

SPORT

'Beating Mash most pleasing'

SPORTS REPORTER

"Defeating Comilla [Victorians] is not pleasing, but defeating Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza] is," Chittagong Vikings captain Tamim Iqbal joked after his side's victory at Mirpur yesterday. "That's because we have a special relationship," he added while trying to control his laughter during the post-match press conference.

The latter statement made by Tamim was a bit redundant really. The fact that Tamim and Mashrafe are good friends is not something the country's cricketing fraternity is unaware of. Be it at training camps or informal addas with journalists, it is almost a ritual for these two to hang-out together. While Mashrafe compliments Tamim, the opener credits the skipper for helping him and the national team formulate an extremely positive approach.

They may appreciate each other off the field or when they play on the same side. When placed at opposing ends though, neither player is ready to take a step back.

It was something that was evident when Tamim charged the Bangladesh skipper early in the innings.

"With Mashrafe bhai I have a set plan and he also has a set plan against me. He is the kind of bowler who becomes very dangerous if you let him start well.

"But if you don't, he may go on to the back foot. I took that chance and I didn't want him to get set. He is dangerous when he does," explained Tamim.

Mashrafe was disappointed following his side's defeat but the off-the-field humour between these two, expectedly so, remained the same.

After Mashrafe finished speaking to reporters at the press conference, he jokingly addressed Tamim with a formal tone: "Come. Iqbal. It's your turn."

Tamim had a reply ready. "Go celebrate your 15 years [of international cricket] with your family. Don't think about the match," he laughed.



Chittagong Vikings captain Tamim Iqbal struck a fluent 38-ball 54, smashing six fours and two sixes as his side defeated the Mashrafe Bin Mortaza-led Comilla Victorians in the opening match of this edition of BPL at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SCOREBOARDS

VIKINGS V VICTORIANS

CHITTAGONG VIKINGS	R/B	45/65
Tamim run out	54/38	6/2
Smith c Sharif b Wasim	9/15	1/0
Anamul run out	22/18	2/0
Malik not out	42/28	2/2
Jahurul not out	29/21	3/0
Extras: (lb-3, w-2)		5
Total: (For 20 wickets in 20 overs)		161

COMILLA VICTORIANS	R/B	45/65
Liton c Anamul b Nabi	13/18	2/0
Imrul c Anamul b Smith	6/4	1/0
Samuels c Taskin b Razzak	23/18	3/1
Nazmul not out	54/44	6/0
Zaidi b Nabi	2/2	0/0
Mashrafe b Mills	1/8	0/0
Wasim c Nabi b Taskin	4/2	1/0
Al-Amin b Nabi	14/18	0/1
Tanvir lbw b Nabi	0/1	0/0
Sharif not out	2/6	0/0
Extras: (lb-2, w-10, nb-1)		13
Total: (For 20 wickets in 20 overs)		132

BARISAL BULLS	R/B	45/65
Shamsur c Maruf b Shahid	6/10	1/0
Munaweera c Nasir b Bravo	12/15	2/0
Malan c Bravo b Shakib	16/15	0/1
Mushfiqur not out	50/36	4/2
Nafees b Shahid	55/41	7/2
Perera c sub (Prasanna)		
b Bopara	3/6	0/0
Emrit c Nasir b Shahid	1/2	0/0
Mahedi not out	2/2	0/0
Extras: (lb-1, w-2)		3
Total: (For 20 wickets in 20 overs)		148

DHAKA DYNAMITES	R/B	45/65
Maruf not out	75/45	5/5
Sangakkara lbw b Tajjul	30/24	5/0
Shakib b Monir	20/23	2/0
Mosaddek not out	10/5	2/0
Extras: (lb-4, lb-1, w-8, nb-1)		14
Total: (For 20 wickets in 16 overs)		149

HERATH COMPLETES 5-WKT CIRCLE
SRI LANKA: First innings 504
ZIMBABWE: First innings 272
(Chari 80, Ervine 64, Williams 58, Moor 33; Lakmal 2-55, Herath 54-89, Perera 3-51)
SRI LANKA: Second innings 102 for 4 (Karunaratne 54 not out, Tharanga 17; Mumba 3-31)

Key players drive Vikings 'Glad he is on my side'

SPORTS REPORTER

Reigning champions Comilla Victorians began the fourth season of the Bangladesh Premier League with a 29-run defeat against a disciplined Chittagong Vikings at Mirpur yesterday.

The difference between the two sides yesterday was that Chittagong's key players fired for them, while Comilla's did not. A half-century from Tamim Iqbal and a quickfire 42 off 28 balls from Shoab Malik helped Chittagong post 161 for three in the first innings.

After the exchange, Mohammad Nabi took a four-wicket haul and with the help of a balanced bowling attack the Vikings restricted Comilla to just 132 for eight.

The Vikings had finished last in the BPL in the previous season. And in order to make up for that embarrassment they seemed to have built a formidable side this year, one which analysts would expect to easily reach the playoffs.

Tamim continued his good run from the England series and laid the foundation with a 38-ball 54. He continued playing those inside-out drives against the spinners with ease and ended up hitting six fours and two sixes.

He was however dismissed in the oddest of fashions. He drove one towards long-on and attempted to take a double in the sixth over. His partner Anamul Haque however was not ready and had signalled Tamim to stop. Tamim was not aware of that and ran the complete distance without looking at his partner to be easily run out. Anamul himself was run out in the 14th over for 22 and they were poised at 101 for three after 13 overs.

A brilliant 60-run stand for the fourth wicket between Jahurul Islam and Shoab Malik though brought the Vikings back into the game. While Shoab hit two sixes and two fours during his 28-ball 42, Jahurul scored 21 off 29 with three boundaries.

If Chittagong's batting was impressive their bowling seemed even more dominating. With the veteran Abdur Razzak, Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi and Shoab in the team, their spin attack was always going to be decent.

However, the addition of England pacer Tymal Mills has added another dimension to the attack. Mills is someone who can regularly bowl at 90-plus miles per hour and he proved how dangerous he could be when he came on to bowl yesterday.

He stunned Liton Das in the seventh over with his pace and even hit his

helmet once. However, with Tamim preferring to use up his spinners at the start, it took Mills some time before he could get a wicket.

At the start of the second innings, Dwayne Smith removed Imrul with a medium-paced delivery that moved off the pitch and got the batsman's edge in the third over. Two overs later, Razzak got Samuels caught at mid-off. The left-arter had been hit for a six in the previous ball. Samuels tried to repeat the shot but was caught inside the circle.

Nabi removed Liton Das and Ashar Zaidi, the player-of-the-series of the last edition, in the eighth and tenth overs respectively before Mills bowled Mashrafe Bin Mortaza with a slower delivery. At 77 for six in 13 overs, the game was pretty much over for Comilla.

The young Nazmul Hossain Shanto, recently selected in the preliminary squad to tour New Zealand, tried his best by scoring a few boundaries. However, Nabi took two wickets when he was brought back in the 18th over and Comilla were reduced to 107 for eight.

Shanto continued attacking the bowlers though. He smacked Taskin Ahmed for four consecutive fours in the last over and reached his 50 and ended up scoring 54 off 44 balls.

SPORTS REPORTER



Prior to the start of the fourth edition of the Bangladesh Premier League, Chittagong Vikings fans might have been regretting the fact that they could not sign Mohammad Amir, their best bowler in the last season.

However, after watching the way Tymal Soloman Mills toyed with Comilla Victorians' batsmen, those concerns were probably forgotten.

A 24-year-old who has played one T20I for England troubled the batsmen with his high pace and also the occasional lack of it. He regularly seemed to touch the 150kmph mark yesterday and the batsmen were hard-pressed to cope with that.

And just as the batsmen were getting used to his pace, he began unleashing his slower, which further caused problems.

In the second ball of his first over, he bowled a lethal bouncer to a charging Liton Das, who probably was thanking the heavens that it did not hit his helmet. The ball whizzed past the batsman and forced wicketkeeper Anamul Haque to jump high in the air to intercept it. It was one of his better takes.

In the very next ball, Liton failed to evade a bouncer. The ball hit his helmet and went away for a four. His slower ones were probably more threatening than his faster balls. One of those went past Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who had swung the bat a little too early.

"He is very quick and our batsmen are

not accustomed to playing against such pace because we don't have such pacers in our country. It's always difficult to face a bowler who bowls at 150kmph.

"And when you have someone who can bowl that fast, no matter how he bowls his slower, it will be effective because everyone will be expecting the fast ball," Mashrafe said after the match yesterday.

While Tamim did appreciate Mills's effort, he expects more from him.



TYMAL SOLOMAN MILLS

"Pace is no doubt very important. But it can be both an advantage and disadvantage. I feel that he needs to bowl a bit better. If he can stay within his control, then his pace can be massive for us.

"There are very few bowlers who can bowl at 150-plus in world cricket and it will be a challenge for the local players to face him. If they can score against him, it will give them lots of confidence," said Tamim.

"The good thing is that he is on my team," smiled Tamim.

'Proud that he is a symbol of love'

A father told a story on his son's occasion of completing 15 years in international cricket yesterday. Every father loves to tell stories of their children and all are unique in their own way. Still, when Golam Mortaza told that story to The Daily Star's Bishwajit Roy it seemed like an out-of-this-world tale. It is because the man behind the story was none other than the larger-than-life figure of Bangladesh cricket, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. Pain and pleasure go hand in hand in life, but Golam Mortaza has walked a fine line between them. The tale the 59-year old told seemed like an epic, from which we have presented a brief excerpt below:

15 years, I still can't believe it. He is now in the twilight of his career. We know another injury means his career will be over because there is no chance for my 'pagol' (mad) son to make any recovery from injury. And he can be injured at any time and we are mentally prepared for everything.

As a father it is very hard to see my son still playing cricket with such pain. As a father sometimes I think it would be better if he says goodbye to cricket. You know he needs at least one hour to prepare himself before any game -- wearing all the knee braces and tape. It is very painful to watch him nursing his legs after each delivery and I think only a few know what kind of difficulties he has had to overcome with his two surgically repaired knees behind the scenes to continue his cricket career.

As a father I learned many things from him and am still learning. In our country it's very difficult to be loved but it's a great satisfaction in my life as Koushik, a nickname by which people are now often calling him, living life without cricket. I will go to the ground and watch a match without Koushik playing -- I cannot imagine that right at this moment. But once again it is really hard to bear the pain he has been suffering only to play cricket.

As an individual, he is nothing. It is cricket and his good soul that have made him special. If you ask me what makes me proudest I must say it's his stature as a good human being. Statistics will tell of his cricketing career but I don't know

whether it would be wise to say as a father that sometimes I am astonished how he has developed such qualities in his character.

As a father I learned many things from him and am still learning. In our country it's very difficult to be loved but it's a great satisfaction in my life as Koushik, a nickname by which people are now often calling him, living life without cricket. I will go to the ground and watch a match without Koushik playing -- I cannot imagine that right at this moment. But once again it is really hard to bear the pain he has been suffering only to play cricket.

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things for me happened in Australia. The pain of seeing a person as vibrant as him lying in a hospital bed in Australia after enduring one operation after another is hard to explain in words. On the other hand, the way he led the team in the 2015 World Cup in Australia was something special. I am glad that I was in Australia during the World Cup to see him succeed after everything he has been through.

There are many people behind a person's success in life. But it would be unfair if I failed to mention [Ekram] Babu bhai. What he did for Mashrafe during his operation and post-operations in Australia was amazing. The word grateful is not good enough for that.

The day when Koushik made his debut at the Bangabandhu National Stadium is still fresh in my mind. I can still remember a journalist asking me: "Your son said that 'ami pach wicket niaya neboni'" in Narail dialect (I will take five wickets). That journalist was also curious to know whether my son was mad. I told him with a smile that yes he was a pagol and later Day Whatmore affectionately called him 'pagla'.

I only pray that my pagol remains a pagol throughout.

Herath completes 5-wkt circle

AFP, Harare

Sri Lanka's Rangana Herath became just the third bowler in history to take five-wicket hauls against all nine Test opponents, before Zimbabwe fought back on day three of the third Test at Harare Sports Club on Tuesday.

Herath recorded figures of 5 for 89 -- his first five-wicket haul against Zimbabwe -- to bowl the home side out for 272 and give Sri Lanka a 232-run lead in the first innings.

But after the tourists opted not to enforce the follow-on, fast bowler Carl Mumba picked up three wickets as Sri Lanka slumped to 84 for four in their second innings.

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