

Mominul positive about Dhaka Test

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

Batters getting some big runs led to Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque being positive about the upcoming second Test in Dhaka, slated to begin from May 23.

Opener Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudul Hasan Joy set the tone with a fine opening partnership in Bangladesh's only batting innings in the first Test in Chattogram after the bowlers did a solid job to wrap up Sri Lanka's innings under the 400-run mark.

Tamim's 133 was complemented by Joy before Mushfiquir Rahim and Liton Das took charge of the innings. Bangladesh were also able to exert pressure on the fifth day by picking up wickets, but it was not enough to bring a result.

"If we could have taken wickets in the middle part [today], the result could have been different. Since the batters got runs, everyone played as a unit. When we play as a team, we get results. That will certainly be of use in Dhaka," Mominul said at the press conference.

Bangladesh's pacers did not get among the wickets and the loss of Shoriful to injury will hurt the Tigers going into the second Test. Mominul rued the fact that pacers did not always zone in on a good line and length.

"I think the pace bowlers could have bowled better. We have expectations from them and I feel they could have bowled better in the first innings," he said. "Shoriful was not there in the first innings but I would have been pleased if Khaled [Ahmed] had bowled a better length because that would have been good," he added.

Spinners getting wickets was a positive for Bangladesh, considering that the Mirpur wicket is likely to be even more conducive to spin.

"The wicket in Dhaka is a bit faster and turns in sharply. I think we will be able to adjust," he concluded.



Bangladesh left-arm spinner Taijul Islam celebrates one of his four wickets with spinner Nayeem Hasan, who received the most valuable player award for his six for 105 in the first innings, during final day's play of the Chattogram Test. [Inset] Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiquir Rahim, who ended their run droughts with hundreds, discuss something during a drinks break as Sri Lankan batters showed stubbornness to share the honours at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Neither team wanted to force a result

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

The first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka ended in a draw, as expected due to the nature of the wicket, a flat surface which showed little wear and tear over the course of five days.

The players shook hands after the minimum number of overs that were required to be bowled on the day before the match could be called a draw was completed. Skipper Mominul Haque and his Lankan counterpart Dimuth Karunaratne appeared to be content after the match. Neither side had risked enough on a batting friendly pitch because of the how the match progressed over the first four days.

Four wickets fell on the first day, seven on the second, three on the third. The highest number of wickets then fell on the fourth day, when Bangladesh lost their seven remaining first-innings wickets before Sri Lanka lost two before the close of play. That gave Bangladesh some hope of getting more than a draw from the Test match and the morning session induced some excitement yesterday.

Resuming the day on 39 for two, Sri Lanka's intent was clear. The visitors wanted to throw Bangladesh off their game.

Skipper Dimuth Karunaratne looked

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh Vs Sri Lanka (DAY 5)

SRI LANKA: First Innings -- 397 all out & Second Innings -- 260 for 6 in 90.1 overs declared (Karunaratne 52, Mendis 48; Taijul 4-82, Shakib 1-58)

BANGLADESH: First Innings -- 465 all out in 170.1 overs.

Result: Match Drawn

Player-of-the-match: Angelo Mathews

solid while Kusal Mendis started putting pressure back on Bangladesh. Mendis in particular scored at a fast rate and it appeared that Sri Lanka would look to put pressure by putting Bangladesh in to bat on the final session of the day.

It was Taijul Islam who brought Bangladesh a chance at making a game out of it. Bowling in tandem with Shakib Al Hasan, he scalped three more wickets, including Mendis's with a near unplayable delivery. Shakib bagged one too, albeit with a long hop, but it reduced Sri Lanka

to 161 for six.

The pair kept creating chances, but on the last day and with a little bit of luck, Dinesh Chandimal and Niroshan Dickwella held on. In the absence of Shoriful Islam, out of the rest of the series following a fracture in his right hand, Bangladesh just could not create the necessary pressure.

"We tried to do something different and put them under pressure, but we played some poor shots and then we had to change tactics. We unfortunately couldn't put pressure on Bangladesh on the last day," Karunaratne said at presentations ceremony.

Later at press conference, Dhananjaya de Silva said his side were happy with the draw. "Definitely it was going to be a draw. We knew that on the first day when they were batting," he added.

Tamim Iqbal had batted positively during his 133-run knock, but Bangladesh, while looking good, lost wickets and did not up the tempo on the fourth day with the bat. It was clear Mominul did not feel comfortable going for the kill much earlier on Day Four by batting with more intent.

"If you get too excited on this wicket, you can lose wickets. If Liton [Das] didn't get out, we could have taken a chance," he said at the press conference after Bangladesh put pressure on Lankans on the final day, leaving it too late.

'Bangladesh made us work really hard'

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite the initial pressure from Bangladesh, Dinesh Chandimal and Niroshan Dickwella dug deep to eventually draw the first Test of the two-match series at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Dickwella remained unbeaten on 61 and Chandimal was not out on 31 runs as the pair frustrated the Bangladeshi bowlers after being reduced to 161 for 6 and showed great patience to negotiate the spinners.

"It was a batting-friendly wicket, but Bangladesh made us work really hard. Credit should go to them, they didn't give us any freebies and made us work for our runs," player-of-the-match Matthews said during the post-match presentation ceremony yesterday.

It was Matthews who struck a magnificent hundred in the first innings as the right-hander became the 12th batter in Test cricket to be dismissed on 199 runs. He fell at the bowling of Nayeem Hasan as Sri Lanka posted 397 in the first innings.

According to the 34-year-old, it was disappointing to miss out on the double hundred and said that he just wanted to take that single and go off the strike.

"Yeah it was disappointing, but once again it's cricket and you got to take what God gives you. I just wanted to get one run and get off strike," Mathews said.



Miraz, Shoriful ruled out of 2nd Test

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz is unavailable for the second Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, scheduled to be held in Mirpur, after the all-rounder missed out on the first Test following a finger injury while left-arm seamer Shoriful Islam also faces the same fate as the selectors announced the 16-member squad yesterday.

Shoriful fractured his right hand during the fourth day of the first Test in Chittagong and it was revealed that the 20-year-old was ruled out of the second Test, slated for May 23. The selectors, however, did not include any replacement of Shoriful for the upcoming Test, considering the hosts have four seamers in Ebadot Hossain, Khaled Ahmed, Rejaur Rahman and Shohidul Islam in the squad.

Off-spinner Miraz injured his right hand's index finger during the Dhaka Premier League game on April 24, following which he was prescribed to rest for two weeks but the cricketer is yet to recover from the injury.

Shoriful was deemed unfit to play for the next four to five weeks and that likely puts him, alongside another injured pacer Taskin Ahmed, out of the Test series in West Indies, where pace-friendly surfaces will be in store.

Bangladesh are likely to play the first Test in Antigua on June 16 before playing the second Test in St. Lucia from June 24.

Women referees officiate WC finals

AFP, Lausanne

For the first time ever there will be women referees at a men's World Cup finals after FIFA revealed the list for the quadrennial showpiece being hosted later this year by Qatar.

France's Stephanie Frappart, Salima Mukansanga from Rwanda and Japan's Yoshimi Yamashita are among the 36 match referees.

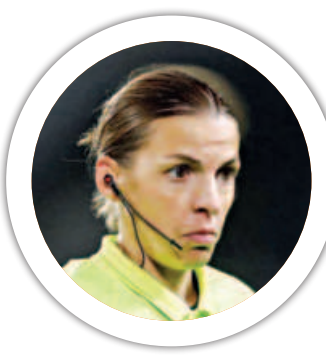
Brazil's Neuza Back, Mexico's Karen Diaz Medina and American Kathryn Nesbitt have been included in the 69 assistant referees.

"We are very happy that ... we have been able to call up female match officials for the first time in the history of a FIFA World Cup," said FIFA Referees Committee chairman Pierluigi Collina.

"This concludes a long process that began several years ago with the deployment of female referees at FIFA men's junior and senior tournaments.

"In this way, we clearly emphasise that it is quality that counts for us and not gender. I would hope that in the future, the selection of elite women's match officials for important men's competitions will be perceived as something normal and no longer as sensational."

All match officials for the finals will participate in early summer in seminars in Asuncion, Madrid and Doha.



Frankfurt win first European trophy in 42 years

AGENCIES

Eintracht Frankfurt won the Europa League final after holding their nerve to beat Rangers 5-4 in a clinical penalty shootout as they claimed their first European trophy in 42 years.

Eintracht keeper Kevin Trapp saved Aaron Ramsey's spot kick -- Rangers' fourth -- while Eintracht were flawless in their execution, scoring all five after the game had finished 1-1 after 120 minutes.

Joe Aribo had struck against the run of play in the 57th minute to give Rangers the lead, charging clear after a string of defensive errors and sliding the ball past Trapp.

The Germans, unbeaten in the competition going into the final and eyeing their first European title since 1980, bounced back as Rafael Borre snuck in between two defenders to turn in a Filip Kostic cross in the 70th.

"There is not just one hero. We are all heroes," Trapp said. "It's one of the most beautiful moments of my career. We couldn't have done it without the



crowd's support," he added.

Thousands of Frankfurt fans created a sea of white shirts at the Estadio Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan, which along with the blue-clad Rangers half of the ground created a febrile atmosphere.

"We played 13 matches in Europe and we did not lose a single one," said Eintracht coach Oliver Glasner. "We took it step by step and at the end we were rewarded. I have no words to express what I feel for the players," added the Austrian, whose side

will now compete in next season's Champions League despite finishing in 11th place in the Bundesliga.

Frankfurt are the first Bundesliga team to win the Europa League, or its predecessor the UEFA Cup, since 1997, when Schalke beat Inter Milan on penalties.

They stand to collect around 60 million euros (\$63 million) in prize money and bonuses from both competitions, but club president Peter Fischer insisted he would not be blowing the money on signings.

"Just because we have qualified for the Champions League, we will not tear up all our loans and simply buy," he said.

The money will help bridge losses of 70 million euros that the club suffered from often having to play in empty stadiums during the pandemic.

"Of course, the financial income is extremely good for us after two years of the coronavirus. That will really help us for the future," said sports director Markus Kroesche.