

SPORT



BOSSING A UNIVERSE OF HIS OWN

18 Chris Gayle set a world record as he hit 18 sixes against Dhaka yesterday, the most in any T20 innings, beating his own tally of 17 sixes for Bangalore in IPL 2013. He also became the first player to surpass 100 sixes in the BPL. 4th Gayle became the fourth batsman to hit a century in the final of a T20 tournament.

15 Gayle has hit more than 10 sixes in a T20 15 times. The next highest is twice.

485 In eleven matches, Gayle amassed 485 runs at an average of almost 54 as he finished as the highest run-getter in the BPL's fifth edition.

3 Three centuries were struck in the BPL's fifth edition, two by Gayle and the other by teammate Johnson Charles. He also hit two fifties but Evin Lewis (Dhaka Dynamites) and Upul Tharanga (Sylhet Sixers) bettered him with three each.

146* Gayle's unbeaten 146 also broke the record for most runs in a T20 tournament final.

20 The West Indian hit a record-extending 20th T20 century. 11,056 Gayle now has the most runs in T20s with 11,056. Brendon McCullum is second with 8,526.

201 Gayle combined with McCullum to form the highest partnership of the BPL so far as the pair put on 201 for the second-wicket in the final.

BEST OF THE REST

160 Dhaka's Shahid Afridi and Sunil Narine together gave 46 runs from 48 balls in the final, but the other 12 overs haemorrhaged 160 runs.

5-16 Shakib Al Hasan finished with the best figures in an innings in this BPL. He picked up five wickets for just 16 runs in Dhaka's last meeting against Rangpur.

22 Shakib also finished as the leading wicket-taker of the tournament with 22 scalps.

Dhaka Dynamites captain Shakib Al Hasan (INSET) not only dropped a catch, but also the trophy as he failed to hold on to a chance for Chris Gayle on 22. The West Indian giant went on to break all sorts of records with his unbeaten 69-ball 146, hitting a world record 18 sixes to single-handedly power Rangpur Riders to victory in the BPL final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

খুলো ময়লার দিন শেষ!

SCOREBOARD

DHAKA V RANGPUR		R/B	6s/4s	
RANGPUR RIDERS				
Johnson c & b Shakib		3/8	0/0	
Gayle not out		146/69	5/18	
McCullum not out		51/43	4/3	
Extras: (lb-3, w-1)		6		
Total: (For 1 wkt in 20 overs)		206		
Did not bat: Bopara, Mashrafe, Nahidul, Rubel, Mithun, Nazmul, Udana, Shohag.				
Fall of wickets: 1-5.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mosaddek	3	0	32	0
Shakib	3	1	26	1
Narine	4	0	18	0
Afridi	4	0	28	0
Hider	2	0	26	0
Khaled	2	0	39	0
Pollard	2	0	33	0
DHAKA DYNAMITES				
Mashrafe b Mashrafe		0/3	0/0	
Lewis c Mashrafe b Shohag		15/9	2/1	
Dentley c Nahidul b Shohag		0/5	0/0	
Shakib b Nazmul		26/16	3/1	
Pollard c Gayle b Rubel		5/5	1/0	
Jahurul b Udana		50/38	4/2	
Mosaddek b Bopara		1/4	0/0	
Afridi c Rubel b Nazmul		8/5	0/1	
Narine b Udana		14/15	2/0	
Hider not out		9/11	1/0	
Khaled not out		8/9	1/0	
Extras: (lb-1, lb-7, w-5)		13		
Total: (For 9 wks in 20 overs)		149		
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-1, 3-19, 4-29, 5-71, 6-74, 7-87, 8-129, 9-132.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mashrafe	4	1	25	1
Shohag	3	1	32	2
Rubel	4	0	28	1
Bopara	2	0	21	1
Udana	4	0	25	2
Nazmul	2	0	8	2
Gayle	1	0	2	0
Results: Rangpur Riders won by 57 runs.				
Player-of-the-match: Chris Gayle.				
Player-of-the-tournament: Chris Gayle.				

'Only one Universe Boss'

SPORTS REPORTER



Question (Q): Cometh the hour, cometh the man. Scoring a hundred in a T20 final, must have been a box you wanted to tick.

Chris Gayle (CG): "Thank you so much. It is a big game, a big occasion. To actually stand out and get a century in a final, you actually look back and say well done. You tap yourself on the back. It is a winning effort as well, which makes it more special for me. So I am glad that we came out on top."

Q: You didn't start too quickly, was that part of the plan?

CG: They started well. We had a slow start. We lost [Johnson] Charles a bit early. [Brendon] McCullum came in. We had to give ourselves a chance to bat as deep as possible. It was important for one of us to bat right through the innings. It actually set the momentum for us. We didn't let their best bowlers get wickets.

Q: When you were batting, did you set any goals?

CG: In a very important game like a final, I look to bat 15 overs. Once I bat that deep, the bowlers will tend to be more tentative in the back end; you will get more loose balls once I am in the middle. The other batter can feed off that as well.

Q: Where would you rank this innings among your 20 T20 hundreds?

CG: I would put it in the top five, certainly for the occasion as well. I will have to reflect where this takes place. It is right up there.

Q: What did you think of your captain?

CG: Mash is a great captain. He has a lot of experience behind him. He is a cool guy; he will talk some crazy stuff and make you laugh, make you relaxed. It is always good to be led by Mash. He doesn't give up till the end. He is a good listener as well. The respect from him was good as well.

Q: Have you seen a batsman better at hitting sixes?

CG: Na na na, there's only one Universe Boss. Only one, only one. [Evin] Lewis is in the making. Be aware of him.

Q: We didn't see Gangnam Style.

CG: My ankle was twisted so I couldn't jump too much. We have to celebrate winning a big tournament. It is a long tournament, so overall every player deserves to have fun. I have been coming here every BPL season. You guys should be thankful to the South Africa T20 was called off because I was going to go there. InshAllah, I will be back next year and entertain you guys.

Q: Where do you want to take yourself in T20s?

CG: 11,000 runs, that's a fantastic achievement. I actually do it for the people, to be honest with you. I am 38. I am entertaining the fans for as long as possible. I will look to win cups for whichever teams I am playing for.

Q: How many centuries do you want to score in T20s?

CG: I just want to hit sixes, and the centuries will come.

Q: Are you the greatest T20 player of all time?

CG: No, I am the greatest player of all time.

MOMENTS

DHAKA DROP THE BALL

Dhaka cannot say that they were knocked out by a flawless performance from Rangpur Riders. Yes, it was every team's nightmare that Chris Gayle and Brendon McCullum would set up camp and toy with the bowlers, but Dhaka had a chance to dismiss both before much damage had been done.

In the sixth over, on 22, Gayle spooned Mosaddek Hossain straight to extra cover where Dhaka skipper Shakib Al Hasan, who usually has the safest of hands, dropped a straightforward chance. As if he needed reminding of the terrible error he had committed, Gayle hit the very next ball for his second six and the last ball for his third. 15 more followed.

Although McCullum was nowhere near as destructive as his West Indian partner, he also got a life but unlike Shakib's spill, it wasn't surprising given the overall catching standards of the tournament. In the 15th over, McCullum on 27 skied a pull off Abu Hider and the way the bowler ran after it, it was obvious that the catch would not be completed. And it wasn't.

MASH ONE-UPS SHAKIB (ONE-RUN OVER AND THE CATCH OF LEWIS)

It would not have been wide of the mark to bill this match as a face-off between Shakib Al Hasan, the country's most accomplished and decorated cricketer,

and Bangladesh's most beloved cricketer, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. Although yesterday was basically all about Gayle's criminally awesome hitting, fans of Mashrafe will know that he won the battle of captains hands down, but for a while it was close. Before Shakib turned villain by dropping Gayle on 22, he bowled a phenomenal first over, constructing a maiden while dismissing Johnson Charles. Mashrafe also took a wicket in his first over, that of Mehedi Maruf, but did give away one run more than Shakib. However, the Narail Express came up trumps when, in the fourth over he ran back towards the midwicket fence and completed a superbly judged catch to dismiss Evin Lewis, Dhaka's equivalent of Gayle.

THE UNDERTAKER FROM JAMAICA

A huge roar went up when it was time for the last over of BPL 2017. Not because it was ending, no. It was because the man given the ball by Rangpur Riders skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, with 60 runs needed, was none other than the Universe Boss himself.

Gayle may well have earned himself yet another nickname, because at the start of the over, he did the throat-cut gesture made famous by WWE superstar The Undertaker. It will fit him well because, given his batting yesterday, Gayle is no less dangerous than the man from Death Valley.

No mishit when it's Gayle

MAZHAR UDDIN

The definition of sheer power in batting is a batsman who can clear the ropes without much apparent effort going into the bat swing, be it against a pacer or a spinner.

Thus defined, no one in world cricket can match the ability of the West Indian explosive device Chris Gayle when it comes to hitting sixes regardless of the line and length of a delivery. Even his mistimed shots sailed comfortably over the ropes yesterday, indicating the bat speed and the powerful bottom hand employed by the left hander.

The 38-year-old struck a total of 18 sixes for Rangpur Riders in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League against Dhaka Dynamites. The Jamaican remained unbeaten on a 69-ball 146, which also included five fours, to power Rangpur to a huge total of 206 for one in 20 overs.

The big man, who leads the T20 sixes chart with 819 sixes -- 310 ahead of the next highest -- broke his own record of most sixes in a T20 innings, going past the 17 he hit on way to the highest T20 score

of an unbeaten 175 in the 2013 IPL for Royal Challengers Bangalore. It was also his 20th century and second in the fifth edition of the BPL. He also hit two tons in the inaugural edition for Barisal Burners.

Among those 18 sixes, at least four came from mistimed shots which

WHACK-OMETER

TOTAL 6s HIT **540** | TOTAL 4s HIT **1011**

Most 6s hit by a player: 47, Chris Gayle, Rangpur Riders

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

sailed over the boundary ropes quite comfortably.

His first six of the innings came in his 15th ball, bowled by off-spinner Mosaddek Hossain, when the big man cleared his front leg and launched an effortless six over long on to start the

rampage. The type of form he was in yesterday was reflected when his mistimed slice off pacer Khaled Ahmed sailed over the backward point region for a six, surprising the fielder who at one point was hoping for a catch.

Another instance of his power was seen when he mistimed a short of a length Shahid Afridi delivery in the 12th over. Gayle waited for the ball and rocked back but was unable to connect fully. It still cleared long on and the gigantic Kieron Pollard's leap quite comfortably.

In the very next over it was his fellow countryman Sunil Narine who suffered the power of Gayle when he went for a bent-kneed slog off a back-of-a-length delivery. It took the leading edge of the bat and Narine was looking at the fielder at deep midwicket, but like the spinner the fielder was a mere spectator. Even Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal, who was seen watching the game, exclaimed: "When we mishit, we get caught. But when it's this guy, it goes for six."

At the end, the only logical conclusion is that there is no such thing as a mishit when Gayle is batting.

I am not thinking of a comeback [from T20 retirement] first of all and secondly it is futile to hold a grudge. As I am playing a lot of people are watching me. When I play I don't let the fact that I am playing T20s affect me because if I think like that it will affect my team and the young cricketers will get wrong message. I always try to give my hundred per cent whenever I play and don't make any plans for future. Our message to Gayle and McCullum was just go and play as they like to play their shots. Although they (Gayle-McCullum) were watchful in the first 10 overs, once they got set they played according to the plan. The aim is to play with freedom, no restrictions, and nobody blames anyone — that's very important. If someone asks me as a captain to choose one player in this format I would definitely choose Gayle first.

Rangpur Riders skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza answers a question about a possible T20 comeback and explains Rangpur Riders' success this season.



Rangpur Riders skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) hugs Dhaka Dynamites counterpart Shakib Al Hasan (H) at the end of the BPL final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

The catch [of Gayle] that I dropped [was the reason for the loss].. We couldn't bowl that well and against Gayle I think we were unable to bowl in good areas enough. Maybe if we got one or two more opportunities we might have done something but the chance never came. Overall we had a good tournament where our first target was to reach the final, which we did. We had a lot of ups and downs this year. Overall we had a good season. You can't judge a team properly only from the final match. In this tournament us and Comilla Victorians were very consistent and two batsmen [Gayle, Johnson Charles] won three game for them [Rangpur Riders] at a crucial time and they also had McCullum. There is hardly anything to do if someone plays like this. This is the beauty of T20 — one or two batsmen can change the course of the game.

Dhaka Dynamites captain Shakib Al Hasan puts the blame for the loss on the catch he dropped with Gayle on 22 and looks back on Dhaka's campaign.