

# SPORT

## Outclassed in the field

SAKEB SUBHAN

In the 14th over of Bangladesh's chase yesterday, Sabbir Rahman hit a well timed pull that for all money seemed to be sailing over the ropes. Fast bowler David Willey jumped up at the midwicket fence and appeared to catch it, but to the delight of the crowd he went over the line. The delight was premature, as before he went over the line, Willey had thrown the ball up in the air and then completed a brilliant catch after stepping back in calmly to set Bangladesh back in the chase of a big total.

About an hour before that athletic display, Chris Woakes smit a Taskin Ahmed lifter in the 49th over and Tamim Iqbal went after it from the infield while Mosaddek Hossain ran in from the midwicket fence. The ball was in the air for a long time, and when it landed it was just about two or three feet away from Mosaddek, who astonishingly was not running but looking at Tamim.

Of course, Bangladesh had done the damage to themselves with a woeful display of catching and ground fielding, but that contrast more than explained the difference between the teams.

The Bens, centurion Stokes and debutant Duckett, did well to rescue the side from 63 for three, but they should both have been dismissed long before their eventual departures. Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed was bowling at good clip and hurrying both batsmen. Stokes, naturally aggressive, wanted to break free in the 31st over and hit one hard in the air at Mahmudullah Riyad at mid on.

Riyad, instead of moving his feet just swayed to his right and intercepted the ball. But when he fell, quite unnecessarily, the ball popped out. Stokes was on 69 then and in the



**A DISAPPOINTING DAY:** Mosharraf Hossain (Top L) and Mahmudullah Riyad (Bottom L) missed two easy catches off Ben Stokes, who eventually went on to score a century. Shakib Al Hasan (R) looks completely dejected after his dismissal, which ultimately led to the Tigers downfall from a winning position.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED



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ANWAR CEMENT

very next over he went for another big shot off Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. Instead of it sailing into the stands it merely carried to sweeper cover, where 38-year-old Mosharraf Hossain fluffed the easiest of outfield catches.

Three overs later Mosharraf dropped a regulation chance offered by Duckett, on 58, at square leg. Mosaddek was the aggrieved bowler. Mosharraf could well be the microcosm of Bangladesh's effort on the day. He was expensive with the ball while his catching and fielding were of a standard seen in the Tigers about a decade ago; coincidentally this is his second match in national colours after a gap of eight years.

It was a throwback to a much weaker Bangladesh. Not only were the catches dropped, but many of England's hard-hit shots burst through the hands of the infielders, as if they were strangers to this standard of cricket. Mashrafe said recently that there are no excuses for bad fielding. If this standard prevails, he will have an incredibly tough time as there are about two or three fielders he will have to hide in the field, which is a big handicap against a team like England.

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## This has happened before: Mash

SPORTS REPORTER



Imrul Kayes and Shakib Al Hasan's century stand was the only bright spot in an otherwise woefully pedestrian display by Bangladesh in the first ODI against England at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Three dropped catches cost them a total of 33 runs in a match they lost by 21. England scored 89 runs for four wickets in their last 10 overs and 60 for two in the last five. Bangladesh lost their last six wickets for 17 runs, rendering a last 10-over comparison impossible and utterly unnecessary.

For all the talk of Bangladesh's improvement over the last two years, and they have undoubtedly improved, the bare statistics say that there was a gulf in difference in quality between the two sides when it mattered most. The kind of panic that saw that collapse from a position where the Tigers

needed 39 off 52 balls with six wickets in hand is not the hallmark of a top side.

"The dismissals told you there was a bit of panic," said a dejected Mashrafe Bin Mortaza after the match. "We could have played out 10-12 dot balls, but we got out trying to get the runs.

"Maybe we could have batted slowly and gone after the bowling with 15-16 needed in the last two overs. We cannot blame them [the batsmen] because this is has happened before and has happened repeatedly. If we cannot turn around for this, if we lose matches like this, it will be difficult."

Perhaps the skipper was referring to their recent 2-1 series win over Afghanistan when he said that it has happened before. Against Afghanistan their last 10-over batting figures were: 69 for seven in 10, 54 for three in 9.2 and 64 for five in 10.

He recalled the loss against India in the World Twenty20 earlier this year when Bangladesh lost after needing two runs off

three balls when asked whether this was his most crushing loss as captain, a tenure which has seen more against-the-tide victories rather than defeats.

"This is also disappointing because successfully chasing 309 would have sent the team to a great position mentally," he said.

Mechanically taking the positives from the game, Mashrafe praised Imrul -- who scored his second successive ton against the tourists after the hundred in the tour match -- and Shakib, whose 118-run fifth-wicket partnership was the reason that Bangladesh were in a winning position near the finish line.

"The batsmen did well tackling their cutters in the first 10 overs. Shakib and Imrul put us in a winning position," Mashrafe said. "He [Imrul] doesn't get a chance often, always in and out. His performance outside the national team was really good. He proved that he can go big at this level."

If the story of the second innings was Bangladesh blowing a golden chance, then in

the first innings it was about the shoddy fielding that allowed Ben Stokes lives -- courtesy of a Mahmudullah Riyad spill at mid-on off Taskin Ahmed in the 31st over -- when he was on 69 and 71 (Mosharraf Hossain dropping a skier in the deep in the very next over off the skipper's bowling), and numerous ground fielding errors that leaked runs. Mosharraf also dropped debutant Ben Duckett on 58, but that cost only two runs whereas Stokes went on to complete his first ODI century -- 101 off 100 deliveries.

"Fielding cost us. If we could have taken those catches, we could have stopped them for around 280-290 runs," Mashrafe said. "The mindset would have been different. We don't bat on these wickets and chase 300 every day."

"We can take it professionally and think that we have two matches in hand," Mashrafe said when asked how the team can recover. "We have every chance to return in the series. I think we have no alternative but to think positively."



### BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND	R/B	4s/6s
Roy c Sabbir b Shakib	41/40	5/1
Vince c Mashrafe b Shafiqul	16/20	1/0
Duckett b Shafiqul	60/78	6/0
Bairstow run out	0/3	0/0
Stokes c Sabbir b Mashrafe	101/100	8/4
Buttler c Mosaddek b Shakib	63/38	3/4
Moeen c Tamim b Mashrafe	6/5	0/0
Woakes run out	16/15	2/0
Willey not out	0/1	0/0
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, w-2)	6	
Total: (For 8 wks in 50 overs)	309	
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-61, 3-63, 4-216, 5-230, 6-245, 7-308, 8-309.		

  

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	10	0	52	2
Shafiqul	9	0	59	2
Shakib	10	0	59	2
Mosaddek	9	0	50	0
Mahmudullah	3	0	24	0
Mosharraf	3	0	23	0
Taskin	6	0	38	0

  

BANGLADESH	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim c Vince b Ball	17/31	2/0
Imrul st Buttler b Rashid	112/119	11/2
Sabbir c Willey b Ball	18/11	3/0
Mahmudullah c sub (Billings) b Rashid	25/26	2/0
Mushfiqur c sub (Billings) b Rashid	12/12	1/0
Shakib c Willey b Ball	79/55	10/1
Mosaddek b Ball	0/1	0/0
Mashrafe c Buttler b Rashid	1/5	0/0
Mosharraf not out	7/18	0/0
Shafiqul run out	0/6	0/0
Taskin c Buttler b Ball	1/4	0/0
Extras: (b-1, lb-4, w-10, nb-1)	26	
Total: (All out in 47.5 overs)	188	
Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-82, 3-132, 4-153, 5-271, 6-271, 7-274, 8-280, 9-280, 10-288.		

  

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Woakes	7	1	38	0
Willey	7	1	46	0
Ball	9.5	0	51	5
Stokes	5	0	37	0
Rashid	9	0	49	4

## It was a dream debut: Ball

SPORTS REPORTER



Jake Ball could not have asked for a better international debut. He steamed in challenging conditions and almost single-handedly stole a game away from Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Although he found good support from leg-spinner Adil Rashid towards the end, it was his double strike -- first removing Shakib Al Hasan and then Mosaddek Hossain -- that broke the hearts of nearly 25,000 spectators yesterday.

It therefore was not a surprise when he described yesterday's game as a 'dream debut' during the post-match press conference.

"It was obviously a debut you can't really forget. I just wanted to come into the game and show what I can do when you get opportunities. When they come up, it's about taking them and hopefully I have shown what I can do at this level," said Ball.

"It's obviously incredible to get the five wickets on debut. To do the job for the team is incredible. It was a dream debut. The crowd was incredible as well. I have never experienced something like this before," he added.

Both Ball and captain Jos Buttler, who was also present at the press conference, described the game as one that quickly changed pace.

"It was a bit of a roller coaster. I thought our first half was fantastic. Ben Duckett was calm and composed. And [Ben] Stokes showed his maturity again by playing in an aggressive fashion despite being at 60 for 3," said Buttler.

"We probably got the toss wrong, but we still showed belief. It was a brilliant five-wicket haul from Ball. He



**Making his ODI debut yesterday, pacer Jake Ball reinvigorated an English side which seemed destined for defeat as he scalped a stunning fifer and silenced the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.**

PHOTO: STAR

got us back with those two balls. The conditions had changed and the ball was coming on to the bat very well [in the second innings]. I thought we bowled fantastically well. To be one nil up is fantastic for us," he added.

Furthermore he also admitted that he felt the pressure at certain moments yesterday, during his first game as captain. At a time when England desperately needed a breakthrough, he had dropped Imrul Kayes off Ball in the 40th over.

"It's tough. I think as much as you can, you try and stay calm. We knew we needed wickets to win the game and break the partnership. When I dropped probably the easiest catch you would see in international cricket, I was thinking this was one of those days. But Ben Stokes really brought us back

and said let's not give it to them easy. I think that belief and hunger to win really came through," said Buttler.

"I think a lot of guys will take confidence from the way we played. We have proved that we can play in the fashion we want to in these conditions. We were brave to do that and we took it on and that was probably one of the most pleasing things," he added.

The aggressive attitude in the ODIs is one of the biggest changes that the England team has made since the World Cup and that shift in attitude was something both Buttler and Ball had repeatedly mentioned.

"The confidence is really high. We play a brand of cricket that we believe and we back ourselves. We did that today and managed to come out on top," concluded Ball.

## Unrest in ticket queue

SPORTS REPORTER

Chaos struck yesterday afternoon at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium, where tickets for the first ODI between Bangladesh and England were being sold. According to police, thousands of fans had gathered and were waiting in long queues since Thursday night.

The situation went a bit awry in the afternoon soon after the match started around 2:30 pm. According to eyewitnesses, the tension among fans was increasing since the match had already begun and many of them were yet to get tickets. There were also complaints about people trying to cut in the queue.

The police eventually intervened and, according to the officer in charge of the Pallabi thana, the officials used water-spray in order to calm the situation.



**There were chaotic scenes at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium yesterday as members of law enforcement clashed with fans waiting to buy tickets during Bangladesh's first ODI against England.**

PHOTO: STAR

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PERFORMER OF THE DAY

**BEN STOKES**

England batsman Ben Stokes came to the crease with his side at a shaky 63-3 and took it slow, before unleashing a huge six on the 18th ball that he faced. That prefaced what Stokes would do the rest of the game, as he made the most of his two reprieves and plundered the Bangladeshi bowlers for 101 runs off 100 balls. He smashed 8 fours and 4 sixes and formed a vital 153-run fourth-wicket stand with Ben Duckett to reignite England's innings.