



Is there a vision for coach selection?



STEVE RHODES



The World Cup is a thing of the past. The 3-0 series defeat in Sri Lanka seemed to have faded into the background. Now, the country's cricket fraternity is immersed in a guessing game about the name of the next head coach of the national side. Who will take the reins of the Tigers after the premature departure of Steve Rhodes?

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has officially started the process of interviewing shortlisted applicants for the vacant head coach position, with former Proteas coach Russell Domingo presenting his plans to



RUSSELL DOMINGO



CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA



MIKE HESSON



PAUL FABRACE

board high-ups on Wednesday. Who is next? A number of high-profile names like Mike Hesson, Paul Farbrace and Chandika Hathurusingha have come to the fore for interviews. Hesson's name has garnered some attention as the New Zealander stepped down as Kings XI Punjab coach yesterday, although he has also emerged as a possible candidate for the coveted post of India's head coach.

The biggest question, however, is what type of coach are the BCB looking for? Are there any specific plans or vision that will guide the appointment of a new head coach?

BCB had appointed South African Gary Kirsten as a consultant in May last year to

recommend and direct the board in matters regarding appointment of coaches at various cricketing levels. It is through that process that Rhodes was appointed, only for the board to reach a conclusion after 13 months that the gentleman's style did not go with what the board wanted.

This time, there is no special committee and apparently no specific vision to find the head coach; instead the focus seems only to be on instant action.

"Basically me, Sujon [Khaled Mahmud], Durjoy [Naimur Rahman] and Jalal [Yunus] bhai, [IH]Mallick bhai, Mahbubul [Anam] bhai, [Enayet Hossain] Siraj bhai and [Nazmul Hassan] Papon bhai sit together and look into the matter [interviewing a

coach]. We have been involved in cricket for a long time and we decide on it together, although it's not a committee," said Akram Khan, BCB's cricket operations committee chairman.

"We are mainly looking for someone who will give a good presentation, not just about the national team but also his plans about Bangladesh cricket as a whole. We are also considering plans to deal with senior and junior players in the team at the same time, how a coach plans for his coaching staff," he added.

BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus also echoed that sentiment.

But, as premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan recently emphasized the need for long-

term planning in Bangladesh cricket, preparing a guideline by the board in this regard is a must to achieve sustained success.

Ideally, it would have been best if the board first set a target for a long period of time and then appointing a head coach accordingly, taking his opinion on support staff on way to achieving the goal.

BCB have however already appointed former South Africa pacer Charl Langeveldt as pace-bowling coach and former New Zealand spinner Daniel Vettori as spin consultant for 100 days.

Sooner or later, the BCB will get the new man for the post, but will there be the clarity in process in the choice of Steve Rhodes's successor?

WOMEN'S T20 WC QUALIFIERS

Bangladesh to face PNG in opener

STAR SPORT DESK



Bangladesh will take on Papua New Guinea in the opening encounter of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifiers 2019, set to be played in Scotland from August 31 to September 7. Ireland will also face Namibia on the opening day of the tournament. The league-cum-knockout tournament will conclude with two teams qualifying for next year's World T20 in Australia.

Namibia were named as a replacement for Zimbabwe, having finished second in the Africa regional qualifiers earlier this year, while the Netherlands (Europe), Papua New Guinea (East Asia-Pacific), Thailand (Asia) and the USA (Americas) made it after winning their respective qualifying events. Scotland qualified as hosts.

The eight teams are divided into two groups with the top two from each entering the semifinals. Bangladesh, Thailand, Scotland and the USA form Group A, while Group B consists of Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Namibia and the Netherlands.

The tournament will be preceded by a warm-up match for each of the teams, to be played on August 29.

The Tigresses will now head for a 10-day preparation camp in Netherlands before the qualification round begins in Scotland. Bangladesh finished as runners-up and champions during 2015 and 2018 qualifiers respectively.

'Captaincy not even on the radar for Smith'

AGENCIES, Worcester

Cricket Australia chairman Earl Eddings says his board has not discussed the prospect of Steve Smith regaining the Test captaincy at some stage after his leadership ban expires next March, maintaining "it's not even on the radar".

Smith was stripped of the captaincy 16 months ago in South Africa as part of the sanctions handed down to him, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft over the Cape Town ball-tampering affair. Tim Paine was immediately installed as his successor and remains in charge, overseeing one of Australia's great Test victories in the first match of the Ashes at Edgbaston.

The former skipper's senior role in the field in Birmingham, including assisting Paine with field placements, intensified discussion about whether he would ultimately be restored as captain in the future when the tenure of Paine, who is 35 in December, comes to an end.

There is no timeline on that, with Paine focused on leading the team to a first series win in England in 18 years, although in an interview with the Cricket Australia website before the series the Tasmanian did flirt with the idea of retirement after the Ashes in the event of an Australian victory, before



quickly saying: "Nah, I would certainly be looking to play on."

Smith, who led the way with the bat in the first Test with two sublime hundreds, is ineligible for any leadership roles until next March, having received an additional 12-month ban from that responsibility on top of his year-long suspension from playing international and domestic cricket.

The CA chairman said the possibility of him regaining the top job in the future had not been spoken about by the board. While selectors recommend captains, it is the board which has final approval.

"It's not even on our radar. We've got a captain doing a great job. Steve has just come back into the side," said Eddings, who will be in London for the second Test at Lord's

along with chief executive Kevin Roberts.

"We haven't even thought about it or mentioned it at board meetings. We're just glad that [Smith, Warner and Bancroft] are back. That's been a focus, getting the boys back into the team. And getting them playing the right way, which they are. So that's not our focus."

"We're just happy they're doing well and happy to get them back in the side. Tim is captaining really well. It's not on the board agenda."

Smith spoke in the same terms when asked during the first Test whether he aspired to the captaincy, saying he was intent on "just going out there and doing my job as a batsman and scoring runs" and that the leadership was "certainly not on my radar at the moment".

The issue of captaincy is not an immediate concern with Paine running the show but it could become one in the event the wicketkeeper sustains an injury or dramatically falls out of form.

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Hashim Amla retires from international cricket

AGENCIES, South Africa

Hashim Amla yesterday called time on one of the great international careers of the modern era when he announced his retirement from all formats of international cricket. He will continue to be available for domestic cricket as well as the Mzansi Super League.

In an international career that was spread over 15 years he played 349 matches across the three formats for the Proteas, making more than 18 000 runs, including 55 centuries and 88 other scores in excess of 50.

Firstly, all Glory and thanks to the Almighty for granting me this Proteas journey which has been nothing but a joy and privilege," commented Hashim in a statement. "I learnt many lessons during this incredible ride, made many friends and most importantly shared in the love of a brotherhood called #proteafire.

"I would like to thank my parents for their prayers, love and support, it is their shadow over me that enabled me to play for years under the Protea sun."

"Also, My family, friends and agent, my team mates and every member of the support staff throughout this incredible journey. A heartfelt thank you to every one of you!"

"The fans for energizing me when times were tough, and for celebrating with me when we succeeded together. Siyabonga South Africa!"



"And, of course, a very special thanks to the President and the Board at Cricket South Africa – not forgetting the Chief Executive, Mr Thabang Moroe, and his administrative team. I really appreciate all the opportunities and am truly grateful."

"Love and peace," he concluded.

"It is always sad to bid farewell to one of the true legends of the game," commented Cricket South Africa (CSA) Chief Executive Thabang Moroe, "but at the same time this is rather an occasion to celebrate the richness that Hashim has brought to the game around the world both on and off the field. His humility has always been his standout quality and I cannot imagine a better role model to teach us all how to lead better lives. He has added great value not only to the Proteas but to the country at large," he added.

CA unveils new transgender policy

AGENCIES, Sydney

Cricket Australia (CA) unveiled new guidelines Thursday to ensure transgender players can take part in the game at the highest levels.

The policy sets out a testosterone limit for transgender and gender-diverse players who want to play for state and national women's teams.

"It doesn't make any sense that today, people are discriminated against, harassed or excluded, because of who they are," Cricket Australia chief executive Kevin Roberts said in a statement.

To be eligible for elite women's teams, the players must show a testosterone concentration of less than 10 nanomoles per litre over at least 12 months.

They must also be able to demonstrate their elected gender is consistent with how they are living their lives on a daily basis.

The move more closely aligns Australia to the International Cricket Council's gender diversity guidelines.

Cricket Australia's policy also provides guidance to community clubs, supporting grassroots cricketers to compete as the gender with which they identify.

One grass pitch, 1.4 billion people

AFP, Shanghai

They play on a football pitch with plastic wickets and most Chinese people have never even heard of cricket. The Ashes it is not.

But a devoted band of followers says the sport is gradually growing in China, where there is thought to be only one grass cricket pitch for a population of 1.4 billion.

They are up against it with scant domestic media coverage and limited facilities, and Chinese cricket making worldwide headlines for paltry scores.

In 2017 the men's national side was bowled out for a humiliating 28 runs against Saudi Arabia in a World Cricket League regional qualifier.

And this January the women's team were skittled out for just 14 runs against the United Arab Emirates, then the lowest women's total in T20 international cricket.

Undeterred, a handful of spectators recently turned out to watch Shanghai's women's team, and saw them thrash a Hong Kong outfit in a 20-overs-a-side game reduced to 15 overs because of the heat.

In the absence of a grass cricket pitch -- there is one in China, but it is 1,500 kilometres (1,000 miles) south in Guangzhou -- the women played on an artificial football pitch.

"The first question (I get asked) is, 'What's cricket?'" said Ma Fei, an umpire who with his whites and sun hat certainly looks the part.

Ma, who also goes by the Pakistani-sounding name Malik, then tells the frequent inquisitors that it is a bit like baseball.

"And then they understand," he said, adding that he was attracted to the game



This photo taken on July 28, 2019 shows Shanghai's Song Fengfeng (centre L) batting during a match against a Hong Kong side in Shanghai. Followers say the sport is gradually growing in China, where there is reportedly only one grass cricket pitch for a population of 1.4 billion.

most populous country and its growing middle class into the sport.

"We were in university when cricket first entered China," she said.

"To be honest, we didn't really know what it was."

The 33-year-old Huang, who teaches cricket at school, warned that if success comes, it could be a way off.

"I think China is now paving the road for growth because we all hope to start (fostering talent) young," she said.

"So what we have been doing is youth training, and specifically, making cricket more popular and laying the foundations in Shanghai."

HISTORIC ROOTS

Shanghai, because of its large number of expatriates, is one of the main cities in China for cricket.

The first recorded cricket match in China was played in 1858 between officers from the British Navy and a Shanghai side.

But while the British Empire spread the game to Australia, South Asia, the Caribbean and Hong Kong, among others, mainland China resisted colonisation and the sport never caught on.

"China's current cricket situation is in a state of unfolding," said the umpire Ma, moments before the Hong Kong team attempted to chase down 108 runs to beat Shanghai.

The visitors fell well short, making 68-5 in their 15 overs to give Shanghai an emphatic victory -- and a glimpse of a brighter future.

"It may be too soon to talk about the world (level) now, but I hope China will achieve good results in Asia," said Ma.

"Then break Asian records and set sights on the world."

believe that Chinese cricket can flourish. A swashbuckling batter, she represented China at the Asian Games in Guangzhou in 2010 and at Incheon in 2014. There was no cricket at the 2018 Games. China's women came fourth in 2010, when cricket made its Asian Games debut, and it is set to return to the Games in 2022 in China's Hangzhou -- where the country's second grass pitch is under construction.

Huang was introduced to the game in 2006 by the visiting Asian Cricket Council, which wants to get the world's