

The recently concluded Nidahas Trophy in Sri Lanka will no doubt be remembered for a long time. From the competitiveness of each of the three teams to the drama towards the end of the tri-series, each little element contributed to it being one of the most memorable T20I competitions.

As far as Bangladesh are concerned, the series merely restated one of the most crucial aspects of their cricket: the dependence on momentum. Now, it is a given that teams all around the world, no matter what sport you talk about, rely on momentum. However, based on history, it will not be wrong to state that the Tigers have a special affinity for the momentum factor.

Take, for instance, the 50-over tri-nation series that Bangladesh played at home in January. With a new-look Sri Lankan team and a struggling Zimbabwe, one would have expected Bangladesh to easily win their maiden trophy. In fact, the way the hosts eased past their strongest contenders, Sri Lanka, in the first round, suggested that the tri-nation series was going to be a walk in the park for the Men in Green.

However, one bad game and it all changed for the Tigers. Having qualified for the final of the competition, there seemed to be a sense of lethargy in the hosts and they ended up being bundled out for just 82 in the sixth game of the competition.

As a result, it was a nervous Bangladesh that entered the final. Shakib Al Hasan's injury in the final only added to a tournament that began as a mere walk in the park ended up in a costly defeat. The trauma from the previous encounter, the pressure to grab Bangladesh's first tri-nation silverware and Shakib's injury, all conspired to wilt Bangladesh's confidence.

That was, of course, just the start. The pressure continued into the next few games. They failed to win either of the T20Is and also lost a Test match at home. All of a sudden it seemed as

though the Tigers had moved back into the pre-2015 era.

In 2014, Bangladesh suffered one of their worst runs in international cricket. It was a period which saw them lose to Hong Kong in the T20 World Cup and Afghanistan in the Asia Cup. It was a period during which they lost an ODI against Sri Lanka after reducing them to 67 for eight at Mirpur.

There were many other near misses that year as they failed to win a single game in any format against Test opposition until October, when a good series against Zimbabwe, leading into the World Cup 2015, changed all of that. They beat Zimbabwe 5-0 in the ODIs and 3-0 in the Test matches and all of a sudden, they had rediscovered their vigour and ended up reaching the quarterfinals of the World Cup, their best ever performance.

One can say that is what happened in the tri-nation series in Sri Lanka. When Mushfiqur Rahim took the Tigers over the line in that crucial game against Sri Lanka, in which they chased down 214 (the fourth-highest successful chase in T20Is and Bangladesh's highest) Bangladesh had overcome a mental barrier. It was a much-needed victory to overcome the painful defeats to Sri Lanka at home. That win laid the foundation for Bangladesh for the rest of the series.

Yes, they did lose to India in the next game, but they fought well. Furthermore, they were buoyed by Shakib's return and following Mahmudullah Riyad's brilliant knock that culminated in a penultimate-ball six, Bangladesh beat Sri Lanka once again and reached the final.

The only reason the Tigers had the belief that they could beat India in the final was because their mindset had changed drastically during their stay in Sri Lanka. They knew that they were a different team from the one that had lost in all formats to Sri



PHOTO: AFP

RIDING ON MOMENTUM

NAIMUL KARIM

Lanka at home.

Not only were they playing against the best T20I team in the world, but they were doing so in a ground filled with spectators supporting their opposition. This is not an environment Bangladesh are used to. And yet, they showed plenty of calm throughout the final. While they did miss out on a number of crucial run-outs, they did not freak out or give in like they did in the home series. The change in the body language was definite and obvious.

Despite all the improvements, they failed

to cross the last hurdle, but gained plenty of confidence. And this is something that will most definitely help them when they play newcomers Afghanistan in June and then reach the Caribbean Islands later this year. That they managed to recover from a lull period so quickly and win matches abroad will definitely be in the back of their minds when they meet the West Indies for a full series.

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কাপড়ের রঙকে রাখে নতুনের মতো ঝকঝকে

মাল্টি বুস্টার

কাপড়ের যে কোন দাগ-ময়লাকে নিমিষেই দূর করে

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