

Mashrafe's 4-for leads Legends

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, on a hat-trick, watched the ball zip off the surface but just beat the outside edge of Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity's number 10 batter Noor Alam before going through to the wicket-keeper, leaving the Legends of Rugganj skipper without a hat-trick.

The 38 year-old had scalped three wickets prior to that delivery and only one delivery later, a slower one got the better of Noor, who could only manage to provide a dolly of a catch to mid-wicket to leave Mash with four wickets and Khelaghar bowled out for 198.



Bangladesh team get into a huddle ahead of their first practice session yesterday at Port Elizabeth, where the visitors will take on South Africa in the second Test starting on Friday. (Bottom) Wicketkeeper-batter Liton Das plays a defensive stroke at the nets during the training session.

PHOTO: BCB

Donald warns of ‘wind tunnel’

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a crushing 220-run defeat in the first Test, Bangladesh trained at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth ahead of their second and final Test against South Africa yesterday.

The Tigers have never played a Test at the venue, but the South African members of their coaching staff have vast knowledge of the ground, especially head coach Russell Domingo, who coached the Warriors side that used the venue as their home ground.

According to Bangladesh's fast-bowling coach Allan Donald, the visiting pacers will have to be creative and brave to get the most out of a surface that he believes offers something to both batters and bowlers.

"This is one of the oldest Test venues in South Africa and I have some fond memories of this ground. It's the kind of wicket where you are never in or out as a batsman or bowler. There's always



It's like a wind tunnel goes through the scoreboard and across the field and it keeps swirling. You almost feel like you are with it and, all of a sudden, you're against the wind.

something happening. This is also a ground where you have to be very creative as a bowler. As the innings goes on, the track gets flatter. So, from a fast bowling perspective, you always have to have

something up your sleeve. You have to put your hands up and be brave," Donald told media yesterday.

Pacers Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam have returned to Bangladesh after suffering injuries, so the team management will need to make some tough calls in forming a balanced playing eleven. On a more positive note, the experienced Tamim Iqbal, who missed the first Test due to an upset stomach, is expected to take part in the second Test.

"It's one of those Test grounds where you can hit a big hundred if you settle in.

Dale Steyn showed here a few years ago against Australia on a flat pitch when the ball started to reverse swing. He was coming in and attacking with a creative mindset and that's how you can take wickets here. It's going to be tough work but it's a wonderful, traditional ground and I always love playing in front of the crowd and I expect it will be a bit noisy."

Known as the windy city, Port Elizabeth poses a tough challenge to visitors, especially in terms of adjusting to the strong winds.

"One thing you need to contend with in Port Elizabeth is the wind that comes in at sort of 12:30 to 2:00pm. We have been talking about this as a group and catching high balls is a real skill here. We have to do a lot of spiral and long catching and know which side of the ground we're on because the wind traditionally flows from the scoreboard area. Late in the afternoon the wind can get up to 40-45 kmph and you have to deal with that.

"It's like a wind tunnel goes through the scoreboard and across the field and it keeps swirling. You almost feel like you are with it and, all of a sudden, you're against the wind. The wind continues to swirl so we need to focus a lot on our fielding today (Wednesday), do high catching and practice getting into correct positions. Someone has to bowl against the wind while another will have to bowl with the wind. It's going to be tough work," he said.

Donald also praised the efforts from the pace unit in the first Test, saying he was impressed by Taskin's hunger and was pleased to see the hunger from him to give his best despite battling pain.

‘Root still the right man to lead England’

REUTERS, New Delhi



England's record of one win in their last 17 tests is clearly not good enough but Joe Root is still the right man to skipper the side, former bowler Darren Gough told Reuters.

Root has come under pressure after England slumped to a 4-0 defeat in the last Ashes series and lost 1-0 in West Indies, with former captains Michael Atherton and Nasser Hussain among those saying it was time for a leadership change. Since taking charge in 2017, Root has led the side in a record 64 tests. His 27 wins and 26 defeats as captain are also records.

Gough, who had a stint as England's fast bowling consultant in 2019, said Root enjoyed the utmost respect of players in the dressing room and that there was no clear "natural successor".

"If you're looking at results alone, one win in 17 is not good enough, of course," Gough said.

"But having been in the England dressing room, I can assure you that he's so well respected by every single player in that team. He's the natural captain." "If we had someone that was really putting their hands up and saying, 'I'm your natural successor', you could make an argument for a change," Gough said.

"But I honestly believe Joe Root is still the right man for the job at this moment in time. I don't think it's time for Ben Stokes to take over.

Koeman to return to Netherlands job

AFP, The Hague



Former Barcelona coach Ronald Koeman will take over as Netherlands boss from Louis van Gaal after this year's World Cup, the Dutch football federation said on Wednesday.

Van Gaal announced at the weekend that he had been receiving treatment for prostate cancer for the last two years but that he still hoped to lead the team at the finals that kick off in Qatar in November.

It will be 59-year-old Koeman's second time in charge of the Dutch national team after taking the reins from 2018 to 2020, when he left the post to become coach of Barcelona.

He was dismissed by the Spanish giants in October last year after 14 difficult months in charge which included the departure of Lionel Messi to Paris Saint-Germain as the club plunged into financial difficulties.

"I am looking forward to working together again. When I left the national team a year and a half ago, it was certainly not because I wasn't happy," Koeman said.

Marianne van Leeuwen, the director of professional football at the Dutch federation, said: "We're very happy that Ronald is coming back next year. During his last term in charge as national coach, his work and his results were very satisfying."

The Netherlands will play the opening match of the World Cup against Senegal. They also have the host nation and Ecuador in their Group A.

Klopp praises Benfica keeper Guardiola says City must keep their cool

REUTERS

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp heaped praise on Benfica keeper Odysseas Vlachodimos for denying the English side a bigger victory after their 3-1 win in their Champions League quarter-final first leg on Tuesday.

Liverpool took the upper hand in the tie as goals from Ibrahima Konate, Sadio Mane and Luis Diaz earned them a comfortable victory in Lisbon and it could have been much worse for the Portuguese club.

"We should have scored much more," Klopp told BT Sport. "I think, mainly because of their goalkeeper, credit to him. Their goalkeeper was probably the game's best player. We played well, but he made a couple of really good saves."

Klopp said he was satisfied with the win and with their two-goal advantage ahead of next week's second leg at Anfield.

"It was a tough game but I expected it," Klopp said. "They had these counter-attacks as they recovered the ball in the midfield that was a threat. It's not always easy to keep the ball all the time. The further you go, the more risk you take. And they have really good players."



(L) Liverpool's Colombian midfielder Luis Diaz celebrates after scoring his team's third goal during their 3-1 victory against Benfica in the Champions League quarterfinal first leg match at the Luz stadium in Lisbon on Tuesday. (R) Kevin de Bruyne scored the only goal for Manchester City in their 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid at the Etihad Stadium.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



After Liverpool dominated the first half, Benfica made a game of it after the break at a packed Luz stadium, that roared their team back into the contest when Darwin Nunez scored in the 49th minute to make it 2-1.

"It was tough when they scored because

the crowd was there immediately because they knew that 2-0 is nothing, it's nice but nothing more than that and we saw it after they scored. The game was much more open than we expected.

"That's it. We won. Two goals up. Halftime. Not more, not less. It would

have been nice to score another one, but let's keep going. We have a good result, we know much more about our opponent going to the second game and are aware of their quality."

Meanwhile, Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola called on his players to

control their emotions in their Champions League quarter-final return leg at Atletico Madrid next week.

Kevin De Bruyne's 70th minute goal earned City a 1-0 win on Tuesday in a game that had several flashpoints, including an incident in which a prone Jack Grealish was struck in the head from close range by a clearance from Angel Correa. Read full story "We have to control our emotions and do what we have to do," Guardiola told reporters after Tuesday's game. "There will be a referee there and we have to play our game."

"(Atletico) have faced this kind of knockout stages many times and it will be a good test for us with our maturity in this game. Jack reacted really well and stayed focused on what we needed to do."

The Spaniard added that City would not simply look to defend their 1-0 advantage in Madrid and would be looking to kill off the tie.

"We've won the game with 1-0 and after 1-0 it was a little bit different. All the players start to press a little bit higher," Guardiola said. "If the game starts on the good side for Atletico, maybe they come back in to the game."