

SPORT

WHAT TO WATCH

T SPORTS & GTV
Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe
One-off Test (Day 1)
Live from 1:30 pm
SONY SIX, TEN 1 & TEN 2
EURO 2020
Semifinal
England vs Denmark

Live from 1:00 am (Thursday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2
Wimbledon
Quarterfinals
Live from 4:00 pm



PHOTO: REUTERS

ENGLAND AIM FOR BREAKTHROUGH but Danes stand determined

REUTERS, Manchester

England have the chance to reach a first major final since their 1966 World Cup triumph when they take on Denmark at Wembley in Wednesday's Euro 2020 semi-final, but they will need to banish a history of stumbling at this stage.

Gareth Southgate's side were impressive in their 4-0 dismantling of Ukraine in Rome on Saturday, heralding a wave of euphoria in the country as media showered the team in praise.

England fans need no reminder, however, that their team have lost four major semi-finals since Alf Ramsey's team's title.

Southgate has been keen to keep the burden of history out of his team's thinking. If he needs a way to bring his players back down to earth before the semi-final, he does not have to look back far for a warning against complacency.

An England side containing ten of the current squad faced Denmark at Wembley in October in a Nations League match and lost 1-0 to a Christian Eriksen penalty.

Kasper Hjulmand's side, who beat the Czech



Republic 2-1 in their quarter-final, will be largely the same as the one which left London with three points eight months ago. With Harry Kane back to scoring form with three goals in the two knockout stage games, England look to be peaking at the right moment.

Denmark's performances in this tournament, where they have responded to the Eriksen trauma in such inspiring fashion, should also keep England focused.

The Danes got out of Group B with a rousing

HIGHLIGHTS

- **England have beaten the Danes in 12 of their 17 encounters (Draw-5, Lost-4), although they haven't recorded a competitive win since 2002.
- **Southgate's team failed to beat their semi-final opponents in the Nations League last autumn, drawing 0-0 in Copenhagen and losing 1-0 at Wembley.
- **The two teams last met at a major international tournament in 2002, with England hammering Denmark 3-0 on the Japanese island of Niigata in the last 16 of the World Cup.

4-1 win over Russia in Copenhagen before thrashing Wales 4-0 in Amsterdam. In the quarter-final they beat a well-organised Czech side 2-1 in the heat of Baku.

Hjulmand's team have a clear structure and method to their play which has earned them their place in the last four.

Unbeaten England though start as clear favourites with a stronger squad and home advantage and the fear that has gripped them in previous campaigns refreshingly absent so far.

'Brazil will win the final'

AGENCIES



the semifinals of the Copa America on Monday and delivered the only goal in a 1-0 victory.

Brazil star Neymar was quick to sing his team mate's praises and said there was more to come. "Paqueta is a great player, he's getting better with each game. He had a great season with his club and here he is showing that he can be a very important player for Brazil."

It was yet another performance from Brazil where they were wasteful in front of goal as Peru's Pedro Gallese made seven fine saves, but it was more than enough to advance in Copa America final.

Neymar said he hopes Argentina will be their opponents in the Copa America final and has no doubts that the hosts

would come out on top against their fierce rivals.

"I want Argentina, I am cheering them on," Neymar, who missed Brazil's Copa America triumph on home soil two years ago but inspired them to the 2013 Confederations Cup as well as Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, said with a smile. "I have friends there and in the final Brazil will win."

Brazil have won the Copa America every time they hosted the tournament and in the early part of Monday's match showed exactly why they are favourites to do so again.

The last time the two sides met in a Copa America final was in 2007, when Brazil won 3-0 in Venezuela, and a title match between the arch rivals would be a treat for the neutrals.

It would not only pit the tournament's only unbeaten teams against each other it would also be a showdown between two of the best No. 10s in the game, former Barcelona team mates Neymar and Lionel Messi.

Both players have had an exceptional tournament so far, with Neymar recording two goals and three assists, while Messi has four goals and four assists.



Brazil midfielder Lucas Paqueta celebrates his all-important goal with Neymar, who created the chance with a moment of magic that took three Peruvian defenders out of the game before setting up Paqueta for a left footed finish.

PHOTO: REUTERS



PHOTO: BCB

Tigers prioritise on hunting as a unit

SPORTS REPORTER



Followed by recent times

performances in the longest format of the game, Bangladesh will be desperate to return to winning ways against host Zimbabwe as the Tigers begin their African safari today with the one-off Test match at the Harare Sports Club Ground.

And with the Zimbabwean ground staff having barred the visitors from inspecting the surface until the day before the Test match, the Bangladesh think-tank is forced to agonisingly wait till the last moment to finalise their game plan.

"Last time when I played here seven-eight years back, we witnessed the pacers being dominant. However, in the last two series, both Zimbabwean spinners and pacers played a

crucial role. But to be honest, it's difficult to comment (on the game plan) without having a look at the surface," Mominul told the media ahead of the Test match yesterday.

The visitors will also wait for Tamim Iqbal as the left-hander is still in doubt to recover from his knee injury while another experienced player Mushfiqur Rahim is expected to play today.

Mominul was questioned as to whether he is feeling the pressure of captaincy and also about the Tigers' approach towards the Test format to which the 29-year-old replied: "It mostly depends on the conditions as we tend to pick more spinners whenever we play at home, and whereas in abroad, we prefer having more batsman and seamers in the line-up."

"Conditions also decide whether we feature five or four bowlers or six to seven batters. Regardless, we have to prioritise

playing as a unit. And as far as captaincy is concerned, I don't feel pressurised by it, rather I take it as a privilege and try to enjoy the role."

There were additional doubts on whether the Tigers had enough time to adjust to the red-ball cricket since the cricketers had participated in the domestic T20 competition prior to this tour. However, according to Mominul, they had sufficient time to adapt and the two-day warm-up game certainly helped them to prepare accordingly.

On the other camp, Zimbabwe's stand-in captain Brendon Taylor banks on the home advantage and expects a competitive game.

"I think we were a bit rusty and not up to the mark in Test matches recently but we have done our homework. We look better prepared to stamp our authority with the bat to give something for our bowlers to fight," said Taylor.

Could Harare Test be Tigers' step in the right direction?

NABID YEASIN



For a long time, Bangladesh have been struggling to find the blueprint for a Test culture with a suitable mindset and approach towards the game's elite format. In fact, even in the 21st year of their Test journey, Bangladesh are unfortunately yet to take a single step in the right direction in this regard.

The Tigers could potentially set the tone for their approach towards upcoming Test hurdles in the lone Test against Zimbabwe at the Harare Sports Club today. Although the fixture is not a part of the upcoming World Test Championship (WTC), it could still be Bangladesh's first step towards making amends for mistakes in previous editions of the competition, due to which they were left sulking at the bottom of the table with no wins and one draw from seven games.

The fact that the game against Zimbabwe is not a part of the WTC could well work in the Tigers' favor as they prepare for upcoming WTC commitments. A win must be the sole target but with little at stake in terms of the outcome, this could be the perfect opportunity to figure out what has caused Bangladesh to lose focus at crucial junctures on their previous WTC journey, resulting in unexpected defeats.

BANGLADESH V ZIMBABWE IN TESTS

Match	Win	Lose	Draw
Head to head (in Zimbabwe)	7	1	5
Overall against Zimbabwe	17	7	7

Complacency had clearly gotten the better of Mominul Haque's troops as they lost 2-0 at home to a depleted West Indies side earlier this year, with the Tigers failing to salvage even a single point despite the opportunity to enter the top five in the WTC standings. That equation may also have impacted the unexpected outcome.

As is the case before nearly every series, there has been talk of playing a particular

HIGHLIGHTS

**Bangladesh played two Tests during their last tour of Zimbabwe in 2013. Tigers suffered a thumping 335-run defeat in the opening Test before salvaging some pride in the final Test with a 143-run win. Both Tests were played at Harare Sports Club.

**The average first innings total in the last three Tests in Harare was 325 runs.

**Zimbabwe lost the last two Tests against Pakistan and managed to draw a Test against Sri Lanka in the last three Tests played in Harare.

'brand of cricket', 'keeping the process right' or 'having patience' ahead of the Harare Test as well. Although the team management has never been able to clear any ambiguity surrounding these statements, it is about time at least some of their ploys bear fruit and set a standard and approach for the future as well.

That could start with the team management relaying a set of objectives to each player about the role they are expected to play while putting up the right man for the right job and not making short-sighted changes tailor-made to the purposes of one fixture only.

In his ninth match in charge of the Test squad, Mominul should also go into the game with a lot of lessons learned from mistakes made in previous fixtures. When things are not going his way, Mominul should now know better than to stick to the usual and instead surprise the opposition by thinking outside the box, something that he failed to do during the Chattogram Test against the West Indies.

While the team management and the skipper may agree on a coherent approach towards the format, players also need to adopt specific mindsets regarding how each of them wants to approach the game instead of 'maintaining the right channels' as the bowlers often say when asked about their plans regarding a game.

Medvedev falls to Hurkacz in 5-set thriller



REUTERS, LONDON

Poland's Hubert Hurkacz ousted second seed Daniil Medvedev after the pair returned on Tuesday to finish their rain-hit match and reached his maiden major quarter-final where he will meet eight-time Wimbledon winner Roger Federer.

World No.2 Medvedev was leading Hurkacz by two sets to one on Monday with the fourth set on serve when play was cancelled for the day because of rain after the players had spent two hours and 25 minutes on Court Two.

But the 24-year-old Hurkacz, seeded 14th, looked a completely different player when the match restarted under the closed roof of Centre Court, triumphing 2-6, 7-6(2), 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

"Playing on this unbelievable court, probably the best in the world, with an amazing crowd is really special," Hurkacz said in his on-court interview.

"Daniil is an unbelievable player. We battled so hard on Number Two Court. So to win is incredible... I knew I needed to get off to a strong start today and I think I did a pretty good job."

Hurkacz could not have hoped for a better start as he broke Medvedev immediately after the resumption with the Russian double-faulting on break point. The Pole then held serve to level the match at two sets each.

Medvedev took a comfort break at the end of the fourth set having just played two games but things did not change when he returned to court.

The Pole broke the Russian's serve to love at the start of the deciding set to continue his ascendancy before a second break sealed the fate of the contest with Medvedev finding the net with a low forehand volley on match point.

Next up for the world number 18 will be the 39-year-old Federer, the 20-time major winner, who defeated him in their only previous meeting in 2019 at Indian Wells.

"Roger, what he does, the titles he has won, is a real inspiration," Hurkacz said about the Swiss great. "I will be hoping to get a little bit of support tomorrow."