



## Is there a vision for coach selection?



STEVE RHODES



RUSSELL DOMINGO



CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA



MIKE HESSON



PAUL FABRACE

SPORTS REPORTER

The World Cup is a thing of the past. The 3-0 series defeat in Sri Lanka seemed to have also 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

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, Mahbulul [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.

## The squad won't change much: Jamie Day

SPORTS REPORTER

The national team's preparation for the joint qualifiers of the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup are likely to get underway in the last week of this month as English coach Jamie Day is scheduled to return to Dhaka on August 19.

Day has finalised his 38-member preliminary squad, which has been sent to FIFA and AFC on August 5. There were very few changes from the squad that played the pre-qualifiers against Laos in June as the 33-year-old coach pinned his hopes on proven campaigners who know Day's formations and styles.

"I have seen most of the [domestic] games from the UK and as I have said before, the top five sides [Bangladesh Premier League clubs] feature most of the Bangladesh [national] players. There are one or two who have done well recently from clubs lower down but the squad won't change that much.

"The players who have played this year have not let me or the country down so far and have been very successful, so I don't believe we need to change much," Jamie told The Daily Star over an email exchange on



Tuesday.

Day was unwilling to reveal the 38-member squad until an official announcement was made but it has been learnt that he may call upon a couple of new

faces for the away match against Afghanistan on September 10.

Young forward Rakibul Islam of Rahmatganj MFS, who struck three goals in the league, is likely to make his debut in the senior side after representing Bangladesh U-23 team. However, national discard Tolkish Ahmed -- who struck seven goals for Mohammedan in the second leg of the just-concluded league -- was not in Day's consideration.

With Afghanistan yet to decide their home venue, there has been a bit of uncertainty about where the team's training camp abroad will be held as the team management wants to fly out for Afghanistan's home venue straight from the camp.

National team manager Satyajit Das Rupu said that they have already talked to Qatar and United Arab Emirates about a short-term training block and have let those federations know that Bangladesh would want to play a couple of practice matches against local sides.

It is however certain that Day will have to start the preparatory camp without Abahani players as they will play the AFC Cup inter-zone semifinal play-offs against North Korea's April 25 on August 21 and 28 respectively.

## Amla quits int'l cricket

REUTERS, Cape Town



South Africa's Hashim Amla announced his retirement from international cricket on Thursday, bringing the curtain down on one of the country's leading batting careers.

The 36-year-old played international cricket for 15 years, scoring almost 10,000 test runs and close to another 10,000 in limited overs internationals.

He is the only South African to have scored a triple century in test cricket -- a record 311 not out against England at The Oval in mid-2012 -- and is second behind Jacques Kallis in test runs for the country (9,282).

"I learnt many lessons during this incredible ride, made many friends and most importantly shared in the love of a brotherhood," he said in a statement released by Cricket South Africa (CSA).

His retirement follows swiftly on from that of his fast bowling colleague Dale Steyn and is no surprise after a disappointing World Cup in England in May and June.

Amla struggled initially at test level, with his batting technique heavily questioned, but after a first test century against New Zealand at Newlands in 2006 he established himself as a key player in the South Africa set-up.

He went on to top the International Cricket Council rankings for both test and ODI batsmen.

Amla was appointed test captain in 2014 but gave up the job during England's visit to South Africa at the beginning of 2016 when it was affecting his form.

"It is always sad to bid farewell to one of the



STATS

Amla hit 9,282 runs at an average of 46.64 in 124 Test matches and 8,113 at 49.46 in 181 one-day internationals. He hit 28 centuries in Tests and 27 in ODIs. His Test tally included four double centuries.

true legends of the game, 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," said CSA chief executive Thabang Moroe.

Amla will continue to play domestic cricket.

## Hafeez, Malik dropped from PCB contracts

AFP, Karachi

Veteran players Shoaib Malik and Mohammad Hafeez lost their central contracts on Thursday as Pakistan's cricket clear-out gathered pace.

Fast bowler Mohammad Amir was also demoted in the new contracts, announced a day after head coach Mickey Arthur was shown the door following a disappointing World Cup.

Malik, 37, had already quit one-day internationals after a poor World Cup in which he scored only eight runs in three matches with two ducks.

At 38, Hafeez also has little chance of regaining the chance to play for Pakistan, while Amir, who retired from Tests last month to focus on limited-overs cricket, is demoted from an A-category contract to a C.

"The annual central-contracts list for the 2019-2020 is trimmed from 33 to 19, reducing the number of categories from five to three," the Pakistan Cricket Board added in a release.

Skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed, batsman Babar Azam and spinner Yasir Shah were retained in category A and will get 1.1 million rupees (6,870 US dollars) a month over the next year.

## 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.

PHOTO: AFP

by its "ceremonial procedures... the tea breaks, for example".

"WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS" Reliable figures are hard to come by, but the International Cricket Council (ICC), the sport's governing body, said in 2017 that about 80,000 people played in China. Half of those are women and girls.

The ICC has made growing the game in the world's second-biggest economy a priority, but the current number is meagre considering China's population.

Shanghai's Huang Zhuo, a pioneer of the sport in China, is among those who

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

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."

## CA unveils new transgender policy

AFP, 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.