

SPORT



Johnson Charles' unbeaten 105 powered Rangpur Riders to a 36-run victory against Comilla Victorians in the second qualifier of the BPL at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.
PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ধুলো ময়লার দ্বন্দ্ব শেষ!

I don't expect anything: Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER

From his sacking as Test captain in September 2011 to being reinstated in December 2017, Shakib Al Hasan has passed a considerable amount of time in international cricket. He was then a 24-year old cricketer, and is now a 30-year old man and a proud father of a daughter. It is not like he is a transformed character with new traits, but many feel that he is now more mature and has become a bit diplomatic in his words and relationships.

When he smilingly told reporters yesterday that he forgot what happened in September 2011, there was no reason to assume that he really forgot those bitter memories; he simply applied his new trait whereby he gives detailed answers to some questions but ducks some others, including that of coach Chandika Hathurusingha's comments and his desire for a six-month break from Test cricket.

"Many things happen in life," the Bangladesh Test and T20I captain responded when a reporter reminded him that he was removed from captaincy following the Tigers' dismal performance on the tour of Zimbabwe.

A Flashback: "Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal have been relieved of captaincy and vice-captaincy as their leadership was not satisfactory. They failed to lead the side during the tour. There are reports of indiscipline against Shakib. In certain areas, Tamim breached discipline. He argued with the head coach. We thought they could improve their behaviour, but now we have no choice other than [to take] a hard line. We took this decision after receiving reports from the different people on tour," were the comments from BCB spokesman Jalal Yunus in September 2011.

The star all-rounder will certainly look

upon the past in order to be more successful in his second tenure and it was encouraging when he stressed upon the importance of 'responsibility', 'collective decisions' and added in response to a question about how much will change from the first tenure that 'It's difficult to say how much change will happen but it is very important to adjust with the situation'.

"This is a new responsibility. We have been doing well in Test cricket the last few years... we won against Sri Lanka, Australia and England. We will try to see how much we can achieve from this stage," he said when asked to comment on regaining the Test captaincy after a six-year break as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) named him for the position and Mahmudullah Riyad as his deputy on Sunday.

"Every series and tournament is tough whether it is at home or abroad. It's true that we feel comfortable at home and as we don't have away success we feel uncomfortable [when playing away]. But it's also an opportunity for us as we have a number of away series in the coming days. It's tough but someone has to start and the way we have been playing many things are possible," he responded to a query about the Tigers' challenge in the away series next year.

He was also optimistic about his second tenure as there are now a number of performers in the team in contrast to his first tenure, when it was his one-man show. "Hope we will do something good collectively. When players perform there is hardly any job for the captain."

"I am surprised by the sudden decision but I am not shocked. I can take things easy, which is my strength," Shakib told The Daily Star after his removal in 2011. He was not far off that sentiment when yesterday, answering a question about whether it was expected, he said: "I don't expect anything. And don't give up on anything either... it is good if it comes and okay if it doesn't."

Charles powers Riders

Take on Dynamites in final today

SPORTS REPORTER

Rangpur Riders galloped into the Bangladesh Premier League final by defeating Comilla Victorians by 36 runs in the second qualifier at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Rangpur's Brendon McCullum lived up to expectations for the first time in this edition with a solid 78 while Johnson Charles laid the platform for the win with an unbeaten hundred.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's charges will now take on the defending champions Dhaka Dynamites led by Shakib Al Hasan in the final today.

Rangpur resumed the innings on 55 for one in seven overs following the drama on Sunday when rain forced a close to the day's play. The Riders then posted a huge total of 192 for three, in chase of which Comilla were bundled out on 156.

The Victorians did make a confident start, riding on skipper Tamim Iqbal and Liton Das, the side reached fifty inside five overs. But after Tamim's departure -- top-edging Mashrafe -- on 36 runs off 19 balls which included six fours and a six, Comilla slowly lost their grip on the game.

Liton top scored for Comilla with a 28-ball 39 that saw him hit six fours and a six but the Victorians were never able to recover in their chase.

Pacer Rubel Hossain was the pick of the bowlers for Rangpur as he scalped three wickets for 34 while teammate Ravi Bopara took two.

Resuming the innings on 46 Charles, who was in great touch, went on to remain unbeaten as he added a 63-ball 105 which included seven sixes and nine fours.

McCullum also displayed an array of power hitting

alongside player-of-the-match Charles as the duo struck a BPL record breaking second wicket partnership of 151 runs, surpassing David Malan and Shahriar Nafees's 150-run stand for Barisal Bulls in 2016. It was also the third highest partnership for any wicket in the history of the BPL.

28-year-old Charles who was middling almost everything yesterday hit consecutive sixes off medium pacer Mohammad Saifuddin in the 13th over. The way he struck the first one while clearing his front leg out of the way was a treat to watch.

At the other end Baz looked terrific as well when he went for a paddle sweep towards the leg-side on a full toss from pacer Hasan Ali. Eventually McCullum chose to guide the ball towards the off side and the swash-buckling batsman reached his fifty with a magnificent down-the-wicket six over long on.

However, McCullum was bowled off a slower delivery while going for a slog on 78 runs off 46 balls which featured nine sixes and a four.

Meanwhile Dynamites skipper Shakib informed that they have already formed an idea about their opponent during the group stages and that his side have the momentum and are looking forward to clinching the title again.

"Our bowling attack is good and along with the three main spinners [Sunil Narine, Shahid Afridi and himself] our pacer Abu Hider has also bowled really well throughout the tournament for us. We did fail in the batting department at the middle but now we are consistent which is important at this stage of the tournament. We have the momentum and will try to win the final yet again. There are a lot of big players in the side and everyone is willing to give the best," Shakib told reporters during a training session at the Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday.

SCOREBOARD

RANGPUR V COMILLA				
RANGPUR RIDERS	R/B	4s/6s		
Johnson not out	105/63	9/7		
Gayle c Malik b Mehedi	3/10	0/0		
McCullum b Hasan	78/46	1/9		
Bopara c Malik				
b Saifuddin	0/1	0/0		
Mashrafe not out	0/0	0/0		
Extras: (lb-3, w-3)	6			
Total: (For 2 wkts in 20 overs)	192			
Did not bat: Nahidul Islam, Rubel Hossain, Mohammad Mithun, Nazmul Islam, Udana, Sohag Gazi.				
Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-178, 3-184.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mahedi	4	0	44	1
Hasan	4	0	23	1
Malik	1	0	4	0
Saifuddin	4	0	38	1
Al-Amin	4	0	42	0
Cremer	3	0	38	0
COMILLA VICTORIANS	R/B	4s/6s		
Tamim c Shohag b Mashrafe	36/19	6/1		
Liton c Mithun				
b Tillakaratna	39/28	3/2		
Imrul st Mithun b Shohag	0/2	0/0		
Malik c Rubel b Nazmul	10/14	1/0		
Samuels c Johnson				
b Bopara	27/30	2/1		
Buttler c Nazmul b Bopara	26/16	1/2		
Hasan c McCullum b Rubel	6/6	0/0		
Saifuddin c Nahidul				
b Tillakaratna	0/1	0/0		
Graeme not out	1/2	0/0		
Mahedi c Lyth b Rubel	0/2	0/0		
Al-Amin c Mashrafe b Rubel	0/10/0			
Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-9)	11			
Total: (All out in 20 overs)	156			
Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-56, 3-75, 4-96, 5-137, 6-147, 7-154, 8-155, 9-155, 10-156.				
Result: Rangpur Riders won by 36 runs.				
Player-of-the-match: Johnson				

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT: 514 | TOTAL 4s HIT: 988

Most 6s hit by a player: 26, Evin Lewis, Dhaka Dynamites, and Chris Gayle, Rangpur Riders

Most 4s hit by a player: 45, Tamim Iqbal, Comilla Victorians



Dhaka Dynamites skipper Shakib Al Hasan speaks to media in Mirpur yesterday about his future plans after being made Test captain on Sunday. PHOTO: STAR

When BPL turned into street cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

There is a great love of street or neighbourhood cricket in Bangladesh; in the absence of robust grassroots structures budding cricketers get together with their neighbours to form teams and play tournaments. A word in the Bangla language -- jora tali (roughly translated: hastily put together) -- best describes such tournaments as they are often hastily put together and the rules are made up as they go along. But this love seems to have been taken a bit too far as the Bangladesh Premier League, the tournament that local administrators tout as the 'most popular after the IPL', seems to run on the same principles despite truckloads of money and resources going into the planning and staging of the event*.

Along with Sunday's farcical continuation of the second Qualifier between Comilla Victorians and Rangpur Riders after rain rendered further play on the day impossible, despite the tournament bylaws saying that the higher ranked team will go through and there will be no reserve day, we take a look at three previous instances when the BPL's mask of organised cricket slipped and revealed the jora tali nature of the tournament.

Inaugural edition (2012): Five semifinalists

At the end of the league stage of the inaugural edition of the BPL, Dhaka Gladiators, Duronto Rajshahi and Khulna Royal Bengals were through as the top three teams. The fourth team, Barisal Burners was named at 2:45 am on the morning of the match. This, after the then BPL governing council chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain had said that according to the bylaws, Chittagong Kings were the fourth team through to the semifinals. Brad Hodge, Barisal's captain, reportedly had to come back from the airport to participate in the match.

Chittagong, Barisal and Dhaka were on equal points and Dhaka had gone through because they beat Barisal twice and had a 1-1 head-to-head record with Chittagong as well as the best net run rate of the three. But Barisal and Chittagong had a 1-1 head-to-head record, so originally, because Chittagong had one more victory than Barisal in the three-way tie, they were said to have gone through. But something happened late at night, and Barisal were asked to go through because of a superior net run rate. It is quite futile to ask what was in the bylaws, because that in the BPL has become a byword for meaninglessness.

BPL 2015: Toss awaits NOCs

The toss of the 2015 league match between Chittagong Vikings and Sylhet Superstars was delayed by 25 minutes. The umpires initially informed Chittagong captain Tamim Iqbal that there will be a 10-minute delay because two of Sylhet's foreign players were yet to submit their no objection certificates [NOCs] from their home boards. When the toss did happen, the Sylhet team sheet had two foreign players, but when Tamim went out to open he saw four foreigners on the field, leading to a further delay, but the match did go on because, well, BPL.

BPL 2016: Reboot and restart

The 2016 BPL was supposed to start on November 4, but rain had washed out the opening day's matches. With rain forecast for the next two days, the governing council decided to call off matches scheduled for November 5 and 6 as well, and the rest of the franchises had to fall in line. The result: a congested schedule that took away from the competitiveness of the tournament.

And last, but not least...

The bylaws, as released by the governing council last night, in the event of a playoff match not being completed due to weather and a Super Over not being possible because of the same reason, the higher ranked team at the end of the group stage will go through. That meant Comilla Victorians should have gone through as play was not possible on Sunday and a Super Over was not played despite the cut-off time being extended from 9:30pm to 11:30pm. And if a team declines to play the Super Over, the match will be awarded to the opposition. There is also no provision for a reserve day.

After much hullabaloo, the governing council's email laid out the laws and at the end, it said: "However, management of both teams agreed to resume play on the following day in the greater interest of the tournament and in the spirit of the game."

In other words, the council itself admits that the bylaws mean nothing when the management of the teams got involved.

*We apologise for the comparison to neighbourhood tournaments, many of which maintain a strict adherence to the rules.

