

SPORT



TIGERS FLOORED: This was the picture that encapsulates Bangladesh's tour of New Zealand so far as they repeatedly created opportunities only for the hosts' superiority to run roughshod over them, which it did again yesterday in the form of Kane Williamson (C) and Corey Anderson in the third T20I at the Bay Oval.

'Collective effort missing'

AL-AMIN from Tauranga



Shakib Al Hasan escaped unscathed with the ball when others were taken to the cleaners by the brute force of Corey Anderson. He then scored 41 but this particular knock off 34 balls in the final T20I at the Bay Oval yesterday was not something that has gone with his usual expressed intention of winning games. He dropped a sitter at a crucial stage and when he talked after a 27-run defeat he admitted they have not collectively played well in the limited-overs series that ended in six defeats in six games.

The end was a bit punishing in the form of one Corey Anderson, who has certainly shown that he has left behind his back pain with a whirlwind, unbeaten 41-ball 94.

"He batted very well. It would have been good had the score been limited to 160-170. We are not getting results because we are not contributing collectively. We could have done better but we will have to accept that they are a very good team in their own conditions. They were technically and tactically better than us in their own conditions," Shakib told reporters at the post-match briefing.

He however did not want to use the conditions as an excuse for the defeats.

"The conditions were certainly a factor. We have come here after five years. But the wicket was good for batting. We have got starts but failed to convert those into big scores. We bowled well in patches. When we did not bowl well they hurt us most," admitted the all-rounder.

PHOTO: AFP

Shakib best all-rounder again

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA from New Delhi

Shakib Al Hasan rose to become the best all-rounder in the One Day Internationals and was adjudged the second-best all-rounder in Tests and T20Is in the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) latest rankings.

Shakib also claimed sixth place in the ODI Bowlers' Rankings and is the only Bangladesh cricketer to make it into the top 10 of separate categories.

In the all-rounders' list, Shakib was first with 377 points, well ahead of second-placed Sri Lankan AD Mathews who has 335 points.

The Bangladeshi player was placed second best all-rounder in T20s with 346 points behind Australian GJ Maxwell who has 388 points.

Shakib also finished second best all-rounder in Tests with 405 points, trailing India's Ravichandran Ashwin's, who has 482 points.

When asked if the wicket changed after Bangladesh were 80 for one in eight overs, he said: "You need momentum but if you lose wickets at regular intervals it's tough to get the momentum back."

He also observed that the New Zealand batsmen have got more muscle than their Bangladesh counterparts.

"It was difficult to tell from which end it was easier to bowl on this wicket. I think we have bowled from our comfortable ends. But one thing is that they have got more power-hitting ability than us," said Shakib, adding that experienced pace bowler Rubel Hossain bowled really well in the three T20Is.

When asked if it was a wise decision to use Soumya Sarkar when Mosaddek Hossain still had an over left, Shakib replied: "It was the decision of the captain. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work," quipped the vice-captain.

About his personal performance in the series he said it was a mixed bag.

"I'm happy with my bowling. But in batting I should have scored more considering the wicket we have got. In that respect it was a bit disappointing for me," opined Shakib.

Regarding the dropped catch that let off Kane Williamson when the Kiwis were starting to accelerate, he said: "I have dropped an easy catch. Tamim's one [also off Williamson] was a bit difficult. Fielding is something that can change a team's outlook and if you compare the fielding of the two sides you can easily see how good they are."

Mash out for up to eight weeks

AL-AMIN from Tauranga



Bangladesh's most successful limited-overs captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has been ruled out for six to eight weeks after sustaining a right thumb fracture during the third and final T20I against New Zealand at the Bay Oval yesterday.

He suffered that painful blow in the 18th over when he was trying to stop a cracking straight drive from Corey Anderson, the left-handed batsman who smashed 10 sixes in the game.

"It felt like my hand was broken," the Bangladesh captain said while talking to reporters at the Trinity Wharf Hotel last night. Wearing a sling, he also showed the X-ray image that he has kept in his cell phone, where a big crack was prominently on display.

Injury is something not new for Mashrafe. The pace bowler, who has undergone so many surgeries on both knees in a stop-start career, however picked up a thumb injury for the first time. He was however confident that he would recover in time before Bangladesh's next limited-overs assignment in Sri Lanka in March-April.



He will now travel to Auckland for another medical check-up in four days before heading to Sydney to enjoy a planned vacation with his family -- his wife, son Sahel and daughter Humayra. But the freak injury has certainly upset his vacation plans.

"After consulting the doctor here I will travel to Sydney where I might consult with another doctor. But most likely I will head back home as

soon as possible and want to take rest over there," said Mashrafe while keeping an eye on his two beautiful children roaming around in the hotel lobby at that time.

Better known as a man of steel, Mashrafe showed little signs of discomfort with his broken thumb. He was still lamenting what he termed another missed opportunity.

"We were in a great position when we took three early wickets. But we could not break that partnership," he said, adding that his team still had a chance despite that Anderson hammering when Bangladesh cruised to 80 for one in eight overs.

Asked how disappointing to lose both limited-overs series 3-0 Mashrafe again said it could have been different had they seized their chances.

"We should have won the second ODI in Nelson. We also created chances in all the three T20Is. It's disappointing to lose all six games. Still, I think we didn't play that badly," Mashrafe observed.

While talking to reporters Bangladesh's bowling coach and West Indies great Courtney Walsh came onto the scene. He hugged Mashrafe and said: "Enjoy your time with your family. It will be okay man!"

Mosaddek gets a lifeline

SPORTS REPORTER



Mosaddek Hossain, the young all-rounder, was supposed to end his tour of New Zealand at the end of the limited-overs leg, which ended yesterday with the third T20I. However, injuries to crucial players have forced the Bangladesh team management to keep the 21-year-old as a back-up player for the upcoming Tests.

The final T20I yesterday saw three Bangladeshi players -- Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes -- get injured. While Mashrafe is returning home, Tamim and Imrul are in the Test squad. In addition, Bangladesh will hope their Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim -- who was injured in the first ODI -- will be a hundred per cent fit prior to the first Test.

According to a press release sent by the Bangladesh Cricket Board, Tamim hurt his left thumb while

fielding and also had an X-ray after the match. "The thumb is sore but the X-ray has come clear. We will review his condition after 48 hours," said Bangladesh physio Dean Conway.

The physio also informed that opener Imrul Kayes, whose left knee hit the digital board near the boundary's edge during an attempted catch, did not require a scan today but will be assessed after 48 hours.

Mosaddek may not have found a spot in the Test team yet, but the youngster has produced impressive numbers in first-class cricket. His current batting average is 70.89. His first prominent first-class score was 250, a score he posted against Dhaka Metropolis on February 16, 2015. A week later, he hammered 282 against Chittagong. He managed to score two successive double centuries in his first six first-class games. The youngster carried on the momentum from there. He recorded 50-plus scores in 11 consecutive first-class games.

BD-NZ SCOREBOARD					
NEW ZEALAND		R/B	4s/6s		
Williamson b Rubel	60/57	6/1			
Neesham lbw b Rubel	15/12	3/0			
Murphy c Soumya b Rubel	0/3	0/0			
Bruce c Imrul b Mosaddek	5/4	1/0			
Anderson not out	94/41	2/10			
De Grandhomme not out	4/3	0/0			
Extras: (lb-14, w-2)	16				
Total: (For 4 wks in 20 overs)	194				
Did not bat: Blundell, Santner, Wheeler, Boult, Sodhi.					
Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-36, 3-41, 4-165.					
Bowler		O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	3.2	0	42	0	
Taskin	4.0	0	37	0	
Rubel	4.0	0	31	3	
Shakib	4.0	0	22	0	
Mosaddek	3.4	0	27	1	
Soumya	1.0	0	21	0	
BANGLADESH		R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim c De Grandhomme b Boult	24/15	3/1			
Soumya c & b Sodhi	42/28	6/0			
Sabbir b Williamson	18/16	2/0			
Shakib c Anderson b Boult	41/34	4/0			
Mahmudullah b Sodhi	18/14	3/0			
Mosaddek c De Grandhomme b Santner	12/7	2/0			
Nurul not out	7/5	1/0			
Rubel not out	1/1	0/0			
Extras: (lb-1, w-3)	4				
Total: (For 6 wks in 20 overs)	167				
Did not bat: Imrul, Mashrafe, Taskin.					
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-82, 3-97, 4-122, 5-150, 6-161.					
Bowler		O	M	R	W
Santner	4.0	0	37	1	
Wheeler	4.0	0	29	0	
Boult	4.0	0	48	2	
Neesham	1.0	0	17	0	
Sodhi	1.0	0	22	2	
De Grandhomme	1.0	0	4	0	
Williamson	2.0	0	9	1	
Result: New Zealand won by 27 runs and clinched the 3-match series 3-0.					
Player-of-the-match: Corey Anderson.					

'Challenge to beat India at home'

PTI, Mumbai

England captain Eoin Morgan has said it will be a big challenge for the visitors to beat India at home but they are ready for the "special experience" that awaits them in the upcoming limited overs series.

"Yes, I am really looking forward to it. Playing against India in India is special experience. (They) are a strong side and hard to beat at home. I think, that's something we are looking forward to as a side (and) it's going to be a challenge.

"It is only a short series, but we think we can learn a lot from it," Morgan told reporters in suburban Malad here.

Meanwhile, Buttler said that the ODI series will be different from the Tests.

"Little bit, yes obviously. Good to play before Christmas, we got used to conditions and stuff. But the ODI matches will be completely different. We have got a different side but every time you come, you have to re-adjust and get ready for the matches accordingly," Buttler said when asked whether he would like to carry his form from the Tests to ODI series.

India will be led by a new skipper -- Virat Kohli -- in ODI series following the sudden resignation of Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the limited-overs captain.

Anderson relaxed after blitzing Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER



Corey Anderson might have started a bit slow yesterday, but he provided an ending that destroyed any chances of the Tigers getting a solitary win in the limited-overs leg of the New Zealand tour yesterday. It took 17 balls to score his first 22 runs, and he did seem a bit edgy against the spinners initially, but he more than made up for that by smashing 94 off 41 balls. With his 10 sixes, he almost single-handedly took the game away from the visitors.

Speaking to reporters after the game yesterday he said that the innings had given him a sense of reassurance, having returned to the game following an injury.

"An innings like this probably just reassures you. You go through periods when you don't get runs and then you start questioning yourself. I think when you hit an innings like this you can relax a bit," said Anderson.

"It's nice to come back after two low scores and putting a big total on the board," he added.

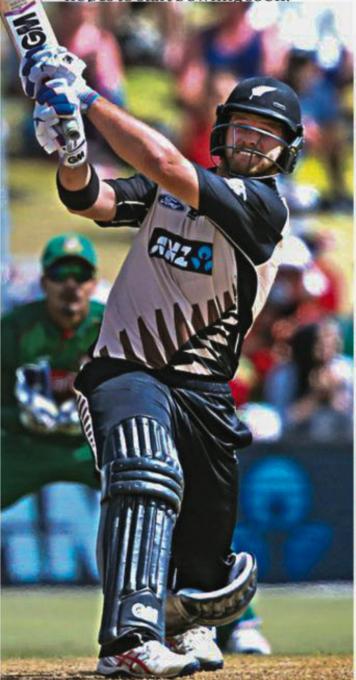
For the third consecutive time in the T20I series, Bangladesh lost a game after getting a good start. Yesterday, they had taken early wickets against the Black Caps and were in pole position after 10 overs. However, just like the last two games, the hosts managed to cruise home quite comfortably towards the end.

It was something that Anderson acknowledged yesterday.

"I think the outcome of the scores is not a great sign of how competitive it has been. You kind of are never out of the game. I think the wins reassured the boys that you

have got to stay on task and stick to the plan and not give them an inch," said Anderson.

Anderson, who is in the team as a specialist batsman, also said that he hopes to start bowling soon.



Corey Anderson bludgeoned 94 off 41 balls, including a New Zealand record 10 sixes in a T20 innings, at the Bay Oval yesterday.

PERFORMER OF THE DAY: COREY ANDERSON

Having reduced the Black Caps to 55 for three after 10 overs, Bangladesh had a glimmer of an opportunity to get their maiden win in New Zealand. However, that was tarnished once Corey Anderson arrived at the crease.

The hard-hitting batsman smashed 94 off 41 balls and killed any chances of Bangladesh making an impact. He hit a total of 10 sixes, the highest by a New Zealander in T20Is.