

Fine tuning or overall policy change?

Abdullah Al Mehdi



The recent history of the Bangladesh cricket team's fast bowling unit is a topsyturvy one. In an era where the general quality of fast bowling is rising, the

national team is not only lagging behind international standards but appear to be relatively 'out of ideas' when it comes to improving the state of the bowling unit.

Bangladesh signed pace legend Courtney Walsh in 2016 to guide a relatively young pace arsenal with veteran Mashrafe Bin Mortaza leading the charge. There was an also apparent resurgence in faith shown to fast bowlers as five pacers were included in the squad for the World T20 and the Asia Cup tournaments in

The likes of Taskin Ahmed and Mustafizur Rahman showed promise, looking capable of carrying the pace lineup alongside Mashrafe and the likes of Rubel Hossain. Four years on, Walsh has left his post after the 2019 World Cup and even as new pacers have come in, the Tigers have shown little signs of levelling

The ODI side regularly features four seamers, even at home, but the New Zealand series last year and the recently concluded World Cup showed that pace is a discipline where the Tigers suffer greatly. Even ace paceman Mustafizur Rahman got his wickets after the 30-over period at the World Cup and the new-ball woes greatly compounded the team's ability to challenge in a major tournament.

failed to execute ideas which were based on Walsh's theme of 'consistency'. In fact, bowlers showed more improvement during Heath Streak and Champaka Ramanayaka's tenures.

team management almost always seem to fumble through the darkness before stumbling onto familiar faces like Taskin Ahmed.

However, while talent remains on an individual level, the quality never improved. Fizz was still mostly relying on his cutters that he had to perfect due to conditions at home. Taskin was looking to hit the wicket hard, but his inconsistent form shows that ideas did not materialise.

Abu Jayed perhaps suffered from a lack of opportunities while others such as Khaled Ahmed, Ebadat Hossain and Abu Hider have remained on the periphery of the management's plans, never showing signs of cementing their place. Subashis Roy, once thought to have great potential, played his last Test in 2017 before he too was 'lost' in the shuffle.

India, once thought to be primarily a batting side, improved in Tests by finding owlers who attack. The question facing newly appointed pace-bowling coach Charl Langeveldt is whether small tweaks to individuals will do the trick or whether it is a matter of implementing an overall change in policy for the fast men.

He admitted that his coaching philosophy was different to Walsh's and e would focus on the individual. He understood the problem of playing pacers in the subcontinent while pushing the bowlers to get better in foreign conditions. However, the improvement shown by pacers is directly related to the nature of the pitches here as well, which has left a chasm between current and required standards.

Langeveldt talked about 'changing Despite Walsh's best wishes, the pacers the mindset' of the bowlers, but the aggression that has to be shown on the field can only materialise through skills developed. "It's [fast bowling] hard work but you need to be clever," Langeveldt said during a press conference. It appears Plenty of faces have been tried in all that for the pace battery to improve, a lot three formats in recent times but the more than just fine tuning is needed.

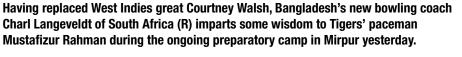


PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Bangladesh prepare for Afghanistan tie

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team are set to begin a training camp ahead their opening match of the joint qualifiers of the

2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup against Afghanistan, which will be held on September 20, at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The Bangladesh Football Federation named a 25-member preliminary squad for the camp on Friday. Head coach Jamie Day informed that although he has called up an additional goalkeeper the finalised 23-member squad for the joint qualifiers will not feature all four keepers present at

"Like I said before, I like [Mazharul Islam] Himel. Ithink Himel has done well. Obviously we are not going to carry four goal keepers in a squad of 23 but I think it is important to keep him involved in the national team. So I asked if

wanted to come and train with us up until the 31st and that's what he will do. It keeps him involved, it keeps him training with three other goalkeepers



and Bobby -- the goalkeeping coach -- can also assess all four keepers and train them. I thought it was right to add him to the squad." said Day at the team hotel in Paltan

The Englishman also spoke of his plans for the national booters for the next two weeks, ahead of their departure for Tajikistan on September 1 for the upcoming match against Afghanistan.

"I think up until the 31st it is about just making sure the boys are where we want them to be fitness wise and mentally back in the swing of training every day and be in a camp to prepare for very important games. Then in the second week we will be more demanding of the tactical side of it. They have had a 10-day or 12-day break. I think they will be looking forward to coming back and do a little bit of training."

BD lose by six again

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh U-21 women's hockey team suffered a 6-0 defeat at the hands of Sports Authority of Indian (SAI) academy's hockey team in the second match of the Junior Women's AHF Cup's preparation series at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The home side fell one goal behind in the first quarter before going on to concede three more in the second quarter. After resumption, the visiting SAI Academy's women's team added two more goals, raising the tally to 6-0, however they could not add any more in the fourth and final quarter in from the home side, who lost the first match by an identical 0-6 margin on Wednesday.



I think the introduction of the [World] Test Championship is a good initiative for our country. Personally I am very happy because Test cricket doesn't get enough attention in our country. Now it will get the attention, so it is good for us. The Test match [against Afghanistan at home] before the Test Championship will be good in terms of preparation. It is a good opportunity for us and I am hopeful that it will be a

MOMINUL HAQUE

Tigresses edge past Thailand

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team beat their Thai counterparts by four wickets in a T20I at the Kampong Cricket Club in Utrecht on Wednesdav.

Thailand scored 68 runs for the loss of five wickets in their allotted overs before Bangladesh overcame the target with three balls to spare.

Bangladesh will play a T20 practice match against the Netherlands before taking on Thailand in the second T20I on Monday.

After the completion of their 10-day camp in the Netherlands, the Tigresses will travel to Scotland to participate in the upcoming Women's World T20 qualifiers, set to begin on August 31.

Eight teams, divided into two groups, will take part in the qualifiers. The winners of the two semifinals will ensure their places at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020, to be held in the Australian cities of Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney from February 21.

In the qualifiers, defending champions Bangladesh have been drafted alongside Scotland, Papua New Guinea and the USA in Group A while Group B consists of Ireland, Thailand, Namibia, and the Netherlands.

Lankans to tour Pakistan for

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka will return to Pakistan after a nearly two-year absence for three short-form cricket games later this year, the sports minister said Thursday.

ODIs or T20Is

"We are not in a position to send the team to Pakistan to play the two Tests, but we will be in Pakistan for about eight days to play the ODIs or the T20 matches," Harin Fernando told reporters in Colombo.

No dates were announced, but the minister said the games would be scheduled for later this year.

Citing safety fears, Fernando said two Tests could instead be played in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where Pakistan has held many of its home series.

International teams have stayed away from Pakistan over security concerns.

In October 2017, Sri Lanka played a T20 match in Lahore for the first time since a terror attack near the same venue in March 2009.

Archer strikes early

AFP, Leeds



England fast bowler Jofra Archer dismissed recalled Australia opener Marcus Harris on the first day of CRICKET the third Test at Headingley on Thursday before rain intervened again in the Ashes.

Only four overs were possible before lunch but that was enough time for Australia to be reduced to 12-1 after England captain Joe Root had won the toss under gloomy skies in conditions that promised to assist his pace bowlers.

No sooner had Root called correctly on his Yorkshire home ground, however, then rain delayed the scheduled start by over an hour.

When play eventually got underway, conditions remained difficult for the batsmen.

Australia had dropped opener Cameron Bancroft, who had made just 44 runs in four innings, and brought in Harris to partner David Warner at the top of the order after England had enjoyed the better of a rain-affected draw in the second Test at Lord's.

Both left-handed batsmen struggled against England's new-ball attack of Stuart Broad and

The experienced Warner was repeatedly beaten by Broad jagging the ball off a length, while the express Archer, in his second Test, went past Harris's outside edge. Harris did leg-glance a stray Archer delivery for

four and edged him short of Ben Stokes at third slip for another, far less convincing boundary. But Archer, bowling from around the wicket,

squared him up with an 87.3 mph delivery that saw Harris get a thin edge through to wicketkeeeper Jonny Bairstow -- like Root appearing on his home ground.

Moments after Harris had fallen for eight, with Australia 12-1 off four overs, the umpires took the players off the field after deciding that a fresh shower was now too strong for play to continue. Warner had yet to score after facing 12 balls.

Australia, still 1-0 up in the five-match series after their 251-run win in the first Test at Edgbaston, made three changes to their side in

With Steve Smith ruled out with a concussion suffered when hit on the neck by a 92 mph Archer bouncer at Lord's, Marnus Labuschagne -- cricket's inaugural concussion substitute when replacing Smith in the second Test -- took over from the star batsman.

Smith, however, was a huge loss to Australia having made scores of 144, 142 and 92 this series. Meanwhile fast bowler James Pattinson came in for paceman Peter Siddle.

England pacer Jofra Archer (C) continued his hot streak in the Ashes series by taking the wicket of Australia opener Marcus Harris for just eight on the first day of the third Test at Leeds yesterday.



SL 85 for 2 on rain-hit day

AFP, Colombo



Dimuth Skipper Karunaratne helped Sri Lanka to 85 for two at stumps on a rain-hit day one of the second Test against New Zealand

in Colombo on Thursday. Only 36.3 overs were possible after rain washed out the first session and bad light ended play for the day with Karunaratne

unbeaten on 49. Karunaratne, fresh from a matchwinning century in the first Test in Galle

last week last week, hit six boundaries during his 100-ball stay in overcast conditions.

The left-hander batted with positive intent despite losing opening partner Lahiru Thirimanne and Kusal Mendis either side of tea.

Thirimanne never looked comfortable and his 59-minute stay at the wicket produced just two runs.

His misery ended when he pushed a William Somerville delivery and was caught at extra cover by skipper Kane Williamson. He had been earlier dropped by wicketkeeper B.J. Watling off Somerville. Mendis looked good as he reached 32 with four fours and put on 50 runs with

Karunaratne to steady the batting. Colin de Grandhomme, who made the XI in place of Mitchell Santner, got Mendis caught behind on a seaming delivery outside the off stump and Watling gloved

the catch. Former captain Angelo Mathews joined Karunaratne in the middle to remain unbeaten on nought after facing 14

The hosts only need a draw to clinch the

two-match series. Both teams made one change from the first match.

Sri Lanka included veteran spinner Dilruwan Perera in place of Akila Dananjaya, who was reported for a suspect bowling action after the first Test. SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: First innings 85 for 2 (Karunaratne 49 not out, Mendis 32; De Grandhomme 1-14, Somerville 1-20)