

Sammy sinks Vikings

SPORTS REPORTER

There is never a dull moment as long as Darren Sammy is at the crease and that was the case as the former West Indies captain led from the front to keep the Rajshahi Kings in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) race by eliminating Chittagong Vikings at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Rajshahi's three-wicket win means that they will now meet Khulna Titans, the losers of last night's first qualifier against Dhaka Dynamites, at 5:45pm today.

There were a lot of memorable moments in the low-scoring game -- Tamim Iqbal and Chris Gayle's batting, Taskin Ahmed dropping a sitter and Shoaib Malik and Jahurul Islam combining for a brilliant parried catch -- but none provided as much entertainment as the 'selfie-bration' from the Rajshahi players or Darren Sammy's unbeaten, match-winning 55 off 27 balls which saw him smash

seven fours and two sixes.

However, the efforts of another West Indian, Kesrick Williams, to Rajshahi's win cannot be overlooked as he not only started the enjoyable selfie-bration after each Chittagong wicket fell, but he also bagged figures of four for 11 to restrict the Vikings to 142 runs for eight.

Everything seems to come naturally to Sammy, from having fun and cracking jokes to facing any challenge in the middle.

When left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib sparked wild celebrations after dismissing James Franklin, Rajshahi were teetering at 57 for six, but an undaunted Sammy smashed boundaries as easy as one-two-three.

The right-hander smote three consecutive boundaries against Mohammad Nabi in the 12th over -- punching a short ball on the back foot, pulling down an outside off-stump delivery and cutting brilliantly to find the gap for the third. In the next over he hit his first six as he stepped down to punish a length ball from Sajib.

Subhashis Roy was next to fall victim as Sammy again smashed three bound-

aries. He got a back of a length delivery outside off and settled up onto the toes and punched past the diving backward point, then punished a short and wishy ball over backward point before again unleashing the back-foot punch.

Sammy reached his fifty in style as Mohammad Nabi tossed up a ball on the off stump which was lofted straight back over the bowler's head. And his brilliant effort ensured that their early celebrations during Chittagong's innings would continue till the end.

Forhad Reza chipped in with an unbeaten 11-ball 19 and he also hit the winning runs after opener Nurul Hasan made a 28-ball 34 that saw two fours and one six.

However, Chittagong had an opportunity to throw down the gauntlet after Tamim and Gayle had recovered from an early blow by putting together a 74-run stand for the second wicket. That impetus however petered out after Franklin removed Gayle for 44 and Chittagong could only stitch together 60 runs from their last 9.2 overs.

Williams and Reza did the damage as Tamim's 46-ball 51 effort went in vain.



Dhaka Dynamites' Andre Russell set off the fireworks, scoring a 25-ball 46 which included four fours and three sixes to lead his side against Khulna Titans in Qualifier 1 of the Bangladesh Premier League in Mirpur yesterday.

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SCOREBOARDS

VIKINGS V KINGS

| CHITTAGONG VIKINGS | R/B | 4s/6s |
|---|-------|-------|
| Tamim c Patel b Williams | 51/46 | 6/0 |
| Smith c Sammy b Williams | 0/5 | 0/0 |
| Gayle c Farhad b Franklin | 44/30 | 2/5 |
| Malik c Mehedi b Farhad | 14/12 | 0/1 |
| Anamul c Mehedi b Farhad | 11/10 | 2/0 |
| Nabi run out | 5/6 | 0/0 |
| Jahurul not out | 11/7 | 0/1 |
| Razzak c Mehedi b Williams | 0/2 | 0/0 |
| Taskin lbw b Williams | 0/1 | 0/0 |
| Saqlain not out | 1/1 | 0/0 |
| Extras: (w-5) | 5 | |
| Total: (For 8 wks in 20 overs) | 142 | |
| Did not bat: Subashis. | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-82, 3-112, 4-117, 5-127, 6-131, 7-131, 8-132. | | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------|---|---|----|---|
| Williams | 4 | 0 | 11 | 4 |
| Mehedi | 4 | 0 | 36 | 0 |
| Afif | 2 | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| Sammy | 3 | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| Farhad | 4 | 0 | 26 | 2 |
| Franklin | 1 | 0 | 8 | 1 |
| Nazmul | 2 | 0 | 16 | 0 |

| RAJSHAHI KINGS | R/B | 4s/6s |
|--|-------|-------|
| Nurul c Jahurul b Saqlain | 34/28 | 2/1 |
| Mominul c Razzak b Subashis | 4/7 | 0/0 |
| Afif c Subashis b Razzak | 0/1 | 0/0 |
| Subbir c Nabi b Subashis | 11/13 | 0/1 |
| Patel b Nabi | 5/10 | 0/0 |
| Franklin b Saqlain | 2/4 | 0/0 |
| Sammy not out | 55/27 | 7/2 |
| Mehedi run out | 10/10 | 1/0 |
| Farhad not out | 19/11 | 3/0 |
| Extras: (w-3) | 3 | |
| Total: (For 7 wks in 18.3 overs) | 143 | |
| Did not bat: Nazmul, Williams. | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-8, 3-39, 4-53, 5-55, 6-57, 7-94. | | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------|-----|---|----|---|
| Razzak | 4 | 1 | 17 | 1 |
| Subashis | 3 | 0 | 28 | 2 |
| Smith | 1 | 0 | 13 | 0 |
| Taskin | 3.3 | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| Saqlain | 4 | 0 | 24 | 2 |
| Nabi | 3 | 0 | 30 | 1 |

Result: Rajshahi Kings won by 3 wickets.
Player-of-the-match: Darren Sammy.

DYNAMITES V TITANS

| DHAKA DYNAMITES | R/B | 4s/6s |
|---|-------|-------|
| Maruf c Pooran b Junaid | 7/16 | 0/1 |
| Lewis c Pooran b Junaid | 11/8 | 1/1 |
| Sangakkara c sub (Naem) | | |
| b Junaid | 9/7 | 2/0 |
| Nasir c Shuvagata b Fletcher | 13/16 | 1/0 |
| Shakib c b Fletcher | 18/18 | 2/0 |
| Mosaddek run out | 8/15 | 0/0 |
| Russell c Mahmudullah | | |
| b Howell | 46/25 | 4/3 |
| Bravo not out | 23/22 | 0/1 |
| Alauddin b Junaid | 0/2 | 0/0 |
| Sunzamul not out | 0/1 | 0/0 |
| Extras: (lb-1, w-4) | 5 | |
| Total: (For 8 wickets in 20 overs) | 140 | |
| Did not bat: Jayed. | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-27, 3-28, 4-56, 5-65, 6-68, 7-81, 8-84, 9-84, 10-86. | | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|-------------|---|---|----|---|
| Mahmudullah | 3 | 0 | 26 | 0 |
| Junaid | 4 | 0 | 24 | 4 |
| Shuvagata | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| Howell | 4 | 0 | 35 | 1 |
| Mosharrarf | 4 | 0 | 18 | 0 |
| Fletcher | 3 | 0 | 22 | 2 |
| Shafiu | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 |

| KHULNA TITANS | R/B | 4s/6s |
|---|-------|-------|
| Fletcher st Sangakkara b Shakib | 28/22 | 4/1 |
| Hasanuzzaman lbw b Russell | 5/11 | 0/0 |
| Mahmudullah c Jayed b Russell | 5/6 | 1/0 |
| Howell lbw b Sunzamul | 4/6 | 0/0 |
| Mazid c b Mosaddek | 7/8 | 0/0 |
| Pooran c Bravo b Jayed | 9/13 | 1/0 |
| Arifur c b b Russell | 14/16 | 1/0 |
| Shuvagata b Bravo | 8/6 | 1/0 |
| Mosharrarf c Sunzamul b Bravo | 1/3 | 0/0 |
| Junaid c Lewis b Bravo | 1/5 | 0/0 |
| Shafiu Islam not out | 0/2 | 0/0 |
| Extras: (w-4) | 4 | |
| Total: (All out in 16.2 overs) | 86 | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-39, 3-40, 4-46, 5-53, 6-68, 7-81, 8-84, 9-84, 10-86. | | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------|-----|---|----|---|
| Jayed | 3 | 0 | 20 | 1 |
| Russell | 4 | 0 | 16 | 3 |
| Shakib | 3 | 0 | 22 | 1 |
| Sunzamul | 2 | 0 | 9 | 1 |
| Nasir | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Mosaddek | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Bravo | 2.2 | 0 | 10 | 3 |

Result: Dhaka Dynamites won by 54 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Andre Russell.

Selfie Kings revel in unity

SPORTS REPORTER

In terms of face value, the Rajshahi Kings are definitely not there at the top. But as far as gelling as a group is concerned, they have easily dominated the lot in this season of the Bangladesh Premier League.

The Kings so far have clearly been the most enjoyable team to watch on the field. From their unorthodox celebrations on the field to their ability to turn things around at the last moment, under the leadership of Darren Sammy, the Kings seem to have inculcated the West Indian approach.

"We are a new team but if you look at the group, we are gelling together. We perform like a family, whether we look good or not. I wasn't too sad when we finished fourth in the group stage because every time we played a team above us, we defeated them. We have fixed our aim on the final. Hopefully we will do well," said Sammy after yesterday's match.

The fact that all the 11 Rajshahi players were in unison was obvious from the way they celebrated every wicket against the Chittagong Vikings. All their players took the pain of gathering together and taking imaginary selfies and photos of each other on the field.

"We all like to take photos. If you check their instagram, they always keep posting photos, so why not bring that into cricket? When you play well, and when you bring out the celebration, you continue to play as a team and you gel well. That creates an environment for success," said Sammy.

"We were under the pump at one point initially and we came back because we had the spirit. Again while batting when we were under the pump, I just imagined how it feels like when you take selfies," he added with a smile.

The way Darren Sammy revived the team from a precarious 57 for six, through a whirlwind 55 off 27 balls, was absolutely amazing. His team was under pressure and instead of playing defensively he attacked the

opposition. And this is of course not the first time that he has helped a side recover in a T20 game towards the end.

When asked to explain how he plans his chase, he said: "I look at the required run-rate and then break it down. I am a big admirer of [MS] Dhoni. If you bat out and take the game out as long as possible, you give yourself a better chance of winning."

"But today after [James] Franklin got out, he said to me, just free up and enjoy and go for it. That probably changed my mindset to a positive from a defensive. I just put the attack back on them," he added.

Despite the win, Sammy reckoned that the Kings are yet to play their best cricket.

Chittagong Vikings skipper Tamim Iqbal on the other hand was expectedly quite distraught.

"If I start analysing our mistakes then there are a lot of things I can tell. But I don't want to go into that. The tournament has ended. I am proud of the way my team played," said Tamim.



The 'selfie-bration' was a recurring sight throughout yesterday's BPL Eliminator as the Rajshahi Kings joyfully greeted the fall of each Chittagong Vikings wicket with the now-famous celebration.

PHOTO: STAR

Felt no pressure: Russell

SPORTS REPORTER



When Andre Russell arrived at the crease for the Dhaka Dynamites, they were struggling at 89 for 6. It was a crucial game and the Dynamites, as Shakib Al Hasan said during the post-match presentation yesterday, were under pressure.

Russell went on to hammer a 25-ball 46 and changed the course of the game. You would think that the West Indian might have been a bit nervous, but Russell claimed that he was confident throughout his innings while speaking to reporters after the game yesterday.

"I think I am mature enough to know my game so I wasn't feeling any pressure. I have been in those situations a lot of times and I know what I can do.

"The wicket wasn't spinning and it was just sliding on. So I knew that if I got in I could start attacking. If it was turning then yes there would have been plenty of pressure. But on this wicket I wasn't pressured at all," said Russell.

The Dynamites eventually went on to post 140 and won the game, but Russell felt that the score was below-par.

"To be honest, from my point of view I

think it wasn't enough but when we actually started warming up, I said listen there are runs on the board, let's just go there and fight.

"Let's go out and play fearless cricket and not worry about the result. I think 140 wasn't enough based on the goodness of the wicket but we bowled excellently and credit goes where it goes," said Russell.

A specialist T20 player who has played all around the world, Russell lauded the unity in his team and believed that it was one of the factors that led them to the final.

"I think we have a wonderful unit and that's what's allowing us to play the way we are. Once you have a good team, you stick together whether you lose or win. We have a fantastic management. It's just chill. They allow you to be relaxed and there is no pressure on us," said Russell.

While Russell was happy with his team's performance, Khulna coach Stuart Law was understandably disappointed.

"First of all I thought we bowled well and fielded well. They needed some power hitting to get to a total of 140. We got a good start in our Powerplay as well, but after that we were just not good enough. We were outplayed. The batsmen probably need to look at the mirror and analyse their own performance," said Law.

Morgan, Hales set to return

REUTERS, London

England captain Eoin Morgan and opening batsman Alex Hales have returned to the one-day international (ODI) and T20 squads for the tour of India which starts next month.

Both players are back in the international set-up, having chosen to miss October's Bangladesh tour over security concerns.

Batsman Joe Root is also included after being rested for the 2-1 victory in the ODI series against Bangladesh, but Ben Duckett, Steven Finn and James Vince all miss out.

England have won nine of their last 12 ODIs and head coach Trevor Bayliss said there was no never any doubt Morgan and Hales would return despite deciding not to go to Bangladesh.

Shakib kicks off Lord's honours

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was yet again featured in the Lord's Top 20 Cricketers of the year, being unveiled as number 20 on the list.

The countdown, which was launched on Monday, will

feature a range of the most successful cricketers of the year with a new player being revealed each day. Shakib came in at number 16 in last year's rankings.

Shakib amassed 534 runs across 24 matches in all formats in the calendar year, while also picking up 41 wickets at an average of 21.80.

He was influential in Bangladesh's Test series against England, culminating in the Tigers' first-ever win against England. He took a seven-wicket haul in the first Test defeat and followed that up with five wickets in the second Test in Dhaka, including three wickets in an over, as the series was drawn with a historic Bangladesh win.

South Africa's Imran Tahir was awarded the 19th spot for his 43 wickets across 24 matches in the year.



Fans clash with police

SPORTS REPORTER



The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur was the venue of some unsavoury scenes in the crowd in the grandstand section yesterday.

The incident occurred after the Bangladesh Premier League Eliminator between Rajshahi Kings and Chittagong Vikings in the afternoon, which the former won. Amid the celebrations after the match in the grandstand, two groups of supporters engaged in jostling and pushing each other, and when one group went to complain to the police personnel assigned to the section there was some reported pushing and manhandling of one or more police officers.

The clash between the spectators at the grandstand and the police took place quite

openly and as a result caused a brief stir among those in the stadium.

A number of senior police officers were later seen checking out the video footage of the incident at the stadium's security room.

Deputy Commissioner of Mirpur Division Masud Ahmed, when contacted, said that there was some trouble at the stadium, and that there will be an investigation into the matter. No action is being taken as yet, but if some wrongdoing or unlawful activity on the part of the supporters is uncovered, firm action will be taken.

On a similar note, Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said that an incident had taken place and that both the board and the police are discussing the matter. "I can't comment on it until the investigation is done," said Nizamuddin.

AFP, Canberra



David Warner slammed his sixth one-day century of the year to lead Australia to a crushing 116-run victory to reclaim the

Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series off New Zealand in Canberra on Tuesday.

Warner smashed 119 off 115 balls to propel the Australians to an imposing 378 for five after being sent into bat and then bowled out the Black Caps for 262 off 47.2 overs at the bat-friendly Manuka Oval.

New Zealand had to win to keep alive their hopes of retaining the



Australia opener David Warner scored a 115-ball 119 against New Zealand in the 2nd ODI in Canberra yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

trophy after losing by 68 runs in the opening game in Sydney on Sunday.

Warner led the way in Australia's third-highest ODI total and was supported by skipper Steve Smith's 72 off 76 balls, while Mitchell Marsh bludgeoned seven sixes in a unbeaten 76 off just 40 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 378 for 5 in 50 overs (Warner 119, Smith 72, Marsh 76 not out; Southee 2-63)

NEW ZEALAND: 262 all out in 47.2 overs (Guptill 45, Williamson 81, Neesham 74; Cummins 4-41)

Result: Australia won by 116 runs and lead 3-match series 2-0.
Player-of-the-match: David Warner.