

SPORT



Comilla Victorians pacer Mohammad Saifuddin laid ghosts of hammerings past to rest by bowling an inch-perfect last-ball yorker in their Bangladesh Premier League match against Dhaka Dynamites in Mirpur yesterday. Saifuddin's late heroics ensured that (Inset) Dhaka pacer Rubel Hossain's four-for went in vain.

No value in being average: Saifuddin

SPORTS REPORTER



Young pacer Mohammad Saifuddin seemed to have come of age and if yesterday's game was any indication, managed to exorcise the ghost of being struck for five sixes in an over by South Africa's David Miller in 2017, which led to him losing his place in the Bangladesh team.

Yesterday, the 22-year-old Comilla Victorians pacer successfully restricted another hard hitter in Andre Russell in the Bangladesh Premier League when Dhaka Dynamites required 13 run to win in the final over.

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Growing in confidence, the cricketer from Feni said that he was no longer willing to be just an average cricketer and was looking forward to becoming extraordinary.

"For those of us who are international cricketers, or stars, there is no value in being average. You have to perform extraordinarily compared to the others. The World Cup is knocking on the door and naturally my target is to do something different from the norm since holding on to a place in the national side is a very challenging job. From

Player-of-the-match Saifuddin ended up with figures of four for 22 from his four overs. The right-arm seamer displayed the skill of bowling yorkers and cutters to restrict Dhaka to 126 for nine and clinch a dramatic one-run win.

WHACK-O-METER

TOTAL 6s HIT **499** | TOTAL 4s HIT **870**

Most 6s hit by a player: 28, Nicholas Pooran, Sylhet Sixers
Most 4s hit by a player: 45, Rilee Rossouw, Rangpur Riders

Saifuddin's calm under pressure came through when, needing 12 off two balls, Russell hit a six over long on but Saifuddin responded with an inch-perfect yorker that Russell just managed to inside-edge to the fine leg fence for four.

The confident youngster, however, was annoyed when asked whether those Miller sixes were at the back of his mind when he came on to bowl the last over.

"I don't know why, but whenever I come to a press conference you always ask me about Miller. In cricket what is gone is gone, so there is no point holding on to it.

"I have managed to prove myself today [Friday] and hopefully in similar conditions I will do the same in the future. Comilla Victorians give me priority [in the death overs] and I try to repay the team by per-

forming well. I enjoy bowling under pressure situations," Saifuddin told reporters yesterday.

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Dynamites found wanting

Need win today to have chance of qualifying for playoffs

SPORTS REPORTER



Batting remained the biggest concern for Dhaka Dynamites as Shikib AL Hasan's side failed to chase a small 128-run target, succumbing to a one-run defeat against Comilla Victorians in an action-packed Bangladesh Premier League match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Player-of-the-match Mohammad Saifuddin was instrumental in defending Comilla's total, picking up four wickets for just 22 runs from his four overs.

It was in his last over of the innings, when Dhaka required 13 runs to win with West Indian hard-hitter Andre Russell at the crease, that Saifuddin first removed Rubel Hossain with the first ball.

After that, when Dhaka needed 12 runs off the last two balls with Russell

on strike, Saifuddin's fifth delivery was hit for a six, bringing the equation to six runs off the last ball. However, Saifuddin then bowled a brilliant yorker which went for a boundary but was still enough for Comilla to clinch the dramatic win in the end.

With 16 points from 11 games, Comilla now lead the points table while Dhaka, after facing their fifth consecutive defeat, have 10 points and will have to win their last game against Khulna Titans to qualify for the playoff stage. Meanwhile Rajshahi Kings, on 12 points with no games remaining,

will surely be relying on a favourable results to see themselves through.

Opting to bowl, Dhaka did everything right even though Tamim Iqbal started things off for Comilla with an all-guns-blazing approach. However, after the left-hander departed for 38 runs off 20 balls Comilla lost their way.

It was Mahedi Hasan's 20 off 15 at the end which helped Comilla post 127 before being bundled out. Rubel Hossain was the pick of the bowlers for Dhaka, bagging four scalps.

In the chase, Dhaka once again

fielded a different opening pair with Sri Lanka's Upul Tharanga playing alongside Mizanur Rahman. However, much like in their previous few fixtures, Dhaka lost both openers -- Tharanga (0) and Mizanur (16) -- early before the dismissal of Rony Talukdar (1). Young off-spinner Mahedi then bowled skipper Shikib AL Hasan (7) to leave Dhaka reeling on 29 for four inside the Powerplay.

Keiron Pollard and Sunil Narine added 42 for the fifth wicket before the latter was dismissed for 22. Saifuddin then came to the fore, dismissing Pollard for 34 runs and Nurul Hasan (0) in successive deliveries.

Russell was lucky when he handed a catch in the next over off Wahab Riaz but TV replays showed that it was a no ball.

Apart from Saifuddin's four-wicket haul, Mahedi ended with figures of two for 22 from his four overs while Riaz and Afridi also took a wicket each.



Sylhet Sixers pacer Taskin Ahmed had to leave the field after turning over his ankle while attempting a catch. X-rays later revealed nothing concerning, but Taskin was advised a week's rest. Sylhet won the BPL match against Chittagong Vikings by 29 runs. PHOTO: STAR

SCORES IN BRIEF	
COMILLA VICTORIANS v DHAKA DYNAMITES	COMILLA: 127 all out in 20 overs (Tamim 38, Mahedi 20; Rubel 4-30, Shikib 2-23, Narine 2-25)
DHAKA: 126 for 9 in 20 overs (Pollard 34, Russell 30 not out, Narine 22; Saifuddin 4-22, Mahedi 2-22)	Result: Comilla won by one run.
Player-of-the-match: Mohammad Saifuddin.	

SCORES IN BRIEF	
SYLHET SIXERS v CHITTAGONG VIKINGS	SYLHET: 165 for 5 (Fletcher 66, Nawaz 34, Sabbir 32; Viljoen 4-29)
CHITTAGONG: 136 all out in 18.3 overs (Mushfiqur 48, Yasir 27, Mosaddek 25; Ebadat 4-17, Parnell 2-22)	Result: Sylhet won by 29 runs
Player-of-the-match: Ebadat Hossain	



India skipper Virat Kohli celebrates with wife Anushka Sharma after winning the Test series in Australia. PHOTO: REUTERS FILE

'A logistical nightmare'

STAR SPORT DESK



The Indian cricket team is taking the world by storm, whatever the format, and it may have something to do with the cricketers being happy off the field in order to express themselves on it. A measure skipper Virat Kohli, married to Bollywood star Anushka Sharma, has taken in that regard was to convince the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to allow wives and girlfriends to go on tour with the players.

After a successful tour of Australia, it has emerged -- according to a Times of India report, that the BCCI is not quite thrilled with the logistical problems the large

touring party have caused.

"If the team is travelling with less number of members, it is easier to manage. Right from booking tickets to rooms, the entire management of handling the arrangements is with the BCCI. It would be a logistical nightmare if this arrangement -- of families travelling with players -- continues to be there for the entire duration of the World Cup," TOI quoted a BCCI official as saying.

"There is also the problem of arranging match tickets for their families. It has to be regulated. This is not a question of money," the official added.

It is not a question of money because the report mentioned that the players bear their families' expenses. Given their fantastic results, perhaps the BCCI should just grit their teeth and get on with it.

England claw back

AFP, North Sound



England clawed their way back into contention with four wickets in the afternoon session with the West Indies seeking to build a substantial first innings lead at 212 for five at tea on the second day of the second Test of the three-match series at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Friday.

Stuart Broad and Moeen Ali took two wickets each to peg back the home side's progress in response to England's modest first innings total of 187.

Ali, who top-scored with 60 for England on the first day, got his side off to the perfect start after lunch when he

had obdurate opener Kraigg Brathwaite caught at short-leg for 49 by substitute fielder Keaton Jennings to break a 63-run second-wicket partnership with Shai Hope.

He then ended the period of play with the important wicket of Shimron Hetmyer, the flamboyant left-hander attempting to repeat a heave for six earlier in the over but miscuing for James Anderson to take an excellent catch running in from the long-off boundary.

Broad, the tourists' unluckiest and most threatening bowler through the innings so far, was finally rewarded with the dismissals of Hope and Roston Chase in the same over. Hope looked threatening on 44 when he was caught behind while Chase was left

helpless by a delivery which barely got off the ground before clattering into his stumps.

Darren Bravo and wicketkeeper-batsman Shane Dowrich will resume battle with the England bowlers after the interval with the home side 25 runs ahead with five wickets in hand. Crucially, the second new ball becomes due immediately upon the resumption of play and it is anticipated that Broad and Anderson will be charging in with renewed vigour in the final session of the day.

At the start of the day Brathwaite and John Campbell, resuming at 30 without loss, extended that opening stand to 70 with Campbell getting to 47 before his luck ran out.

Relieved within minutes of the start of play by a television review of an umpiring decision which was shown to be erroneous, the left-hander was then dropped by Jos Buttler at slip before top-edging an attempted pull just out of the reach of scampering substitute wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow at backward square-leg.

Campbell's moments of good fortune were all at Broad's expense.

It took the introduction of Ben Stokes into the attack for the opening pair to be separated as Campbell pushed at another delivery angled across him and Buttler atoned for his previous error with a catch every bit as straightforward as the one missed earlier.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: First innings 187 all out (Ali 60, Bairstow 52; Roach 4-30, Gabriel 3-45, Joseph 2-38)
WEST INDIES: First innings 212 for five (Brathwaite 49, Campbell 47, Hope 44; Broad 2-40, Ali 2-49)



Stuart Broad prised the two crucial wickets of Shai Hope and Roston Chase to give England a fighting chance of bouncing back in the second Test against West Indies on the second day at North Sound yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

SA prevail by 6 runs

STAR SPORT DESK

Hosts South Africa won the first of three T20Is against Pakistan by six runs despite the best effort from Shoaib Malik, whose 31-ball 49 eventually went in vain at Cape Town last night.

South Africa, after having won the Test series 2-0 and the ODIs 3-2, rode on skipper Faf du Plessis's 45-ball 78 and Ryan Hendricks's 74 off 41 balls to post a sizeable 192 for six after being asked to bat first. Usman Shinwari was the best Pakistan bowler, netting figures of three for 31 in four overs.

Pakistan made a good fist of the chase and reached 85 for two after 10 overs when Hussain Talat was out. They could not hold on to the momentum, however, and lost five wickets for 67 runs in the aftermath of a strong beginning. South Africa's Tabraiz Shamsi, Beuran Hendricks and Chris Morris took two wickets each.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 192 for 6 (Du Plessis 78, Hendricks 74; Shinwari 3-31, Wasim 1-23)
PAKISTAN: 186 for 9 (Malik 49, Talat 40, Babar 38; Shamsi 2-33, Morris 2-39, Hendricks 2-40)
Result: South Africa won by 6 runs
Player-of-the-match: David Miller