

SPORT



Five areas for the Tigers to look at

MAZHAR UDDIN from Wellington

Not much need be said to accurately convey the nature of the debacle that was Bangladesh's second Test against New Zealand in Wellington. Simply put, Bangladesh lost a match in the first session of the fifth day by an innings and 12 runs after the first two days were washed out and rain forced an early end to the third day's play.

There were quite a few areas in which Bangladesh lacked both in mental and physical skill. The following is a look on five of those to improve upon ahead of the third and final Test in Christchurch from March 16:

OCCUPYING THE CREASE AND PLANNING SESSION BY SESSION

When it comes to Test cricket it is important for a batsman to take his time at the crease as there is no pressure to look for quick runs. Obviously, the Kiwi bowlers -- especially Neil Wagner -- employed the short ball to excellent effect but there were opportunities if the Tigers could only resist attacking the left-arm seamer and instead tire him out by ducking most of his short stuff. There were three hundreds from Bangladesh in the first Test in Hamilton, but apart from skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's 229-ball 146 the ones from Tamim Iqbal and Soumya Sarkar came at almost a run a ball. Things would have been easier if they faced more deliveries as they were set at the crease. The other major concern was the lack of planning to play session by session as the Tigers batted over three sessions in an innings just

once in the two Tests.

A TIGHT NUMBER THREE BATSMAN

There has been a long-standing problem for the Tigers -- finding a perfect opening partner for Tamim Iqbal, especially in the longest format of the game. Young Shadman Islam showed a lot of character coming to New Zealand after playing just one Test. The left-hander has provided a solid start with Tamim and added over fifty runs in the opening stand in three of the four innings so far on tour. Following a good start, it is important for the number three batsman to carry the momentum but Mominul Haque has been very disappointing in both Tests, which put immense pressure on a batting lineup without Mushfiqur Rahim or Shakib Al Hasan. With scores of 12, 8, 15 and 10 in four innings, once again the question has been raised over Mominul's ability when it comes to playing away from home.

BOWLING IN PARTNERSHIPS

It will be too harsh to criticise the inexperienced Tigers fast bowling department populated by Abu Jayed, Ebadot Hossain and Khaled Ahmed alongside Mustafizur Rahman, who is the most experienced of the lot with just 13 Tests. Following a disappointing show in the first Test where the pace trio of Khaled, Jayed and Ebadot gave away 369 runs in 87 overs for just one wicket, there was a hint of improvement in the second Test. It was Jayed who stood above as he bowled a fiery spell on the third day to dismiss both in-form Kiwi openers Tom Latham and Jeet Raval. Ebadot also gave valuable support from the other end as both seamers looked to bowl in partnership, which troubled the Kiwi batters. It will be important to continue bowling in partnerships and bank on each other's strength rather than just banging it in on the green top.

GRAB THOSE CATCHES

As things went from bad to worse for with both bat and ball, to make matters even worse it was the Tigers' butter fingers that dug a deep hole for them throughout the two Tests. Dropped



New Zealand pacer Neil Wagner (C) continues to be a scourge for the Tigers, picking up five wickets in the second innings of the second Test against Bangladesh, which the hosts lost to trail the three-match series 2-0, in Wellington yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

catches kept haunting the Tigers in both Tests and if the fielders had held on to those precious few chances things could have been different. Soumya dropped Tom Latham on nought at second slip in the first Test and the left-hander went on to score 161.

Kane Williamson was dropped, again by Soumya, at slip and the Kiwi skipper went on to strike an unbeaten double hundred in the same innings. Things remained the same in the second Test as Ross Taylor was dropped twice in the same over by Mahmudullah and Shadman off the bowling of Jayed when he was on 20. He too went on to register his third double-hundred, which eventually turned out to be the turning point of the game.

ONCE AGAIN IT'S THE SENIORS

There was a lot of talk about the juniors need-

ing to step up alongside the senior members, but it was the same old story. Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah were the only two consistent and standout performers for the Tigers in the two Tests. Apart from the second innings of the second Test, Tamim was solid and scored a hundred and two 70-plus innings. Mahmudullah too struck a hundred in the second innings of the first Test and fought a lone battle in the second Test. He was the ninth Bangladesh batsman to be dismissed in the second innings of both Tests and that reflects the amount of pressure he went through as well as the lack of support. It is important for the young members of the side to share the responsibility, rather than relying on the experienced campaigners who have been proving their worth time and time again.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ THE STORY

'We are a better team than this'

Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah Riyad reiterated that the team is better than their performances in the last two Tests after suffering yet another innings defeat in the second Test against the Kiwis.

Bangladesh Test captain Mahmudullah Riyad was the only one in the Tigers' top order to show any fight on the fifth day of the second Test against New Zealand, scoring 67 runs off 69 deliveries. However, the visitors went on to lose the match by an innings and 12 runs. PHOTO: AFP

BD-NZ SCOREBOARD

BANGLADESH: 1st innings 211 all out (Tamim 74, Liton 33; Wagner 4-28, Boulton 3-38)
NEW ZEALAND: 1st innings 432 for 6 (Taylor 200, Nicholls 107, Williamson 74; Jayed 3-94, Tajjil 2-99)

BANGLADESH: 2nd innings R/B 4s/6s
Tamim b Boulton 4/2 1/0
Shadman c Watling b Henry 29/44 4/0
Mominul c Southee b Wagner 10/19 2/0
Mithun c Southee b Wagner 47/105 7/0
Soumya c Taylor b Boulton 28/57 5/0
Mahmudullah c Boulton 67/69 12/1
Liton c Boulton b Wagner 1/7 0/0
Tajjil c Latham b Wagner 0/6 0/0
Mustafizur b Boulton 16/22 0/2
Jayed not out 0/3 0/0
Ebadat b Wagner 0/2 0/0
Extras: (lb-4, w-3) 7
Total: (all out in 56 overs) 209

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-20, 3-55, 4-112, 5-152, 6-158, 7-170, 8-203, 9-209, 10-209.

Bowler O M R W
Boulton 16 5 52 4
Southee 12 1 57 0
Henry 9 3 40 1
Grandhomme 5 0 11 0
Wagner 14 4 45 5

Result: New Zealand won by an innings and 12 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Ross Taylor.

Kane in doubt for third Test

AFP, Wellington



Injured Kane Williamson could sit out the third Test against Bangladesh beginning Saturday in Christchurch and might have to delay his departure for the Indian Premier League (IPL), New Zealand Cricket said Tuesday.

Captain Williamson suffered a shoulder injury while fielding in Bangladesh's first innings of the second Test in Wellington, which New Zealand won on Tuesday by an innings and 12 runs.

Coach Gary Stead said scans had detected a tear to Williamson's left pectoral minor muscle in his shoulder.

"There's obviously irritation and a wee bit of bleeding, it's not a major injury," Stead said.

"We're hopeful that he will recover quickly, and the thing for us is to make sure he doesn't aggravate it any more. He will come to Christchurch and we will make an assessment there on whether he plays."

With the series already won, Stead said New Zealand would take a "safety first" approach, particularly with this year's World Cup on the horizon.

"No player wants to give up their spot in the Test team. But I think it's safe to say that we will probably err on the conservative side, and if there's any chance of risk then we're likely to pull him from that game."

Williamson had suffered considerable discomfort while batting, although he managed to score 74.

He did not take the field for Bangladesh's second innings with Tim Southee taking over the captaincy.

Williamson is due to fly to India after the Bangladesh series to join up with the Sunrisers Hyderabad in the money-spinning Twenty20 IPL.

"If things progress as we hope, then still going to the IPL shouldn't be a problem to him," said Stead.

"But he's also aware that if he's not quite 100 per cent, then we will potentially hold him back as well and make sure that he is right before he goes on that plane."

Batters rule the day

SPORTS REPORTER



Runs continued to rain at BKSP-3 with Prime Bank's Doleshwar chasing down Prime Bank's 301 for eight to register a five-wicket victory in their Dhaka Premier League encounter yesterday.

The batsmen also dictated the terms in the two other games played on the day. Mohammedan skipper Raqibul Hasan led from the front, striking an unbeaten 88-ball 84 to ensure a four-wicket win over Khelaghar SKS at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

At the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, it was Touhid Tareq's unbeaten 76 that proved decisive as his side, Gazi Group, secured a four-wicket victory over Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP).

Back at BKSP-3, after being sent in to bat Prime Bank's Sudip Chatterjee and Al-Amin strung together a 110-run third-wicket partnership after the side lost their openers -- skipper Anamul Haque and Rubel Mia -- on 52 in 13.4 overs.

Chatterjee departed after scoring 57 runs but Al-Amin went on to reach the three-figure mark, scoring 111 runs off 99 balls

before being run-out in the 45th over. With the foundation laid by the two batsmen, Prime Bank went on to post the huge 301-run total.

However, Doleswar's batsmen were up to the task as opener Saif Hassan's 85 was well supported by Marshal Ayub's 76 and Saad Nasim's 64 in the middle. Nasim, who started with a six off the second deliv-

ery he faced, laced his innings with five sixes and two fours before departing in the 48th over. Doleshwar skipper Forhad Reza then put on the finishing touches with an unbeaten 35 to see his side through to the target with 10 balls to spare.

In Mirpur, Mosaddek Iftekar struck 87 to help Khelaghar reach a modest 225-run total before being bundled out. However, Mosaddek's effort was eventually

trumped by skipper Raqibul as Mohammedan registered a win with four balls to spare. Raqibul was vital in Mohammedan's previous match as well, scoring 82 not out in a three-wicket victory over Gazi Group earlier this week.

In the other game, BKSP posted a challenging 249 for seven, thanks to Mahmudul Hasan's 85 and an unbeaten 63 from Aminul Islam. However, Mahedi Hasan's 73-ball 70 and Touhid's knock helped Gazi Group get their first victory of this edition.



Mohammedan skipper Raqibul Hasan led from the front with an unbeaten 88-ball 84 as his side registered a four-wicket win over Khelaghar SKS in a DPL encounter in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME BANK V DOLESHWAR
PRIME BANK: 301 for 8 in 50 overs (Chatterjee 57, Al-Amin 111; Sunny 2-34, Forhad 2-43)

DOLESHWAR: 302 for 5 in 48.2 overs (Saif 85, Ayub 76, Nasim 64; Monir 2-43)

Result: Doleshwar won by five wickets.

KHELAGHAR V MOHAMMEDAN
KHELAGHAR: 225 all out in 47.3 overs (Mosaddek 87, Amit 37; Gazi 3-41, Onik 2-19)

MOHAMMEDAN: 228 for 6 in 49.2 overs (Mazid 40, Raqibul 84 not out; Robiul 2-41, Tanvir 2-41)

Result: Mohammedan won by four wickets.

BKSP V GAZI GROUP
BKSP: 249 for 7 in 50 overs (Mahmudul 85, Aminul 63 not out, Shamim 44; Rabbi 2-52)

GAZI: 252 for 6 in 49.2 overs (Mahedi 70, Touhid 76 not out; Mukidul 2-56)

Result: Gazi won by four wickets.

My brother shaved a cricket bat out of a coconut branch. We played cricket with anything we put our hands on -- a hard orange, a lime, a marble -- anything we could use in the backyard or the streets. My dad made sure he gave me everything, he sacrificed what he had to, to make sure I had what I needed to perform at the best level.

BRIAN LARA
THE WEST INDIES GREAT SAID IN A SPECIAL FOR ICC CRICKET 360

Jewel, Junayna continue record-spree

SPORTS REPORTER



Jewel Ahmed and Junayna Ahmed continued to rewrite the record books as the third day of the Max Group National Swimming, Diving and Waterpolo Championships ended with Bangladesh Navy's complete domination at the Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

Jewel set two new records to take his record as well as gold tally to five while Junayna broke two more to take her record tally to five and gold tally to six yesterday.

There were two more records set on the third day -- one by Faisal Mahmud and the other by the Navy relay team, taking the number of records over the three days to 14.

Bangladesh Army's Jewel, whose



JUNAYNA AHMED

best record-haul in nationals was two before this championship, maintained his perfect record at this championship as he broke the 200m butterfly and 50m backstroke records. He broke the 15-year-old 200m butterfly record, set by his namesake Jewel Ahmed, in

2:11.57min, eclipsing the previous mark by 0.15 seconds. He broke the 50m backstroke record by 18th of a second, with a time of 0:28.12min.

Junayna, the 17-year-old Navy swimmer, broke 200m butterfly record by 6.89 seconds by clocking 2:34.14min while she broke the 400m freestyle record by 13.79 seconds, clocking 4:53.31min.

Faisal of Army won the 400m gold in 4:18.25min, erasing the old record by 5.15 seconds while Navy team won the 4x100m relay gold in record time (2:38.45min).

A total of 10 events were completed on the third day, six of which saw new records set. The fourth and final day will hold 10 more events.

Navy led the medals tally with 20 gold, 15 silver and 11 bronze medals followed by Army with eight gold, 12 silver and 12 bronze medals.

Shankar gain for India Fifth ODI against Australia today

AGENCIES, New Delhi



Regardless of the outcome of Wednesday's series decider against Australia, India are already counting Vijay Shankar's rise as a handy, nerveless all-rounder as one of their gains from the five-match series against the world champions.

The hosts approached their last ODI series before this year's World Cup more as an assessment of their preparedness for the showpiece event in England and Wales.

With Hardik Pandya, India's first choice pace-bowling all-rounder, recovering from a back injury, Shankar capitalised on his opportunity against Australia to catapult himself into World Cup contentions with some impressive performances.

The 28-year-old has proved he can float in the batting order and, with the ball, can hold his nerve in the death overs.

"Vijay has gained in confidence. He's

batted brilliantly at any given position given to him," India's bowling coach Bharat Arun told reporters on Tuesday at Feroz Shah Kotla ahead of the fifth and final match of the series, currently level at 2-2.

"He batted at number four, six and seven, and he has done exceptionally well."

Emboldened by Australia's remarkable turnaround in the ODI series against India, vice-captain Alex Carey Tuesday said they are "really confident" of entering the ICC World Cup with a squad good enough to play like defending champions.

"As a player in the Australian cricket side we have been working hard in the last 12-18 months. Some success has started to come our way. We are really confident moving with the squad we take to the World Cup," Carey said on the eve of the series-deciding game here.

The match will be played on a Feroz Shah Kotla wicket which may assist slow bowlers. Carey, though, said they are capable of handling whatever is thrown at them.