



PRIMED TO STAGE A GOOD SHOW

What's the one thing that most of the other teams have but Bangladesh don't? The answer is: a wrist spinner. Such is the state of Bangladesh in this regard that while some teams even boast two wrist spinners, Bangladesh do not have the mere option of employing one. Going into the T20 World Cup in Oman and the UAE, where pitches are expected to be slow following the end of the Indian Premier League, this one missing facet could turn out to be a real thorn in their side. However, with three series wins on the trot -- away to Zimbabwe followed by maiden series wins over Australia and New Zealand at home -- Bangladesh head to the T20 extravaganza in their richest vein of form ever. With the Super 8s appearance in the inaugural edition in 2007 being their best so far, many feel this is the Tigers' ideal chance to put the record straight, somewhat. The caveat for the Tigers is that they have not yet mended their top-order issues. With Tamim Iqbal, the country's most successful opener across formats till date, opting out of the mega event to hand other openers a 'fair' opportunity, Bangladesh's prime headache will be getting decent starts as the Tigers' average score for the opening stand in the last 10 games has been 21 despite using as many as four different players in the opening slot. The Mahmudullah Riyad-led side, who will have to play qualifiers against Scotland, Oman and Papua New Guinea in order to progress to the Super 12 stage. Clearly the favourites to make it to the next stage, the Tigers can consider the qualifiers as an opportunity to at least have their openers find rhythm before entering the tournament proper.

SURPRISE INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

There were no surprise inclusions in the Bangladesh squad as the names of the 15 selected were predictable and properly justified. However, Tamim Iqbal, who represented Bangladesh in each of the previous six editions of the T20 World Cup, opting out of the mega event to make way for other openers was a surprise move but that was announced days before the final squad was named.

STRENGTHS

With all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, skipper Mahmudullah Riyad and batting mainstay Mushfiquir Rahim forming the middle-order, it can be said that Bangladesh's strength lies in this particular aspect of their batting line-up. This trio forms the core of the batting line-up and will carry the burden of scoring the bulk of runs for the side. The team will also look up to performances with the ball from Shakib and Mustafizur Rahman, both of whom will have a better understanding of the conditions in the UAE having featured in the Indian Premier League recently.

WEAKNESSES

While Bangladesh have issues with their unstable top-order, the other discernible weakness in the side is the absence of power-hitting batsmen in the line-up. Afif Hossain, who usually bats at number five, has been amongst runs during recent series against Australia and New Zealand while Shamim Hossain, who bats down the order, has shown glimpses of promise. However, none of these batsmen, or anyone else in the squad, meets the demand of power-hitting at the death, which is a crucial facet in T20Is.

SQUAD

Mahmudullah Riyad (c), Naim Sheikh, Soumya Sarkar, Liton Das, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiquir Rahim, Afif Hossain, Nurul Hasan Sohan, Mahedi Hasan, Nasum Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Mohammad Saifuddin, Shamim Hossain

RESERVES

Rubel Hossain, Aminul Islam Biplob

THE SHAKIB IMPACT

Playing 112 T20Is, Bangladesh have won 41 till date. And Shakib Al Hasan was part of 35 of those matches. On the contrary, in the 24 matches that Bangladesh played without Shakib, they won only six.



FORM GUIDE

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STATISTICS

Bangladesh
T20 World Cup Appearances: 6
Best Result: Super 8s (2007)