

## Pitches a product of winning mindset

SAKEB SUBHAN

In March 2010, Bangladesh had set England a target of 209 to win in the fourth innings in Mirpur. Then, the match had gone till the fifth day and the fifth morning started with Bangladesh trying to bat out time in order to salvage a draw after conceding a first innings lead of 77. Fans and players alike were hopeful after they batted till after lunch and set a target of 209, just enough to hope for a draw.

Alastair Cook, on his first tour as captain, then hit an unbeaten century and Kevin Pietersen a quickfire 74 to take England home with nine wickets and plenty of time to spare, making a mockery of home hopes.

When he fronted up to the press yesterday after a 108-run loss to Bangladesh in the second Test that ended within three days, even if he wasn't thinking of that match six and a half years ago, a question from the British press contingent took him back to 2010.

"They've obviously taken big strides, but we've played them on totally different wickets," said Cook when asked how different Bangladesh were as a side since he last played them in a Test in their backyard. "Last time the wickets were flatter, they didn't spin as much. They've decided that's the way they want to be brave and try to win the game, and why wouldn't you as a side?"

What he may have missed, however, is that the change in pitches are a result of a change in mindset.

For Bangladesh, it was not the obvious thing to do. It would have been much easier to look for more draws. But they had the heart to gamble in the format they were least proficient in, and the skills to pull it off.

"We have never played on wickets like these before," said skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, presenting the other side of the pitch phenomenon moments after Cook had completed his presser. Although they have proven to have better spinners than England and were able to negotiate England's wirlers better, this was as much a step into the unknown as England had taken when they stepped out to play the first Test of the series in Chittagong on October 20.

Cook may have hoped that Bangladesh would see the 22-run loss in Chittagong as a backfire of their new policy to go for the win. Instead they doubled down -- they selected only

one pacer in the eleven and the pitch in Mirpur was as spin-friendly as the Chittagong one, while being more prone to breaking down because of its clay base.

Cook would have done well to ask Eoin Morgan, England's one-day captain who chose to sit out the tour, about Bangladesh's change because although the methods were vastly different, the mindset that made England reluctantly share the spoils of a series they would have expected to win is a continuation of the one which resulted in the 15-run win that saw England exit the World Cup last year.

That came on the back of a disastrous 2014, during most

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of which Bangladesh could not buy a win. Then Mashrafe Bin Mortaza took over the reins and with coach Chandika Hathurusingha devised strategies to win and a team more than willing to execute them. And once the joy of winning was tasted, it was not one they wanted to let go of, regardless of format.

It is cause for celebration that Bangladesh, outstripping all expectations, translated that attitude so quickly to the Test arena. Their play is not perfect by any means -- there were frustrating moments of captaincy brain-freezes yesterday and the batsmen seemed too anxious to get runs on the board -- but they have finally found their niche at home and much like in the ODI format, they can look forward to being a force in Tests at home too.

"They'll find it hard on bouncy wickets," added Cook when talking about his opponents. Judging by Bangladesh's track record of adjusting strategy and personnel to the conditions, that is a prediction Cook should not be putting much money on.

### NUMBERS GAME

19

Mehedi Hasan now has the most Test wickets after the first two Test matches for Bangladesh with 19 scalps to his name. Mahmudullah Riyad and Sohag Gazi are second with 12 each. It is also the highest number of wickets by a Bangladeshi in any Test series, surpassing Enamul Haque and

19Y  
5D

At 19 years and 5 days, Mehedi became the second-youngest player to claim a 10-wicket haul against England. India's L Sivaramakrishnan did it when he was 18 years and 338 days.

12

Mehedi's 12 for 159 is the best Test bowling analysis for Bangladesh, surpassing Enamul Haque's

9

Nine players have won the man-of-the-series awards on debut series. Mehedi joins Rohit Sharma, James Pattinson, Vernon Philander, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ajantha Mendis, Stuart Clark, Jacques

8

The number of Test wins Bangladesh now have. All their other wins have come against either

4th

Mehedi also has the fourth-highest number of wickets overall after the first two Test matches. India's Narendra Hirwani leads that list with 24, with England's Alec Bedser (22 wkts) and Bob

### PREMIER CEMENT

#### BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

**BANGLADESH:** First innings 220

**ENGLAND:** First innings 244

**BANGLADESH:** 2nd innings R/B 4s/6s

(overnight 152-3)

Tamim c Cook b Ansari 40/47 7/0

Imrul lbw b Moeen 78/120 9/0

Mominul c Cook b Stokes 1/2 0/0

Mahmudullah b Ansari 47/57 5/0

Shakib b Rashid 41/81 6/0

Mushfiqur c Cook b Stokes 9/29 1/0

Sabbir lbw b Rashid 15/17 3/0

Shuvagata not out 25/28 4/0

Tajjul c Bairstow b Stokes 5/4 1/0

Mehedi c Root b Rashid 2/8 0/0

Kamrul c & b Rashid 7/9 0/1

Extras: (b-17, lb-7, w-1, nb-1) 26

Total: (All out in 66.5 overs) 296

Fall of wickets: 1-65, 2-66, 3-152, 4-

200, 5-238, 6-238, 7-268, 8-273, 9-

276, 10-296.

**Bowler** O M R W

Finn 3 0 18 0

Moeen 19 2 60 1

Ansari 19 0 76 2

Stokes 12 2 52 3

Rashid 11.5 1 52 4

Woakes 2 0 14 0

**ENGLAND:** 2nd innings R/B 4s/6s

Cook c Mominul b Mehedi 59/117 5/0

Duckett b Mehedi 56/64 7/1

Root lbw b Shakib 1/2 0/0

Ballance c Tamim b Mehedi 5/14 0/0

Moeen lbw b Mehedi 0/4 0/0

Stokes b Shakib 25/36 2/1

Bairstow c Shuvagata

b Mehedi 3/8 0/0

Woakes not out 9/17 0/0

Rashid lbw b Shakib 0/1 0/0

Ansari c Imrul b Shakib 0/2 0/0

Finn lbw b Mehedi 0/8 0/0

Extras: (b-4, lb-2) 6

Total: (All out in 45.3 overs) 164

Fall of wickets: 1-100, 2-105, 3-124, 4-

124, 5-127, 6-139, 7-161, 8-161, 9-161,

10-164.

**Bowler** O M R W

Mehedi 21.3 2 77 6

Shakib 13 1 49 4

Shuvagata 6 0 25 0

Tajjul 5 2 7 0

**Result:** Bangladesh won by 108 runs



Alastair Cook, the England captain, cuts a forlorn figure in front of the dressing room as he watches the England innings fall like a pack of cards late on the third day of the second Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Mehedi Hasan Miraz put on a larger-than-life effort yesterday, scalping six wickets in England's second innings to go with the six in the first, as Bangladesh recorded an historic 108-run win against the visitors at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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## They got 30 runs too many: Cook

SPORTS REPORTER

After conquering Chittagong's dustbowl, Alastair Cook must have been a confident man going in for the Tea break after putting together a 100-run opening stand with newcomer Ben Duckett yesterday. It was by far England's best opening stand of the series, beating the 26 in the second innings in Chittagong. 273 and a 2-0 whitewash did not seem too far off at Tea.

80 minutes, 64 runs and 22.3 overs later however, the England skipper was looking up at a scoreboard that showed the series score at 1-1. The collapse of 10 wickets for 64 runs was spectacular and shell-shocking, even in a Test that has moved at breakneck speed.

"It was amazing how things can turn. We possibly showed our inexperience in those conditions," said Cook after the match. "It was amazing, the difference before Tea and after Tea. You lose a couple of wickets, then men come round the bat,

crowd get into it -- being able to deal with that and get through it -- you know it doesn't last forever. But that half an hour, 40 minutes is crucial, and we just weren't good enough to be able to get through."

Although the win was a historic one for Bangladesh, the standard of play from either side did not sustain the high standard set in the Chittagong classic.

"I thought 270 would have been a real good chase to be honest," he said. "They got 30 too many today. We had four or five, not easy chances, but chances you need to take. I started the rot with one at leg slip [off Imrul Kayes] -- you need to take them, especially in low-scoring games."

He stopped short of calling it his toughest loss as captain, however.

"It's very easy sitting back and saying it's just Bangladesh. But in these conditions on spinning wickets, their bowlers are good, they're experienced. I know the guy who got 19 wickets [Mehedi Hasan Miraz] isn't experienced, but he's a very good bowler and he's experienced in these conditions."

## Stokes fined 15 per cent of match fee

SPORTS REPORTER

England all-rounder Ben Stokes was fined 15 per cent of his match fee for breaching the ICC Code of Conduct during the second Test against Bangladesh after being found guilty of "conduct contrary to the spirit of the game". One demerit point was also added to Stokes' record.

The incident occurred during the morning session when Stokes ignored umpires' repeated requests to stop verbally engaging Sabbir Rahman.

England captain Alastair Cook expressed frustration over the incident.

"I do find the incident frustrating. Both very competitive cricketers, Sabbir and Stokes. To me, people love it -- that's what people watch. Sometimes I believe the umpires can get involved too quickly, and then it blows up even more."