

SPORT



Can Domingo change the mindset?

NABID YEASIN

When Bangladesh were pitted against Afghanistan for a one-off Test series followed by a T20I tri-series involving the duo and the low-ranked Zimbabweans, many thought it would be a great opportunity for a declining Tigers to get back into their groove after a disappointing tour of Sri Lanka in July which was preceded by an eighth-place finish in the World Cup in England.

However, the entire arrangement has only served as an eye-opener for the Tigers. The 114-Test old Bangladesh had their flaws and shortcomings pointed out, and seized up, by Afghanistan -- the newest side in the format.

Instead of dominating and easing their way back into rhythm, Bangladesh could only register a hard-fought three-wicket victory against Zimbabwe before being slapped hard by Afghanistan in a 25-run defeat when the two sides first met in the T20I tri-series in Mirpur on September 15.

Although Bangladesh somewhat redeemed themselves with an impressive second phase -- winning all the Chattogram leg matches and booking a place in the final -- not a single soul would be confident of the outcome of the tri-series final had it not been decided by rain.

Even if the weather remained favourable at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Tuesday, Bangladesh could well have been on the losing side. And even if they had managed to win, the victory would only come as a consolation considering their horrendous recent hiccup.

Bangladesh will now be tested in the same two formats but against a far better side when they tour India for a two-Test and a three-T20I series next November. It cannot be said the Tigers look in the best of shape going into a



The one-off Test against Afghanistan earlier this month and the following T20I tri-series served as an eye-opener for Bangladesh. Bangladesh were humiliated by Afghanistan in the longest format before realising their shortcomings in T20s against the same opponents. PHOTO: STAR FILE



much more challenging assignment.

However, one can say that the players can fine tune their technique in the upcoming National Cricket League (NCL), scheduled to begin next month. But is that really the case?

Even Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan believes that playing or not playing in the NCL is the same thing, presumably because its standards are nowhere near that of an international game. Shakib will rather be featuring in the ongoing Caribbean Premier League before joining the team for the tour of India.

One boon for the Tigers is that Russell Domingo, the newly appointed head coach, will be going to Sri Lanka to oversee the performances of the touring Bangladesh A team. One of the main reasons for selecting Domingo as head coach was that the South

African would be more involved with the domestic games and get more players out of the pipeline. Although he is keeping up to his commitments as of now, the main challenge for the 45-year-old is a lot different and harder.

Domingo needs to be courageous enough to state the truth to the BCB officials -- the truth that they have been ignorant of so far. He needs to point out that it does not matter how many trips he makes with age-level teams or how many domestic matches he watches, he will still not be able to pick the players that best fit into the national squad unless the BCB takes the necessary step of increasing the standard of the domestic leagues.

The range of problems that Bangladesh face while playing in foreign conditions are not unknown to the world. Afghanistan have

recently proven that given the right approach and tactics, even the spin ploy of Bangladesh at home can be counter-attacked, making the Tigers suffocate even in favourable conditions.

Domingo needs to come up with a permanent solution and try to change the whole mindset of the board. The type of mindset that prevails now has restricted the BCB to make sporting wickets or call players as replacements seemingly at random to provide stopgap solutions.

So the real question that remains is whether Domingo can change what has been prevailing for so long and initiate a domestic circuit which will be valued by the likes of Shakib and other national players? If not, then it can be said that Bangladesh will have to endure much more humiliation in the future, which would serve only to put Domingo's future in doubt.

INTERIM president for Mohammedan!

SPORTS REPORTER

Appointing an independent interim president, a High Court bench recently passed an order to hold the suspended annual general meeting (AGM) of Mohammedan SC Ltd, Mohammedan director-in-charge Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan said yesterday.

"The honorable court has appointed Supreme Court Bar Association president AM Amin Uddin as president in order to conduct Mohammedan's suspended AGM following the appeal that I filed some two-and-half year ago," Bhuiyan told The Daily Star yesterday, just a week after Mohammedan and five other clubs were hit by the casino scandal.

Bhuiyan added that the court passed the order on August 28 and it was revealed last Monday.

However, AM Amin Uddin is not aware that he has been made president.

"I have not been appointed as president. The information I have gathered today [Wednesday], is that, on an application for condonation in delay of holding the AGM, the court passed an order for holding the AGM with an independent person in the chair. But no order of the hon'ble court has yet been received by me," he said.

The tenure of current board of directors ended in 2013. The board of directors tried to hold the elections and AGM in 2015 but could not do it due to a case filed by MSC member Riazuddin. The current body is running Mohammedan after taking time the joint stock exchange.

Liton given NOC for CPL

SPORTS REPORTER

Wicketkeeper-batsman Liton Das has received a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and can represent Jamaica Tallawahs in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL).

Liton will play for Talawahs, who have won just two games out of eight so far in the ongoing CPL. Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan will also take part in the CPL, representing Barbados Tridents.

BCB Cricket Operations Committee chairman Akram Khan confirmed yesterday that Liton, who has scored 452 runs in 22 T20Is at a strike rate of 138.22, had been granted the NOC.

Liton is the sixth Bangladeshi after Shakib, Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad to be selected to play in the CPL.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz was picked by the Trinbago Knight Riders but did not get any opportunities to play a game while Afif Hossain was selected by Saint Nevis and Patriots but was not granted an NOC by the board.

'Ronaldo's drive separates him from everyone else'

STAR SPORT DESK



India captain Virat Kohli spoke of his admiration for footballers and their discipline while also comparing between Cristiano Ronaldo, Ronaldo 'The Phenomenon' and Lionel Messi during an interview with The Times of India.

The India captain is co-owner of football club FC Goa of the Indian Super League and said he will be focusing a lot more on developing football and other sports in India after retirement. "It is going to be one of my priorities when I retire. Football will take a lot of my attention because I am involved with FC Goa, but for sports in general, I want to contribute in such a manner that people benefit at the grassroots," Kohli said.

He had previously spoken keenly about his fondness for CR7 and Brazilian legend Ronaldo 'The Phenomenon'. Who would he pick between his two favourites?

Tough question but I think Cristiano is the most complete player I have seen. Whether it's the left foot, right foot, speed or dribbling skills, he's amazing. I have not seen a better goal-scorer.

"The Phenomenon (Ronaldo) on the other hand was something else. He revolutionised the sport and everyone followed him. His place is special but if I had to pick one who will give energy and intensity, it's Cristiano.

Asked if he would pick CR7 over Messi, he replied: "It's a personal preference. Messi is a



VIRAT KOHLI

freak, an absolute natural talent, and his ability is second to none. Cristiano Ronaldo's drive separates him from everyone else. Playing at the top level, everyone has talent but I don't think

everyone has the drive that he has."

Kohli, a trend-setter when it comes to fitness amongst cricketers, said that there is a lot to learn and respect about the way footballers keep themselves fit.

"We always look up to footballers for their discipline. It's a requirement of the sport that you need to be at your absolute best to be able to take the field.

"Football players are very particular about professionalism, in terms of physical preparation, nutrition and rest periods. We learn a lot from them."

However, the skipper stopped short of comparing cricket with football owing to the requirements of both the games. He did, however, add that the fast bowlers with their workload come close to the footballers.

"You cannot compare. I think the only people who can be compared to an extent in terms of endurance are fast bowlers. Cricket is not a sport which requires amazing physical endurance. Football is fast and played within 90 minutes where you have to be absolutely fit to take control of the situation. In cricket, the fitness level requirement is not as high (as football). But if you strive to be as fit as footballers, then you do things at a different level in cricket. That's what we look forward to. If we take our fitness level higher, we will perform at another level. Footballers are way fitter than cricketers," he further added.

Under-23s lose youth ODI series 3-1

SPORTS REPORTER



Batting failures remain the biggest concern for the Bangladesh Under-23 team as, despite posting over two hundred runs for the first time on tour in the fourth youth ODI, the visitors faced a four-wicket defeat to their Indian counterparts at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow yesterday. The result means they have lost the five-match series 3-1 with a game remaining.

It was once again the top-order's failure that let the young Tigers down as they could post just 202 for six in 50 overs. India, riding on skipper Priyam Garg's century, reached the target with four wickets and 46 balls to spare.

After electing to bat, Bangladesh found themselves struggling on 55 for four inside 15 overs. Despite getting a start, opener Saif Hasan was dismissed for 27. Ariful Haque and Al Amin added 56 runs for the fourth wicket but both departed in their forties. Only Mahidul Islam's unbeaten fifty helped Bangladesh cross the two-hundred run mark.

The selectors will be disappointed by the performances from the likes of Saif, Yasir Ali and Zakir Hossain who were below par with the bat throughout the series despite being considered future batting options for the senior side.

The fifth and final game of the series will be contested tomorrow.

SHORT CORNER

SL to replace Zim for India T20 series

Sri Lanka will replace Zimbabwe in the Twenty20 series in India in January after the African nation's suspension by the world governing body, officials said Wednesday.

Zimbabwe was suspended by the International Cricket Council (ICC) in July over a failure to keep the sport free from government interference.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said Sri Lanka would play a three-match series starting January 5 in Guwahati.

The second Twenty20 match will be played on January 7 in Indore and the third on January 10 in Pune.

"In the wake of Zimbabwe's suspension by ICC, the BCCI invited Sri Lanka to participate in the three-match series. Sri Lanka Cricket has confirmed their participation," the BCCI said in a release.

--Agencies

'Comeback will be stronger than setback'

A day after being ruled from the three-match Test series against South Africa due to an injury, India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah vowed to return to stronger. Bumrah took to twitter to state that injuries are part and parcel of the game and also thank his well wishers.

"Injuries are part & parcel of the sport. Thank you for all your recovery wishes. My head is held high & I am aiming for a comeback that's stronger than the setback," tweeted Bumrah.

Bumrah was ruled out due to a stress fracture on his lower back which might also force him out of next month's assignment against Bangladesh.

--Agencies

Novak to play in Tokyo after injury

World number one Novak Djokovic, forced out of the US Open with a shoulder injury, is back in training and will play in Tokyo next week, a member of his press team told AFP.

The 32-year-old Serbian star has "started to train and the situation with his shoulder is a bit better," the spokesperson said.

Earlier this month Djokovic was forced to pull out of his US Open fourth round clash with three-time Slam winner Stan Wawrinka due to a nagging injury in his left shoulder.

Serbia's media quoted Djokovic as saying he had been "training without pain for two days already."

His return means he could play out the season and hold off a challenge to his number one ranking from US Open winner Rafael Nadal.

"It makes me very optimistic that I could play until the end of the season as I planned," Djokovic was quoted as saying.

--Afp

I can't wait for Friday: Sarfaraz

ICC



Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed and his teammates have urged fans to come out in large numbers as the country gets ready to host a three-match one-day international series against Sri Lanka, which starts on Friday.

Pakistan last hosted a bilateral ODI series in May 2015, against Zimbabwe, while Karachi, where all the three ODIs against Sri Lanka will take place, is getting ready to host ODIs for the first time since January 2009.

"Leading the Pakistan cricket team in a bilateral ODI series in front of my home crowd will be one of the highlights of my career," Sarfaraz said on Tuesday.

"I can't wait for Friday, which will mark the memorable occasion, and I hope when I walk out, I have a full house behind me, not only cheering me, but both the sides. Fans are the lifeline for any sport as they are the driving force for any team or player. They give extra energy to the teams and help them produce their very best.

"History will be made on Friday when Karachi will host the first bilateral ODI series since January 2009. I request all local cricket fans to be part of history so that they can tell the next generation that they were at the National Stadium when an international series was played."

Babar Azam, who has been named as Sarfaraz's deputy for the series, added that to walk out as vice-captain of the side in front of the home crowd in the first ODI would be "one of my biggest days."

"I can't thank enough for the love and respect



I have received from all my fans in the early days of my career," he said. "Friday will be one of my biggest days when I will take the field as Pakistan vice-captain. I will want the entire country, as well as the National Stadium crowd to make this a day to remember for me."

Pakistan's new head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq recalled the time when he made his last appearance in an ODI in Karachi as a player.

"Friday's match will be an emotional one for me as I played at the National Stadium when it last staged an ODI, also against Sri Lanka," said Misbah. "Ten years later, I will start my time as

head coach of the Pakistan national cricket team, so the time has moved really fast.

"As the national cricket team commences its 2019-20 international season in Karachi, I hope the crowds will once again be there to encourage us and help us do better. No player or team can succeed without the support of its fans, and we look forward to them being behind us when we start a new era in Pakistan cricket."

The three ODIs will be played at Karachi's National Stadium on September 27 and 29, and October 3, before the teams shift base to Lahore for as many Twenty20 Internationals, starting on October 5.