

SPORT



It is certainly possible to win the ODI series, it is not true that we cannot win it. But now [considering Shakib's absence] it has turned out to be difficult but possible. To make that happen we need to have the belief and mental strength and we also need to execute our plans properly, and if that is the case, it is possible.

MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA
BANGLADESH ODI CAPTAIN

Tigers start NZ tour with defeat

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh cricket team started their tour of New Zealand with a two-wicket defeat in the lone one-day tour match against New Zealand XI at Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln yesterday.

Having sent in to bat, Bangladesh were bundled out for 247 in 46.1 overs, a target which was chased down by the hosts with 11 balls to spare.

The three-match ODI series begins on in Napier Wednesday.

The Tigers played the match without four regular starters -- skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, pacer Rubel Hossain, opener Tamim Iqbal and all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin -- all of whom had left the country for New Zealand in the early hours of Sunday. The hosts had only one player in skipper Jeet Raval with international experience.

The Tigers, however, can take away a few positives from the game. Mushiqrur Rahim carried on his good form from the Bangladesh Premier League with a 61-ball 62 while Mahmudullah Riyad's 72 off 88 balls would give him a boost after a torrid BPL campaign. Sabbir Rahman, too, showed glimpses of form with 40 runs off 41 deliveries.

Bangladesh started their innings shakily, losing four top-order batsmen within just eight overs and with the score of only 31 runs. But thanks to contributions from Mushiqrur, Mahmudullah and Sabbir, the visitors did manage a respectable 247.

Another positive takeaway from the game would be spinners Nayeem Hasan, Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Riyad getting some purchase from the pitch -- which has always been a tough task in foreign conditions. Coming in to chase, New Zealand XI were cruising at one stage before Nayeem broke a 114-run opening stand between Andrew Fletcher and Raval by picking up the



Bangladesh pacer Mohammad Saifuddin (2nd from R) posted this picture on Facebook, depicting him alongside teammates Tamim Iqbal (R), Rubel Hossain and two BCB officials during their transit in Singapore en route to New Zealand yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

latter for a 63-ball 52. Mehedi and Mahmudullah came in the middle and latter part of the innings and picked up two wickets each to make things tight for the hosts.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe, on the eve of departure for New Zealand, was confident that Bangladesh would be able to get a good result despite losing the nation's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan to a finger injury.

"Shakib's importance cannot be overstated. It was a difficult experience every time we went to play without Shakib. It was a big challenge and it

became a bigger challenge after losing Shakib. However, we played with this challenge in Asia Cup too and so I will step onto the field with a positive mind frame."

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 247 all out in 46.1 overs (Mahmudullah 72, Mushiqrur 62, Sabbir 40; McPeake 4-38)

NEW ZEALAND XI: 251 for 8 in 48.1 overs (Fletcher 92, Raval 52; Mustafizur 2-33, Mahmudullah 2-37, Mehedi 2-46).

Result: New Zealand XI won by two wickets.

Minhazur fashions eight-wicket win for U-19s

SPORTS REPORTER



Left-arm spinner Minhazur Rahman ran riot on the field as he scalped all the four wickets that fell on the day and finished with match figures of nine for 65 to help Bangladesh Under-19s register a whopping eight-wicket victory against their English counterparts on the fourth and final day of the first Youth Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

England had started the day on the back foot on 89 for six after Bangladesh had declared their first innings on a strong 398 for nine, with a healthy 118-run lead. Minhazur then ensured that the visitors were unable to stage a comeback, breaking the 45-run seventh wicket partnership between George Hill and Luke Hollman -- the only highlight of England's innings -- as he trapped former leg before after a patient 102-ball 32. There were no more big partnerships as the visitors kept losing wickets at regular intervals before being bundled out for 152 runs, setting a paltry 35-run target for the hosts. Minhazur's second innings figures were six for 28.

The batsmen were left with very little to do, but still, Bangladesh lost both their openers -- Tanzid Hasan and Amite Hasan -- cheaply, but there were no more casualties as the hosts comfortably saw off the chase.

Bangladesh had won the only Youth T20I and all three Youth ODIs and, with yesterday's win, the young Tigers now have a chance to whitewash the visitors in all formats when they square off against England in the final Youth Test beginning on February 15 at the same venue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND U-19S: First innings 280 and second innings 152 all out (Charlesworth 20, Hill 32, Hollman 29, Galib 3-30, Minhazur 6-28)

BANGLADESH U-19S: First innings 398 for 9 decl and second innings 40 for 2 (Shamim 20 not out; Finch 1-6)

Result: Bangladesh U-19s won by 8 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Minhazur Rahman.

NZ win thriller to take series 2-1

REUTERS, Hamilton



Colin Munro struck a 40-ball 72 as New Zealand pipped India by four runs in the third and final Twenty20 international at Hamilton to seal a 2-1 series victory on Sunday.

Dropped for the opening two one-day internationals of New Zealand's upcoming series against Bangladesh, Munro responded in defiant fashion to help the hosts post a commanding 212 for four wickets after the hosts were asked to bat first.

A 75-run partnership for the second wicket between stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma and Vijay

Shankar put India in a strong position but their middle-order failed to capitalise and the tourists finished with 208 for six in 20 overs.

"It was touch and go, but the boys did well to finish it off," man-of-the-match Munro said. "I came out nice and free, tried to play my game and put pressure on the bowlers. Had my luck, it went my way."

Munro, who was dropped twice, smashed five boundaries and as many sixes in the company of fellow opener Tim Seifert to lay the foundation for a big total.

Player-of-the-series Seifert, whose big hitting helped inflict an 80-run defeat on India in the opening match, made 43 off 25 balls before being dismissed, but steady contributions by the

Disappointing to not cross the line but we fought well right till the end. 210 odd (213 target) was always going to be tough, but we were in it till the end. They held their nerve and kept hitting their yorkers.

ROHIT SHARMA
INDIA CAPTAIN

Kiwi middle order helped them post a big total.

Dinesh Karthik (33 not out) and all-rounder Krunal Pandya (26 not out) flexed their muscles towards the end but could not get India, who needed 16 off the last over, over the finish line.

"Both teams put in strong performances, we did slightly better," New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson said.

"We travel-train-play and straight into the next series against Bangladesh, that's the nature of international cricket but the guys are looking forward to it."

India earlier won the one-day international series 4-1 and Rohit said there were positives despite defeat in the T20s.

"It would have been nice to fly back with a series win, but yes, lot of positives through the tour, looking forward to heading home and playing Australia," he said.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: 212 for 4 in 20 overs (Seifert 43, Munro 72, Williamson 27, De Grandhomme 30; Yadav 2-26)

INDIA: 208 for 6 in 20 overs (Sharma 38, Shankar 43, Pant 28, H Pandya 21, Karthik 33 not out, K Pandya 26 not out; Santner 2-32, Mitchell 2-27)

Result: New Zealand won by four runs and clinched 3-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-match: Colin Munro.

Player-of-the-series: Tim Seifert.



New Zealand batsman Colin Munro smacks one over mid-wicket during his 40-ball 72, laced with five boundaries and an equal number of sixes, helping the Kiwis win the third T20I against India by four runs to clinch the three-match series 2-1 in Hamilton yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP



Bangladesh U-19s off-spinner Minhazur Rahman shows the cherry after picking six wickets in England U-19s second innings to help the hosts register an eight-wicket victory in the first Youth Test at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Stokes, Buttler revive England

AFP, Gros-Islet



Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes featured in England's best partnership of a deeply disappointing series as

they lifted their team to 231 for four at stumps on the opening day of the third and final Test against the West Indies on Saturday.

Put in to bat by West Indies stand-in captain Kraigg Brathwaite, and seeking to regain some lost prestige after already surrendering the series

and the Wisden Trophy, the fifth-wicket pair played with increasing fluency through an extended final session in putting on 124 runs to the close of play at the Darren Sammy Stadium.

It was England's first century partnership of the series with Buttler getting to 67 and Stokes reaching 62 at the close.

Both made the most of lucky escapes. Buttler's first scoring shot was an edge off

Shannon Gabriel to which a legging Shimron Hetmyer at second slip could only get his fingertips.

Stokes was caught and bowled on 52 by Alzarri Joseph and was already in the England dressing room when he got the call to return to the middle as the lanky fast bowler had delivered a no-ball.

"We've been disappointed with the way we've played," said Stokes at the end of the day in reflecting on defeats by 381 runs and ten wickets in the first two Tests.

"This is still a challenging wicket so to come off (the field) four wickets down, we're pleased with that."

England's contented mood at the end of the day was in sharp contrast to the situation just three hours earlier as Joe Root's personal tale of batting woe on this disastrous Caribbean campaign continued.

He fell to Joseph for the third consecutive innings just before the tea interval, wafting at an innocuous delivery from Joseph to give a simple catch to wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich.

Root's painstaking innings of 15 off 54 deliveries leaves him with a tally of just 54 runs from five innings, typifying England's desperate struggles with the bat from their first innings of the series when they were routed at Kensington Oval for just 77 on the way to a 381-run mauling.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 231 for 4 (Burns 29, Buttler 67 not out, Stokes 62 not out; Paul 2-42)



England's Ben Stokes struck a patient 175-ball 79 in the third Test against West Indies at the Darren Sammy Cricket Ground yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Pak to play all five ODIs in UAE

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket authorities were forced to schedule all five one-day internationals against Australia in the United Arab Emirates after the Aussies refused to visit the Sri Lankan team bus in 2009.

Cricket Australia (CA) acted on their government's advise not to tour Pakistan where no Australian senior team has played since 1998 over security fears.

PCB director Zakir Khan showed disappointment over Australia's refusal to tour.

'Aus can win the World Cup'

AFP, Melbourne



Australia can successfully defend their World Cup title in England this year with Steve Smith and David Warner back in the fray, newly-appointed assistant coach Ricky Ponting said Sunday.

His upbeat assessment comes despite the misfiring team losing their two most recent ODI series at home, to India and South Africa.

"Absolutely, I actually do," said Ponting when asked in Melbourne if Australia could win the World Cup.

"India and England are probably the two standout teams right now but if you add Warner and Smith back into that lineup, I think that team looks as strong as any."

"Conditions in England will suit our style of play," added Ponting, who was appointed on Friday as assistant to coach Justin Langer for the World Cup, focusing on the batting group.

The former national captain is

hugely experienced in the one-day game, playing at five World Cups and winning at three.

"I think I have a pretty good grasp on what it takes for tournaments like that," he said.

"Hopefully I can have an impact right from the start. The feedback from



RICKY PONTING

the boys has been positive."

Ponting, a close ally of Langer, will start after Australia's upcoming one-day tours against India and Pakistan.

Smith and Warner are available for selection again from March 29, when their one-year bans for ball-tampering expire.

Cameron Bancroft, who was suspended for nine months, is already back playing.

"Once we get Warner and Smith and Bancroft back into the fray, and looking ahead to the World Cup, I don't think they'll be too many better teams on paper."

"You've got a lot of experience as well as a fair bit of youth going into that tournament," he added.

"Any team I've been a part of, we've always had a really good mix of youth and experience and this current group will certainly have that going into the World Cup."

Ponting, who played 375 one-dayers and 168 Tests, previously worked as an assistant with Australia's Twenty20 side in 2017 and 2018.

He also accompanied Langer during his first tour -- to England -- after taking over as head coach from Darren Lehmann last April following the tampering scandal in South Africa.

Ponting suggested he could be available for the Twenty20 World Cup next year, although his commentating duties during the Australian summer made it hard for him to commit to Test cricket.