

SPORT



MENTORING THE CARIBBEAN WAY: West Indies pace bowling legend Courtney Walsh (C), who has just been promoted as Tigers' coach for next month's T20I tri-series in Sri Lanka, imparts words of wisdom to his charges not over a cup of tea but a coconut instead at the BCB indoor facilities in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Specific roles for everyone'

SPORTS REPORTER

Will Courtney Walsh be able to inject some positive vibes into the national team in the current atmosphere of chaos? Since becoming the specialist bowling coach of the Tigers in September 2016, the West Indies legend is still trying to get the best out of his pace bowlers, so everybody will be eager to see how he, as the interim head coach, guides the side and makes sure that they are focused on their jobs during the upcoming Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka.

The 55-year-old Walsh was however very clear about what is required of the team following a forlorn tour of South Africa in October last year and this year's disastrous home series against Sri Lanka which put Bangladesh cricket in complete disarray on and off the field.

"It [his role] is going to be like a father figure, to give them the confidence. We must make sure everybody is prepared for the extra work that we need to do to get those out of form into good form. We have to get everybody thinking that they have to play a role for the team, so that everyone plays for the team and does what is required. It is going to be my motto," Walsh responded to

a question regarding his role as head coach for the T20I tri-series while talking to reporters at Mirpur yesterday.

During the conversation, Walsh emphasised on the word "consistency" several times and underscored the need to play as a team.

"We have a very testing tour coming up in Sri Lanka. As one who likes to accept challenges, it is important to play quality and consistent cricket. I am happy to be given the opportunity to do so. I will give it the best shot and ensure we play good, positive cricket.

"We are lacking a bit of consistency. The talent is here. The guys have good work rates. If we can get consistent, we will be happy. It is going to be the biggest challenge, and it is something that I will be stressing on, a lot," he said about the immediate challenge, adding that performing the role of interim coach was not a difficult one for him.

"It is an interim role. We were without a head coach for the last couple of series. I was asked to do the job. It wasn't something that needed a long discussion. I am here. I want to try to do the best for Bangladesh cricket; try to get us to be more consistent. Once the opportunity came, it wasn't anything too difficult to discuss. I want to improve what we are doing here and hopefully take up a

challenge," he said.

The West Indian was impressed by the improvement of the players in the special training camp involving pace bowlers and a few batsmen but he wants to see improvement out in the middle. He said it is not one area but all areas that needed work in order to help the team to win games in Sri Lanka.

The BCB president's decision to give the senior players the coaching role in the last series apparently brought no results and when Walsh's attention was drawn to the seniors' roles, he said: "I will try to give everybody specific roles, to carry out their task."

Walsh also said that he would be happy if he can make the same impact as an interim coach as he did as interim captain of West Indies.

"My first stint into responsibility was as an interim captain. I enjoyed that as we had some success, so if I can transform that here and get the same sort of impetus and mobility going forward, I will be very happy. It is going to be very challenging. But, I will take it one game at a time," said Walsh when reminded of his role as West Indies captain, during which he led his side in 22 Tests and 43 ODIs to win six and 22 matches respectively at a time in the mid to late 90s when the West Indies' decline had started.

Mathews out of T20 tri-series

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka limited-overs captain Angelo Mathews has been ruled out of next month's tri-nation Twenty20 tournament after failing to recover from a hamstring injury, the country's cricket board said Tuesday.

The hosts will be led by Dinesh Chandimal in the series starting March 6 at Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium. India and Bangladesh are the other two teams.

Sri Lanka Cricket announced a 20-man preliminary squad that will be cropped to 15 on Wednesday.

"Angelo Mathews was not considered for selection as he is still recovering from the injury he suffered during the concluded Tri-Nation Series in Bangladesh," the board said in a release.

Mathews, 30, was in January named as Sri Lanka's captain in the shorter format until the 2019 World Cup.

But the all-rounder has been beset by injuries and has led the side in just a single one-day international, against Zimbabwe in Dhaka last month.

Sri Lanka recently swept their Bangladesh tour, winning both the Test and T20 series, after a come-from-behind win in the tri-series involving Zimbabwe.

BCB eager to get Shakib early

SPORTS REPORTER



Shakib Al Hasan flew to Thailand on Monday night to seek advice from orthopaedic experts on the injury to his left little finger.

As the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is eager for the ace all-rounder to participate from the start of the Nidahas Trophy on March 6 in Sri Lanka, Shakib was sent for further inspection ahead of the tournament where Bangladesh will face India in their opening fixture on March 8.

"Shakib left for Thailand yesterday [Monday] night to seek a different opinion. He has appointments with two orthopaedic experts in Thailand today. He will return after that and we hope that he will leave with the squad for Sri Lanka," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury informed yesterday.

With only eight days remaining before Bangladesh's first match of the competition, it is still uncertain whether Shakib can feature for the Tigers right from the start. The national team will begin a training camp for the Nidahas Trophy on March 2, with Shakib expected to return to the country by then, and will depart for Sri Lanka with the squad on March 4.

Shakib sustained the injury during the Tigers' loss to Sri Lanka in the ODI tri-series final at home last month. He then missed the Test and T20I series against Sri Lanka, both of which Bangladesh went on to lose.



Kiwis call up Chapman

AGENCIES, Mount Maunganui

New Zealand have called up Mark Chapman as cover for Wednesday's second one-day international against England, with skipper Kane Williamson doubtful due to a "mild hamstring injury".

Black Caps coach Mike Hesson is hopeful his captain will be able to feature in Mount Maunganui, as the hosts seek to move 2-0 up in the five-match series.

"If he proves his fitness, then he'll definitely play - otherwise, you'll see Mark Chapman come in," Hesson told reporters on Tuesday.

"He [Williamson] has had a few little niggles over the last few months. This is just a mild hamstring strain, but one [where] he's obviously got to make sure he's 100 per cent ready to go."

Halsall on forced leave

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will tour Sri Lanka for the T20I tri-nation Nidahas Trophy without assistant coach Richard Halsall, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday.

Halsall, the Tigers' assistant and fielding coach, has been on leave in England since the conclusion of the home series against Sri Lanka and there were rumours that he will not return and join the Bangladesh team.

It was also learned that a few of the senior members of the team were not happy with Halsall, whose contract was extended in 2016 till the 2019 ICC World Cup, and the BCB sent him on a forced leave. Chowdhury however informed that the Englishman is still the Tigers' assistant coach.

"Halsall will not be a part of the team for the upcoming Nidahas Trophy. Currently he is on leave and we are in talks for the upcoming West

Indies tour and also a series against Afghanistan later and he is expected to join the side ahead of the West Indies tour," said Chowdhury at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"It's not like that, Richard Halsall is



still our assistant coach," said Chowdhury when asked whether the board is not willing to continue with the assistant coach. He went on to add: "As you all know we have taken an internal decision over the matter as the

Nidahas Trophy is a T20 tournament where our High Performance head Simon Helmot will act as the batting coach," he said.

The BCB CEO also informed that High Performance bowling coach Champaka Ramanayake will act as the bowling coach for the series and added that the team management wanted to keep the squad limited, keeping the short nature of the tournament -- which will kick off on March 6 and conclude on March 18 -- in mind.

Chowdhury meanwhile also informed that the board is all set to appoint another curator Praveen Hingnikar, alongside present BCB chief curator Gamini Silva soon.

"We are in the process of appointing curators. Gamini has been with us for a long time and apart from him we are planning to include one or two curators. In continuation of this we have already had a meeting with one of the curators and if everything goes well he [Hingnikar] will be appointed by the BCB soon," Chowdhury added.

Holder delighted with Gayle return

AFP, Harare



West Indies captain Jason Holder on Monday praised star batsmen Chris Gayle and Marlon Samuels for making themselves available for the upcoming 2019 World Cup qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe.

The two-time World Cup winners failed to automatically reach next year's tournament in England and Wales after slipping outside the top eight in the world one-day international rankings, leaving them to fight it out with cricket's lesser names for one of the last two spots.

The 26-year-old Holder has experienced pair Gayle and Samuels at his disposal, despite the decisions of other key players Darren Bravo, Sunil Narine, Andre Russell and Kieron Pollard to skip the qualifiers to play in the lucrative Pakistan T20 Super League.

"I must commend Chris and Marlon, who have come here with the motivation to do well for the Windies and give themselves a chance to play another World Cup," said Holder ahead of his team's first Group A game against the United Arab Emirates on March 6.

"We've got a well-balanced side, quality side with experience. Hopefully, we could gel together and make things happen in this tournament."

The Caribbean outfit will face Papua New Guinea, Netherlands and Ireland in the group stage.

Rashid set to be youngest captain

IANS, New Delhi

At 19 years of age, highly-rated Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan is set to become the youngest captain in the history of international cricket.

The World's No. 1 ODI and Twenty20 International bowler, Rashid will lead Afghanistan after regular skipper Asghar Stanikzai was diagnosed with appendicitis.

"The doctors have advised that he will be able to return to cricket in approximately 10 days. Current vice-captain Rashid Khan will lead the team in his absence," Afghan Cricket Board said in a press statement.

Afghanistan travel to Bulawayo for the group-stage matches of the ICC World Cup Qualifier.

Afghanistan will take on Scotland on March 4.