

Bumrah has ‘bowled better’ before

AFP, LONDON

Jasprit Bumrah responded to a one-day international career-best haul that set-up India's 10-wicket thrashing of world champions England by saying "I have bowled so much better than this and not got wickets".

Bumrah took 6-19, including an opening spell of 4-9 in five overs that routed a proven top order, as England were skittled out for just 110 in 25.2 overs at the Oval on Tuesday.

India then sprinted to their target, with captain Rohit Sharma unbeaten on 76 as his side won with more than 31 overs to spare to go 1-0 up in a three-match series that continues on the other side of London's River Thames, at Lord's, on Thursday.

Bumrah, 28, may have been assisted by overcast conditions and a well-grassed pitch after Rohit won a good toss, but there was no denying his skill as he surpassed his previous best return in 71 ODIs of 5-27 against Sri Lanka at Pallekele in 2017.

"I don't look at end results and judge my bowling," Bumrah told reporters after a day/night match that ended so quickly there was no need for the floodlights to be switched on.

"There have been instances where I have bowled so much better than this and not got wickets."

Bumrah was well supported by new ball partner Mohammed Shami (3-31) as India made light of the fact that England were fielding arguably their strongest batting line-up in the 50-over format since winning the 2019 World Cup final.



"Both of us had a conversation and decided we should go a little fuller and try to bowl a Test-match length," said Bumrah.

"I try to keep a balanced mind, not look too far ahead... Keeping things simple, not trying to over-complicate it too much and shutting out the outside noise has always worked for me."

He started England's collapse by inducing Jason Roy to play on with just his fourth ball -- one of four ducks in an England innings where Bumrah had Joe Root, the world's top-ranked Test batsman, caught behind for nought as well.

"There's no doubt about the quality of the England side," said Bumrah. "You always want to test yourself against very good players."

England captain Jos Buttler, whose 30 was the hosts' top score, paid tribute to Bumrah's "unique action".

"He has an incredibly high level of skill -- he creates an angle but still has a phenomenal wrist to move the ball both ways from that angle to both right and left-handers," Buttler said.

"He produces tough angles and does it at high pace -- as a package that is very good."

Buttler has now lost three of his four games -- including a 2-1 T20 series defeat by India last week -- since taking over following former white-ball captain Eoin Morgan's retirement.

"It's certainly key not to panic," Buttler said.

"If I look back over the past five or six years, batting has been our super strength in this form of the game."



Mosaddek Hossain (L) and Mehidy Hasan Miraz celebrate the dismissal of Kyle Mayers (R) during Bangladesh's second ODI against the West Indies at Guyana National Stadium in Providence on Wednesday. The Tigers elected to field first, with Mosaddek replacing Taskin Ahmed in the playing eleven. Miraz took four wickets while Nasum Ahmed took three as the hosts were bowled out for 108 runs in 35 overs.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers can dream big with Tamim at the helm

MAZHAR UDDIN

When Tamim Iqbal replaced Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as the ODI captain of Bangladesh back in 2020, there were concerns whether the Tigers would be able to continue on the upward trajectory in their preferred format under new leadership.

With Mashrafe stepping down after recording 50 wins in the format as the skipper, Tamim sure had big shoes to fill. For someone like Tamim, who had always shied away from leadership roles, the task was even steeper considering the legacy left behind by a charismatic leader like Mashrafe.

Owing to the outbreak of coronavirus, Tamim had to wait almost over a year before officially beginning his journey. And that probably worked in the left-hander's favour as he had time to ponder on ways he would like to lead the Tigers. As things stand now, Tamim seems to have done his homework right.

Refining the squad ahead of the next fifty-over World Cup in 2023 has always been a part of Tamim's long-term plan. Considering that, the 33-year-old definitely seems to be headed the right way.

Under Tamim's captaincy, Bangladesh have already won five out of six series and, after a convincing win in the first ODI against the West Indies in their ongoing series, the Tigers are now eyeing yet another series triumph in the three-match series.

Since taking over as the captain in 2021, Tamim has led Bangladesh to 13 wins in 19 matches. Among the ones who led Bangladesh in ODIs, Tamim also boasts the highest win percentage (59.09).

Tamim had a splendid start as the Tigers



whitewashed West Indies in a three-match series at home in his very first assignment as the captain of the side. Bangladesh went on to lose 3-0 in a tough away tour to New Zealand, but that has been the only blemish in Tamim's record so far.

Bangladesh have won four series on the trot since then -- away to Zimbabwe, at home against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka before sealing a maiden ODI series win away to South Africa. Under the southpaw's leadership, Bangladesh were even on top of the ICC ODI Super League table for a while.

"If we win one or two [matches], we will probably qualify for the World Cup. [But] it is not my target. My personal target as a captain is to finish in the top four. If you want to claim that you have come to win the 2023 World Cup, it wouldn't make sense if you qualify as the seventh or eighth team," Tamim had said after the Afghanistan series earlier this year.

There were also concerns whether the added responsibility would hinder the left-hander's form with the willow. But the elegant left-hander has managed to brush off those concerns as well.

In the 19 ODIs since taking over as the captain, Tamim has scored 657 runs, averaging over 36 which is quite similar to his overall ODI career average.

His aggressive captaincy and ability to read the situation also garnered a lot of praise. More importantly, like a true leader, Tamim remained vocal and led from the front whenever the team needed.

Although Tamim and Bangladesh still have a long way to go, the Tigers are surely heading in the right direction and can dream to achieve big in the coming days.

Tennis courts at Bosnian ‘pyramids’!

AFP, VISOKO

Recently-crowned Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic arrived in Bosnia on Wednesday to inaugurate tennis courts at a 'pyramid park' that he regularly visits to recharge his batteries.

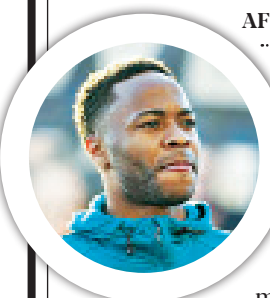
The tennis star, known for his new-age spiritual interests, is fond of a hill town of Visoko, where thousands flock every year to what some believe are an ancient man-made pyramid complex with healing powers -- a claim rejected by scientists.

The 35-year-old Serb, who claimed his 21st Grand Slam title on Sunday, visited the site for the first time in 2020 and called it a 'paradise on earth'.

Bosnian businessman and ancient civilisation aficionado Osmanagic said the idea to construct a regional tennis training centre was born during Djokovic's last visit in March.

"We have agreed to build in our park two courts for training of the top-level players, one hard-court and another one with clay surface" Osmanagic told reporters recently.

Sterling thanks Man City



AFP, MANCHESTER

Raheem Sterling has said he will leave Manchester City "a man" on Wednesday as his transfer to Chelsea edged ever closer.

The 27-year-old posted a goodbye message on social media ahead of an expected £50 million (\$59 million) move.

Sterling announced his exit from the Etihad with a social media post thanking those he worked with at the club over the past seven years.

"Seven seasons, eleven major trophies, a lifetime of memories," he posted on Twitter. "What a ride it's been."

"I am thankful for the ups and the downs as it's the downs that have, at times, tested my strength and resolve and enabled me to stand here in front of you as the best possible version of myself."

"I arrived in Manchester as a 20-year-old. Today, I leave a man. Thank you for your endless support. It's been an honour to wear the shirt of Manchester City."

Sterling is set to become Chelsea's first signing since Todd Boehly's consortium bought the club.

The England international won four Premier League titles among nine major trophies since joining City from Liverpool in 2015.

A key player in the early years of Pep Guardiola's reign at City, Sterling scored 131 goals in 337 appearances for the English champions.

However, his regular place in the starting line-up at City came increasingly under threat from the signing of Jack Grealish for a Premier League record £100 million last year, plus the emergence of Phil Foden from the club's academy.



Bahrain Victorious team's Belgian rider Dylan Teuns (R) leads a breakaway during the 11th stage of the 109th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 151.7 km from Albertville and Col du Granon Serre Chevalier, in the French Alps on Wednesday. The world's most high-profile cycling event was disrupted briefly by environmentalists in the previous stage, which was eventually won by Magnus Cort Nielsen of Denmark. Two-time defending champion Tadej Pogacar held on to the yellow jersey of the overall leader.

PHOTO: AFP



Woods, McIlroy honoured

REUTERS, ST ANDREWS

Former British Open champions Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and Paul Lawrie have become Honorary Members of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, the club said on Wednesday.

American Woods, a 15-times major champion, is bidding to win the British Open for the fourth time this week at St Andrews to add to his victories in 2000, 2005 and 2006.

"I am grateful for this invitation to become an Honorary Member of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews," the 46-year-old said. "It is not only the home of golf but a place in this world that I hold near my heart."

Northern Ireland's McIlroy won the Open at Royal Liverpool in 2014, one of his four major titles.

"It's a privilege to represent a club that has done so much for golf over so many years and I'm proud to play my part in promoting golf around the world," he said.

Scotland's Lawrie, who won the 1999 British Open, will have the honour of striking the first tee shot of the 150th Open on Thursday.