


Franchise favouritism or inconsistency?

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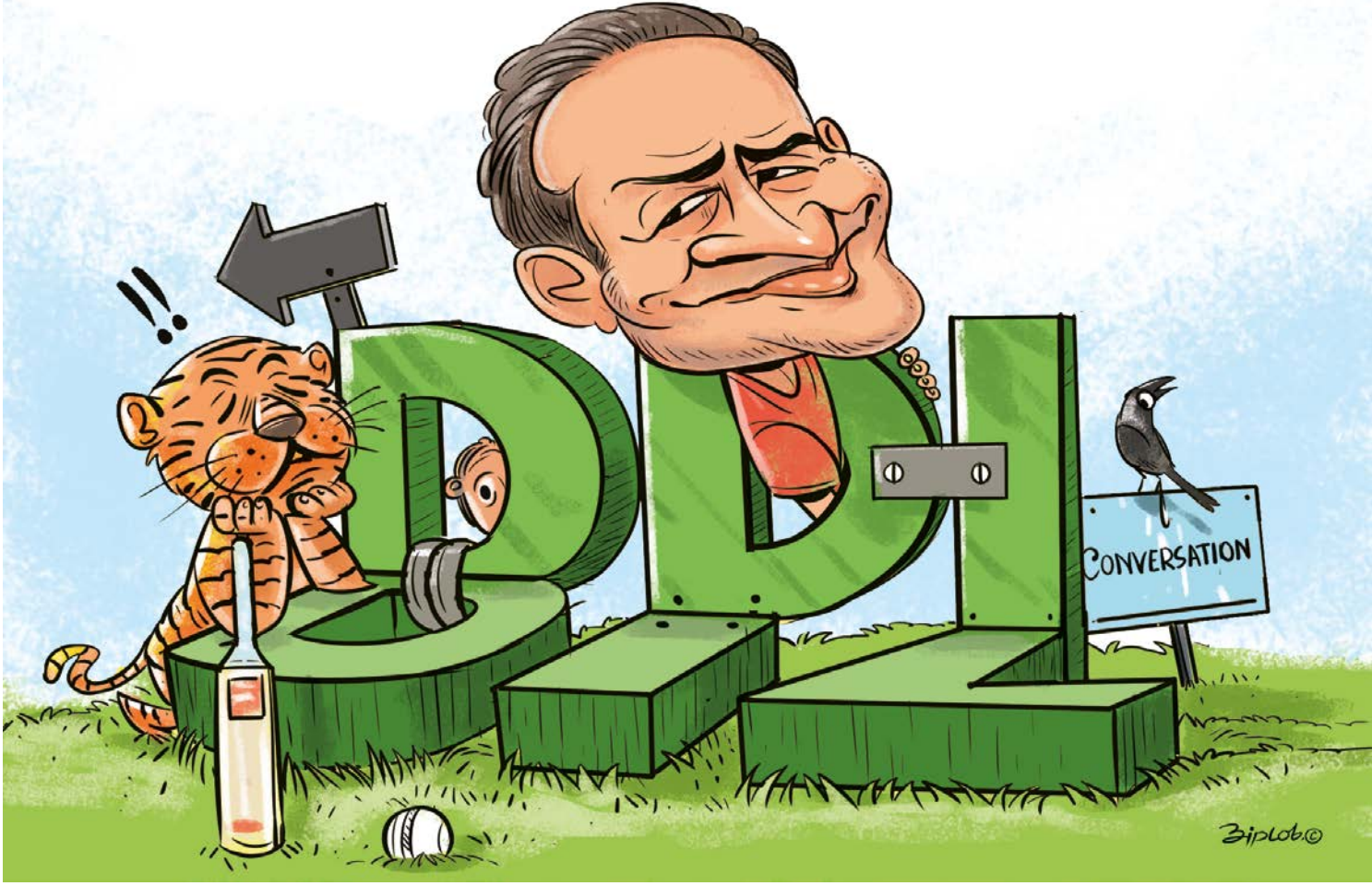
The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) is set to enter a new paradigm of doing things in its own inconspicuous way for the upcoming seventh edition of the tournament. The BPL Governing Council disclosed a new four-year cycle, however, their communication seems arbitrary seeing as how everything is going to change after a fresh reality was set during a press conference in Mirpur on August 4. The technical aspect of the new cycle was sound, but the process and the inauspicious issue regarding the timing and communication is set to throw the BPL into further disarray. Given the BPL's history, the franchises might want to count their lucky stars seeing as the Governing Council did not communicate these paradigm-shifting changes 15 days ahead of the tournament.

Essentially, the Governing Council have now communicated that everything is going to change, including players' contracts and also the BPL's agreements with franchises themselves. The sixth edition marked the end of the first cycle and the second four-year cycle will be played under different rules.

However, is there enough time for the franchises to settle into this new realm just three months before the season starts?

During the press conference on Sunday, BCB director Mahbubul Anam spoke about the maturity of the governing council after completing their first cycle. However, the start of the new proceedings still only reeks of the BPL's image of inconsistency.

Things came to a head when the BPL organising committee communicated that Shakib Al Hasan's move to Rangpur Riders from Dhaka Dynamites has not been endorsed by the governing council. However when the BPL governing council sent a letter to franchise owners on May 11 this year, there was no mention of either the four-year cycle or the fact that icon players cannot move arbitrarily due to the changes set to take place. The governing council only requested the franchise owners to make 'necessary preparations and make payments of previous dues [if any]' in that letter.



That Shakib's move has been rendered null, points to favouritism which could further tear asunder BPL's image.

"When we spoke to them after the last season, they assured us that everything would be done as per usual because the [new] agreement was a formality," Rangpur Riders CEO Ishtiaque Sadeque told The Daily Star.

The new agreement was by no means a 'formality' as Shakib's move was not endorsed but at no point was it clarified by the governing

council that the franchises cannot 'prepare' for the upcoming season by acquiring players. When questions are raised about whether or not the changes will benefit one franchise or the other, it does not bode well for the marketability of the tournament.

The BPL tournament is essentially a big money-spinning endeavour and it is supposed to bring in financial opportunities for those involved. The marketing part of the tournament cannot be overemphasized since it

is through marketing that the franchises and the tournament as a whole can begin to create the necessary hype and excitement at the start of a new season. The current situation will not lure franchise owners to make the investments that pull in the crowds.

Following the match-fixing scandal of 2013, the BPL needed a fresh start without controversies but there have been many instances that raised questions. Since 2016, icon players have been free to move from their previous franchises.

In fact, rule changes were there after 2016 as well. In 2016 only two local players could be retained but in 2017 four local players could be retained. Players like Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Mushfiqur Rahim moved to Rangpur Riders and Rajshahi Kings respectively in 2016 and there have been movements from icons each season and these matters have always caused much controversy.

For the next four-year cycle, the (former) franchise owners have now requested for more consistency in rules and regulations. The tournament organisers had claimed that the Indian Premier League's standards was the benchmark for the BPL, which was allegedly living up to those standards. However, the IPL has never had such inconsistency in policy making.

It is said that there is no last word when it comes to the BPL. The upcoming edition, set to begin with fresh changes, might also signal the arrival of fresh controversies if current events are the precursors to the tournament's future.

BCB'S LETTER TO THE FRANCHISES

Dated: May 11, 2019
Subject: Bangladesh Premier League T20 tournament

Dear Sir
Greetings from Bangladesh Cricket Board! We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the participation of... In the 6th edition of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 tournament, your continuous support and cooperation helped us to make the tournament successful.
As decided by the BPL Governing Council, the Bangladesh Cricket Board, this is to inform you that the 7th edition of BPL T20 tournament is scheduled to commence from 5th December 2019 to 11th January 2020. In the regard, you are requested to take necessary preparation and make immediate payment of previous dues (if any). Your kind cooperation and support in relation to the BPL T20 tournament will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you
Nizam Uddin Chowdhury
Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board



Australia players take off in celebration after winning the first Ashes Test by a whopping 251 runs at Edgbaston in Birmingham yesterday. Aussie bowler Nathan Lyon (R) took six wickets on the fifth and final day to help restrict England to just 146 and clinch their first win of the series.

PHOTO: RUETERS

Australia pillage England's Edgbaston fortress

AGENCIES, Birmingham



Australia spinner Nathan Lyon made light work of England's batting line-up as the hosts were bowled out for 146 in their second innings, losing the first Ashes Test by 251 runs to give the visitors a 1-0 lead in the series.

Nathan Lyon took six wickets as Australia thrashed England at their Edgbaston 'fortress'.

Victory gave Australia their first win at Edgbaston in any format since 2001 -- the last time they won an Ashes series in England -- and ended England's run off 11 successive wins at the Birmingham ground.

Chasing the second highest successful run chase in Ashes history (398), England first innings centurion Rory Burns fell first in the second over of the day for 11. The highest successful run chase ever was Australia getting 404 at Headingley in 1948.

Fellow opener Jason Roy (28) looked in good shape until he was

bowled when coming down the pitch, before Joe Denly (11) and the key wicket of England captain Joe Root (28), having been saved by two earlier reviews, were out before lunch.

The wickets kept tumbling in the afternoon, with England's middle order collapsing for the second innings in a row, before Lyon ripped through the tail for finish with figures of 6-49 as Australia picked up a first win at Edgbaston in 18 years.

Burns did not last long at the crease this time around, lofting a bouncer from Pat Cummins to Lyon at backward point.

On-field umpire Joel Wilson's poor test continued after Root was twice saved on review, meaning eight of Wilson's decisions have been overturned in this test.

Lyon then got his first wicket as he enticed a big shot from Roy, which he got badly wrong, wildly swinging and missing the ball completely.

An inside edge onto pad saw Denly caught off Lyon, before Root's luck ran out, with Cameron Bancroft taking a fine catch.

After Root's dismissal, it felt very much like a matter of time until England's resistance was broken and in the first over after lunch, Jos Buttler was clean bowled for one.

A bizarre shot from Jonny Bairstow saw him caught in the slips off his glove for six, with Ben Stokes out the next ball -- Lyon's 350th test match victim.

Moeen Ali (4) failed to produce with the bat once more as Lyon struck again and again with Broad falling for a golden duck.

Chris Woakes was last to go as he top scored with 37, with Cummings' fourth of the innings clinching a first opening game win in an Ashes series in England for Australia since 2005.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: First innings 284
ENGLAND: First innings 374
AUSTRALIA: Second innings 487 for 7 decl
ENGLAND: Second innings 146 all out (Roy 28, Root 28, Woakes 37; Lyon 6-49, Cummins 4-32)
Result: Australia won by 251 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Steve Smith

SHORTCORNER

Kohli hints at change in line-up for final match

PTI, Lauderhill

Series in their bag, India may experiment with their line-up in the final match against the West Indies, skipper Virat Kohli has hinted.

India won the weather-hit second match by 22 runs via Duckworth-Lewis method on Sunday to clinch the series with a game to spare.

Kohli lauded his players for "clinical" performance and dropped hints that he may try out players, who did not get chance to play in the first two matches.

"Winning is always going to be a priority. But sealing the series gives the chance to bring few guys in. Idea is always going to be to win first. But winning the first two games gives the cushion," Kohli said during the post match presentation ceremony.

The teams will now travel to Guyana for the final match, to play at Providence Stadium on Tuesday.

NZC retires Vettori's jersey number

PTI, Wellington

New Zealand Cricket (NZC) on Monday retired spin legend Daniel Vettori's jersey no. 11 as a mark of respect to the much-admired former captain's achievements. In fact, it's not just Vettori, NZC will retire the jerseys of all those cricketers who have represented the Black Caps in more than 200 ODIs.

"Players that represent New Zealand in 200 ODIs have their shirt number retired. Daniel Vettori who wore number 11 has played the most ODIs for the Black Caps with 291," NZC tweeted on Monday.

Vettori has scalped 305 wickets while representing New Zealand in 291 ODIs. With the bat, he scored 2253 runs, including four fifties.

Eng U-19s post 256

SPORTS REPORTER

An unbeaten 143-ball 122 from Jordan Cox helped hosts England post a challenging 256 for seven against Bangladesh in one-day encounter in the ongoing Tri-Nation Under-19s Tournament -- featuring Bangladesh, England and India -- in Beckenham yesterday.

After electing to field, Bangladesh got off to a brilliant start as medium pacer Tanzim Hasan returned opener Ben Charlesworth for a duck with the second delivery of the game. After that, the other English opener, Cox, kept on running out of partners as England were reduced to 132 for six in the 34th over. But a 108-run partnership between skipper George Balderson (56 off 50) and Cox helped England reach a commendable total. Left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan was the pick of the bowlers for the young Tigers, returning figures of three for 33.

Coming in to chase, Bangladesh were on 39 for one after six overs by the time this report was filed.

'Best Test batsman we've ever seen'

AFP, Birmingham



Australia captain Tim Paine on Monday hailed Steve Smith as "probably the best Test batsman we've ever seen" after his man-of-the-match performance in the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston.

The tourists beat England by 251 runs to win the first game of the five-match series.

England, set an imposing target of 398 to win, collapsed to 97-7 in the post-lunch session on the fifth and final day before being bowled out for 146.

Off-spinner Nathan Lyon took 6-49 and fast bowler Pat Cummins 4-32 as Australia enjoyed their first win in all formats at Edgbaston since 2001 -- the last time they won an Ashes series in England.

The match was a personal triumph for Australia's Steve Smith, who in his first Test

It does hurt. It is bitterly disappointing. Steve Smith played two brilliant innings. We have to keep working hard to get him out. Obviously it was hard that we lost Jimmy (Anderson) early on. These things happen. We have to take it on the chin and come back hard at Lord's.

JOE ROOT
England captain



Australia batsman Steven Smith signs a young fan's shirt following the side's 251-run win in the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston in Birmingham yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

since a 12-month ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal, scored 144 and 142.

Smith was the hero for Australia as they battled back from 122-8 in the first innings.

"I thought we were certainly up against it at that stage but we had the best player in the world at the crease," said Paine.

"Steve showed his class in both innings. We're running out of things to say about Smithy. He's probably the best Test batsman we've ever seen. We're lucky to witness it.

"Nathan bowled superbly but our three quicks took a lot of pressure off him at the other end as well. The seamers were sensational.

"We thought we could improve on our first-innings performance with the ball. All those guys are world-class performers. This morning all four of them were sensational.

"We know every Test we play in England, the crowd will be against us. I thought the guys handled themselves really well and we've come out on top."