

All-rounder Miraz turns up in BPL as well

SPORTS REPORTER

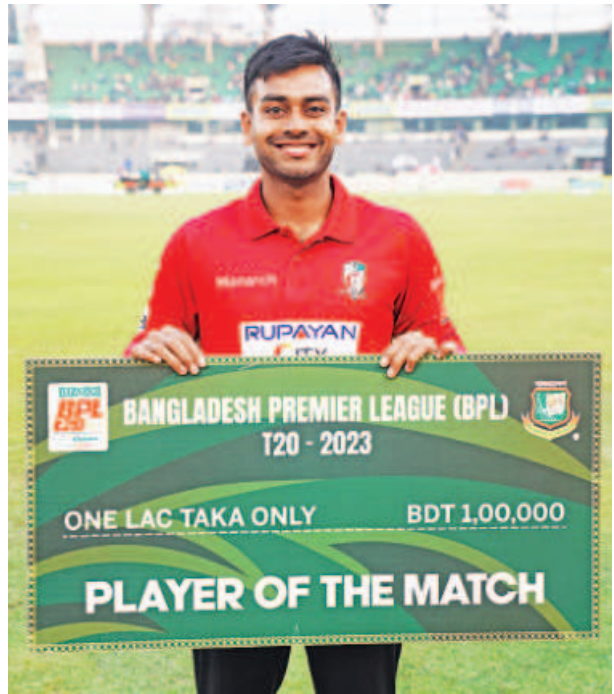
Despite showing great potential with the bat at the age-level, Mehedi Hasan Miraz failed to live up to the expectations in the international arena for many years since making his international debut.

Miraz announced himself as a genuine off-spinner, scalping seven wickets in his first Test, against England back in 2016. But the cricketer could never really turn himself into a proper all-rounder, with glimpses of his batting brilliance few and far between.

But the 25 year-old finally seems to be making the transition from just being a handy option in the batting line-up to someone a team can rely on with the bat in hand – as was the case yesterday when the right-hander’s 29-ball 43 helped Fortune Barishal register a six-wicket victory against Rangpur Riders in a Bangladesh Premier League game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Miraz gradually improved his batting technique and his maiden Test hundred against the West Indies in 2021, and first ODI ton against India in December last year only showed how far the cricketer has come over the years to become a regular feature for the Tigers across all formats as a genuine all-rounder.

The all-rounder captained Fortune Barishal in the opening game of the BPL, and it seemed that the burden of captaincy was too much for the cricketer. Miraz batted



at number eight, scoring only just one run as his side suffered a six-wicket defeat against Sylhet Strikers.

Barishal’s policy of rotating captains each game seemed to have worked in favour of Miraz, who came up with an all-round performance to help Barishal seal their first win of the BPL over Rangpur Riders in their second game yesterday while playing just as a player.

After picking up two wickets with the ball in hand, Miraz added a crucial 84-run third-wicket stand with Ibrahim Zadran to rescue his side from 18 for two in their chase of a 159-run target against Rangpur.

“I always enjoy my batting. Our game plan was that if we lose early wickets then I will go ahead of Shakib bhai and Mahmudullah [Riyad] bhai to bat. But I would have been more satisfied if I could finish the innings unbeaten. However, I am happy that I was able to utilise the powerplay as we needed to score some quick runs,” Miraz, player of the match, told the media.

Miraz also believed that if given more opportunities during crunch situations, local cricketers will be able to flourish in their roles as finishers.

“I think we are improving and if you look at players like Zakir Hasan or Towhid Hridoy, they have shown what they are capable of. Once you put yourself under such pressure, you will gain more experience and improve day by day,” he added.

Disjointed, disorganised, but ‘nothing irregular’

Age-old problems rear head in Youth Games

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Although the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) was hopeful of organising the Sheikh Kamal 2nd Bangladesh Youth Games in a more cohesive way than the inaugural edition, age-old problems bubbled to the fore as the first phase, featuring 495 upazillas, began.

Of the 60,000 athletes, officials, technical staff and organisers that had geared up for the event across the upazillas, at least those who turned up to the Tangail Stadium were frustrated by the poor arrangements from negligent authorities.

There was a low turnout in terms participants during the meet, which ran from January 7 to yesterday, and virtually no audience, both attributed to the district sports association’s failure to promote the event.

But concerning on-field matters, things became even more disjointed.

Several athletes complained that the tracks they were asked to run on were not even. Elsewhere, karatekas complained about the bitter cold that they felt during their events as they were asked to compete on cement floors, sans the mats that are customary.

Meanwhile, teams from six upazillas participated in football and volleyball matches but allegations about the inclusion of over-aged players and players



from unconnected districts were rife.

“We have complained to the authorities over irregularities but turned a blind eye to the issue,” said Jahirul Islam Milon, coach of the Dhanbar upazila girls’ football team.

When queried about the issue, Golam Raihan Bapon, general secretary of the Gopalpur upazila sports association, admitted that some players were from outside the district and said they were included due to a shortage of players. He added: “However, they practice football

with our girls in our upazila.”

In another curious case, several football players alleged that they did not get the Tk 700 each player was due to receive for transport, food and pocket money.

Shafiqul Islam Ratan, general secretary of the Bhuanpur upazila sports association, explained that most the budget had already been spent on transport and food and that only the remaining amount was disbursed.

Regardless, authorities maintained that

they had done their utmost. They claimed there had been no ‘irregularities’ and attributed the low turnout to the weather.

Mirza Moinul Hossain Lintu, general secretary of Tangail district sports association, said the event was held properly and that there was no negligence nor irregularities.

Al Amin, district sports officer in Tangail, said that audiences were low due to the chilling cold. “However, there were no irregularities,” he added.



Shakib Al Hasan, still in his slippers, entered the field and was seen having a heated conversation with the on-field umpire over who, between Anamul Haque Bijoy and Chaturanga de Silva, would take strike for Fortune Barishal in their Bangladesh Premier League game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BPL gets the Shakib it deserves

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Before the Bangladesh Premier League’s ninth edition had rolled on to the field, Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan was scathing in his criticism of the tournament’s organisation. As the tournament has begun, Shakib’s attitude towards it has only caused further uproar about its standards.

His latest act, rushing onto the field to argue with umpires during the game between Rangpur Riders and Fortune Barishal, further signals Shakib’s attitude towards the BPL, a tournament where ‘whatever goes’ has become the norm.

His latest act also crossed the line normally maintained in a professional setting. The matter turned out to be rather futile in essence. The issue was about who would take strike given the match-up at the start of the innings. The event in itself was not big, but Shakib’s reactions signalled otherwise.

Left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan had the ball and left-handed Chaturanga De Silva was set to take strike. It was then that Nurul Hasan Sohan, the Rangpur skipper, gave the ball to Sheikh Mahedi. Shakib immediately shouted instructions for Anamul Haque to take strike against the right-arm spinner and chaos ensued, leading to Shakib bursting onto the field before a ball was bowled in the second innings.

When Anamul took strike, Rangpur again changed to Rakibul and Shakib went on to argue with the match officials. Barishal’s Mehedi Hasan Miraz later said at a press conference that Shakib had sought permission from the fourth umpire. “He did talk to the umpire at first,” Miraz said.

“This is the first time,” Rangpur skipper Nurul Hasan said when asked if this was something he was seeing for the first time.

“When Shakib bhai was shouting from the outside, I was changing [the opening bowler],” he said. “When Shakib bhai was instructing from outside, I did that.

If the batters had taken the decision, then I wouldn’t have changed. Since instructions came from outside [the field of play], I opted to change.

Judging from Shakib’s body language, he may not have bothered enough to seek permission in the heat of that moment. Previously, during the match against Comilla, he had almost charged an umpire for failing to signal a wide.

Shakib has also publicly said that he could run the BPL better than the current organisers. Clearly, from his point of view the BPL is not meeting the professional standard.

Nurul also opined that the standard was missing and suggested the rules had not been explained. “The umpire should have mentioned [the rules] but he didn’t say anything. If he did, it would have been solved easily,” he said of the game being stopped for almost five minutes due to Shakib’s entrance.

“Later, things happened as the batter wanted. It’s their right and that’s what happened,” Nurul said.

When The Daily Star asked the match referee if either Shakib or Nurul would be fined, he said yesterday evening he ‘could not say at the moment’.

When the BPL governing council failed to address what a contracted player could say about the BPL to the press, a member of the refereeing committee may be in doubt over communicating the penalties or if indeed they will be handed out.

The Alternate Decision Review System caused confusion again when a not out decision against Anamul was reviewed and given out. There was no clarity around such decisions. “I think umpires feel more pressure [due to ADRS]. It would be better if it wasn’t there,” he said.

From marketing to player availability and lack of accountability in terms of umpiring decisions and otherwise, the BPL showed a lack of professionalism and Shakib could only be seen as answering his own claims regarding the tournament with his actions at this point.



So far the leading scorer in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League with 195 runs at 65 average, Sylhet Strikers’ Towhid Hridoy continued his purple patch as the right-hander hit his third fifty on the trot to propel his side to 201 for eight against Dhaka Dominators in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: bcb

Mohammedan’s sights on semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan all but confirmed a quarterfinal berth in the Federation Cup with a massive 7-0 win over Uttara Azampur in a Group A encounter while Rahmatganj surprised Sheikh Jamal to win 3-0 and keep their hopes of a quarterfinal berth alive yesterday.

Mohammedan are top of Group A with six points and a game in hand while Sheikh Jamal are level with Rahmatganj on three points each from two games.

Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik made six changes to the team that suffered a 0-2 loss to Sheikh Russel in a Bangladesh Premier League match last Friday and the moves paid huge dividends as his team toyed with Azampur, taking a 3-0 lead at half-time before adding four more goals at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

Despite the absence of Malian forward Souleymane Diabate, Mohammedan’s attacking line-up proved devastating, leaving Azampur totally helpless.

Uzbek attacking midfielder Muzaffarjon Muzaffarov and national team forward Sazzad Hossain struck a brace each while Brazilian defender Roger Oliveira, Spanish forward Daniel Ricardo and Shahriar Emon netted one goal apiece as the team found some room to breathe after a hard-fought 1-0 win over Rahmatganj in their tournament opener.

At the Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj, Sheikh Jamal made seven changes to the team that had played out a 1-1 draw against Chittagong Abahani, but it did not work out as it had for Mohammedan.

Last edition’s runners-up Rahmatganj looked far more motivated and emerged as the better side after surviving the initial pressure. Rahmatganj went ahead after Tajik forward Fatkhulo Fatkhulloev converted a penalty after Omar Faruque Babu handled the ball inside the box.

The Old Dhaka outfit came close twice to doubling the lead before Brazilian Michael Vinicius headed a Fatkhulloev corner home in stoppage time of the first half. After resumption, Maruful Haque sent on three fresh players to control the match, but his charges could not find the target. Instead, Colombian Jhoaho Valencia wrapped up the victory for Rahmatganj with a header in the 74th minute.