

Tri-nation series beckons for new heroes

SPORTS REPORTER

Oftentimes reality shapes the hardened professional, but it may also find the inundated lacking in clarity and unable to execute. As the Tigers go into the first match of the tri-nation series against Pakistan today, they will not have the experience of a Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim or a Mahmudullah Riyad.

But they will very much be looking forward to finding new gems from the batch selected for the tri-nation series and the T20 World Cup in Australia that follows the series.

Overwhelmed or otherwise, the questions that will be asked in this series will be real. And answering them will go a long way to taking the team forward instead of backward.

Crucially, the Tigers do not have a tried and tested scheme at present. The opening pair experiment with Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Sabbir Rahman has not worked despite the former finding runs at the top in the Asia Cup and the series against the UAE.

Still heavily dependent on Liton Das and Afif Hossain in the batting front, the form shown by the likes of Yasir Ali, Mohammad Saifuddin and Najmul Hossain Shanto has reflected Bangladesh's struggles in the format. Even stand-by option Soumya Sarkar has not been firing on all cylinders.

When it comes to the team's approach, it is at the top where such questions of meritocracy and process will be put paid to if results do not match expectations.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan has gone about his natural game and his intent has seen him hold his place in the side while other seniors were found lacking.

But questions will be asked of him and how he can assume the leadership of a young side, especially after he was delayed by two days and could only join the team yesterday.

On the bowling side of things, Mustafizur Rahman and Saifuddin's struggles with the ball continue to prove a headache while Hasan Mahmud is still finding his feet in the international arena. Taskin Ahmed and Ebadot Hossain are yet to settle down in T20Is while Shoriful Islam, on standby, will be hoping to make a case.

The team is looking to find a new avenue in T20Is and if the seniors were found wanting by the demands of the time, the relatively younger stars have received messages about the expectations on them.

On the other hand, Pakistan's pace attack holds sway over most oppositions, especially in conditions that help faster bowlers. It is in batting where questions could be asked of Pakistan, with very little response coming from those behind Mohammad Rizwan and skipper Babar Azam.

A litmus test beckons as these two subcontinental teams look to find their feet in New Zealand and group together for the T20 World Cup.



Erling Haaland continued his remarkable goalscoring form to take his goal tally to an incredible 19 in all competitions this season with another double in Manchester City's 5-0 demolition of FC Copenhagen in Champions League Group G match on Wednesday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

'He's not human!'

AGENCIES

Erling Haaland took his goal tally to an incredible 19 in all competitions this season with another double in Manchester City's 5-0 demolition of FC Copenhagen in Champions League Group G match on Wednesday.

The Norwegian slammed in the opening goal on seven minutes with his weaker right foot before prodding in a rebound for his second 25 minutes later. There was to be no hat-trick for Haaland as he was withdrawn at halftime.

The 22-year-old has now scored 28 times in his 22 Champions League appearances, already breaking Ruud van Nistelrooy's record for most goals in a player's first 30 games in the competition.

"Erling Haaland just wants to win the game, hat-tricks are not everything," City coach Pep Guardiola told reporters. "We need to have everyone involved. I know the problems we have now -- Kyle Walker is out for a long while -- but we can rely on players off the bench like Rico Lewis, even though he is only 17."

"This is the biggest title we can get, beyond the Premier League, the biggest we can get."

"It's unbelievable honestly," Jack Grealish told BT Sport when asked about Haaland. "I've never witnessed anything like it in my life. For the first and second goals I was just laughing. He is always there."

"The keeper said something to me as I was walking back. He said 'he's not human!' I said 'you're telling me?' Hopefully he can carry on this form and take us to glory."

From mere onlooker to the record books

SPORTS REPORTER FROM SYLHET

On Thursday, Fariha Trisna etched her name in the record books as the left-arm pacer bagged a hat-trick on her T20I debut to help Bangladesh crush Malaysia by 88 runs in their Women's Asia Cup encounter at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium.

Coming in to bowl only her third over in T20Is, the 20-year-old scalped the wicket of Malaysia skipper Winifred alongside Duraisingam Mas Elya and Mahirah Izzati Ismail off the second, third and fourth deliveries of the sixth over of the game.

All three wicket-taking deliveries were identical -- length deliveries that nipped back in to bamboozle the right-handed batters. Duraisingam and Mahirah Izzati were beaten by the slight movement off the pitch and lost their stumps while Elya was trapped in front.

However, things were not as easy for Trisna as she made it seem yesterday.

She encountered innumerable obstacles on her path from Panchagarh, the northernmost district of Bangladesh, to the national



team, with difficulties in abundance for women playing cricket in such a remote area.

"Playing cricket in Panchagarh is very difficult for girls. The game is entirely for the boys over there. There is nothing for girls [in cricket in Panchagarh]. We had grounds in Panchagarh but we still could not

practice," Trisna, who overcame all these hurdles to become only the second Bangladeshi bowler to scalp a hat-trick in T20Is, said after the game.

Leg spinner Fahima Khatun is the only other Bangladeshi bowler to have bagged a hat-trick in the shortest format, doing so against the UAE in 2018.

Trisna also became only the second bowler, after Nepal's Anjali Chand, to scalp a hat-trick on debut in T20Is.

The young seamer spoke about how sticking to her strengths worked for her.

"My strength is my spot ball. I just try to land the ball in a specific spot. I usually get out-swing when bowling to left-handed batters. For right-handers, they become in-swingers. I get results when I stick to my strengths."

Interestingly, Trisna thought the Sylhet wicket also had something to do with her success.

"This wicket is lucky for me. Whenever I play here, I try to do good things and things happen for me. I believed that I would do something good on my debut as well."

Pretorius ruled out of T20 WC

AFP, Lucknow

South Africa's Dwaine Pretorius has been ruled out of the ongoing one-day international series in India and the Twenty20 World Cup with a broken thumb, the country's cricket board said Thursday.

The bowling all-rounder sustained the injury during the third T20 on Tuesday, which South Africa won in Indore to avoid a whitewash with their 2-1 series defeat. Left-arm quick Marco Jansen has been added to the ODI squad and a further announcement on Pretorius' replacement for the T20 World Cup will be made in the coming days, Cricket South Africa said.

"The nature of the injury requires medical intervention and Dwaine will consult the Cricket South Africa designated hand surgeon on arrival in South Africa," chief medical officer Shuaib Manjra said in the statement.

"Normal rehabilitation procedures will follow to ensure he speedily returns to playing cricket."

Qualifiers for T20's showpiece event in Australia will begin on October 16, followed by the Super 12 six days later.



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