



Walsh rues lack of continuity

MAZHAR UDDIN from Hamilton

  From the start of 2017 till the just-concluded first Test against New Zealand in Hamilton, Bangladesh have played nine Test matches overseas and the team management has employed nine different fast bowlers. In the innings-and-52-run defeat against New Zealand in Hamilton, debutant pacer Ebadot Hossain became the ninth, while Khaled Ahmed -- playing his second Test -- was playing his first overseas Test.

Of the nine, Taskin Ahmed and Kamrul Islam Rabbi have played the highest number of overseas Tests with five. Apart from Subhashis Roy and Kamrul, none of the nine have played three overseas Test matches on the trot.

The lack of experience from the Bangladesh seamers was evident during in Hamilton where the Tigers' pace trio of Abu Jayed, Khaled and Ebadot conceded 369 runs in 87 overs and managed to pick just one wicket.

Bangladesh bowling coach Courtney Walsh said that the decision-makers need to be more patient and allow the seamers to grow by providing them enough opportunities.

"I think the decision-makers need to be patient, which I have always advocated for as you have to give a guy the chance to play. After playing a couple of matches you can make changes if he is not doing well, but if you are going to play one Test here and one there you will never get a chance to learn the trade or improve."

"Obviously, when you are in Bangladesh the wicket is spin-friendly but overseas you want to give them a good run. In the last tour New Zealand tour we had a new set of fast bowlers, and this tour is also the same, so there is no continuity and consistency. We have to look at three-four guys that we think can make it, especially overseas, and then test them," Walsh told reporters at the team hotel in Hamilton yesterday.

The 56-year-old Jamaican insisted that the pacers should get at least five to 10 Tests as a unit and be rotated to get a good feel, rather than being discarded after one or two matches.

"We invested in Ebadot as, if you remember, two years ago he came as a developmental player. And that investment has sort of worked in terms of how he made his Test debut here. That's a good sign if we can get

that to continue, for him to play a couple of Test matches and to keep improving," he said.

One of the all-time great fast bowlers did admit that it was testing even for him every now and then to get a new set of fast bowlers, saying that he tries to remain patient.

Walsh however informed that the players were the ones who would have to apply themselves in the middle and added that the seamers need to pick wickets to gain confidence, opining that it was the lack of wickets that has led to low confidence.

When asked whether anyone from the lot could play the role Kiwi pacer Neil Wagner performed in the first Test -- when the left-arm unleashed a constant barrage of short-pitched bowling -- Walsh said Ebadot could be a good prospect, but the right-arm needs experience to understand his role.

"It would be good if they can play all formats but obviously I want some other guys, especially for Test cricket. But for their development they need to get exposure to all dimensions of the game as the more you play the more you will learn," Walsh concluded.



Abu Jayed was one of three Bangladesh pacers who proved toothless in the first Test against New Zealand in Hamilton. PHOTO: AFP

An ecstatic Sheikh Jamal team pose with the trophy after defeating Prime Doleshwar in the Dhaka Premier League T20 final in Mirpur yesterday. Imtiaz Hossain's half-century, followed by a four-wicket burst from Shahidul Islam, led the side to a 24-run win.

Sheikh Jamal crowned inaugural champions

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club were crowned champions of the inaugural edition of the Dhaka Premier League (DPL) T20 after they defeated Prime Doleshwar Sporting Club by 24 runs, courtesy of a 44-ball 56 from opener Imtiaz Hossain which helped the side post 157 for seven and defend it successfully in the final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

After electing to bat, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club got off to a very promising start as the two openers -- Fardeen Hasan and Imtiaz -- strung together a 62-run opening stand before the former

fell prey to a Manik Khan delivery after scoring 18 off 20 balls. However, the next seven overs did not go according to plan as Sheikh Jamal lost four quick wickets in 6.4 overs, adding only 36 runs. Opener Imtiaz, who looked brilliant at the top, also fell in that period but not before scoring a half-ton.

But a 49-run sixth-wicket partnership between skipper Nurul Hasan and Tanbir Hayder saw Sheikh Jamal post a competitive total before both batsmen were dismissed in the final over of the game. Tanbir hit a 15-ball 31 cameo at the death while Nurul contributed with a valuable 33 runs off 27 balls. All-rounder Forhad Reza was the best bowler for Prime Doleshwar, bagging three wickets for 32 runs in four overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SHEIKH JAMAL: 157 for 7 in 20 overs (Imtiaz 56, Nurul 33, Tanbir 31, Fardeen 18; Reza 3-32, Sunny 1-25, Enamul 1-30)

PRIME DOLESHWAR: 133 for 8 in 20 overs (Forhad 45, Arfat 33, Saif 26; Shahidul 4-19, Salauddin 2-41, Minhajul 1-10, Elias 1-36)

Result: Sheikh Jamal won by 24 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Imtiaz Hossain.

Player-of-the-series: Forhad Reza.

In chase of the modest total, Prime Doleshwar had started off brightly, cruising comfortably as the two openers -- Saif Hassan and Mohammad Arafat -- strung together a 55-run opening stand before the latter retired hurt with a hamstring injury in the eighth over of the game and had to leave the

field. After that, Prime Doleshwar kept losing wickets at regular intervals and were reeling at 105 for six.

However, Prime Doleshwar skipper Forhad seemed set to stage a dramatic comeback at the death as he played a magnificent late cameo of 45 runs off just 20 balls. But none of the other batsmen could support the skipper and eventually Sheikh Jamal right-arm quick Shahidul Islam scalped the wicket of the dangerous-looking Reza in the final over of the game before also picking up the wicket of Manik Khan. Shahidul finished the game with impressive figures of four for 19. Sheikh Jamal also owed a debt to another youngster -- Minhajul Abedin Afzad -- for their triumph as he returned economical figures of one wicket for 10 runs from his four

Tahir to quit ODIs after World Cup

AFP, Johannesburg

Veteran leg-spinner Imran Tahir said on Monday he would retire from one-day international cricket after the World Cup in England and Wales, which ends on July 14.

But he said he would like to continue playing for South Africa in Twenty20 internationals.

Tahir, who will turn 40 later this month, played a starring role for South Africa, taking three for 26, in their eight-wicket win in the first one-day international against Sri Lanka at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

His performance drew attention to the fact that he was not on the list of contracted players for the 2019/20 year released by Cricket South Africa last week.

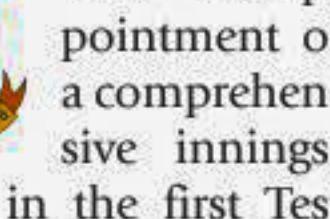
But he revealed on Monday that he had reached an agreement with CSA for his contract to expire at the end of July, extending his 2018/19 contract by three months.

In a statement released by CSA, Tahir said he would re-assess his freelance future after the World Cup.

"I have always wanted to play in the World Cup," he said. "I have a mutual understanding with Cricket South Africa and going forward I decided that I would finish at the World Cup, that is why I am contracted until then. After that, Cricket South Africa has allowed me to go and play around the world in various leagues."

Tigers regrouping on day off

SPORTS REPORTER from Hamilton



The disappointment of a comprehensive innings-and-52-run defeat in the first Test inside four days against hosts New Zealand was visible among the members of the Bangladesh team on their day off in Hamilton yesterday.

Most of the players opted to stay at the hotel while a few like Soumya Sarkar, Shadman Islam and Mohammad Mithun, opted for a touch of adventure in the form of a jet-boating excursion with team manager Khaled Mashud.

Bangladesh will travel to Wellington, the venue for the second of three Tests starting from March 8, today and will start preparations for another difficult examination tomorrow.

However, despite the defeat there were a few positives that the Tigers could take forward into the next Test -- Tamim Iqbal's hundred in the first innings that was followed by an expert 74 in the second innings, as well as



There are concerns over whether Mushfiqur Rahim will recover in time for Bangladesh's second Test against New Zealand but the wicketkeeper-batsman, who was spotted at the team hotel in Hamilton yesterday, is expected to participate in a training session in Wellington tomorrow.

PHOTO: MAZHAR UDDIN

Soumya Sarkar and skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's hundreds that kept New Zealand at bay for a large portion of the fourth day in Hamilton.

But despite the few individual heroics, there was a marked lack of a collective approach both from batsmen and bowlers, which the Bangladesh think tank would surely

want to improve upon if they are to keep the series alive after the Wellington Test ends.

One of the biggest disappointments in Hamilton was the performance of seamers Abu Jayed, Khaled Ahmed and debutant Ebadot Hossain, who combined to concede 369 runs in 87 overs for just

a solitary wicket. It is almost certain that left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who according to coach Steve Rhodes was rested in Hamilton because he was being saved for Wellington, will play the second Test.

At the same time, it will be even more challenging for Bangladesh to adapt to Wellington conditions because of the capital's strong wind and seaming pitches.

Once again, the home side will surely bank on the bouncer-barrage strategy which they successfully implemented in Hamilton, led by left-arm seamer Abu Jayed and Tim Southee.

There was one piece of good news for the visitors as the experienced Mushfiqur Rahim is recovering quickly from his wrist and finger injuries sustained during the ODI series and there is still a chance that the wicketkeeper-batsman will take part in the second Test.

However, it will still depend on Mushfiqur and how he recovers as he is set to start batting from tomorrow, two days before the Test starts.

'Shakib shouldn't play unless fully fit'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hasan said yesterday that Test skipper Shakib Al Hasan should not return to cricket unless he has fully recovered from a left little finger injury and that it is not absolutely important for him to feature in the third Test in New Zealand from February 16. Hasan also revealed, speaking after the Dhaka Premier League T20 final, that Shakib could be in New Zealand ahead of the third Test.

Shakib missed the ODI series and the first Test in New Zealand because of the injury sustained in the Bangladesh Premier League final on February 8. Hasan also gave a positive update about Mushfiqur Rahim, who missed the first Test because of finger and wrist injuries sustained during the ODI series. According to the BCB boss, Mushfiqur said that he was feeling okay and wanted to play the second Test from March 8.

Shakib said that he would go to play the third Test. Before I left for an ICC board meeting in Dubai, he said that he was eager to play in this league [DPL T20] to get some match practice before leaving. I thought that if he can play in this league then he could play the second Test. But if not, his health is important. I heard he underwent a test yesterday and was prescribed a further seven days' rest. I don't think it's absolutely necessary for him to play the third Test because the World Cup is coming. We want him to recover fully before returning."

Kohli & Co eye 2-0 lead

Second ODI against Australia today

AGENCIES, Nagpur



Auditions for World Cup hopefuls will continue but India will also be aiming at producing another complete performance against Australia in the second ODI at Nagpur on Tuesday.

Virat Kohli's side ticked more than a few boxes in a six-wicket win to open the five-match series at Hyderabad on Saturday -- a welcome result after going down 2-0 in the preceding T20I series.

With this India's final assignment ahead

of the ICC World Cup 2019, the hosts are hoping to get closer to finalising the few remaining berths in an otherwise settled squad for their all-important trip to England.

Australia did their best to make a match out of it in Hyderabad but 236 was never going to be enough for a power-packed Indian batting lineup. Aaron Finch's form has been a big worry for the visitors while an unsettled middle-order has further added to their woes.

Usman Khawaja and Marcus Stoinis started off well after Finch fell for a nought

but the middle-order barring Glenn Maxwell was not able to chug along consistently. Australia have won just three of 17 ODIs since the start of 2018, a winning percentage of just 17.25. That is one record they will desperately want to improve upon. They showed they have the calibre to play in the sub-continental conditions as was on display in the two T20Is.

They are likely to be bolstered by the return of Shaun Marsh who was ruled out of the first ODI due to injury. His presence is bound to make the batting unit slightly stronger.



India captain Virat Kohli (R) discusses tactics with all-rounder Vijay Shankar during a training session in Nagpur yesterday, ahead of the second ODI against Australia today.

PHOTO: AFP