

'I am going to score a hundred'

Mayers fulfils his prophecy

MAZHAR UDDIN from Chattogram

"You have been chosen on merit. This is your destiny. It is your opportunity to fulfil it. This is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate your talents and skills to the world and prove to all and sundry that you're not second-class cricketers."

Those were among the words former West Indies great Clive Lloyd wrote to inspire the West Indies side that had arrived in Bangladesh after the majority of their top cricketers opted out of the tour.

Among them was an obscure 28-year-old Barbadian named Kyle Mayers, who, with just two first-class centuries to his name before stepping out to make his Test debut, confidently declared: "I am going to make a century."

The rest is history and Kyle Mayers is now the talk of world cricket after creating history not just for himself, but for the entire Caribbean, whose morale was shot after a second-string outfit were given the huge challenge of playing in the sub-continent.

After being dominated by the hosts for the first four days, West Indies staged one of the most dramatic turnarounds in Test cricket. Mayers' monumental unbeaten 210 saw the visitors chase down a record 395 runs with three wickets to spare after coming in on the fifth and final day.

The highest successful run-chase

The left-handed Mayers guided the West Indies, negotiating 310 deliveries by mixing composure and calm with muscular hitting displays during a 415-minute stay at the crease.

"It is very special to me. It is my highest score and in my first Test. It is also the longest I have ever batted," said an elated Mayers.

The West Indies needed 285 runs on the fifth and final day with seven wickets in hand, but Mayers and another debutant, Nkrumah Bonner, showed enough hunger

"We didn't create enough chances, and our bowlers didn't bowl enough in the right areas. But all credit goes to Bonner (Nkrumah) and Mayers (Kyle) who batted really well. On the last day, if the wicket was a bit more helpful for spinners, we could have created more chances, but we didn't grab those chances. We lost, but we got some positives. We played the first innings as a team, and we dominated the first four days. Mehidy played really well, and he bowled very well too."

MOMINUL HAQUE
BANGLADESH CAPTAIN

"I have believed in this team from Day 1. It's just believing ourselves and to back our plans, and that's what we have done till Day 5. We lost some momentum with three wickets in the evening, but the pitch was playing well. We knew it was an open game. We trusted our plans. I won't say it was a depleted side. I was very confident when leaving with this side. We were outplayed in 2018, and we were confident we would do better this time."

KRAIGG BRATHWAITE
WEST INDIES CAPTAIN



Flabbergasted Bangladesh skipper Mominul Haque congratulates Kyle Mayers, who batted through a tricky last day at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram during his colossal unbeaten 210-run knock on way to seizing an unlikely three-wicket win for the West Indies.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

RECORDS GALORE FOR KYLE MAYERS AND WEST INDIES

- ▶ The 395-run chase by West Indies is the highest successful run-chase in Asia.
- ▶ Kyle Mayers became only the sixth cricketer in history to score a double hundred on debut.
- ▶ The unbeaten 210 from Mayers is the second-highest individual score in a successful run-chase. His fellow West Indies great Gordon Greenidge's 214 not out is the highest ever.
- ▶ The 210-run knock from Mayers is the highest individual score in the fourth innings in Asia.
- ▶ Mayers is the third on the list of highest score in 4th innings by a West Indies

- ▶ batsman. George Headley is at the top with 223 runs.
- ▶ It was also the highest individual score in fourth innings by any player on debut.
- ▶ The 216-run fourth-wicket stand between Mayers and Nkrumah Bonner is the second best partnership between debutants in Test cricket. Khalid Ibadulla and Abdul Kadir holds the highest partnership of 249 runs record for Pakistan.
- ▶ It was the fifth-highest successful chase in Test cricket and second for West Indies. Their highest successful chase was 418 against Australia.

in Asia shocked Bangladesh and gave the hosts a 1-0 lead in the two-match series.

and inspiration to make history. The two debutants exploited a lack of discipline from the Tigers

with the ball and in the fielding department, with even the hosts' body language a little deflated after Mayers and Bonner ensured the visitors took tea without losing a wicket on the final day.

"I truly wasn't looking at the target. I was just trying to stick to my game plan as long as possible. I was trying not to look at the scoreboard. I was trying to bat as long as possible. I knew within that if we batted the whole day, the team would cross the line. It was always a challenge to bat on this wicket and they bowled very well. There were tough periods when we had to dig in. I tried to stay as tight as possible and when there were chances to score, I took the opportunity," Mayers said.

Although the pitch at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium was anticipated to be a rank turner from the third day, there were no

demons on the surface, which offered some turn and bounce for the spinners if they bowled in the right areas. Despite achieving the feat of scoring a hundred on debut, Mayers' unwavering focus saw him take responsibility for his side and see them across the finish line.

"A hundred was on the cards for me but I knew the team required me to score more than a hundred. So when I was batting, I was thinking that I needed to make 150. I thought at the start of the day that if I got 150-160, my team would be in good stead to cross the line. But as I reached 160, I knew I had to push more. It encouraged me to go further," he said.

After such a heroic effort, Mayers did not forget his close ones, saying: "Family, friends, coaches and those who stuck with me during my cricket career, I just want to give you thanks."



Mayers shows character; Tigers the lack of it

NABID YEASIN from Chattogram

Test cricket is a different ball game -- a common saying that was yet again proved yesterday when West Indies registered an unlikely-yet-fully-deserved win against Bangladesh at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

What transpired on the final day was simply incredible and could not have been anticipated by anyone. Had anyone said that the Windies would go on to secure a three-wicket victory at any point of the first four days, there probably would be many who would refuse to believe it.

But that's what Test cricket, the most elegant format of the game, can do to you. It can stun you in the most mesmerising way possible, make you witness the almost unbelievable and prove the team management's detailed and well-thought strategies impracticable. And at the root of all these was one player, Kyle Mayers, who was out there playing his first Test at the age of 28. The left-hander, who was called into the side only after a number of first-choice players opted out, etched his name in the record books by helping his side instigate a roaring comeback the sound of which probably would resonate around the world for a while.

The beauty of cricket had been portrayed in the country's port city through Mayers' unbeaten 210 which saw him become the first player to have scored a double hundred in the fourth innings on Test debut and helped his side record the highest successful run-chase in Asia. The 395-run chase was also the fifth highest ever.

Bangladesh team management had a lot of strategies and plays in place for the game, all of which were outdone by Mayers. With the target of registering first points in the World Test Championship (WTC), the 'Tigers' think-tank opted for the safest route of employing a spin quartet and a sole pacer, a strategy that they thought would help them take home advantage like on a number of occasions in the past.

And even though premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was sitting out with an injury, none of the other spinners -- Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Mehedi Hasan

Miraz, and the sole pacer Mustafizur Rahman -- could prove to be posing much of a threat to the Windies batsmen. The debutante duo -- Mayers and Nkrumah Bonner -- batted for most part of the fifth day and strung together a 216-run stand, most by two debutantes in the fourth innings in Tests.

The duo kept frustrating the Bangladesh bowlers and went unscathed till Tea while Bangladesh players showed very little urgency and aggression in trying to break the daunting partnership. The body language of the players, who are usually accustomed to playing four-dayers and three-dayers at the domestic level, displayed a clear lack of energy and determination on the fifth day of the Test.

Mominul Haque, the inexperienced skipper, seemed out of ideas, failing to put pressure on the Windies batsmen with witty bowling changes and placing an attacking

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: First Innings-430 all out in 150.2 overs and Second Innings- 223-8d in 67.5 overs.
WEST INDIES: First Innings-259 all out in 96.1 overs and 395-7 in 127.3 overs (Brathwaite 20, Campbell 23, Bonner 86, Mayers 210 not out, Joshua 20; Miraz 4-113, Taijul 2-91)
RESULT: West Indies won by three wickets.
PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH: Kyle Mayers.

field setting. Only in the final session of the game that the Tigers seemed to be realising the impending defeat. Players started chanting and became vocal with Tamim, who had been out of the ground for hours, sharing words with the bowlers and Shakib talking with fielders close to the boundary line.

That did have an impact as Bangladesh managed to pick up two quick wickets just after Tea. But it was all too late to stop a side that had already stepped on the gas, with Mayers on the driver's seat. And an incredible victory was registered in the best fitting way -- Mayers taking the winning run and raising his bat towards his teammates at the dugout.

'Never thought we would lose'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

Even if you are a Bangladeshi fan, you have to admire Kyle Mayers creating history with an epic unbeaten 210 on his Test debut to help the West Indies stun the hosts and chase down a record 395-run target on the fifth and final day in Chattogram yesterday.

Bangladesh were one the receiving end of the most exciting chases in Test history and even Test skipper Mominul Haque had no explanation about what turned out to be one of the shocking results in their history.

"Yes, it's unbelievable. But cricket is a game of a round ball. Round. Cricket is a game of great uncertainty, but I never expected this would happen. I think the bowlers were unable to bowl in the right areas. Both [Kyle Mayers and Nkrumah Bonner] batted really well," said a dejected Mominul.

Needing 285 runs with seven wickets in hand, the two West Indies debutants put on a record 216-run fourth-wicket stand in the fourth innings, leaving Bangladesh without a single wicket across the first two sessions of the final day. "I never thought of losing the game at any point in time. We dominated the past four days and we lost the game at the very last moment today (Sunday). I never imagined we would lose the game in the end," Mominul added.

Mominul admitted that Shakib Al Hasan's presence could have made a difference after the ace all-rounder was forced to witness the disastrous defeat from the sidelines due to a thigh injury. "The bowling would have been more disciplined if Shakib bhai was on the field because he is a senior bowler. And as a batsman he could have guided us. We missed his presence, especially in the bowling department," he said.

A lot was expected of the pitch at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, but it did not favour the hosts' spinners, remaining on the slower side throughout the five days. After Mehedi Hasan Miraz picked up three early wickets on the fourth day, the Bangladeshi spinners, featuring Taijul Islam and Nayeem Hasan, were unable to bowl in the right areas consistently. Meanwhile, lone pacer Mustafizur Rahman struggled to provide a breakthrough.

"There was enough on the pitch but we were unable to utilise opportunities. Both the batsmen (Mayers and Bonner) gave us opportunities and if we could have grabbed them then the momentum would have shifted. It's difficult to dismiss a batsman once he is set at the crease," Mominul added.

Bess savours Kohli wicket



DOM BESS...4 FOR 55

REUTERS

England off-spinner Dom Bess said claiming India captain Virat Kohli's wicket in the opening test was "special" and he was particularly pleased with the process he used to get it.

Bess claimed 4-55 in Chennai, ripping the heart out of India's middle order, beginning with Kohli. The 23-year-old drew one of the world's best batsman forward with a flighted delivery and induced a thick inside edge which Ollie Pope grabbed at short leg.

"It's certainly up there," the spinner said when asked if Kohli's wicket was the most satisfying of his test career. "The player of the calibre of who he is, I think phenomenal, a world class player, one of the best. But again, it's more of a process -- what I'm learning, what I'm doing that

is getting me to that."

Bess claimed the wicket of Ajinkya Rahane in his next over and went on to account for Cheteshwar Pujara and Rishabh Pant as well to keep England on top. "It was looking to get him out but it was not about bowling that magical ball," Bess said of his "process". "It's about smashing in 10-15 balls in a good area and then something will happen. "It's that process of getting there and that's what I was really pleased about."

India faced the prospect of having to follow-on after England off-spinner Dom Bess ripped the heart out of their middle order to reduce them to 257-6 at the close on day three of the opening test in Chennai on Sunday. After England had posted a mammoth 578 in their first innings before pace bowler Jofra Archer removed both India openers to deny them a strong start to their reply.

Rizwan helps Pakistan set a tough task for South Africa

REUTERS

Mohammad Rizwan scored a first Test century as Pakistan set South Africa a daunting target of 370 to win the second and final Test in Rawalpindi, but the tourists closed the fourth day on 127 for one to set up an intriguing finale.

Rizwan was unbeaten on 115 and batted brilliantly with the tail to help add 222 for the final five wickets as the home side were bowled out for 298 in their second innings, profiting from a number of dropped catches by the visitors.

Aiden Markram (59 not out) and Rassie van der Dussen (48 not out) gave South Africa hope after adding an 94 for the second wicket, showing the patience and application that will be needed

on the final day if they are to claim an unlikely victory.

South Africa have not made over 300 in the fourth innings to win a test since their remarkable 414 for four against Australia in Perth in 2008, while the highest successful run chase ever in Pakistan is 315 for nine by the home side, against Australia, in 1994.

The only wicket to fall was opener Dean Elgar (17), who edged to wicketkeeper Rizwan chasing a wide delivery from seamer Shaheen Afridi.

But the pitch is still good for batting and has not yet shown prodigious turn for the spinners, leaving South Africa in with a sniff on the fifth day.

They would have been chasing considerably less had they not dropped a number of catches, including off Rizwan when he had four.



MOHAMMAD RIZWAN ...115 N.O

Rahmatganj beat Brothers after 3 years

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS defeated Brothers Union for the first time in three years in the professional league with a 2-0 win in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The second win in seven matches helped Rahmatganj move up to sixth position of the 13-team table with eight points while Brothers Union remained second from bottom with only one point.

Rahmatganj, who last beat Brothers 1-0 during the ninth edition of Bangladesh Premier League in 2017, were the better side in the whole match, leaving the field with a deserved victory to extend their unbeaten run to three matches.

Tajik forward Dilshod Vasiev gave Rahmatganj a 33rd-minute lead with a side volley after Christ Remi headed down a long ball inside the box before Remi doubled the lead three minutes into the second half, heading home a corner from Mahmudul Hasan Kiran.

With Brothers Union struggling to control the midfield, Rahmatganj went close to increasing the lead but wasted efforts from Enamul Islam and Dilshod meant the Old Dhaka side had to be satisfied with a 2-0 win.