

Booters concede five despite Zico's efforts

SPORTS REPORTER



Goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico made some brilliant saves but could not help Bangladesh avert a thumping 5-0 defeat against Asian champions Qatar during their World Cup qualifying match at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium in Doha yesterday.

Zico, who made his international debut in a freindly against Nepal on November 13, was given the nod ahead of regular shot-stopper Ashraful Islam Rana. And the young keeper had little fault of his own in letting five past him.

Zico was perhaps the best discovery of a match that was expected to be dominated by Qatar. And so they did. With Qatar having 73 per cent ball possession, the scoreline could have been much more devastating had the boy from Cox's Bazar not awed everyone by thwarting at least four to five attempts.

Qatar coach Felix Sanchez



brought four changes in the squad that beat Bangladesh 2-0 in Dhaka last year. The hosts put pressure from both wings, with forward Akram Hassan Afif causing most trouble down the left. The Bangladesh defence looked vulnerable initially as they were startled by the quick exchanges between the Qatari forwards. But it was either Zico or the Qatari forwards' failure in hitting the target that helped Bangladesh.



Bangladesh defender Bishwanath Ghosh tries to tackle Qatar strike Akram Afif during their World Cup qualifying fixture Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Stadium in Doha last night. Afif scored two goals as the defending Asian champions ran out 5-0 winners. (L) Bangladesh coach Jamie Day relays instructions to his charges during the match.

PHOTO: BFF

Jamie Day's charges had not conceded any goals within the first 20 minutes in any of the World Cup Qualifiers but they could not do it this time against a side, who are 125 places above them in FIFA Rankings. The men in red and green could not even muster a single shot on target.

Qatar came close to taking the lead in the fourth minute when Afif whipped in a cross from the left for Ahmed Alaaeldin, who saw his header ricochet off the post. But Bangladesh could not hold Qatar off for long as Abddel Aziz Hatim made inroad in the ninth minute with his low shot that kissed the post on its way in following a massive deflection off defender

Tapu Barman.

Zico blocked a close-range header from Ahmed Alaaeldin in the 11th minute before frustrating Afif in the 32nd minute, giving away just a corner. However, Afif was unstoppable and scored a superb goal from outside the box -- a curling shot that went into the top corner of the far post with Zico left watching.

After resumption, Bangladesh looked to be defending deep inside their half. When Qatar came into the attack, wingers Saad Uddin and Mohammad Ibrahim came down deep to stop two wing-backs of Qatar.

However, the visitors could not resist the home side despite Zico

making three brilliant saves and having a lot of training on how to stop Qatari forwards, who added three more goals in the second half.

After being denied by Zico several times, Almoiez Ali Abdullah made it 3-0 by converting a penalty after Sohel Rana made an unnecessary foul on substitute Muayed Hassan inside the box. Zico could only put a hand on the ball but could not stop it from going in.

Almoiez then struck his second goal from close-range in the 80th minute after Hatim presented a free ball in front of open net while Afif wrapped up the victory in stoppage time.

Tamim falls and so do Barishal

SPORTS REPORTER



Before the start of the Bangabandhu T20 Cup, Fortune Barishal skipper Tamim Iqbal expressed disappointment over the team combination, saying his side had made a few mistakes during the players' draft.

Tamim hinted that other than himself, the side lacked experience. After four matches lost -- including yesterday's day game against Gemcon Khulna -- and one won, it seems the left-hander has not been able to fully shoulder the burden of high expectations placed on him right from the start.

Tamim's early assessment is justified because their only win came courtesy of his match-winning 77 in Barishal's second game against Minister Rajshahi, after the skipper had fallen for 15 in the tournament opener.

But since then, it has been a disappointing show from the Bangladesh ODI skipper. In the last three matches, he has gotten out at crucial moments in every game after getting a start, starting with his 32 against Gazi Group Chattogram.

Just when his side needed some stability, Tamim came down the track and tried to clear the boundary, having lost Parvez Hossain just two overs back. The skipper's loss was a decisive blow for Barishal as they went on to lose the game by 10 runs.

It was rather a difficult situation for Tamim against Beximco Dhaka as Barishal kept losing wickets at the other end. But even in that situation, when Tamim was caught at deep midwicket going for a pull after scoring 31, Barishal badly needed their skipper to hang in a bit longer. They went

on to post just 108 for eight in 20 overs and succumbed to a seven-wicket defeat.

Yesterday, the Barishal bowlers made a good comeback late in the innings and managed to restrict Khulna to 173 for six.

In reply, Barishal made a decent start with Tamim and Parvez adding 57 runs for the first wicket, laying the foundation for the chase.

But despite losing the wicket of Parvez, who scored 19, in the eighth over, perhaps the turning point of the game was Tamim's dismissal in the very same Shuvagata Hom over.

Just when the experienced cricketer



Fortune Barishal captain Tamim Iqbal goes back to the pavilion after another promising start ended too soon during their Bangabandhu T20 Cup match against Gemcon Khulna at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA: 173 for 6 in 20 overs

(Zakir 63, Imrul 37; Kamrul 3-33)

BARISHAL: 125 all out in 19.5

overs (Towhid 33, Tamim 32;

Shahidul 2-17)

Result: Khulna won by 48 runs

needed to take on the responsibility of taking the game deep, Tamim instead went for a big shot and was once again dismissed in the same fashion -- caught at long on after scoring 32 off 21 balls.

From 57 without loss Barishal were eventually all out for just 125 runs to lose by a crushing 48-run margin. With four losses in five games Barishal were struggling at the bottom of the points table.

Having realised very early the value of his own experience to his otherwise young side, Tamim has to put a higher price tag on his wicket if Barishal want to climb up.

Yasir, Muktar star as Dhaka beat Rajshahi

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Beximco Dhaka registered their second consecutive win in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup with a 25-run victory over Minister Rajshahi in yesterday's second fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Fazle Mahmud kept the hopes of Rajshahi alive while chasing 176, but the left-hander departed after scoring team-high of 58 as Rajshahi were eventually bundled out for 150, succumbing to their third defeat in five games.

Pacer Muktar Ali was the pick of the bowlers for Dhaka with four wickets while young pacer Shafiqul Islam scalped three.

Earlier, Dhaka were struggling on 48 for three before skipper Mushfiqur Rahim and Yasir Ali steadied the ship.

Mushfiqur departed after scoring 37 off 29 balls but Yasir, then pairing up with young Akbar Ali, started to rebuild the innings. The two went on to add the highest partnership of the tournament, that of 100 runs for the fifth wicket, changing the scenario of the match dramatically.

In-form Yasir scored the innings highest of 67 off just 39 balls, featuring nine fours and a six before departing in the last over. Akbar remained unbeaten on 45 off 23 balls as Dhaka added 58 off the last four overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF:
DHAKA: 175 for 5 (Yasir 67, Akbar 45 not out; Mukidul 2-38)
RAJSHAHI: 150 all out in 19.1 overs (Fazle 58; Muktar 4-37, Shafiqul 3-31)
Result: Dhaka won by 25 runs.



Kane double ton drives NZ

AFP, HAMILTON



New Zealand captain Kane Williamson hit the highest Test score of his career on Friday with a majestic 251 as the hosts posted an imposing 519 for seven declared on day two of the first Test against the West Indies in Hamilton.

West Indies bowler Kemar Roach said Williamson's innings was one of the best he'd seen as the 30-year-old surpassed his previous record of 242 against Sri Lanka nearly six years ago.

In reply, the injury-hit West Indies were 49 without loss with John Campbell on 22 and Kraigg Brathwaite on 20 after cautiously negotiating the 26 overs to stumps.

After two months playing in the same Indian Premier League team as West Indies skipper Jason Holder, Williamson slipped seamlessly back into the strict demands of the red-ball game at Seddon Park, his home ground.

Thrust into the Test after just five overs, over the next 10 hours and 24 minutes he faced 412 deliveries, caressing the ball to all points as he picked the balls that needed to be played and rarely touched anything else.

Williamson's third double century, which included 34 fours and two sixes, extended his New Zealand record to 22 Test centuries, three more than team-mate Ross Taylor.

"It wasn't really at the forefront of my mind," the master batsman said, when asked about achieving his highest Test score. "You just want to keep going and try to get yourself and the team in a position of strength, and getting to 240 the job wasn't done."

Roach praised Williamson's "fantastic" innings but said the West Indies remained confident.

"Kane's obviously the main person for them, and kudos to him, it was a fantastic innings, one of the best I've seen," Roach said. "But, take away Kane's innings and we were in at the other batsmen and didn't let the other batsmen settle as long."

Brazil the best at sacking coaches

AFP, Sao Paulo



The coronavirus pandemic has swollen the unemployment rolls to record levels in Brazil, but take a moment to pity another kind of jobless worker: football coaches in the Brazilian top flight routinely fired for as few as four bad results.

Brazilian clubs are the world champions of sacking coaches, and the turnover has been high this year: 23 rounds into the season, no less than 22 coaches have already got the boot.

It is not just teams at the bottom of the table playing musical chairs with the coach's seat in the dugout.

Three weeks ago, reigning Brazilian and South American champions Flamengo fired coach Domenech Torrent, Pep Guardiola's longtime assistant, after barely three months in charge.

The Spaniard was sacked even though Flamengo were in third place, just one point off the top.

He was replaced by Rogero Ceni, under whom the Rio de Janeiro giants this week saw their defence of the Copa Libertadores end in a

defeat on penalties by Argentine side Racing.

Of the 20 Serie A clubs, only five have not changed coaches yet this season.

A recent study found Brazil is the country where top-flight coaches are fired the most.

Directed by the German Sport University Cologne, the study examined the firing of coaches in the Brazilian league from 2003 to 2018.

The authors found an average 37.1 coaches were fired each season in Brazil, versus 21 in Argentina, 10 in England and 4.9 in France.

Four consecutive bad results is often all it takes, the study found. Or getting eliminated from the Copa Libertadores, which increases a coach's chance of being shown the exit by up to 560 percent.

"The fact that teams are analysing performance on a time horizon of just four matches to decide whether to keep their coach shows how much management's thinking at Brazilian clubs is dominated by short-term logic," the study says.

Among the big clubs, Flamengo lead the list, with an average of 1.9 coaches per season, followed by Sao

Paulo and Palmeiras at 1.6.

Coaches' jobs are all the more difficult, given that clubs are often equally quick to sell their best players to Europe -- Flamengo have not been the same since Spanish defender Pablo Mari left for Arsenal in January.

"We need to change our culture. Club presidents need to know why they hire and fire their coaches," Paulo Vinicius Coelho, a commentator for Brazilian network SporTV, told AFP.

The Brazilian national team has lately been an exception to the revolving-door trend. Coach Tite has held the job since 2016, and renewed his contract until 2022 after the last World Cup, even though Brazil were sent packing in the quarter-finals.

But he may be the exception that proves the rule: he is the first coach of the Selecao to keep his job after a World Cup -- whether won or lost by the five-time world champions -- since Claudio Coutinho in 1978.

His assistant, Cleber Xavier, recently said the high turnover rate for coaches was "one of the biggest problems" in Brazilian football.

The average coach in the "Brasileirao" stays just 65 days at the

same club.

Sacked coaches do not necessarily stay unemployed for long, however.

Around 10 coaches on average coach two different teams in a single year.

Ceni is a case in point. The former Sao Paulo player -- a free kick and penalty specialist who holds the world record for goals scored by a goalkeeper, with 132 -- began his coaching career in 2017 at his longtime club.

But he lasted just six months and 37 matches.

He landed at Fortaleza and helped them reach the first division, then left for Cruzeiro. Three months later, he got the sack, and was happy when Fortaleza welcomed him back.

That did not stop him from quitting Fortaleza again last month to take the reins at Flamengo.

"The high turnover for coaches in Brazil is bad for players' development and bad for the teams' quality," wrote Tostao, the 1970 World Cup-winning forward, in his regular column for newspaper Folha de Sao Paulo.

"The league should regulate hiring and firing, but the clubs don't want that."

Haaland out until Jan

AFP, Berlin



Borussia Dortmund expect striker Erling Braut Haaland to be sidelined with a leg injury until January, but defender Mats Hummels said his ankle issue is not as bad as feared.

Haaland, 20, has claimed 17 goals in 13 games this season, including six in four Champions League games as the competition's joint top-scorer.

However, Dortmund coach Lucien Favre has confirmed the Norway striker "won't play again until January" with a torn leg muscle.

"That hurts us, but perhaps he has played a little too much recently," Favre added.

Haaland missed Wednesday's 1-1 draw at home to Lazio which put Dortmund through to the last 16 of the Champions League.

On Thursday, Haaland posted "great news! Spoke to my doctor and will be back soon" without giving details.

However Dortmund's centre-back said the problem is not serious as first feared. "I'm just back from hospital. It looks like it's not so bad and could be good again in a few days," Hummels posted on Instagram.



Eddie Nketiah celebrates his goal against Rapid Vienna during Arsenal's 4-1 home win in the Europa League fixture at the Emirates Stadium on Thursday, with around 2000 fans back inside venue for the first time in 270 days.

PHOTO: TWITTER