



Milk for Good

Similar tactics, different methods

SPORTS REPORTER

OBHAI Bangladesh will be facing off a known opponent, Afghanistan, for the first time in the longer format of the game in their one-off Test starting from September 5 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium (ZACS) in Chattogram.

And much like they usually do in the shorter formats -- ODIs and T20s -- the Afghans will be posing a threat with the variation in their spin attack in the longer version of the game. The 15-member Afghanistan squad includes four frontline spinners.

More than the number of spinners, it is the variety they possess that will be most challenging for the Bangladesh batsmen.

Skipper Rashid Khan is known to bamboozle batsmen with his quality leg-spin while all-rounder Mohammad Nabi specialises in simple yet effective off-spin to keep the scoring rate in check and take wickets by creating pressure.

Meanwhile, Zahir Khan, who played for Khulna Titans in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) earlier this year, is a left-arm chinaman bowler. It was his exploits in the Afghanistan's sole two-day practice game against BCB XI that saw the home side bundled out for a meagre 123 in 44.3 overs on the second day at the M.A Aziz Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Continuing on from their overnight score of 242 for six, Afghanistan declared at 289 for nine yesterday morning. BCB XI were in trouble early on and never really recovered, succumbing to Zahir's spin web.

After Rashid had sent back opener Anamul Haque (19) in his very first over, Zahir started to weave his magic and finished with figures of 24 for five. BCB XI slumped under the spell of Zahir and Rashid as the duo bagged eight wickets between them. The match was drawn after Afghanistan reached 14 without loss in 3.5 overs after the exchange.

While Zahir and Rashid starred in the practice match, Qais Ahmad -- another leg-spinner in the Afghan squad -- who lends further variety to their spin quartet, remained wicketless in his two overs yesterday.

While Afghanistan are most likely to attack with their spin variation, Bangladesh -- who also have four front-line spinners alongside a few part-timers in their ranks -- will however rely on sticking to their processes. The spin quartet of skipper Shakib Al Hasan, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam and Nayeem Hasan are all more or less traditional spin bowlers who specialise in extracting the most from the wicket by maintaining line and length.

Young off-spinner Nayeem Hasan said that the Tigers will try to stay focused on their process to achieve success.

"Actually you need to play according to the process. If the process is maintained and I also give my 100 per cent, we can get the success at the end of the day," said the 18-year-old at ZACS after the Tigers' first practice session in the port city yesterday.

Judging by past trends of team combinations, it can be expected that both sides will attack with spin in the Chattogram Test, although the methods will likely be different for each team.



Shakib Al Hasan (L), Bangladesh's best spin bowler, showed rookie Nayeem Hasan the ropes at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. (Inset) Meanwhile, with catching being a weak point for the Tigers in the past, Soumya Sarkar (L) was seen working on that aspect of his game with coach Russell Domingo.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan (C) celebrates after taking a wicket on the second day of the solitary two-day practice match against BCB XI at MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram yesterday. The off-spinner managed to scalp three wickets on the day with the match ending in a draw.

PHOTO: BCB

First practice match for booters today

SPORTS REPORTER

FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022
AFC Asian Cup 2023
Qatar 2022

Bangladesh national football team will take on FC Kuktosh in the first of their two practice matches at in Tajikistan today as part of preparation for the joint qualifiers of the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup against Afghanistan, which will be held on September 10.

The team had eight days of training in Dhaka under head coach Jamie Day before the team left on Saturday morning and reached Dushanbe in the early hours of Monday.

The team got one session of practice in Dushanbe ahead of their match against the Tajikistan Premier League side Kuktosh, who finished third in the league last

season after being promoted to the top-tier in 2017.

Having worked on the fitness of the squad except for the seven Abahani players in Dhaka, the coach is now supposed to work on the tactical aspects of the game in Dushanbe with all 23 players. The British coach will look to find the right combination and give the players as much match-time as possible ahead of the Afghanistan tie.

Even though positive results in practice matches would encourage and boost the men in red and green, Day's focus is on giving opportunity to all the 23 players in the two practice matches in order to see them closely in an attempt to pick the right combination for the September 10 tie.

The coach will keep his eyes on the defenders in the practice

matches as the defence is considered the most vulnerable department of the squad while the midfielders and forwards are likely to be the ones tried and tested under the guidance

of Day over the last one year.

However, the coach is seemingly giving emphasis on discipline as he warned the players to be disciplined inside and outside the hotel.



Bangladesh players train at a practice facility in Dushanbe yesterday after having arrived at the Tajikistan capital earlier in the morning. The booters will play their first practice match against local premier league outfit FC Kuktosh today.

PHOTO: BFF

BD women edge past PNG

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh registered a six-run win over Papua New Guinea in an ICC Women's T20 World Cup Qualifier encounter in Dundee, Scotland yesterday. The match was held on the allocated reserve day after rain prevented play on August 31.

Rain also interrupted the proceedings yesterday but fortunately could not halt it altogether this time around. Sent in to bat, Bangladesh managed to score 103 for eight in 16.3 overs before rain intervened with Fahima Khatun remaining unbeaten on an 18-ball 32.

After resumption, Papua New Guinea were given a revised target of 59 runs from eight overs. However, they could only manage to score 52 for five, courtesy of Nahida Khatun's heroics with the ball. Nahida took three wickets for just three runs in the final over when the opposition needed 11 to secure a win.

Obhai sponsors home series

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Obhai -- a ride-sharing platform -- was announced as the official title sponsor for Bangladesh's one-off Test against Afghanistan, starting from September 5 in Chattogram, and the following tri-nation T20 series involving hosts Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan, which will start from September 13 in Mirpur. The series has been rechristened as the Obhai Test and Tri-Nation T20I series.

"It's a pleasure, and honor to be partnering with the BCB for this Obhai Series, supporting growth of Cricket amongst our Cricket lovers as Commuting and Cricket have been an integral part of every Bangladeshi's daily life," said Anis Ahmed, founder of Obhai, as quoted in a media release from the BCB.

India complete clean sweep

REUTERS, Kingston



India completed an emphatic 2-0 series sweep against West Indies when they won the second Test by 257 runs in Jamaica yesterday after the hosts' batsman Darren Bravo was replaced by a concussion substitute after retiring hurt.

Bravo was struck on the helmet by a short delivery from Jasprit Bumrah in the final over on Sunday, but batted on and saw out the last two balls at Sabina Park in Kingston.

He returned for the start of day four, but lasted only three overs before deciding to retire hurt on 23 and left the field to be examined by a doctor.

Soon afterwards, Jermaine Blackwood was named as a concussion substitute and went out to bat following the fall of the fourth wicket.

Blackwood's addition meant West Indies had 12 batsmen for the second innings.

Blackwood, a Jamaican who was not in the original squad, scored 38 runs but it made little difference to the final outcome as West Indies, chasing 468 for victory, were bowled out for 210.

India dominated the short two-test series, part of the inaugural World Test Championship, having won the opening encounter in Antigua by 318 runs.

India also extended their unbeaten streak against West Indies to 23 tests. They last lost to

the Caribbean team in Kingston in 2002.

West Indies lost two wickets in the morning session, Roston Chase lbw to Ravindra Jadeja for 12, while Shimron Hetmyer was caught at cover off Ishant Sharma for one.

But dismissals came thick and fast after lunch as India ripped through the middle order and tail, with all the bowlers sharing the spoils, though Bumrah picked up only one wicket to add to his six from the first innings.

Blackwood became the second test concussion substitute after Marnus Labuschagne, who replaced Steve Smith in the Australia team during the second Ashes test against England less than a month ago.



India pacer Jasprit Bumrah (L) celebrates after dismissing Jermaine Blackwood on the fourth day of the second Test against West Indies in Kingston yesterday. India won the match by 257 runs to complete a 2-0 sweep of the series.

PHOTO: AFP

Denly set to open, Roy to drop down

AFP, London

Joe Denly will open the batting for England in the fourth Ashes Test with the struggling Jason Roy to drop down the order, the batsman told the BBC on Monday.

England will hope that Denly can add some solidity with Rory Burns when the fourth Test gets underway at Old Trafford on Wednesday, as the latter's Surrey teammate Roy has accumulated just 62 runs in the three Tests so far.

Roy, who has failed to adapt to the five-day format since the World Cup-winning campaign earlier in the season, will drop down to four.

Denly scored his first-half century of the series in England's miraculous run chase in the third Test, inspired by Ben Stokes, which levelled the five-match series at 1-1.

"I got a call from [captain] Joe Root after a bit of time off and he said he'd like me to go at the top of the order and try to get us off to a good start," Denly told BBC Radio.

Denly made scores of six and 17 as an opener on his Test debut against the West Indies in January before dropping down the order.

But he thinks his partnership with Rory Burns could enable Roy to attack the Australian bowling.

"Obviously Jason is going to bat four and that's great for English cricket," said the 33-year-old Denly.

Waugh back to bolster Aussies

REUTERS, Manchester



Australia have brought back former captain Steve Waugh to help the squad prepare for the final stretch of the Ashes series against England as the tourists look to rebound from the painful third Test defeat at Headingley.

Waugh had left the squad after the first two Tests as scheduled but has rejoined the group ahead of the fourth Test at Old Trafford starting on Wednesday.

With the series locked at 1-1, one victory in the next two tests will ensure Australia retain the urn in England for the first time since Waugh's side triumphed 4-1 in 2001.

"We asked him to stay for the third Test, but he had to go back for a function," Australia coach Justin Langer told reporters in Manchester.

"But he was actually going to fly there, do the function and fly back the next day. That's how much he's enjoying it. He's been like a kid at Christmas."

Having Waugh in the backroom staff, much like Ricky Ponting taking on an assistant coaching role during the World Cup, was a priority for Langer after he faced many testing moments during his first year as coach.

"Guys like Punter (Ponting) and Steve Waugh, not only do they have a great presence in the group, but they are great psychologists," Langer added.

"They've been in the cauldron before, they've seen it all, so to have that those type of guys, we are talking about developing leadership in Australian cricket, to have our guys to learn from people of that calibre is very important short term."

Australia's one-wicket defeat in the third Test was a bitter pill to swallow but they would put it behind them, he said.

"I actually felt physically sick after it and then I went back to my room. I wasn't sure whether to cry my eyes out or smash my hotel room," he said.



"Everyone in that change room, probably a lot of Australians felt it, felt completely sick.

"You never like to let opportunities slip... that's OK, we'll make sure we learn from it."