



Unprofessional and desperate

ATIQUÉ ANAM



Unprofessional and desperate is how football pundits are reacting to Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF) decision to replace national team's head coach Jamie Day with Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon for two months.

Whether or not Day should still be in charge following a series of poor results or what Bruzon could bring to the board is a different question, but the way Day was relieved of his duties and replaced by a club coach, who is yet to complete his season and that too only two weeks before the all-important SAFF Championship, is an unprecedented instance, judging even by the standard the BFF had set themselves in the past.

Shafiqul Islam Manik, a former coach of the national team and a respected tactician in domestic football, reacted to the news strongly.

"BFF can sack any coach any time, but the way Jamie Day was sacked was thoroughly unprofessional and ridiculous. If they felt the results weren't going in their favour, BFF could

have sacked him before, but why keep him as a coach yet relieve him of his duties for two months?" Manik told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It is humiliating for Jamie Day, who has been the national team coach for three years. He deserved better. This gesture is unheard of in world football," added Manik, who believes that the desperation to bring a feel-good factor to football through a better show in the SAFF Championship could have played a part behind this whimsical decision.

Manik may be an outsider in this context, but even those who are part of this show, were taken aback by the suddenness of the decision.

While Bruzon is reportedly still pondering on the proposal following a meeting with the BFF president and declined to talk to the media, the club's technical director BA Jubair Nipu, a former TD of BFF, did not let this opportunity pass without having a dig at his former employers.

"This is unprofessional. One who will be the coach should have been consulted before his appointment. And the one who would be replaced should have been informed of the decision at least one month ahead of the decision," Nipu told reporters on Friday.

JAMIE DAY AS BANGLADESH COACH

- APPOINTMENT: May, 2018
- MATCHES: 29
- WINS: 9
- DRAWS: 5
- DEFEATS: 15

OSCAR BRUZON AS BANGLADESH COACH

22nd foreign and 41st overall
BRUZON'S RECORD AS CLUB HEAD COACH:
Domestic success with Sporting Goa, New Radiant and Bashundhara Kings

It's worth mentioning that Jamie Day did not grow into a universally popular figure at these shores as times passed, with his performance graph going south in the last year or so and his ideas of experimentation

with the squad not pleasing the football high-ups. To be more precise, Day has failed to deliver on two promises that he and the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had made: First, an improvement in FIFA ranking and second, a creditable show in the SAFF Championship. So the call for a change in that position was becoming more pronounced with time.

But is Bruzon the right person for that role at this moment? The Spaniard's detractors feel that he tinkers too much with players' positions, so when the push comes to shove, the team can dysfunction spectacularly.

With a plethora of talent at his disposal thanks to the riches of Bashundhara Group, Bruzon has led Bashundhara Kings to every silverware in domestic football, yet his juggernaut came to a halt once they met their match in the form of Mohun Bagan in group stages of the AFC Cup earlier this year. And that is something which has reportedly compromised his position as the head coach of the club, with no imminent signs of a contract extension.

BFF may be trying to take advantage of Bruzon's untenable position at the club by roping him in temporarily to replace someone

at the national team, who it thinks has become dispensable, despite having one year in his contract. So if Bangladesh do show some improvement over the next three assignments, BFF can offer Bruzon a permanent job and work on an amicable exit for Day, minimising its financial loss. If the gamble does not pay off, it can go back to Day to complete his contract.

It seems like a win-win situation for the BFF, but can the national team withstand the impact of this gamble? While the BFF continues to disregard player development and continues to look for quick-fixes to long-standing problems, chances are that Bruzon's appointment with a myopic vision further destabilises the team.

Saiful Bari Titu, another local coach who has guided the national team in the past, suggested that there are obvious risks associated with this sudden change. "Whether he can change the players' philosophy all of a sudden remains a question. When we guide a club, we have good foreign players which makes it easier for planning and implementing strategies. But for the national team it is a bit problematic," Titu told media on Friday.

IPL resumes today as precursor to T20 World Cup

AGENCIES



Players will be getting valuable experience in the UAE conditions ahead of the T20 World Cup when the Indian Premier League (IPL) resumes, four months after the world's richest T20 league was halted midway by the coronavirus pandemic in India, with the blockbuster Chennai Super Kings-Mumbai Indians clash at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Bangladesh ace allrounder Shakib Al Hasan, who plays for Kolkata Knight Riders, and left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who plays for Rajasthan Royals, are seeing their participation as a preparation for next month's T20 World Cup in Oman and UAE, slated to begin on October 17.

Delhi Capitals, who finished runners-up in 2020, are leading the points tally and are primed to win their maiden title. The other teams in the top four are CSK, RCB and the mighty Mumbai Indians, the winner of a record five titles and the team to upstage.

When the second wave of Covid-19 wreaked havoc in India in April-May, the airtight IPL bio-bubble also ruptured, forcing the tournament to be suspended after 29 games. The full IPL took place in the UAE last year with no problems and the BCCI will look forward to a similar experience this time.

Fans, albeit a limited number, will also be present at an IPL venue for the first time since 2019, adding immensely to the event's spectacle.



PHOTO: TWITTER

Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma, who is a strong contender to succeed Virat Kohli as India's Twenty20 captain, is all smiles during practice ahead of today's match against Chennai Super Kings (CSK).



With flood waters having receded weeks ago, locals of the Taranihat area under Bogura's Gabtoli Upazilla arranged a traditional Boat Racing competition on the Ichamati river yesterday, where 16 teams participated from four upazillas of the district, enjoyed by a huge, enthusiastic crowd. The champion team received one cattle.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

DDGA, TGC welcome new presidents

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Diplomatic Golf Association (DDGA) and Tiger Golf Club (TGC) welcomed their new presidents through a ceremony at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, India's high commissioner to Bangladesh and Joao Tabajara de Oliveira Junior, Brazil's ambassador to Bangladesh, were felicitated as the new presidents of DDGA and TGC.

Earlier, a friendly golf tournament was organised at the Kurmitola Golf Club on this occasion.

Sabina & Co take on Jordan today

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh women's football team will begin their AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign today when they take on Jordan in the first match of Group G at the Milliy Stadium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The match will kick off

at 4:00pm Bangladesh time.

Ranked 137th in FIFA, the Bangladesh women's team would be looking to put on a competitive show against Jordan, ranked 63rd before facing 72nd-ranked Iran in the last group match of the qualifiers. One team from the group will qualify for the Asian Cup, to be held in India next year.

Bangladesh captain Sabina

Khatun hoped that they can show competitiveness against Jordan while coach Golam Rabbani Choton informed that everyone in the team is physically and mentally prepared for the challenge.

Bangladesh will take inspiration from their recent form in Nepal, where they lost a match narrowly before eking out a draw in their second match against the hosts.



NEWS IN BRIEF

'It's an unfortunate scenario'

New Zealand's abrupt decision to pull out of their cricket tour of Pakistan has created "an unfortunate scenario" but the hosts know how to overcome such crises, the chairman of the country's cricket board Ramiz Raja said on Saturday. "It's an unfortunate scenario," Raja, who took over as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman on Monday, said in a video posted on the board's Twitter handle. "But we've faced similar situations in the past and have always overcome them. We've tremendous resilience... it's a setback to staging international cricket in Pakistan but we'll overcome this crisis too." Several Pakistan players took to Twitter to vent their anger and frustration at New Zealand's decision. Raja advised them to channel it into improving their performance. "My message to the team is -- vent your anger and frustration through your performance on the field. "If you become the best team in the world, others will queue up here to play you in Pakistan."

Pele in 'stable' condition

Brazil soccer legend Pele, 80, is in a "stable" condition after "respiratory instability" early on Friday led to him being admitted to an intensive care unit, Sao Paulo's Albert Einstein hospital said in a statement. Concerns grew about Pele's health on Friday after local media reported that he had returned to an ICU that he had only just left earlier this week as he recovers from a colon tumor removal. The hospital said Pele "presented a brief respiratory instability" and was admitted to an ICU as a "preventive measure." After he was stabilized, it said he had been moved to "semi-intensive care" and was now "stable from a cardiovascular and respiratory point of view."