Star
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DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 19, 2017, KARTIK 4, 1424 BS

SPORTS

No Tension with Digestion
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MOMENTS

THE AMLA TRICK SHOT

Visiting Boland Park ground on the day before the match, that a game will take place there seemed impossible as the outfield was muddy in most places. Although the sun came out yesterday, in the 10th over, Amla came down the track and hit Shakib Al Hasan over the top, and on any other ground that would have been a one-bounce four, but yesterday the ball bounced two feet from the rope and actually spun back as the batsmen crossed over for three. It actually helped Bangladesh, because imagine the total AB de Villiers and Co would have piled up on a fast outfield.

REVIEW IRONY

In the eighth over of Bangladesh's chase, Tamim Iqbal, back in the side after missing the second Test and first ODI with a thigh muscle tear, tried to run a ball down to third man from Dwaine Pretorius and was rapped on the pads in front of off stump. The umpire's finger went up and Tamim was happy to walk off, seemingly gesturing to Imrul Kayes -- not a good judge of reviews himself -- that he thought it was adjacent. Replays however showed that the ball would have missed off stump.

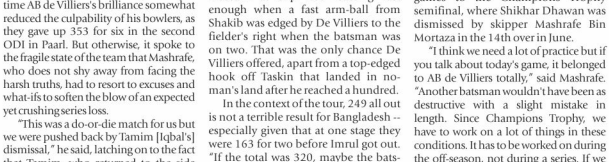
Just three overs later, Liton Das played around a ball from Andile Phehlukwayo and was adjudged leg-before. This time, there was a conference with Imrul and a review was taken. As plumb as can be and Bangladesh lost their only review.

IMRUL'S KARMA

Imrul has had a fair few starts on tour so far, but did not have a fifty to show for it. In South Africa's innings he had been very generous in dropping Duminy on 18, costing the side 12 runs. For once, South Africa were good hosts as Duminy himself dropped Imrul when he was on 49. He duly reached his fifty with an edged pull, and in the only respect where Bangladesh beat South Africa yesterday, scored 19 runs to Duminy's 12 after the reprieve.

AB de Villiers starred in South Africa's 104-run win, smacking 176 off 104 balls in the second ODI against Bangladesh at Boland Park in Paarl yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



'Could have won if we got AB out'

SAKEB SUBHAN *from Paarl*

There was not much new that skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza could say after the 104-run defeat to South Africa yesterday, except that this time AB de Villiers's brilliance somewhat reduced the culpability of his bowlers, as they gave up 353 for six in the second ODI in Paarl. But otherwise, it spoke to the fragile state of the team that Mashrafe, who does not shy away from facing the harsh truths, had to resort to excuses and what-ifs to soften the blow of an expected yet crushing series loss.

"This was a do-or-die match for us but we were pushed back by Tamim [Iqbal's] dismissal," he said, latching on to the fact that Tamim, who returned to the side after recovering from a thigh muscle tear, would have been given not out had he reviewed a leg-before decision in the eighth over of the chase. Tamim however did benefit earlier when Andile Phehlukwayo failed to get a hand to a skier running back from mid on.

"Every team lacks an AB de Villiers," he said when asked whether Bangladesh lacks a player of AB de Villiers's abilities. "He has played innings like this before, and there have been fewer; on his day he is the best in the world, and today was one of those days. There were a few chances here and there but it wasn't our day. If he was out the match would have been a better one; we could even have won."

He may have been referring to Nasir Hossain at slip not reacting fast enough when a fast arm-ball from Shakib was edged by De Villiers to the fielder's right when the batsman was on two. That was the only chance De Villiers offered, apart from a top-edged hook off Taskin that landed in no-man's land after he reached a hundred.

In the context of the tour, 249 all out is not a terrible result for Bangladesh -- especially given that at one stage they were 163 for two before Imrul got out. "If the total was 320, maybe the batsmen would have thought differently; Imrul and Mushfiqur had gotten set."

But it was the bowling that continued to be pedestrian; away performances like the ones in the 2015 World Cup, when both departments fired, seem a lifetime ago.

"We haven't performed as a group. There were some individual performances. I think if we can perform as a group, it will make a difference," said Mashrafe.

Before Quinton de Kock's dismissal in the third ball of the 18th over of South Africa's innings, Bangladesh had taken their first wicket in 85.5 overs of ODI bowling, during which they conceded 550 runs -- going back three games to the Champions Trophy semifinal, where Shikhar Dhawan was dismissed by skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza in the 14th over in June.

"I think we need a lot of practice but if you talk about today's game, it belonged to AB de Villiers totally," said Mashrafe. "Another batsman wouldn't have been as destructive with a slight mistake in length. Since Champions Trophy, we have to work on a lot of things in these conditions. It has to be worked on during the off-season, not during a series. If we keep avoiding that work, we will have to struggle in these tours."

It was interesting that he mentioned that, because the South Africa tour quickly followed the Australia series back home, and that was preceded by an off season that included a training camp of nearly a month and a half. The next off season for Bangladesh is a long way off, which, going by the captain's words is not a promising sign.

'Bowling unit lacks hunger to improve'

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh captain and current Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director Khaled Mahmud yesterday said that it was high time for the board to think about the national team's bowling unit. BCB president Nazmul Hassan had sent Mahmud there with a special assignment following Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim's statements which had led to heated debates and also to find out the reason behind the Tigers' poor showings on the tour.

"I stayed there [in South Africa] for four days and spoke to everybody. There was nothing wrong in the team but everybody was really concerned with the performance of the bowlers, especially the pace bowlers performance and effort will need to be assessed seriously for future interest," said Mahmud.

When asked about whether the bowling problem was exposed in South Africa, Mahmud said: "Not really. If you look at the stats you will find the sordid picture of our pace bowling. You may find some special efforts that gave us glorious victories such as during the 2015 ICC World Cup against England but you will not find any consistency. Now the time has come for the board to take a long look at this issue."

Who then should be blamed for the long-standing problem?

"You can point the finger to many but ultimately the players' self-motivation matters most. Look at our batsmen. They have improved owing to their own hard work and effort. A bowler can't expect improvement after bowling four or five overs in the nets. They have to have the hunger for improvement but the reality is just the opposite. There is no need for any mentors to bowl in the right spots and maintain discipline," explained Mahmud.

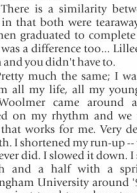
"Once there were no specialist coaches in the national team but now they have everything. So what can you do if a bowler fails to improve himself after staying in international cricket for seven to eight years? If you don't know how you need to change your pace then how can you play international cricket? It's alarming the way they bowled so far on the tour of South Africa so we cannot overlook it."

The former skipper also said that if Bangladesh want to take the next step in international cricket then the board must take special measures to improve the bowling unit.

"We have reached a certain level in international cricket but our improvement will not be sustainable and we cannot go further if we fail to make a good bowling unit."

PERFORMER OF THE DAY

AB DE VILLIERS



Bangladesh were unfortunately on the receiving end of AB de Viliers's wrath as the South African made the most of his chance to bat in an ODI for the first time since June this year, racking up his highest score in 50 over cricket in the second ODI yesterday. It took just 68 balls for De Villiers to reach his first hundred since January 2016 before the right-hander, who was eyeing a double century, was eventually dismissed for a 104-ball 176. His 25th career century was punctuated by 15 fours and seven sixes as South Africa posted a huge total of 353 for 6 in fifty overs. The Bangladesh bowlers were helpless during the De Villiers show and could only witness some extraordinary hitting from the 33-year-old shot manufacturer.

BD-SA SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA	R/B	4s/6s
Amla c Mushfiqur b Rubel	85/92	4/0
De Kock lbw b Shakib	46/61	1/0
Du Plessis b Shakib	0/3	0/0
De Villiers c Sabbir b Rubel	176/104	15/7
Duminy lbw b Rubel	30/30	0/1
Behardien not out	7/9	0/0
Pretorius c Imrul b Rubel	0/1	0/0
Phehlukwayo not out	0/0	0/0
Extras: (lb-2, w-7)	9	
Total: (For 6 wkts in 50 overs)	353	

Did not bat: Rabada, Paterson, Tahir.
Fall of wickets: 1-90, 2-90, 3-226, 4-343, 5-353, 6-353.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	10	0	82	0
Taskin	9	1	71	0
Shakib	10	0	60	2
Nasir	8	0	49	0
Rubel	10	0	62	4
Sabbir	1	0	11	0
Mahmudullah	2	0	16	0

BANGLADESH	R/B	4s/6s
Tamim lbw b Pretorius	23/25	3/0
Imrul c De Villiers b Tahir	68/77	6/1
Liton lbw b Phehlukwayo	14/12	1/1
Mushfiqur c Duminy b Pretorius	60/70	4/1
Shakib c De Kock b Tahir	5/5	0/0
Mahmudullah b Phehlukwayo	35/46	3/0
Sabbir c Du Plessis b Tahir	17/18	2/0
Nasir b Phehlukwayo	3/11	0/0
Mashrafe lbw b Phehlukwayo	0/3	0/0
Taskin not out	3/6	0/0
Rubel b Paterson	8/14	2/0
Extras: (lb-4, w-9)	13	
Total: (All out in 47.5 overs)	249	

Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-69, 3-162, 4-171, 5-184, 6-219, 7-234, 8-234, 9-239, 10-249.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rabada	9	1	40	0
Paterson	8.5	0	67	1
Pretorius	10	0	48	2
Phehlukwayo	10	1	40	4
Tahir	10	0	50	3

Result: South Africa won by 104 runs.
Player-of-the-match: AB de Villiers.

'I was looking for rhythm all my life'

An action so smooth and the result so lethal -- the man nicknamed White Lightning was born to bowl fast, and he did that for a decade at the highest level of cricket, taking 330 wickets from 72 Tests and 272 ODI wickets from 164 games. Pace was the word when ***Allan Donald*** *was running up to bowl for South Africa, and pace was the word on batsmen's minds. Deeper down however, he is a veritable institution on the art of fast bowling and while his silky-smooth action made it seem like it all came easily to him, there was a lot of effort that went behind the finished product that inspired youngsters the world over to take up fast bowling during the '90s. Residing in Paarl, Donald made time to sit down for a chat with* ***The Daily Star's Sakeb Subhan.*** *In the first of a two-part interview, he talks about his beginnings, what he actually wanted to bowl at first, his evolution and that battle with Michael Atherton. The following are excerpts:*

The Daily Star (TDS): Were you afraid that you would never play Test cricket because of the isolation?

Allan Donald (AD): Absolutely, I think I was very much aware of what was going on around me. For me the lucky break came when I played an unofficial Test for the Aussies -- Kim Hughes's Australians in 86-87. David Brown from Warwickshire spotted me and during that game asked me whether I was keen to play for England. I think it was about '89 when I spoke to Allan Lamb and Robin Smith who said that I should really think about qualifying for England, but Dr. [Ali] Bacher, he was there in '89 and he said to me that in 1991 South Africa will play, we will be back in international cricket. He said: "Just give yourself a couple of years, and I know you will be 25 years old when you make your international debut, but you'll have a good run at it." Which happened, and it was the right choice in the end.

TDS: Going back to your backyard days, how early did pace bowling become a thing for you?

AD: That's where we learnt, playing against our uncle [Des Donald] and a few others, and obviously knowing the Cronjes [the late Hansie Cronje and Frans Cronje] was a big thing because we grew up together as kids. His brother was the same year as me, Hansie was a few years apart and we played a lot of rugby Test matches and a lot of cricket Test matches in the backyard.

I actually fancied a bit of leg-spin (laughs), but my uncle always pushed me and said: "You're not a leg-spinner. You don't have the temperament for a leg-spinner." So I changed that completely and started bowling fast from when I was under-12. It's something I still muck around with in the nets every now and again, bowling some leggies, not very well.

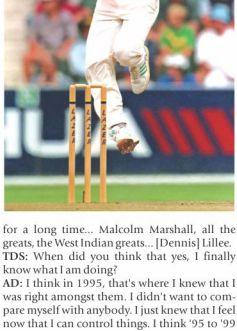
TDS: Speaking of temperament, it is widely said that you are very polite and gentle off the field, but on the field it was a very different story. Was that something that came out naturally?

AD: I think so. I had an immense competitive streak in me. Once I walked across the rope and did battle it was a different story. It just came out of me naturally. It's not something I put on because I don't think any world-class fast bowler who have done well or are doing well, can put it on or fake it. It comes from that instinct, that burning desire -- your natural instinct just comes out. There's a lot of effort, a lot of pride, competition with other players, competing with yourself and competing with your opponents.

TDS: How important was pace in your early development, in the way you looked at fast bowling?

AD: At the start it was just really bowling fast. And I think the narrowing down of motions, narrowing down of lengths, becoming ruthless in those lengths and having a fantastic balance between aggression and coming back into a, as we would call it, the hot zone. Once I got that narrowed down, then I knew how to control pace with aggression, and patience and discipline and, most of all, bringing a serious attitude to every day.

Pace is a God-given gift and unfortunately you can't teach that. But once you can mix the two, it takes hours and a lot of game time to get into those channels consistently and control that passage beautifully well. Ambrose did it for a long time... Malcolm Marshall, all the greats, the West Indian greats... [Dennis] Lillee.



TDS: When did you think that yes, I finally know what I am doing?

AD: I think in 1995, that's where I knew that I was right amongst them. I didn't want to compare myself with anybody. I just knew that I feel now that I can control things. I think '95 to '99 were my best years. During that period I bowled more consistently the quickest and I was probably the fittest I ever was.

TDS: There is a similarity between you and Lillee in that both were tearaways at the start and then graduated to complete fast bowlers. There was a difference too... Lillee changed his action and you didn't have to.

AD: Pretty much the same; I was looking for rhythm all my life, all my young career until Bob Woolmer came around and then we worked on my rhythm and we found something that works for me. Very deliberate, very smooth. I shortened my run-up -- the best thing that I ever did. I slowed it down. I spent about a month and a half with a sprint coach in Birmingham University around '93 or '94 and this guy just taught me how to run. Sprinters talk about bouncing... you watch the greatest sprinters run and they just make it look so easy. I had to find a way that suits me. I went through a lot of experiments, copied a lot of actions, a lot of rhythms until I found one that was me.

TDS: How did White Lightning come about?

AD: Some Aussie journalist wrote one day about 'White Lightning strikes' or something like that. I think it was in Melbourne. Ever since then the name stuck, no particular reason why. It's not something I like to live up to.

TDS: You think Donald and you think the duel with Atherton, Trent Bridge '98. What fired you up to that extent? Was it the 'not out' decision after he obviously gloved it?

AD: The Test match was fairly quickly going away from us and the series was going away from us there. I went to Hansie and said: "Listen, I better have a crack, and I am going to be very aggressive". This was just after tea. I bowled the first ball and I thought I am going to change my line around the wicket and he gloved it to the keeper and Mark Boucher, he was terrific during that series, taking fantastic catches. Not given out and we were all in disbelief. It was one of those 45 minutes where I had to calm my anger down. I needed to be angry but also be very much in control of what I am doing. The hook shot he played, that could have gone down anyone's throat. And then, dropping Nasser Hussain was just the icing on the cake.

TDS: You reacted angrily then, but at the start of the next over you came and patted Boucher on the back. How did you switch off? How does a fast bowler do that, from such intensity?

AD: Switch on, switch off, we talk about that a lot. I took some time, took two balls, ran up to him and said: "Listen, stay with me, we are going to get another one soon". And he was gutted, absolutely gutted. You talk about that competitiveness and that's where you care so much about what happens around you. There's a massive premium on every delivery. Bob Woolmer had a great saying that every ball is an event. During that spell for me, every ball was an event.

But we still laugh about it today, we still have a lot of discussions about it, me and Michael. And after the day's play, he came upstairs and we had a drink together. He's one of the most resilient players to play the game and he was a tough man to get out. And that day, you can't blame the man for not walking. He stood his ground and the umpire has to make the call, he made the wrong call but he benefitted from it. But he stayed real gutsy during that time.