

SPORT

Not mature enough to learn fast BCB in talks with Rhodes

It was an unscheduled day off for the Bangladesh team yesterday after their nine-wicket defeat in the second Test on the fourth day on Monday. But the morning was dominated by meetings, with coach Chandika Hathurusingha presiding over those sessions along with coaching staff and players before their departure to different destinations today. So a scheduled press meet with the coach was understandably delayed by one and a half hours. He finally arrived, sporting a white short-sleeve T-shirt and after checking with the media manager Rabeed Imam if his informal attire was okay, complied with the pensive media outside the lobby of Rendezvous Christchurch. Following is an excerpt from that encounter.

AL-AMIN from Christchurch

Question (Q): The tour is over. Bangladesh have lost the series. Is it a disappointing result at the end of the day especially after the way they played?

Chandika Hathurusingha (CH): The result was disappointing. We did not win matches. We did not play long enough to win a game. But all in all there are positives to take form the series.

Q: What are the positives?

CH: The positive is mainly that we were competitive. We had opportunities to win in every game but we did not seize those opportunities and that is disappointing. But getting into winning positions in conditions we don't play often and still performing, that was a positive.

Q: The captain took the responsibility for the defeat yesterday. How do you react to that?

CH: All you can ask for is that someone takes responsibility. For me if they are taking responsibility that's a start. You can't ask for more than that from the players. The second thing is they need to do something about it. It's a good start if they have taken the responsibility.

Q: It was a tour of lost opportunities. How do you look at that?

CH: It is very disappointing, to be honest. If we were outplayed and if I felt it was because they did not have the technique or the knowhow, it would have been disappointing. But knowing that they had the opportunity and the skill to do it, and even then not achieving it is very disappointing.

Q: In that case was it the mental issue that was the biggest barrier?

CH: I think the mental thing is one of the reasons that we clearly identified; we talk about that as well. And there are other reasons.

Q: How do you explain the way they batted in the second innings?

CH: As I said it was disappointing the way they approached not only Christchurch but even the Wellington game. We were not mentally strong enough or maybe we don't know the typical thing we are trying, or if we are strong enough to play five days of high intensity cricket. Not to take anything away from New Zealand; they probably played their best



cricket in the last innings. In Christchurch they bowled really well. But it's not an excuse because we were beaten by a good team at home. We all know there are high expectations on us and you also have your high expectations. The team and players also have high expectations for themselves because they always show that promise.

Q: With more away series ahead, what would be your advice to the players?

CH: Number one, the starting point is that they are accepting the responsibility; that's a good start. As you all know this is the first away tour after a long time for us. We are learning from that and the quicker we learn and rectify those mistakes the quicker we will move forward.

Q: You said after the first Test that the debacle in the second innings has been addressed in the team meeting and it was heard. But it seems they are not learning from the mistakes.

CH: If I can do magic like that it's a very easy game, this one. I think in bowling, batting and fielding we showed improvement. I think that was until the fourth day morning, considering that we did not have three key players [Mushfiqur Rahim, Imrul Kayes and Mominul

Haque]. For the 500 in the first innings of the opening Test I put a lot of credit of Mini's (Mominul's) 60 because with him around we went through that difficult period of intense cricket. In Test cricket there are harder periods that you need to go through. It is hard with the conditions or it is hard mentally. We did well in patches. And if we can turn that around that quickly... I don't think we are that mature a team yet. So, one chat or one practice session is not enough to change that.

Q: And what about someone who has played 45 odd Test matches repeating the same mistakes?

CH: Good question. It is very hard for someone for how many matches you said -- 45 games. What about nine years or 10 years of international cricket? For me experience is not the number of matches, or the number of years that you have played. What matters is how quickly he learns, that will help the individual player and the team.

Q: Bangladesh have dropped so many catches in the series. Did it play a big part in the defeats?

CH: For teams like ours especially, when we don't take the opportunities coming our way it magnifies in overseas conditions. Because at home when you create opportunities we

are skilled enough and our skill is supported by the condition. So, here it played a part but I don't think fielding is the reason we lost. Unfortunately, our bowling effort, the young bowling effort was not rewarded because of that.

Q: How happy are you with the green pace attack in the Tests?

CH: Overall I'm happy with the performance. There is something to build on. It's not all doom and gloom. You can't discard some of them or go overboard with some of them because of what happened. I think this experience will help Bangladesh cricket and it will help those players get confidence to do well in the future.

Q: How impressed are you with Kamrul Islam Rabbi's batting effort?

CH: He showed that he can bat for the situation. He showed a lot of courage in batting and bowling in the four Test matches he has played.

Q: With a lot of cricket coming after the series, isn't it a bit physically demanding for the players?

CH: It's challenging physically for sure because we haven't played much Test cricket before. At the same time you also take the domestic cricket they played non-stop. It's not only physically challenging for them but also mentally. They need mental as well as physical rest. What we are trying to do is to give them as much rest as possible between training sessions leading up to the Champions Trophy. We also identified certain players who need more rest.

Q: What is the injury status of Mustafizur Rahman?

CH: Mustafizur is medically cleared. So he is coming back slowly, building his bowling workload to get back his full fitness from injury that kept him out for seven months.

Q: A few players also have commitments to foreign franchises. Will those assignments be demanding for them on the sidelines of their national commitments?

CH: They will have to be professional enough to handle those spaces. We will have to leave it up to the players for to manage themselves and keep fit.

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon has said that the BCB has almost finalised a deal to bring South Africa legend Jonty Rhodes to Bangladesh for a short stint with as a fielding consultant for the Tigers.

The board is still in talks with Rhodes regarding the intricate details of the contract but it is likely that the South African could join the Bangladesh contingent for around a month sometime in the future.

Speaking to reporters in the capital yesterday, Papon said: "We will focus more on fitness. We are in the process. We already have discussed and almost finalised the decision to bring Jonty Rhodes and people like him. We will need to have a special focus on physical fitness because we have many away tours this year."

"I don't know if they will all come, but we have contacted them, they have shown interest. We are very serious about the physical fitness aspect," he added.

When asked as to how Rhodes's role would be different to that of Richard Halsall, who joined the Bangladesh camp as their fielding coach before getting promoted to the position of assistant coach, he said: "When a player dives, why does he have to get injured? If Jonty Rhodes comes and makes them dive 10 times daily, then maybe the players will get used to it a bit and if they don't they will keep getting hurt."

"We will do one more thing. We will devise a process by which we can monitor the players even when they are away from the camp. When there's a camp, players are serious and physically fit, but when they go back home, they get relaxed," explained Papon.

Bangladesh's next assignment is expected to take place in Hyderabad in India where they will be taking on the hosts for a lone Test. With the Indian Supreme Court having compelled the Board of Control for Cricket in India to make several changes, there have however been doubts regarding the venue of the Test in the last few weeks.

With regards to that, Papon said: "There will be a warm-up game, but the venue is yet to be finalised. As for the Test, that will take place for sure, and as of now it's supposed to take place in Hyderabad. If it takes place anywhere else, we have no problem."

Papon also spoke on the arrest of Bangladesh spinner Arafat Sunny who, accused of threatening a 23-year-old woman online, was denied bail and sent to jail yesterday. He said that if proven guilty in court, Sunny would be banned by the BCB.



NAZMUL HASSAN PAPON

AB returns to ODI team Will captain SA against Sri Lanka



AFP, Johannesburg

AB de Villiers will captain South Africa in a five-match one-day international series against Sri Lanka, starting in Port Elizabeth on Saturday.

Batting star De Villiers, who has recovered from an elbow injury which prevented him from playing for six months, regains the captaincy after Faf du Plessis led South Africa to a 5-0 clean sweep in a one-day series against Australia last October.

Du Plessis has subsequently been named South Africa's long-term Test captain.

De Villiers will make his international comeback in the third and final Twenty20 international against Sri Lanka in Cape Town on Wednesday before resuming his one-day international career.

Also back in the one-day squad after a long injury lay-off is all-rounder Chris Morris. Fast bowler Lungi Ngidi is the only newcomer to one-day internationals after taking six wickets in the first two Twenty20 internationals.

Fast bowlers Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel were not considered because of injury.

South Africa's squad for the first three one-day internationals: AB de Villiers (captain), Hashim Amla, Farhaan Behardien, Quinton de Kock (wkt), JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, David Miller, Chris Morris, Wayne Parnell, Lungi Ngidi, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi.

Tigers enjoy day out before long trip home

AL-AMIN from Christchurch



The Bangladesh players were doing a bit of shopping in Westfield, a popular shopping mall in Christchurch, yesterday. But nobody was interested in expensive purchases. Sabbir Rahman led one group while Mahmudullah Riyad trooped the other in a last-minute attempt to buy something for their near ones before their long trip back home.

Bangladesh team will take an early morning flight from Christchurch to Auckland today from where coach Chandika Hathurusingha will head to his home in Sydney. The rest of the team members including bowling coach Courtney Walsh will be travelling to Dhaka via Singapore. It will be a long flight back home for the players. They will leave Christchurch at 9:00am and are expected to reach Dhaka at 10:40pm tonight.

However, the flight schedule could have been a bit easier for them had they flown straight from Christchurch to Singapore. It could have saved them from the hassle of an unnecessary domestic flight from Christchurch to Auckland, which is not only time consuming but also troublesome with all the luggage the team is carrying with them.

The Bangladesh coach is expected to join the team in Dhaka before they depart for the one-off Test against India starting in Hyderabad on February 9.

Meanwhile, while talking to this reporter the coach said that it needs only '10 minutes' to select the team for Bangladesh's maiden Test in India. He said he was actually waiting on the update status of the three injured players -- skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, opener imrul Kayes and number three batsman Mominul Haque.

Tigresses' squad named

SPORTS REPORTER



Led by Rumana Ahmed, the Bangladesh women's cricket team will have to take on South Africa, Pakistan, Scotland and Papua New Guinea in the group stages of the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier set to take place in Sri Lanka from February 7. India, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Zimbabwe and Thailand have been placed in the other group.

Australia, England, New Zealand and the West Indies have already qualified directly for the pinnacle tournament after finishing as the top four teams in the ICC Women's Championship, which concluded in November 2016.

In terms of rankings, India (5th), Pakistan (7th), South Africa (6th) and Sri Lanka (8th) are among the leading sides participating in the qualifiers, which will decide the four teams that will get a chance to play in the ICC Women's World Cup 2017 from June 24 in England and Wales.

The top four sides will also earn places in the second edition of the ICC Women's Championship, while the fifth and sixth placed sides will secure ODI status for the next four years.

BANGLADESH SQUAD: Rumana Ahmed (captain), Fargana Hoque, Fahima Khatun, Sanjida Islam, Jahanara Alam, Khadiza-Tul Kubra, Lata Mondol, Nigar Sultana (wicketkeeper), Panna Ghosh, Ritumoni, Salma Khatun, Sarmin Sultana, Sharmin Akter and Suraya Azmin.



The Bangladesh under-16 women's football team pose for photographs at the BFF House premises yesterday on the eve of their departure for Japan. The Bangladesh team will take part in the J-Green Sakai Ladies' Festival as part of their preparation for September's AFC U-16 Women's Championship in Thailand. PHOTO: BFF

'Run-out rule needs tinkering'

AFP, Christchurch



New Zealand coach Mike Hesson has called for a review of run-out rules following the bizarre dismissal of Neil Wagner in the second Test against Bangladesh.

Wagner grounded his bat before the ball hit the wickets but was given out because he had no part of his body nor bat on the ground when the balls came off.

In the fraction of a second it took for the bats to be dislodged he was mid-stride with both feet in the air and had lifted the bat off the ground.

"It seems a little bit unfair," Hesson

said Tuesday, although the decision did not impact on the outcome of the game as New Zealand went on to win by nine wickets.

The New Zealand argument was that if the bat touching the ground behind the line completes a single if the batsmen turn for another run, then it should also complete the single if it is the end of the scoring movement.

"When your bat bounces over the line, once you've made your ground, that's not really what the run-out's all about," Hesson said.

"I personally think it [the rule] needs a bit of tinkering."

The second Test win in Christchurch completed a tour sweep of Bangladesh with New Zealand claiming both Tests as well as the

three one-day internationals and three Twenty20s.

Hesson said the 8-0 triumph had given his bowlers in particular confidence going into next week's one-day series Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series against Australia.

Dismissing Bangladesh for 173 in their second innings "was probably our best performance with the ball in 12 months," he said.

Hesson was also not concerned that Australia were resting two of their biggest draw cards, vice-captain David Warner and Usman Khawaja, for the three-match series.

"I think they've got plenty of good players though," he said, recalling that Australia beat New Zealand 3-0 in an ODI series just last month.