after the training session where the players underwent drills like shooting, crossing and heading.

"We are missing the services of Rony and also don't know about the current condition of Emily. I want to know their conditions so that I have more choices in striking position. We need strikers who have the ability to score," said the 43-year-old coach.

Assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu has already carried the message to both the players who are supposed to meet the Belgian coach today.

Cook passes Gavaskar

APP, London

England captain Alastair Cook broke India great Sunil Gavaskar's record of 9,607 for the most runs as a Test opener while making 81 against Pakistan at Lord's on Friday.

The 31-year-old England captain had already become the youngest player in the history of cricket to score 10,000 Test runs but 13 of his innings were not as an opener.

But he broke Gavaskar's opening record when he cut Mohammad Amir for four in familiar fashion to go to 61.

Lord's ton Misbah's 'top innings'

APP, London

Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq said his century against England at Lord's on Thursday was the "top innings" of an impressive Test career.

The 42-year-old Misbah became the sixth oldest player in Test history to make a century as his unbeaten 110 took Pakistan to 282 for six at stumps on the first day of a four-match series.

Thursday's match was Misbah's maiden Test at Lord's, selection decisions having seen him miss previous tours of England, yet he secured a coveted place on the dressing room honours board at the very first attempt.

As soon as he had completed his 10th Test century, Misbah dropped to the turf.

But rather than utter a prayer, Misbah performed several press-ups, just as 73-year-old actor Jack Palance did when winning the Best Supporting Actor Oscar at the 1992 Academy awards.

But Misbah's celebration, which included a salute to the Pakistan flag flying above the Pavilion, was no tribute act.

Rather it was a reference to Pakistan's gruelling pre-tour boot camp at a military academy in Kakul in May.

"I promised the army guys I would do the push-ups if I got a century," Misbah told

reporters after stumps.

"We had an honour code on the boot camp, for push-ups, so that was my promise to them the next time I scored 100. So that was for them, and the salute was for the flag."

Misbah equalled West Indies great Vivian Richards's then world record for the fastest-ever Test century with a blistering 56-ball hundred against Australia in Abu Dhabi in 2014 -- a mark surpassed by Brendon McCullum's 54-ball hundred for New Zealand against Australia at Christchurch in February.

But Thursday's hundred ranked higher in Misbah's estimations.

"I rate this as my top innings in Test cricket and I'm really happy about that," he said.

"It's a dream to play at Lord's and especially getting 100, and the name on the honours board is something special," added Misbah, who vindicated his own decision to bat first after winning the toss.

"Obviously when you are playing competitive cricket you just don't think about your age.

"If you are there, you just take on the challenge that comes with playing the game.

"These records are always something special, and they are very satisfying to make those kinds of achievements, but the main thing is just to keep achieving for your country."



After his skipper Misbahul Haq etched his name on the Lord's honours board on the first day, Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah matched the feat by becoming the first leg-spinner in 20 years to take a five-for at the historic ground on the second day of the first Test against England yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pak on top after Yasir's 5

APP, London

Yasir Shah became the first leg-spinner in 20 years to take a five-wicket haul in a Test innings at Lord's to leave Pakistan well-placed at stumps on Friday's second day of their series opener with England.

At the close, England were 253 for seven in reply to Pakistan's first innings 339 -- a deficit of 86 runs, with Chris Woakes 31 not out.

Shah, in his first Test since serving a three-month drugs ban -- and his first outside of Asia and the United Arab Emirates -- ran through England's middle-order on the way to five for 64 in 25 overs.

It was the first time any leg-spinner had taken five or more wickets in a Test innings at Lord's since his compatriot Mushtaq Ahmed's five for 57 in 1996.

Earlier, England captain Alastair Cook scored 81 but, in sight of a century, he became Mohammad Amir's first Test wicket in six years when the left-arm quick, who twice had Cook dropped, got him to play on.

Amir was making his return to Test cricket at Lord's -- the scene of his 2010 spot-fixing crime which saw him given a five-year ban and a jail term for deliberately bowling no balls.

After the early loss of opener Alex Hales, Cook and new number three Joe Root shared a stand of 110.

Cook, belying his reputation as a steady run-maker, struck three fours in four balls as

Rahat Ali strayed onto the left-hander's pads.

But Shah turned the tide when he had Root carelessly hole out off a miscued sweep on 48.

James Vince and the recalled Gary Ballance were both lbw as they each failed to pick Shah.

Amir eventually drew Cook wide and got the left-hander to play on to end a 124-ball innings featuring 12 fours.

Jonny Bairstow was deceived into playing back to Shah and bowled by a top-spinner for 29.

That left England 193 for six and they were 232 for seven when, after a prolonged review, Yasir won a tight 'umpire's call' decision to have Moeen Ali lbw on the sweep for 23.

Even before Ali's exit had finally been confirmed, Shah had saluted his fifth wicket Friday by kissing the turf.

It was the fifth time in just 13 Tests that the 30-year-old Shah had taken five or more wickets in an innings.

Earlier, Woakes took a Test-best six for 70 as Pakistan, 282 for six overnight, were bowled out by Yasir.

Misbah only added four to his overnight 110 not out before he was bowled by Stuart Broad.

Amir, booed by a small section of a capacity crowd as he walked out to bat, inside edged his first ball in Test cricket in six years, from Broad, for four and was hit on the helmet next delivery when he ducked into another Broad ball.

He was last man out for 12, caught in the slips off Broad.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 282 for 6)

Hafeez c Bairstow b Woakes	40
Masood c Bairstow b Woakes	7
Azhar lbw b Ball	7
Younis c Moeen b Broad	33
Misbah b Broad	114
Shafiq c Bairstow b Woakes	73
Rahat b Woakes	0
Sarfraz c Vince b Woakes	25
Riaz b Woakes	0
Amir c Root b Broad	12
Yasir not out	11
Extras: (b-4, lb-10, w-2, nb-1)	17
Total: (All out in 99.2 overs)	339
Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-51, 3-77, 4-134, 5-282, 6-282, 7-310, 8-310, 9-316.	

ENGLAND: First innings

Cook b Amir	81
Hales c Azhar b Rahat	6
Root c Hafeez b Yasir	48
Vince lbw b Yasir	16
Bairstow b Yasir	6
Bairstow b Yasir	29
Alli lbw b Yasir	23
Woakes not out	31
Broad not out	11
Extras: (nb-2)	2
Total: (For 7 wks in 71 overs)	253
To bat: Finn, Ball.	
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-118, 3-139, 4-147, 5-173, 6-193, 7-232.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Broad	27.2	9	71	3
Ball	19	5	51	1
Woakes	24	7	70	6
Finn	21	2	86	0
Moeen	7	0	46	0
Vince	1	0	1	0

Abdullah, Jafar dream big

ANISUR RAHMAN



Mohammad Abdullah, a midfielder for the preliminary squad of the national football team, was 'destined' to become a footballer as his mother prophesied after a dream she had before he was born.

The 19-year-old from Sirajganj has found himself in the squad of the new coach Tom Saintfiet after playing just 10 matches in the top flight with Arambagh KS -- five-matches each in the Independence Cup and the Federation Cup respectively. However, his metamorphosis into a top-flight footballer was not an easy one as the 5ft 9inch midfielder went through numerous ups and downs before finally getting an opportunity to prove his worth.

"Though I started playing football at the age of six, my first competitive football match was in the Bangabandhu Gold Cup primary school tournament in 2010. Since then I have had to do a lot of hard work to come to this stage," said Abdullah, who relayed an interesting story about becoming a football player.

"While I was in my mother's womb, she had a dream one day that a good-looking little boy stopped her on the road before embracing her. The little boy then gave her a football and asked

whether she knew him. Later the boy told the lady to turn him into a footballer and name him Abdullah," said the youngster,

adding that his mother tells this story to everyone who queries about him.

"When I was six, my father was



Two teenagers, Jafar Iqbal (L) and Mohammad Abdullah, may have finally realised their dreams after breaking into the national football team's preliminary squad.

PHOTO: STAR

Rajkot to make Test debut in Ind-Eng series

REUTERS, New Delhi

England will embark on their lengthy tour of India later this year with Rajkot hosting the first of the five Test matches from November 9, the cricket boards announced on Friday.

The western Indian city of Rajkot will be making its debut as a Test venue in the series, as will be coastal Vishakhapatnam, which hosts the second Test from November 17.

Mohali, Mumbai and Chennai will host the remaining matches of what would be England's first five-Test rubber in India since 1984-85.

Beginning on January 15, England will also play three one-dayers and as many Twenty20 Internationals.

"This promises to be a historic Test series... and a great opportunity for Alastair Cook and his players to repeat the memorable test series win we enjoyed on our last trip to India in 2012," Andrew Strauss, Director England Cricket, said in a statement.

"Equally, Eoin Morgan's white-ball squad will be anticipating hard-fought and competitive encounters against high quality opposition in both formats..." he added.

LEADING TEST OPENERS

Batsman	Runs
A Cook (Eng)	9630
S Gavaskar (Ind)	9607
G Smith (SA)	9030
M Hayden (Aus)	8625
V Sehwag (Ind)	8207