

SPORT



The big news for the Bangladesh pacers yesterday was the appointment of Courtney Walsh as bowling coach. And they were in a jovial mood knowing that they will not only get a legend to guide them, but also another great personality in the

Walsh named new bowling coach

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the appointment of celebrated former West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh as the national team's new bowling coach. According to a BCB press release, the former West Indies captain's stint with the Tigers became effective from 1 September 2016 and will continue till the 2019 50-over World Cup in England.

Walsh is expected to reach Dhaka within the first week of this month to begin work with Bangladesh's bowlers ahead of their home Test and ODI series against England in October.

"I am thrilled to be joining the BCB as their specialist bowling coach. I am really looking forward to getting started with the group," the 53-year-old Jamaican was quoted as saying by the press release. Walsh replaces former Zimbabwe all-rounder Heath Streak, who occupied the role for two years leading up to this May.

"Having watched Bangladesh cricket from afar over the years, they are a seriously talented bunch of players.

WALSH FACTS

- Stint as Bangladesh's bowling coach: September 2016 – 2019 World Cup
- Played 132 Tests and 205 ODIs for West Indies between November 1984 and April 2001
- Highest Test wicket-taker for West Indies with 519 Tests
- Together with Curtly Ambrose took 421 wickets in 49 Tests
- Most balls (30,019) bowled by a fast bowler in Tests
- Has the most ducks (43) in Test history

performed a variety of roles including coaching, especially with fast bowlers. He has managed the West Indies U-19 side and has also been a bowling consultant for Jamaica Tallawahs in the Caribbean Premier League. Most recently, he was a selector of the West Indies Cricket Board.

Walsh's career for West Indies began in November 1984 and ended in April 2001, taking in 132 Tests and 205 ODIs in between. He started out as a back-up fast bowler for West Indies' fearsome pace attack of the 1980s, supporting the likes of Malcolm Marshall and Curtly Ambrose. Endurance mixed with pace and bounce was his hallmark, and from the 1990s onwards Walsh formed a deadly partnership with Ambrose which realised 421 wickets from 49

Courtney's impact will be bigger in Tests: Mashrafe

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There is no guarantee that a great cricketer will become a great coach. In modern cricket, to become a successful coach one has to deal with many of the finer aspects of the game apart from issues of physical fitness or physiological aspects. So you may argue that we have to wait to see how big a forward step the Bangladesh bowlers can take under the tutelage of a great like former West Indian fast bowler Courtney Walsh.

But the aforementioned issues cannot come to the fore right now when news is still fresh of a legend like Walsh joining the camp. And you can take it from none other than Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who made it clear that the presence of the 53-year old West Indian great will make a

big difference. He said that his experience will make a huge impact particularly in the Test cricket, where the Tigers are yet to put their best foot forward.

"Having such a high-profile person like him in the team, not only the bowlers, I think it's a big deal to all the players and I hope this will have a huge impact on our bowling, especially in Test cricket. To have his vast experience in the dressing room will be amazing," said Mashrafe while he was talking to reporters yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Another West Indies great Andy Roberts had a huge impact on Mashrafe's career as he was sent to a bowling camp run by Roberts -- then a temporary bowling coach -- and the West Indian was impressed enough by his pace and aggression to make recommend his selection

for Bangladesh A.

But the name of Walsh triggered a different emotion in Mashrafe as the tall paceman was his idol.

"Andy Roberts was a huge turning point in my career but through my whole career I have always said I was a fan of Courtney Walsh. Even when I was a kid, he was my favourite. So obviously now that he has come as our bowling coach I am more excited than anybody," said Bangladesh's limited-overs captain.

"He is such a great personality. He was one of the greatest bowlers in the world and I believe they were very passionate towards Test cricket. He has played 132 Test matches so if you go by the numbers then staying fit for so long shows that passion for Test cricket. That hunger which I have seen in him throughout, I believe if our bowlers can pick up those qualities then they will bene-

fit," he continued.

"There are some specialties in bowling and each bowler has his own. And I think a coach like him will understand how to build up each player based on their specific technique. Overall, at the moment, the way he built his whole career is more important, it's as important as learning from matches," he added.

Mashrafe believes that the young and upcoming players will also be benefited by the presence of a bowler like Walsh.

"The opportunity for the young and upcoming bowlers is always there because during the national team's net session we have players from the Academy, promising bowlers who participate so he will be able to see and guide them as well. Everyone will get that opportunity," said Mashrafe.



An absolute wrecking ball with the leather, Courtney Walsh will now transfer his know-how and train the pacers of the Bangladesh

Chandika Hathurusingha has done a wonderful job thus far as head coach so hopefully I can complement his skills and continue the positive progress.

"I have loved my time working as a selector for the West Indies Cricket Board and I would like to thank them for giving me that opportunity. Obviously the West Indies is my home but the chance to go in a new direction on the coaching front and with such a talented group, was one I couldn't look past."

Walsh ended his career as the then highest Test wicket-taker with 519 scalps. He has since

Tests.

With Bangladesh's recent upsurge in fast bowling ability, Walsh's appointment is seen as a step in the right direction and has been welcomed by the likes of limited-overs skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

BCB CEO Nizam Uddin Chowdhury said Walsh's vast experience will be a valuable addition to a growing team: "We are delighted to have Courtney in our ranks. He is a role model to millions and his fast bowling knowledge is second to none. Bangladesh cricket at present is going through the best pace bowling

WALTON-DRU FOOTBALL The Daily Star finish second

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star fell just short of retaining their title in the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) football tournament, being defeated 3-2 on penalties by Bangla Vision in the 34-team tournament's final at the M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium in Gulistan today.

Defending a title they won six years ago, The Daily Star eased past Sangbad Pratidin earlier in the day with a 3-0, looking primed for the final.

The experienced Mohammed Al-Amin bagged a goal and was adjudged the man of the match in the semifinal, with the sleek Fazlur Rahman and midfield maestro Hasan Jahid Tusher scoring the others.

However neither team managed to produce a goal in regulation time of the final and, in the lottery of the shootout, Bangla Vision emerged on top with goalkeeper Dipen Dewan making some fine saves to be adjudged the man of the match.

The tournament, organised by Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) and sponsored by Walton Group began on August 28 with 34 teams representing various print, electronic media, news agencies and online media houses of Bangladesh.



While half of the of Bangladesh under-16 girl's team underwent intense training at the BFF astro-turf yesterday, the other half played a friendly game of handball to unwind ahead of their

It'll be like a final: Choton

SPORTS REPORTER



"Krishna, go forward! Maria, fall back! Put the ball on Anuching's head! Give me the ball," the girls of the Bangladesh under-16 women's national team shouted during yesterday's training session on the astro-turf adjacent to the headquarters of the Bangladesh Football Federation.

The shouting may have given off the impression that there was a practice match taking place ahead of Saturday's crucial match against Chinese Taipei in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers, but the fact is that the girls -- who were all in the playing eleven against Kyrgyzstan -- were playing handball, only finishing with their heads or legs.

It was a recovery session for the members of U-16 team and it seemed

the girls enjoyed the game on the rain-soaked turf as it came as a bit of a relief after playing three tough matches.

However, the scenario was reversed for the bench players as they underwent full-swing training session under coach Golam Rabbani Choton.

The girls were shielded from the media to avoid 'uncomfortable situation among the girls', but it was clear that the girls were in good spirits.

"All the players are really happy and upbeat after three successive wins," said Choton after training, adding that neither he nor his girls were worried about the tie against Chinese Taipei.

"I watched all three of Chinese Taipei's matches and I must respect them. But we are no less than favourites, especially with the way the girls played in last three matches.

"Playing against Chinese Taipei is not any pressure for the girls as they played at the same tempo in the past

three matches. I believe the girls will carry over their performances to the next match. Chinese Taipei is also a good team and I think the match will be very competitive and like a final," Choton said evaluating his opponents, who were tipped as the second best team in Group C after Iran.

The coach believes that his charges have gained the qualities they need to face Chinese Taipei from the past matches and that they will take the field with hopes of an outright victory.

Though Bangladesh initially had a problem with the striking line-up -- which kept misfiring in the first match -- they recovered well in the second match to find the target at regular intervals before the players from every position fired on all cylinders in the third match as a forward, winger, midfielder and defender found the back of the net against Kyrgyzstan and coach Choton believes it is a positive

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS Bhutan to touch down today

SPORTS REPORTER

A 29-member Bhutan football team is scheduled to land in the capital in the morning today, four days before their Asian Cup Play-Off Qualifying tie against hosts Bangladesh.

The first leg of the Qualifiers will be held on September 6 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, while the second round will take place in Thimphu on October 10.

The winners on aggregate over the two legs will then progress to the 24-team Asian Cup Qualifiers next year.

Nevertheless, Bhutan's early arrival in Bangladesh means that they want to acclimatise to the conditions as well as get used to the natural grass, which is a change from their astro-turf pitch in Thimphu, as the visiting side will start their training from this afternoon.

The Bangladesh national football team, which was supposed to play an international friendly against Maldives yesterday night, will return tomorrow from Male and will have two days to practice before their crucial home match against Bhutan.

Hales uncertain about touring

AFP, Nottingham



Opener Alex Hales has accepted he could be risking his England place if he pulls out of the forthcoming tour of Bangladesh.

The future of the tour was called into question after a terror attack on a Dhaka cafe last month. However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said last week that the tour, which includes three one-day-international and two Test matches in October and November, would go ahead as planned.

The confirmation followed a visit to Bangladesh by an ECB delegation, led by their long-serving security chief Reg Dickason.

Although no England player has yet publicly confirmed their willingness to tour Bangladesh, the British media earlier reported that England Test captain Alastair Cook confirmed his participation for the tour in October.

Meanwhile several British media reports have suggested that England limited overs captain Eoin Morgan is among those with security concerns.

Nottinghamshire opener Hales returned to form with an England ODI record 171 as England went an unbeatable 3-0 up in their five-match series against Pakistan at his Trent Bridge home ground on Tuesday.

But while his place in the one-day side appears secure, Hales's grip on a Test spot is far less certain.

"If you choose not to go to Bangladesh you're risking your spot, particularly me," said Hales after a century that was the centrepiece of a new ODI world record total of 444 for three. "I'm still uncertain as to what to do. It's going to be some tough decision to make in the next week or so."

Meanwhile Chris Woakes has joined the likes of Hales, Jos Buttler and Liam Plunkett in refusing to commit himself to the Bangladesh tour despite the assurances.

"It's a tricky one," he said. "We are having all the discussions with Reg, the security people, Strauss (ECB director and former England captain Andrew Strauss).

"I'm sure by the end of the series everyone will have to have made their minds up -- and I'm in exactly the same boat."

Warwickshire all-rounder Woakes added: "You have to respect the security level that Reg has reported back on."

"It's a tricky subject. People are going there to play cricket, and they want to make sure they feel 100 per cent."

"I suppose a lot of people won't know they are 100 per cent safe until they get there. But that's up to the individual."