

SPORT



After much effort expended to get him scoring runs again, the Bangladesh selectors put the Soumya Sarkar (C) experiment on hold by dropping him from an ODI squad for the first time since his debut in December 2014. PHOTO: STAR FILE

Domestic runs pay off for Anamul

SPORTS REPORTER

Anamul Haque was rewarded for his recent performance in the domestic circuit as the wicketkeeper-batsman was among the five changes brought to Bangladesh's ODI squad, announced yesterday, for the first two matches of the upcoming tri-series against Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe.

Soumya Sarkar and Taskin Ahmed were axed from an ODI squad for the first time in their careers, with chief selector Minhajul Abedin saying that both cricketers need a break and were dropped for their recent poor form. Liton Das, Mominul Haque and Shafiqul Islam were the three other cricketers dropped from the previous squad which played in South Africa in October last year.

Left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman, who was ruled out of the ODI series in South Africa after twisting his ankle, was included while wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Mithun and pacer Abul Hasan also made a comeback to the squad.

Anamul played his last ODI in 2015 during the ICC World Cup against New Zealand and has been in fine form recently in the domestic circuit, scoring 1077 first-class runs at an average of 63.35 in 2017, including two double hundreds in the National Cricket League. He also scored 596 runs in 16 innings in the Dhaka Premier League before completing the year with 206 runs in eight Bangladesh Premier League innings at a strike-rate of 128.75.

According to Minhajul, among the three wicketkeepers in the squad Mushfiqur Rahim will be the first choice while Anamul and Mithun are in the squad mostly for their

batting.

Mithun, who played the last of his two ODIs in 2014, was considered for his recent form in the domestic circuit. The right-hander was the fifth-highest run-scorer of the BPL, scoring 325 runs in 15 games, and was instrumental in Rangpur Riders' triumph.

Perhaps the only surprise inclusion in the squad is pacer Abul Hasan, who played his last ODI in 2015 and was picked ahead of two BPL performers in Abu Haider and Abu Jayed.

According to Minhajul, the seamer was included to add strength to the fast bowling department with the cold weather in mind.

On the other hand, Soumya has undergone a lean patch in 2017, scoring 243 runs in 11 ODI innings at an average of 24.30 with just two fifties. Taskin also lost his way and picked up just 10 wickets in 12 ODIs in 2017 at an economy rate of 6.60.

Both cricketers will play the upcoming Bangladesh Cricket League. Soumya informed that he will try to work on his shortcomings and is hopeful of making a comeback to the side.

"I will be playing the BCL from January 9 and as it is a longer-version format it will allow me to stay longer at the crease, which I think is important for my batting. I was facing the problem of getting

out after being set at the crease so I will try to overcome that and I think if I can score big knocks it will bring the rhythm back to my batting," Soumya said after being dropped from the Bangladesh side yesterday.

BCB XI team for Zim practice match on Jan 13: Nazmul Hossain (Captain), Anamul Haque, Mosaddek Hossain, Sabbir Rahman, Mohammad Mithun, Abul Hasan, Ariful Haque, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Imran Ali, Ebadat Hossain, Khalid Hasan, Tanbir Hayder.



Anamul Haque (L) returns to the ODI squad for the first time since early 2015, while Taskin Ahmed (R) was dropped for the first time since his debut in mid-2014.

SQUAD

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (captain), Shakib Al Hasan (vice captain), Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah, Imrul Kayes, Nasir Hossain, Sabbir Rahman, Mohammad Mithun, Anamul Haque, Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain, Saifuddin, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Sunzamul Islam, Abul Hasan.

Mobile courts to curb betting

SPORTS REPORTER

In an attempt to curb the influx of betting in cricket, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) advocated the idea of using mobile courts during the tri-nation one-day series and the home series against Sri Lanka, starting later this month.

"There are some limitations in the existing law to punish the culprits. In the inter-ministerial meeting at the sports ministry it was decided that directives would be given to the district commissioners of the three districts to introducing mobile courts during the tri-series and the home series against Sri Lanka," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told reporters while declaring Rocket, the mobile banking service of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited, as the title sponsors of the series at Mirpur yesterday.

He also said that the District Commissioners of Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet, where the tri-series and the home

series against Sri Lanka will take place, will set up mobile courts so that the Anti Corruption Unit (ACU), which acts as a watchdog against any illegal practice in the stands, could hand over the culprits to law enforcement for quick punishment.

Illegal betting in cricket has become a regular feature in Bangladesh and it was overpowering during the Bangladesh Premier League, the glamorous T20 competition that took place in November-December. During the BPL last year, ACU ejected 77 spectators, of which 12 were foreigners, from the venue for their alleged involvement in betting before subsequently handing over to law enforcement.

The tri-series involving Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and hosts Bangladesh will commence at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka from January 15. Bangladesh will play the first of their two-Test series against Sri Lanka in Chittagong. Sylhet will host the second T20I against Sri Lanka on February 18.

Taylor, Jarvis back for tri-series

ESPNCRICINFO

Brandon Mavuta, the 20-year old leg-spinning all-rounder, and Ryan Murray, the 19-year old wicketkeeper-batsman, have been picked by Zimbabwe for the ODI tri-series in Bangladesh starting on January 15. Although Zimbabwe did perform well in their most recent limited-overs assignment, winning their first ODI series against Sri Lanka in July, seven members from the squad won't be making this trip.

Mavuta has played only one List A game and Murray's count is at two.

On the bowling front, Blessing Muzarabani, with an action reminiscent of Kagiso Rabada, has a chance to play his first 50-over match in senior cricket. He made his international debut in the pink-ball Test against South Africa on Boxing Day, finishing with figures of 13-2-48-0.

Balancing the inexperience in the squad are Brendan Taylor and Kyle Jarvis - who will be representing Zimbabwe in ODIs for the first time since they accepted Kolpak deals.

SQUAD: Hamilton Masakadza, Solomon Mire, Craig Ervine, Brendan Taylor, Sikandar Raza, Peter Moor, Malcolm Waller, Graeme Cremer (capt), Ryan Murray (wk), Tendai Chisoro, Brandon Mavuta, Blessing Muzarabani, Christopher Mpofo, Tendai Chatara, Kyle Jarvis.

2018 BCL starts tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the schedule for the first three rounds of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL), the country's second first class competition. The tournament will kick off on January 9 across four different venues.

The first round will see fast bowler Taskin Ahmed, who was dropped from the national team for the first two ODIs of the upcoming tri-series, feature for Walton Central Zone in their opening game against defending champions BCB North Zone at the Sylhet International Cricket stadium.

Meanwhile opening batsman Soumya Sarkar, who was also left out of the Bangladesh ODI squad due to his recent slump in form, will look to return among the runs when his side, Prime Bank South Zone, take on Islami Bank East Zone on the opening day at BKSP.

The next two rounds, the first of which will be held at the same venues, are to take place on January 15 and January 21 respectively. There will be a change in venues for the third round though as the rest of the games will be played at the Sheikh Abu Nasir stadium in Khulna and Shahid Kamruzzaman stadium in Rajshahi.

The final three rounds will be held after a break for the Dhaka Premier League which is tentatively scheduled to begin on February 5.

Steyn out of series

Third day of first Test washed out

PTI, Cape Town

South Africa were dealt a major blow after senior-most pacer Dale Steyn was ruled out for the remainder of three-match series against India after damaging a tissue on his left heel during the second day of the opening Test.

The third day of the Test was washed out yesterday, with relentless rainfall making play impossible with South Africa set to resume on their second-day stumps score of 65 for two and a lead of 142 in the second innings.

Steyn left the field three balls into his 18th over as he felt a pain on his left heel.

It has been learnt that he has damaged a tissue and will be out for a minimum period of four to six weeks which effectively rules him out of the ongoing Test series against

the visiting Indian team.

"It's never nice for Dale Steyn because he's just come back from injury, so just feeling very sympathetic for him. It's not a nice thing, but we have to find a way to win this Test match. Luckily this time, we went with four seamers. So there's three seamers now that have to do the work," said junior pace partner Rabada at the end of the second day.

Steyn in fact was getting into the groove as he had figures of two for 51 with wickets of opener Shikhar Dhawan and wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha during his comeback Test.

He was out of action for one year after a major surgery for shoulder dislocation.

He recently made a comeback in competitive cricket and Cricket South Africa (CSA) did not play during the four-day Test against Zimbabwe to preserve him for the India series.



In what has been called the moment of the Australian summer home all-rounder Mitchell Marsh pushes brother Shaun, who is delighted at his sibling's Test century, as he realises at about the same instant as skipper Steven Smith (INSET) that the ball is still in play and a run-out is a possibility during the fourth day of the fifth Ashes Test in Sydney yesterday.



Al Amin goes thru' 2nd review

SPORTS REPORTER

Fast bowler Al Amin Hossain underwent a bowling action review conducted by Bangladesh Cricket Board computer analyst Nasir Ahmed at the Academy Ground in Mirpur yesterday.

The right-arm seamer, who played for Comilla Victorians, was flagged when he took the wicket of Ariful Haque in the 15th over of a Bangladesh Premier League encounter with Khulna Titans on November 28.

According to Nasir it will take a minimum of seven days to ascertain the review's result, until which Al Amin will be unable to take part in the Bangladesh Cricket League.

"We have captured videos of his bowling action and now we will analyze the tapes. After that we will measure the angles to see whether it is under the permitted level or not. He bowled seven overs today [yesterday]. Firstly, he bowled normal deliveries and then in-swingers, out-swingers, bouncers and other variations one by one," Nasir told reporters.

Al Amin was previously reported for suspect action in August 2014 and had to undergo a bowling action test in Chennai, which eventually gave him the green signal.

Australia on brink of 4-0

AFP, Sydney

Nathan Lyon was spinning Australia toward an emphatic victory in the final Ashes Test as beleaguered England unravelled on a torrid day in Sydney on Sunday.

The Australians amassed a massive 303-run innings lead in blistering heat and then reduced the battle-weary tourists to 93 for four at the close with a day to play.

Compounding England's woes was a finger injury for skipper Joe Root, his team's last major hope of staving off a 4-0 series rout on Monday's final day of the Test.

Root was unbeaten on 42 at the close with Jonny Bairstow not out 17.

Australia called a halt to their epic first innings at 649 for seven, and soon had England in trouble after the tourists had been cooked in the field for more than two draining

days.

Mark Stoneman was leg before wicket to Mitchell Starc for a duck and lost a review in the process, and Alastair Cook was bowled for 10 when a sharp Lyon turner hit the top of off-stump in the off-spinner's first over.

Cook, who became during his innings only the sixth batsman to score 12,000 Test runs, finished the series with 376 runs at 47.

Shaun and Mitchell Marsh earlier became the third set of brothers to score centuries in the same innings for Australia.

The Marsh boys joined Greg and Ian Chappell and Steve and Mark Waugh to score brotherly centuries for Australia, while it was the eighth time overall it had happened in Test cricket.

Mitchell Marsh almost spoiled his century in all the excitement as he embraced his brother mid-pitch before he had completed the second

run scrambling back to his crease to avoid being run out.

"That was my fault," admitted Shaun. "I think emotions sort of got the better of me and I just wanted to give him a hug. I saw him starting to celebrate and I lost all concept of where the ball was and what was happening with the ball. He pushed me off him and said 'you better get down the other end.'"

"Thankfully, it all worked out and I was just really happy for him."

Mitchell added: "My take was I pretty much went for the high five and Shaun went for the hug and we were somewhere parked in the middle and had a quick split-second level of panic and hugged again after that."

Social media went into overdrive after footage of Australia skipper Steve Smith was shared around, with many agreeing it was a classic moment of the summer.

Mitchell Marsh was bowled next

ball by Tom Curran for 101 off 141 balls with 15 fours and two sixes. The century came after his 181 in the third Test in Perth.

He was the third centurion of the massive Australian first innings total, following Usman Khawaja's 171 on Saturday.

Shaun Marsh was eventually dismissed after lunch, run out for 156 by Stoneman's direct throw from the covers.

He batted for 403 minutes and faced 291 balls for his second century of the series and his sixth in 28 Tests.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 346

AUSTRALIA: First innings 649 for 7 decl (Warner 56, Khawaja 171, Smith 83, S Marsh 156, M Marsh 101, Paine 38 not out, Cummins 24 not out; Moeen 2-170)

ENGLAND: Second innings 93 for 4 (Vince 18, Root 42 not out, Bairstow 17 not out; Lyon 2-31)