

SPORT

'Want a second Ambrose in Bangladesh'

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Bangladesh's new bowling coach Courtney Walsh has said that he hopes that he can pass on the spirit that he and Curtly Ambrose had shared during their playing days to the Bangladeshi pacers. He also said that he wants to be a father figure and mentor to the Bangladeshi players rather than just being a coach.

The former West Indies captain, who has been signed as Bangladesh's specialist bowling coach till July 31, 2019, spoke to the media for the first time yesterday afternoon after his arrival on Saturday night.

"In terms of my role here in Bangladesh, I am not here just as a coach, I am here as a mentor as well. I have always been a part of cricket, as part of Jamaica and the West Indies. I always try to get a couple of fast bowlers under my wing to mentor.

"Curtly Ambrose was one of them. So if I can get a second Curtly Ambrose in Bangladesh I will be very happy because when he came into the team, I was one of the first one he looked up to and we probably had one of the best partnerships. So if I can pass that on to any two young Bangladeshi bowlers I will be very, very happy," said Walsh.

"I will work with them not just as a coach but also as a father figure and a mentor. I can help to relive the situation they might find themselves into and sometimes it's best from up there. I remember Malcolm Marshall, Joel Garner, that's what they did for me. So I will be hoping to pass that on to the youngsters and the Bangladesh team as well," he added.

The West Indian further said that he had decided to join the Bangladesh Cricket Board since he was impressed with the way the country's cricketing structure has grown over the years. This is his first ever visit in Bangladesh and he hopes he can help further contribute

to the growth of the game here.

"I remember when Nizam[uddin Chowdhury, BCB CEO] got in touch, at first I said that I will think about it. We went back and forth and back and forth and then he told me that I was their number one guy. That's something that told me how serious they [BCB] were about me," he said.

"My aim is to improve Bangladesh cricket as much as I can. I am happy and excited about the youngsters here. Also from what I have seen so far people in Bangladesh are very warm and friendly. I have never played here in Bangladesh, so this is an opportunity for me to come here and meet new friends and take a new challenge. I have always liked challenges. I hope by the time I leave Bangladesh you see some improvement," he added.

While Walsh has coached domestic teams before, this is the first time that the West Indian will be coaching an international side. He described it as a dream come true.

"It's something that I have always dreamt of. I didn't have to think too hard [before accepting BCB's offer]. It's something that I wanted," he said.

Younis picks Fizz in ODI XI

STAR SPORT DESK

Former Pakistan pacer Waqar Younis was asked to pick 11 players from the modern game and make a modern One Day International World 11 and the only Bangladeshi to feature in the side was 20-year-old pacer Mustafizur Rahman.

Although Fizz is currently nursing an injury, his performances since breaking onto the scene in 2015 have not only captivated Tigers' fans, but seemingly the worldwide cricket fraternity.

Overall, Younis picked a well-balanced side.

He gave the opening slots to Australia's David Warner and India's Rohit Sharma in order to give his team a jet-propelled start.

The next two were picks that should be mainstays in any team, Indian batting maestro Virat Kohli and South Africa's explosive batsman AB de Villiers.

Australia's Steve Smith came in fifth and was handed captaincy followed by the English trio of Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler and Moeen Ali.

Younis preferred Stokes and Buttler for their batting, while he felt that Ali would be able to complement the side well as an all-rounder.

The bowling department was made up of three left-arm pacers: Australian spearhead Mitchell Starc, Pakistan's fiery pacer Mohammad Amir and Mustafizur.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over the National Sports Award to Shakib Al Hasan (L) during a ceremony at the Osmani Memorial Hall yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Posthumous award for Sk Kamal

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Sheikh Kamal was bestowed with a posthumous National Sports Award as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina awarded 32 sports personalities for their contributions to a wide range of sports for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the capital yesterday.

Kamal, the eldest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is considered the pioneer in modern sports in the country. He had formed one of the country's most successful clubs, Abahani, apart from making contribution to a number of sports -- football, cricket, basketball, athletics, etc. during his lifetime. A sportsman himself, Kamal had devoted his life to sports, and even though he is regarded by all and sundry as the father of modern sports in the country, his legacy was officially honoured by the government on Sunday, 41 years after his death.

Among the other awardees was Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan, who became only the third cricketer -- out of the 19 to have received it -- to collect the award during his playing career.

Former Tigers skipper Akram Khan had the honour in 1998 while legendary left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique received the award in 2006.

Aside from cricket, shooters Asif Hossain Khan (2002) and Sharmin Akter (2006) also received the national award when they were still representing Bangladesh at international events.

The National Sports Awards were started in 1976 and until 2009 a total of 197 athletes and sports organisers were honoured with this award. The state minister for youth and sports Biren Sikder was also present on the occasion.

Best in dorms, the rest in luxury

ANISUR RAHMAN



Bangladesh's success in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship

Qualifiers can simply be termed fabulous but the hard work the girls put in over two-and-a-half months to reach their current level cannot be similarly condensed into a single word.

Most of the girls who assembled in the training camp of the U-16 women's team have come from underprivileged backgrounds in remote villages. They left behind the humble warmth of their families to stay at the dormitory of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for nearly two-and-a-half months since the start of the preparation camp in July.

And that is where they continue to reside, without any complaints, even as the other teams enjoy the modern facilities at Purbani Hotel, the designated venue to accommodate 155 players and officials of five teams.

Each girl consumes food worth only Tk 500 per day to replenish the energy lost on

the pitch while training hard and giving their all in matches. That has been the major expenditure of the game's governing body behind the brilliant girls, who do not even get a daily allowance or monthly salary to undergo the training camp or serve in the national team.

During the training camp, each girl could only be given a dress and Tk 500 by the game's cash-starved governing body to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr at the dormitory, while each player is supposed to get only Tk 5,000 cash award ahead of Eid-ul-Azha as well as the required expenditure to travel back home.

The BFF has always struggled to maintain domestic commitments, run the training camps of the age-group (if there is any international tournament) teams as well as the national men's team but they have surprisingly chosen to keep the girls of the U-16 women's team at the dormitory instead of at the Purbani Hotel, apparently in a quest to recover some of their deficit in hosting the AFC U-16 Women's Championship.

The Asian Football Confederation

(AFC) provided the BFF 2.2 lakh [Tk 1.7 crore] US dollars to host the six-team Group C Qualifiers but the BFF needs another Tk 50 lakh to complete the 13-day competition in Dhaka. This budget does not include expenditure for the Bangladesh team.

"It is true that some money [about Tk 22 lakh] would be saved because of accommodating our girls at the dormitory but we could have accommodated them at the hotel along with other teams.

"The fact is that we are taking care of those girls more at the dormitory, providing more food than the hotel and maintaining their discipline. We think it is better for us to take care of the girls at the dormitory and it is happening here. The expenditure is not the main issue, we think we keep our girls in our way," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

Shohag informed that they are spending Tk 15,000-20,000 per day behind the Bangladesh U-16 team and team management for food while they are paying Tk 2 lakh for the accommodation and food for a 31-member foreign squad per day.



The Bangladesh under-16 women's team showed no signs of complacency, training intensely at the BFF Astro-turf ahead of their dead rubber against UAE today.

PHOTO: STAR

Girls focused on UAE fixture

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Captain Krishna Rani was a bit nervous ahead of the crucial match

against Chinese Taipei on Saturday, but she shrugged off her nervousness and played a major role as Bangladesh went on to win the game 4-2 and seal qualification for the final round of AFC U-16 Women's Championship. The girl from Tangail was much more relaxed yesterday as Bangladesh prepared for their final group match against United Arab Emirates.

The match will kick off at 11:00am at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, with BTV World telecasting the match live from the venue. Chinese Taipei will play against Iran later while Singapore will take on Kyrgyzstan in the last

match of the group.

Despite confirming the final round berth, the hosts are determined to end the campaign with a hundred percent win record.

"As this is the last match, we want to keep our winning streak. We want to keep our aggression we showed against other teams," said Krishna, who has struck six goals so far.

"We will have to prove that we are the champions of the group," said the grade nine student, who is now dreaming of playing in the U-17 Women's World Cup.

Despite conceding an early lead against Chinese Taipei, Krishna did not lose her confidence and scored a goal herself after having won two penalties, both of which were duly converted by defender Shamsunnahar.

"I knew that the whole team

would have broken down if I had failed to convert the penalties. I believed in myself and was determined to convert the penalties. I decided to hit the first penalty to the right-hand side of the goalkeeper and I did it," said Shamsunnahar.

Bangladesh are on top of the six-team table with 12 points from four matches, three more than Iran and Chinese Taipei while UAE are in fourth position with four points from four matches.

Even if Bangladesh lose to UAE, whom they handed a 6-0 defeat in last edition, and the match between Iran and Chinese yields a positive result for any of the sides, then Bangladesh will be joined by any of those teams on 12 points. But the hosts having a win against both those teams will be through, thanks to head-to-head record.

Chess teams suffer defeats

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Bangladesh men's chess team suffered a narrow 2.5-1.5 point defeat to Norway in the second round of 42nd Chess Olympiad in Azerbaijan on Saturday.

Bangladesh, who had started with a 4-0 win against San Marino in the opening round, had a good chance to hold the 12th seed Norway, but they suffered defeat after GM Abdullah Al Rakib drew against GM Hammer John Ludvig despite staying in a good position. GM Enamul Hossain Razib lost against world champion Magnus Carlsen while GM Ziaur Rahman lost against GM Tari Aryan. GM Niaz Murshed, however, managed to beat GM Urkedal Frode of Norway.

In the women's section, Bangladesh lost to 19th seed Vietnam by 1-3 points as WIM Shamima Akter Liza, WFM Nazrana Khan Eva and WIM Rani Hamid lost their respective boards. Only WFM Shirin Sultana managed to win her board.

Australia's stand-in skipper David Warner led by example, hitting a brilliant century in their five-wicket win against Sri Lanka to complete a 4-1 series victory on Sunday.

Australia's bowlers laid the foundation for their victory after routing Sri Lanka for 195 in 40.2 overs in the final match of the series at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium.

Aussies win final ODI

REUTERS, Pallekele

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BCL deferral leads to NCL

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The country's premier four-day cricket competition, the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL), which was scheduled to begin on September 20, has been postponed since one of the franchises' sponsors pulled out and another raised concerns regarding to the scheduling of the competition.

The league has now been replaced by the National Cricket League, another first-class cricket competition, which will begin on September 25. While the NCL is the country's oldest four-day competition and is played between the seven divisions of the country, it is not as competitive as the BCL. The top 80 players of the NCL are divided into four zones and are selected to take part in the BCL. Also, players are paid substantially more to play in the BCL.

The postponement is likely to serve as a blow for the national players who were supposed to take part in the first two rounds of the BCL in order to prepare for the England Test series which begins in October. While the change in schedule is not only expected to bring a fall in the level of competition, the fact that the league is set to start five days later is also expected to further affect the preparation of the national cricketers ahead of the England series.

Prime Bank was the first sponsor to raise a concern. They also pulled out of the league. They run the Prime Bank South Zone team. That was followed by Walton raising certain issues as well. Walton runs the Walton Central Zone team.

Both teams were not happy about the fact that the top players would not be available in the league. With the Afghanistan and England series due in September and October, almost none of the national players will be free to take part in the BCL.

As a result, the franchises complained that the league would not be getting enough publicity and so will not be worth their investment. They therefore requested the BCB to host the league at some other time.

Speaking on the issue, BCB director Akram Khan said: "We wanted to start the BCL ahead of the England series so that our players can get enough practice. But the corporate companies want some exposure through the BCL as well. They are paying a lot for these teams. So we decided to postpone the BCL going by their concerns. We will try to give our players as much exposure as we can through the NCL before the England series."

Akram further said that former national player Mohammad Ashraful who has served his suspension will be available to take part in the National Cricket League.

Ashraful, who has been training at Mirpur in the last few weeks, is eligible to play domestic cricket after having served his suspension.