

‘That one over made the difference’

SPORTS REPORTER

Mosaddek Hossain, Bangladesh skipper for the third and series-deciding T20I against Zimbabwe, mentioned that one over from Nasum Ahmed made the difference at the Harare Sports Club yesterday.

The Tigers lost the final T20I by 10 runs, losing the three-match series 2-1 -- the first time that Bangladesh have lost a bilateral T20I series against Zimbabwe.

Mosaddek pinned the blame on that particular over, which cost 34 runs.

“In the first 14 overs, we were on top. But I think that 15th over made the difference in the game,” Mosaddek, who was named captain for the game after skipper for the series Nurul Hasan Sohan was sidelined from the entire tour due to a finger injury, said at the post-match presentation ceremony.



Left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed was smashed for 30 runs in an over by Zimbabwe’s Ryan Burl in the third T20I in Harare yesterday. It was the most runs conceded by a Bangladeshi in an over in a T20I. Nasum also became only the second bowler ever to concede 34 runs in T20Is. The 79 added off 31 deliveries by Ryan Burl and Luke Jongwe has the all-time highest run-rate for a T20I partnership (minimum 75 runs) from seventh wicket and below.

Zimbabwe’s left-handed batter Ryan Burl struck Nasum for a total of five sixes – four on the trot off the first four deliveries – and a boundary in the 15th over, changing the course of the innings and shifting the momentum towards Zimbabwe, who were on 67 for six runs in 13 overs after electing to bat.

Thanks to Burl’s carnage, Zimbabwe were able to post a competitive total of 156 for eight. Burl, who picked up his second T20I fifty on way to a boundary-laden 28-ball 54, said he always had faith in the depth of their batting unit.

“Losing a few wickets early was not ideal. But we have got quite a lot of depth in the batting line-up, so we were very confident,” Burl said.

Asked what he had in mind when he walked out to the ground with Zimbabwe reeling at 55 for five in 9.1 overs, he spoke about trusting in the process that they have been following as a team lately. “Just trusting the process. I just tried to stay positive and take the positive options,” Burl, the player of the match, added.

While Zimbabwe had faith in their batting depth, the scenario was almost the opposite in the Bangladesh camp. Skipper Moasaddek reiterated that losing wickets at regular intervals made the Tigers’ task of chasing a steep target even harder.

“If you are losing wickets every over in T20 cricket then it is always difficult to chase down [a target]. But I think Afif [Hossain] played really well,” Mosaddek added.

Mosaddek, however, remained confident that Bangladesh would bounce back in the upcoming three-match ODI series, scheduled to begin from August 5 at the same venue.



Bangladesh batter Afif Hossain hit an unbeaten 27-ball 39 but his effort was not good enough as Zimbabwe clinched the T20I series 2-1 with a 10-run victory in the final match at the Harare Sports Club ground yesterday.

PHOTO:TWITTER

Did think-tank’s exercise serve any purpose?

SPORTS REPORTER

Although there was little at stake for Bangladesh in the three-match T20I series against Zimbabwe, there were keen eyes on the performance from the new-look squad led by new skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan.

There was a sign of desperation from the Bangladesh think-tank as they looked to provide a platform for a younger crop of cricketers that would allow them to express themselves in the shortest format and the think-tank opted to go to Zimbabwe without any of their big four. Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim were rested for the T20I series while Tamim Iqbal retired from the format and Shakib Al Hasan took a leave for the entire sojourn.

Interestingly, the three-match T20I series saw Bangladesh field two captains. Regular skipper Mahmudullah was rested initially, but when Nurul Hasan Sohan injured himself, the think-tank took a U-turn and included him for the third match.

There was a further surprise from the team management when they announced that Mosaddek Hossain would be captain for the third and final game on Tuesday in place of Sohan, although Mahmudullah would go on to play the game.

Prior to departing for Zimbabwe, team director Khaled Mahmud said that he would not be upset even if Bangladesh lost 3-0 provided that

they played with freedom.

“We can only try out new players in T20Is. I won’t be a bit upset if we lose 3-0 in Zimbabwe. Because I don’t want to put this pressure on them. I want them to play with freedom. What is important is

The Tigers started off the series with a 17-run defeat in the first T20I and their bowlers looked ordinary as Zimbabwe ended up posting 205 for three. In reply, the visitors ended up on 188 for six on a batting-friendly Harare pitch.

The visitors bounced back in the second game courtesy of Mosaddek Hossain’s maiden five-wicket haul that restricted Zimbabwe to 135 for eight, eventually winning by seven wickets and leveling the series.

But things remained unchanged in terms of their attitude for the third and series-deciding encounter yesterday. Although Zimbabwe were struggling for 67 for six inside 13 overs, they went on to post a challenging total of 156 for eight. In reply, Bangladesh fell short by 10 runs, losing their first-ever bilateral T20I series against Zimbabwe.

The Tigers’ intent remained questionable and there were no exceptional performances from any of the players that were given the opportunity to express themselves. The likes of Anamul Haque, Munim Shahriar, Najmul Hossain Shanto and Parvez Hossain Emon, who made his T20I debut in the third game, were disappointing.

So the question remains, even if the result is disregarded, did the performances provide the think-tank with the confidence that their purpose had been served as they look for a new beginning in the shortest format of the game?

SCORES IN BRIEF
Zimbabwe: 156 for 8 in 20 overs (Chakabva 17, Ervine 24, Burl 54, Jongwe 35; Mahedi 2-28, Hasan 2-28)

Bangladesh: 146 for 8 in 20 overs (Liton 13, Anamul 14, Shanto 16, Mahmudullah 27, Afif 39 not out, Mahedi 22; Evans 2-26, Nyauchi 3-29)

Result: Zimbabwe won by 10 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Ryan Burl.

Player-of-the-series: Sikandar Raza.

their body language and whether we can play T20 cricket like the format requires,” Mahmud told the media.

But even when it came to performance on the field, there were hardly any positives to take home.

India, Pakistan clash on Aug 28 in Asia Cup

REUTERS, New Delhi

Arch-rivals India and Pakistan will clash in an Asia Cup Sunday blockbuster in Dubai on Aug. 28, the organisers said on Tuesday.

Bilateral cricket remains suspended between the bitter neighbours who play each other only in multi-team tournaments.

A day after Sri Lanka take on Afghanistan in the opener, India and Pakistan will lock horns in the tournament’s most anticipated match.

The nine-team Twenty20 tournament was shifted to the United Arab Emirates last month due to the political and economic crisis in Sri Lanka, who retain the hosts’ honour. Read full story

Pakistan beat India by 10 wickets in a T20 World Cup match in Dubai last year in their previous encounter.

Dubai hosts 10 matches, including the Sept. 11 final, while three will be played in Sharjah, ACC president Jay Shah, who is also the secretary of the Indian cricket board, said on Twitter.

England to play seven T20s in Pakistan

AFP, Karachi

England will play seven Twenty20 internationals against Pakistan on their first visit to the country in 17 years, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Tuesday.

England will arrive in mid-September and play four T20s in Karachi, with the other three matches in Lahore, and then return in December for three Tests.

England’s last tour to the country was in 2005 before Pakistan were forced to play international matches at neutral venues in the UAE following a 2009 attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore.

International cricket gradually returned to Pakistan in 2015 but suffered another setback when New Zealand pulled out of a tour minutes before a one-day international in September last year, citing security alerts.

A week later, England withdrew its men’s and women’s teams from tours to Pakistan.

Both tours were rescheduled after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) gave assurances over security. Pakistan successfully hosted Australia for the first time since 1998 earlier this year.

Diabate topples Thankgod

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan striker Souleymane Diabate toppled Chittagong Abahani forward Peter Thankgod to finish as the Bangladesh Premier League’s top-scorer as the Black and Whites inflicted a massive 7-0 defeat on Rahmatganj in their last league match at the Shaheed Dhirendhranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

Malian striker Diabate scored four of the seven goals, taking his tally for the season to 21 goals, one ahead of Nigerian forward Thankgod, who had topped the goal scoring charts since the beginning and had stayed been on top since.

The huge victory also helped Mohammedan finish fifth in the 12-team table with 33 points from 22 matches, two ahead of sixth-placed Sheikh Russel, who yesterday beat relegated Swadhinata KS 4-1 at the Muktijoddha Smriti Stadium in Rajshahi.



U-20s seal spot in SAFF final

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh emerged as group champions and booked a place in the SAFF U-20 Championship final after playing out a 1-1 draw against Nepal in an ill-tempered final group-stage match at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar yesterday.

Piash Ahmed Nova gave Bangladesh a second-half lead which was canceled out by substitute Niranjana Malla in a game that saw the referee give marching orders to a player each from each side just two minutes into the second half following an ugly scuffle. Players from both benches and Nepal’s reserves also ran out to join the scuffle, which resulted in Rohit Subra, who was on the bench, being also sent off.

But the budding footballers showed their spirit of sportsmanship at the end of the day, shaking hands at the final whistle.

Ahead of the game, Bangladesh had all but secured passage to the final, needing only to avoid losing by more than five goals to progress, and opted to rest three key players – Shahin Mia, Mirajul Islam and Murshed Ali. On the other hand, Nepal improved considerably after being hammered 8-0 by India in their previous game and pressed hard from the world go.

Paul Smalley’s charges lacked the incision that they had shown in the previous matches, mishitting passes, crosses and shots and displaying less off-the-ball movement overall, but a good performance from the backline and goalkeeper Mohammad Asif kept



Bangladesh in the game.

Rafiqul Islam ran down the right from a counter-attack and entered the box before cutting back for Nova, who made no mistake in driving home from inside the box in the 63rd minute. But Nepalese substitute Niranjana brilliantly leveled the margin in 68th minute, dribbling among three and making the space to strike a

stunning left-footed drive from the top of the box.

Bangladesh could have notched up a fourth straight win had Nova, Rafiqul Islam and substitute Mojibur Rahman Jony not squandered one-on-one opportunities.

Bangladesh will play the final against India on August 5.