

SPORT



BY THE NUMBERS

359 Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim's 359-run stand is the highest partnership in Tests for Bangladesh, surpassing Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes's 312-run stand against Pakistan in April 2015.

217 Shakib Al Hasan's score of 217 is the highest individual score by a Bangladeshi in Tests. He went past Tamim Iqbal's 206-run effort against Pakistan in 2015.

3,000 Shakib Al Hasan became just the third Bangladeshi batsman to reach the 3,000-run mark and also surpassed former Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar to become the second-highest run-scorer for Bangladesh, bettered only by Tamim Iqbal. Shakib now has 3,146 runs to his name, while Tamim

has 3,405.

3rd Shakib Al Hasan became the third Bangladeshi to notch a double hundred. Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim are the two others to have achieved the feat.

1 This is the highest partnership for a visiting team in New Zealand and the fourth-highest partnership for the fifth wicket in Tests.

1st Never before had four of Bangladesh's top six batsmen made half-centuries or higher before this Test. Tamim Iqbal and Mominul Haque made half centuries while Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahman completed their centuries.

HIGHEST FIFTH WICKET PARTNERSHIPS IN TESTS

PARTNERS	RUNS	OPPOSITION	VENUE	DATE
SG Barnes, DG Bradman (AUS)	405	England	Sydney	13 Dec 1946
GS Blewett, SR Waugh (AUS)	385	South Africa	Johannesburg	28 Feb 1997
R Dravid, VVS Laxman (INDIA)	376	Australia	Kolkata	11 Mar 2001
Mushfiqur, Shakib (BDESH)	359	New Zealand	Wellington	12 Jan 2017
AB de Villiers, GC Smith (SA)	338	Pakistan	Dubai (DSC)	23 Oct 2013

359

The joining of forces of two of Bangladesh cricket's sturdiest pillars left in its wake a slew of records both for Bangladesh and Test cricket in general on the second day of the first Test against New Zealand in Wellington. Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim came together at 160 for four early in the morning session and were not separated till late in the evening session when the score read 519 to record the highest partnership for any wicket (359) for Bangladesh and the fourth-highest fifth-wicket stand in Test history. PHOTO: AFP

Had a point to prove: Mushfiqur 'Big players take their chances'

SPORTS REPORTER from Wellington

Mushfiqur Rahim did not receive a warm welcome upon his arrival at the crease yesterday. He initially found it quite difficult to manoeuvre the array of bouncers fired against him from both ends.

From ducking down to jumping off the surface, from hurting his fingers twice to bringing the top part of his bat into play frequently, it was arguably the worst welcome for a player who had just returned from an injury.

However, the cuts through and behind point and the pulls through mid-wicket were played with ease as time passed, and he eventually went on to score his fourth Test hundred.

Speaking to reporters during the post-day press conference, Mushfiqur indicated that he had taken the blows in order to prove a point.

"We needed to play well overseas because of all the talk going on about how we were going to have a tough time. Someone had to step up and the momentum was set by Tamim [Iqbal] and Mominul [Haque]."

"Their knocks gave us the courage to show our skills," said Mushfiqur.

"We have done just one part of our job and there are still three more days, but it is really satisfying to put up a partnership like this. After we lost the ODIs and the T20s we were under tremendous pressure to show something. Because everyone thought that Bangladesh could not play overseas. And the boys really stood up," he added.

Mushfiqur was not able to score his second double hundred yesterday. But in the context of the game, his 159 was as important as Shakib's 217. The 359-run fifth-wicket has given Bangladesh a rare chance to win a Test overseas.

Mushfiqur admitted that neither of the batsmen expected to post such a big stand.

"We just tried to bat normally and play to the merit of the delivery. We did

not think that we would go on to score such a big score, but we just tried our best to score as much as possible since such opportunities don't come that often," said Mushfiqur. He reiterated how much he enjoyed batting alongside an 'attacking' Shakib; so much so, that he also celebrated on his partner's behalf.

"I love to bat with him. We have a couple of big partnerships in ODIs

and T20s together. He does not talk too much. He just gives a few hints and that helps me all the time. We have been playing together since our under-19 days and there is a good chemistry," said Mushfiqur.

"Shakib didn't look troubled at all and neither did he show any emotion. It didn't seem to matter to him that he was scoring a 100 or a 200 (laughs)," he added.



LUCKY CHARM: After reaching his century, Mushfiqur Rahim holds aloft the coin which Tamim Iqbal reportedly said would bring the Test skipper runs. The coin supposedly fell out of Mushfiqur's pocket during a net session while he was recovering from a hamstring injury, before Tamim insisted he take it back and keep it with him while batting, saying it would bring him luck. While it is unclear if Tamim has soothsaying powers, his advice certainly seems to have worked. PHOTO: AFP

PARTNERSHIP BREAKDOWN

Runs	Balls	4s	6s
359	494	51	1

CONTRIBUTION	
Mushfiqur	159
Shakib	193 (total score: 217)

BD-NZ SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: First innings	R/B	4s/6s
(Overnight 154 for 3)		
Tamim Iqbal b Boult	56/50	11/0
Imrul c Boult b Southee	1/7	0/0
Mominul c Watling b Southee	64/116	10/1
Mahmudullah c Watling b Wagner	26/64	4/0
Shakib b Wagner	217/276	31/0
Mushfiqur c Watling b Boult	159/260	23/1
Sabbir not out	10/31	1/0
Mehedi c Southee b Wagner	0/13	0/0
Extras: (b-2, lb-6, nb-1)	9	
Total: (For 7 wickets in 136 overs)	542	
To bat: Taskin, Subashis, Kamrul		
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-60, 3-145, 4-160, 5-519, 6-536, 7-542.		

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Boult	31	4	121	2
Southee	31	5	144	2
De Grandhomme	20	2	65	0
Wagner	36	6	124	3
Santner	15	2	60	0
Williamson	3	0	20	0

'Big players take their chances'

SPORTS REPORTER

Around five months ago, during a freewheeling interview with The Daily Star on the completion of his 10th year in international cricket, Shakib Al Hasan was asked if he had regretted focusing too much on T20s as opposed to Test cricket.

Shakib's immediate response was slightly cold: "If Bangladesh doesn't play Tests, how can people say that I am more focused on T20s?"

His slightly aggressive reply back then suggested that Shakib did not really want to answer that query. After all, it is a tactic that he often uses whenever he faces an uncomfortable question.

Five months on and you are forced to believe that what Shakib had said back then was probably an honest, to-the-point reply. For those who reckon that Shakib has gradually transformed himself into a limited-overs specialist in the last 10 years, his innings yesterday should dispel all those theories.

Yes, it was a typical Shakib knock. He took risks early on by edging a couple above the slip cordon. He was not afraid to go after the wide deliveries, just like he does in limited-overs cricket. But at the same time, the left-handed batsman displayed the immense grit that he possesses by evading the innumerable bouncers fired at him. In one particular over against Neil Wagner he actually went down six times to evade six bouncers. It was a disciplined yet aggressive effort that led Shakib to the magical 217-mark.

He had to win a number of battles yesterday to post the highest ever score by a Bangladeshi batsman and overcoming those obstacles, according to Shakib, was the best part of his innings.

"Honestly speaking, after he [Mitchell Santner] dropped my catch yesterday, I went home and talked to my wife about cricket for a bit in the evening. She has begun to understand cricket these days. I didn't tell her anything but within my head I had a sense of confidence. I was thinking to myself that big players use such opportunities to post big scores.

"But even then, I had to work really hard and go through difficult situations. The most satisfying thing was that I overcame several difficult situations during this innings successfully," said Shakib.

One of the major driving points that kept Shakib going

'Big players take their chances'

SPORTS REPORTER

yesterday were the records that Shakib and Mushfiqur Rahim were breaking one by one during their 359-run stand. And that was also a reason why Shakib did not show a plethora of emotion after reaching his double hundred. Anyone who would have followed him during the Bangladesh Premier League will tell you that he was probably 10 times as excited after winning the BPL last year.

"I don't know why I didn't celebrate too much. I just didn't feel like doing it. The situation was like this -- after you reach one landmark, you set your goal on another and I was just thinking that way. I was thinking about the next achievement," explained Shakib.

"Towards the end of the innings, I did get a bit tired. But honestly speaking, had I played such an innings during summer in Asia or Bangladesh, I would have been in a far worse condition. I scored 217 runs over here, but I never once changed my gloves," he added.

He also did not celebrate after crossing Tamim Iqbal's 206, a score that was previously the highest ever posted by a Bangladeshi in Tests. That, of course, was for a different reason.

"I thought Tamim had scored 214 and not 206. But when I ran that single, Tamim started clapping and that's when I came to know that this is the highest score," said Shakib.

NZ rue inconsistency

SPORTS REPORTER

It will not be an overstatement to state that New Zealand probably expected to skittle the Bangladeshis out quickly after electing to field on a green top in the first Test.

After all, Bangladesh were playing their first Test overseas after more than two years and they had a horrible time in the limited overs matches. The Test seemed to be heading towards a similar direction once Imrul Kayes threw his wicket away in the morning session of day one.

However, the aggressive attitude by Tamim Iqbal and Mominul Haque on Day One and Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim yesterday, left the hosts in disarray. Their tactic of constantly bowling short-pitched deliveries backfired and it hurt their confidence. Their inability to bowl consistently on the second day, according to Kiwi pacer Tim Southee, was one of the main reasons why the Black Caps faltered.

"I think we bowled some good balls throughout, but I don't think we bowled or

applied enough pressure for long periods. And that's where the credit should go to Bangladesh.

"If we were off by a bit, Shakib would cut it and the way Tamim played was similar. They had an aggressive mindset. If we missed, they would play their shots. And when two guys get in, it's going to be tough. A lot of credit should go to the way Shakib and Mushfiqur batted. I think our guys bowled well at times, but not long enough," explained Southee.

"I guess throughout the day, there were a lot of times when we applied a bit of pressure and there were a few inside and outside edges that went astray. We tried hard throughout the day and got a few wickets towards the end. Hopefully, we can have a good night's sleep and come back strong," he added.

Early in the day yesterday, Southee, while attempting to run Shakib out during his follow through, hit Shakib's exposed ankle by mistake. It led to Shakib falling down and taking a breather. Both Southee and Shakib however played down the incident and did not really seem to worry about it too much.

PERFORMER OF THE DAY

SHAKIB AL HASAN



Resuming the second day of the first Test against New Zealand on five, Shakib Al Hasan put on a batting masterclass as he added 212 runs to his overnight score in Wellington yesterday. The left-hander batted with an aura of calmness not often associated with him as he ducked his way through bouncers and picked his shots with unmatched patience. Bangladesh's ace all-rounder was in exquisite touch, although it was hard to tell from his subdued demeanour. He remained as focused as a Tiger stalking its prey, scarcely celebrating any of his milestones, but when all was said and done he had a plethora of records to his name and kept the Tigers flying high.