

WC 2023 key in shaping Tamim’s legacy

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal set his sights firmly on the 2023 World Cup in India, which, in his opinion, could be the final destination for the four seniors in the Bangladesh side, who will likely play their last World Cup together.

Alongside Tamim, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad will look to make a lasting impression in their final appearance in a global event and in a format where they have excelled over their long careers.

Bangladesh beat the West Indies in the second ODI in Guyana to clinch the series 2-0 with a game left, also stretching their winning run against the West Indies to 10 matches on the trot in ODIs.

“The 2023 World Cup probably will be one of the biggest events for all of us, especially for the four of us who will most likely end up there. We have to make the best possible combination and best possible team going forward,” Tamim said about targeting the 2023 World Cup as the final landmark of their careers.

The team has young faces, but also players that have played for the country for a while. Liton Das is honing in to take more responsibility and it was clear that the team was gelling in the ODI format despite the disappointments in the other format. Bangladesh sent in Nazmul Hossain Shanto to open the innings in the second ODI and Tamim clarified that it was regular opener Liton’s idea.

“To open with Shanto was a brilliant call by Liton. At the break, he [Liton] came to me and said ‘if you two open, how would that be’ because he felt left-arm spinners were their major strength. I think it was a wonderful call,” Tamim said at the press conference.

That kind of dynamic decision-making and sharing of responsibilities will go a long way to taking Bangladesh to higher echelons by the time 2023 World Cup arrives. The captain said he was feeling confident in his role.

“I am certainly confident and if that was not the case I wouldn’t be doing it [captaincy],” he said. He also divulged on checking bench strength to see how Bangladesh can gear up towards having the best playing eleven. The use of wrist-spinners or a quality spin option would be highly sought-after in the India World Cup.

Will Tamim push for that particular wrist-spin option or bank on the available options. It could go a long way to defining his tenure as captain and leaving behind a legacy after the completion of the 2023 World Cup, which all the seniors will be eying along with the Bangladesh captain.



PHOTO: TWITTER

Why ODIs are Tigers’ favoured format?

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

It has long been understood that Bangladesh find it easier to meet the challenges of the ODI format. However, the disappointing losses in the Test and T20I series in West Indies brought with it the anxiety that the Tigers may not being able to hold their own in the ODI format. However, Tamim Iqbal’s men passed that test with flying colours, clinching the ODI series 2-0 with a game left.

The question of whether it was expected that the Tigers would find their feet in the favoured format was posed to Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, a mentor to many of the stalwarts in the national side.

“We all know that we play ODIs better than other formats. But it did not look like we would be able to dominate as much as we did in the ODIs in the West Indies. The wicket helped, but the fact remains that we play well in ODIs. The players have a very clear idea of the journey in one-dayers,” Fahim said.

Bangladesh portrayed that the team was able to catch the tempo of the moments in the game with much more clarity in ODIs compared to Tests.

If a bowling change did not work, a solution would come almost naturally with the beat. The attitude and body language all seemed improved in the format compared to Tests and T20Is. The Dhaka Premier League is the country’s best domestic competition till date. So is it natural for players to find it easier to adjust

to ODIs?

“The 50-over games we play in the DPL is our cricket, not the four-dayers or the T20 competitions. Even players aged 12 to 15 dream of playing in the DPL. Since it’s a one-day competition, we know the steps of the ODI format better than we understand Tests or T20Is. In other domestic competitions, foreigners get

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Nazmul Abedeen Fahim

major roles. But in the 50-over format of DPL, despite there being some flaws, there is a lot of competitiveness as everyone wants to play there,” he said.

Tamim Iqbal has done immensely as skipper, winning six of the seven series he has captained, including a series win in South Africa. However, the others have contributed methodically keeping in line

with the ease they find in the format.

“The players know what they have to do. Of course there is a leader but everyone here is a leader and is able to contribute to the decision-making process because they have the experience, having gone through such scenarios and events. They know the critical situations that can occur in ODIs and past successes imbue confidence. It’s true that we struggle against the top two or three sides in the world, but we do well against those below the top-tier,” he said.

Is the team in auto-pilot mode in ODIs?

“The captain definitely has to play his role with bowling changes and especially when the team is on the field. Making the best possible use of resources is important. Of course the players understand their roles and the batters usually can avoid disasters in difficult scenarios but that does not mean we can only win in auto-pilot mode,” Fahim opined.

Fahim was disappointed with how Bangladesh fared in Tests. “We batted a bit too badly in Tests but I felt the result does not reflect our abilities. We did not play as well as we could have and I don’t think they were so much better than us in Tests as the results say.

“ODI is our format but even given the problems in the domestic format, I think there was no justification for playing so badly in the Tests. In terms of improving further in ODIs, we should make sure we increase the margins of our victory as we understand the template.”

Rashford eager for ‘fresh start’

REUTERS

Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said he is eyeing up a fresh start at Old Trafford under new manager Erik ten Hag after a disappointing campaign last season.

Rashford missed the start of the campaign after a shoulder injury and struggled for form and consistency, scoring four Premier League goals in 25 appearances as United finished sixth in the standings under interim manager Ralf Rangnick.

The 24-year-old has also lost his place in the England team. “For me it is a fresh start, something I am looking forward to. I am ready to go again,” Rashford told reporters on Thursday before United’s pre-season friendly against Melbourne Victory.

Shohidul suspended for doping violation

ICC

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday announced that Bangladesh pacer Shohidul Islam has been suspended from all cricket-related activities for 10 months after pleading guilty to breaching Article 2.1 of the ICC Anti-Doping Code.

Shohidul had provided a urine sample as part of the ICC’s out-of-competition testing programme in Dhaka on 4 March 2022, which was found to contain Clomifene. Clomifene is classified as a Specified Substance under WADA’s Prohibited List and is prohibited both in competition and out-of-competition.

The 27-year-old fast bowler admitted the violation and accepted a 10-month suspension. The suspension is backdated to 28 May 2022, the date of his acceptance of a voluntary Provisional Suspension. He will, therefore, be eligible to return to cricket on 28 March 2023.

Shohidul has played a solitary T20I for Bangladesh, where he picked up the wicket of Mohammad Rizwan in the third and final match of the series which Pakistan won 3-0.

He has been part of Bangladesh’s travelling squads for series against New Zealand and South Africa but did not get any game time. He was also a part of the Bangladesh Test and T20I squad for the ongoing tour of the West Indies but missed out due to a side strain.

Kohli absent from T20 squad for Windies

AFP, NEW DELHI

India’s out-of-form star batsman Virat Kohli was missing from the 18-member squad announced by selectors Thursday for the upcoming five-match Twenty20 series in West Indies.

Former captain Kohli, 33, has been going through a prolonged lean patch and has not hit a century since 2019, with his future now a matter of intense public debate in his cricket-obsessed country. The national selectors did not clarify whether the top-order batter had finally been dropped or was merely being rested over injury concerns ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia.

The five matches will be played at three venues in Trinidad, St Kitts and Lauderhill in the US state of Florida.

Abahani get back to winning ways

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani returned to winning ways in the Bangladesh Premier League with an emphatic 4-1 victory over Swadhinata KS at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

Abahani, who had been all but out of the title race following their 4-2 defeat against Saif SC in the previous match, raised their points tally to 41 from 19 matches. The Sky Blues, however, are still a long way off from leaders Bashundhara Kings (48 points), who need only a win in the remaining three matches to ensure their hat-trick title.

Meanwhile, the defeat meant that Swadhinata KS remained at the bottom of the 13-team table with nine points from 19 matches.

Going into the game, Abahani were full aware of their opponents’ capabilities, especially after dropping points against Swadhinata KS in the first leg. The Sky Blues did face a bit of resistance until Daniel Colindres capitalised on a mistake from opposition defender Jaynul Abedin Dipu in the 20th minute to give Abahani the lead.

Four minutes later, another



fumble from Serbian defender Ivan Maric saw Brazilian Dorielton Gomes make it 2-0 in Abahani’s favour.

Abahani seemed to have taken their feet off the pedal after a comfortable 2-0 lead and survived two scares from the Swadhinata KS forwards in the dying minutes of the first half. But three minutes into the first-half stoppage time, Japanese forward Yuta Suzuki found a way as he nodded home a Jahedul Alam chip to pull one back for Swadhinata KS.

After resumption, Abahani once

again came close to conceding a goal when keeper Shahidul Alam Sohel thwarted a goal-bounding cross from Dipu in 52nd minute. That seemed to have worked as a wake-up call for Abahani, who then did not give any space to the newcomers and wrapped the game up with two more goals.

Dorielton scored his second goal of the game in the 57th minute while Brazilian Raphael Augustin, following a one-two with Dorielton, hammered an angular shot past the keeper in the 80th minute.



India’s Virat Kohli congratulates leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who turned the destroyer-in-chief as he ripped through the England batting lineup during their second ODI at Lord’s yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP