

The attitude adjustment that the Tigers needed

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh wrapped up the three-match ODI series against Ireland with an emphatic 10-wicket victory in the final game after a record-breaking display saw the fast bowlers take all 10 wickets in an innings for the first time in any format at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Pacer Hasan Mahmud starred with his maiden five-wicket haul while Taskin Ahmed made the new ball talk and scalped three. Ebadot Hossain also impressed, bagging two wickets as the visitors folded for 101.

Skipper Tamim Iqbal and fellow opener Liton Das made little fuss as they led an authoritative charge and chased down the target in 13.1 overs as Bangladesh won by 10 wickets for the first time in history.

“The batting performances in the first two matches were something we haven’t seen before,” Tamim said in the post-match interview. “The way we chased down the runs with authority gives a very strong message to the opposition.

While a series win was always expected against Ireland, what set it apart was the attitude that the Tigers showed through the three matches.

The first match saw Tamim’s side post their highest-ever total of 338, breaking their previous best of 333 against Australia at the 2019 World Cup. Within 48 hours, the Tigers managed to surpass that by putting on a record 349 in the second ODI thanks to Mushfiquur Rahim, who smashed an unbeaten 60-ball 100, the fastest century by a Bangladesh batter.

Bangladesh’s batters also seemed to have left out any lingering baggage from the England series and purposefully edited out any negativity regarding off-field issues. Towhid Hridoy provided a breath of fresh air,



rejuvenating the squad, and Shakib Al Hasan’s urgency while trying to up the ante with the bat from good platforms was there for everyone to see.

It was almost reminiscent of Chandika Hathurusingha’s first stint as a coach when, according to the players, the Sri Lankan had established a positive and fearless approach to the game, especially in the batting scheme of things.

The 54-year-old might just have been able to reignite that spark with a much-needed attitude adjustment, and this time with much better resources. The Tigers were able to build on their belief and looked to take a proactive approach as each game passed.

That much was evident from what Bangladesh’s fast-bowling coach Allan Donald said on Wednesday. He opined Bangladesh could go for 400 if given the chance to bat first again.

The South African also praised Hathurusingha for propagating that aggressive approach amongst the group and giving them the license to play the fearless brand of cricket that helped the Tigers to a 3-0 T20I series win against England.

Such a clinical effort from the Tigers will bring them a load of confidence but it is important not to drum up a contest that was heavily one-sided, with the Tigers taking on a sub-par Ireland bowling line-up that could do little to challenge the Bangladesh batters.

But it is also important to dominate when the opportunity arrives. It is often a hallmark of a ‘big’ team or a team that wants to brush shoulders with the big guns to display strength against relatively weaker sides. Bangladesh did what was necessary and punished what Ireland offered with authority.



On a day Bangladesh pacers ruled the roost, youngster Hasan Mahmud was still able to set himself apart from the rest during the Tigers’ maiden 10-wicket win in ODIs, against Ireland in Sylhet yesterday. Hasan’s maiden fifer in the format saw the Tigers bundle out the visitors for 101 in just 28.1 overs.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Hasan’s first underlines pacers’ new statement

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI *from Sylhet*

Firsts are always special. Most bowlers come on to the international stage having already bagged five wickets in a domestic game, but that was not the case for Hasan Mahmud. The 23-year-old bagged his first fifer, not just on the international stage, but overall, in the third ODI against Ireland.

He had not even scalped five wickets in a domestic first-class game before, but his presence was a gift that merited acknowledgement of ‘the pack’.

Ebadot Hossain, flanked closely by Mehedi Hasan Miraz, came in for a handshake but Taskin Ahmed had gotten there first. The players congratulated Hasan one by one after the youngsters’ first fifer. ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal was close by, patting his back.

Hasan may have been here only a short while, but he has been coming for a long time. He may not have many first-class domestic games under his belt, but he had been a constant in the U-19 team, the emerging side and always on the periphery of the national team when fit. His skills have not been overlooked since the U-19 World Cup in 2018, when injury troubles had sidelined him. Having returned, the 23-year-old is finally making his claim. A yorker to remove Jos Buttler and his death bowling proved key in the England T20Is.

Against Ireland yesterday, he turned up with the new ball, which swung both ways for him. First, he troubled them by creating uncertainty and threatening the outside edge, then he got them rooted to crease and trapped them leg before with late in-dippers off the hand or the deck.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Ireland: 101 all out in 28.1 overs (Tucker 28, Campher 36; Hasan 5-32, Taskin 3-26, Ebadot 2-29)

Bangladesh: 102-0 in 13.1 overs (Tamim 41 not out, Liton 50 not out)

Result:

Bangladesh won by ten wickets.

Player-of-the-match:

Hasan Mahmud

Player-of-the-series:

Mushfiquur Rahim

His first spell of six overs resulted in an Irish top-order struggle, one they never recovered from, and along with his last two, the pace attack bagged all 10 wickets.

“I was told that I would start with the new ball and I prepared for that over the past two days,” Hasan said, indicating to his ability and willingness to adapt to new roles.

Allan Donald had narrowed things down the previous day, talking about the unit’s pack mentality.

Hasan ushered praise back at his bowling coach. “The last few years, we have been working hard. We have a good connection with Allan Donald. He shared his experience and how he survived in cricket... how to handle situations and back yourself. His skill is unbelievable. He works really hard,” he said. It turned out that the pack mentality also brought out healthy competition.

“We [pacers] all want to give our best and everyone wants to beat each other. Taskin bhai is a senior and always protects us. He plays up our good aspects and tells us to avoid the bad things,” he said, adding that fitness and getting his bowling into a better shape was what he was keen to improve on.

Pacers like Hasan enabled Tigers to play on good sporting conditions this time around.

Skipper Tamim Iqbal added: “We don’t normally play on grassy wickets a lot but thinking of the World Cup and series ahead, we played on these kinds of tracks. The contest became even at home on these kinds of tracks since their fast bowlers are used to such conditions. We accepted those challenges and the pacers reacted exceptionally well.

Hasan, however, was keen to remind: “It is my first five wicket haul. I haven’t gotten a five-wicket haul before in domestic games either.” Bangladesh will be hoping it is the first of many.

RECORDS GALORE FOR TIGERS IN IRISH DEMOLITION

Bangladesh sealed their first-ever 10-wicket victory in ODIs when they thrashed Ireland in the final game of the three-match series in Sylhet yesterday. Bangladesh have won by nine wickets five times in the format.

It was also the first time that Bangladesh pacers accounted for all 10 wickets in an ODI.

338 for eight in the first ODI and 349 for six in the following game are the Tigers’ two highest scores in ODIs.

Bangladesh cruised to victory with 221 balls to spare in Sylhet yesterday, their second-largest victory in terms of balls remaining. Bangladesh’s biggest win in this regard was when they beat Zimbabwe by six wickets with 229 balls in hand in 2009 in Chattogram.

Young pacer Hasan Mahmud became only the 13th Bangladeshi bowler and ninth Bangladesh pacer to get a fifer in ODIs. He ended with figures of five for 32 in 8.1 overs, including a solitary maiden.

Both Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiquur Rahim reached the milestone of 7000 runs in ODIs in this series. The duo along with Tamim are the only players to achieve the feat.

Shakib also became only the third player, after Sanath Jayasuriya (13430 runs, 323 wickets) and Shahid Afridi (8064 runs, 395 wickets), to score 7000 runs and take 300 wickets in ODI cricket during the first ODI against Ireland.

ODI skipper Tamim became the first Bangladeshi and 40th overall to reach 15,000 international runs during his 23-run knock in the second ODI.

Mushfiquur Rahim smashed an unbeaten 60-ball 100 to become Bangladesh’s fastest centurion in the format in the second ODI of the series.



MBAPPE LEADS FRANCE’S FRESH START

Three months on from their agonising defeat in the World Cup final in Doha, France begin a new era as Les Blues start their Euro 2024 qualifying campaign without Ballon d’Or winner Karim Benzema, and with Kylian Mbappe leading the team against the Netherlands tonight. It seems like a new dawn for France with a new captain, new goalkeeper, new defence, new governance and major players retired. The two-time World Cup winners will then play Ireland in another Group B match in Dublin on Monday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

‘Pirates now familiar foes’

SPORTS REPORTER

With all attention grabbed by the ODI series between Bangladesh and Ireland following a historic T20 series win over world champions England, sports lovers have hardly noticed the arrival of a certain foreign outfit in Seychelles, who are slated to play two friendly matches against hosts Bangladesh in Sylhet tomorrow and on Tuesday.

Seychelles, known as the Pirates, reached Sylhet on Wednesday night after landing in Dhaka earlier in the afternoon, and had their first training session at the BKSP ground yesterday.

“Seychelles are now a familiar opponent,” said Bangladesh assistant coach Hasan Al Mamun yesterday. However, it’s worth recalling how, as far as the country’s football fans are concerned, Seychelles had been an almost completely unknown footballing entity until they were invited to play the 2020 Bangabandhu Gold Cup in Dhaka.

And expectedly, Seychelles could hardly impress the spectators with their performance in the aforementioned six-nation tournament but the Pirates moved into the last four from three-team group, courtesy of a superior goal-difference.

It was learned that most Seychelles footballers, hailing from a tiny nation

with around one-lakh population situated in the Indian Ocean, off East Africa, are amateurs and play football after managing their individual jobs.

Despite being tagged an amateur side, Seychelles were organised and disciplined to give the ultimate champions Palestine a run for their money before suffering a narrow 1-0 defeat in the semi-finals.



Bangladesh could not face Seychelles in Dhaka as the two were drawn in different groups, but the men in red and green met Seychelles in a neutral venue in Sri Lanka’s capital Colombo in 2021 during the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa Trophy. In that encounter, despite their players suffering a lot of muscle cramps, Seychelles came from behind to play a 1-1 draw with Bangladesh. The islanders went on to leave Colombo by clinching the four-nation trophy, placing them ahead of finalists Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh.

Similar to Bangladesh’s glorious past in football, Seychelles had a good run as they won a silver medal in the first Indian Ocean Islanders Games in 1979 before they bagged bronze medals in the 1985, 1998, and 2003 editions. They also held teams like Zambia and Namibia and have beaten Zimbabwe during FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in early 2000s.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) may anticipate an improvement in FIFA rankings after playing against the 199-ranked Seychelles, but the task is not going to be easy one for the charges of Spanish coach Javier Cabrera, who has been preparing the men in red and green for nearly two weeks at home and abroad.

Last year the physically superior Seychellois played nine international matches in which they could not taste a win, but they drew thrice against Mauritius, Lesotho, and San Marino, while defeats in home and away matches against Botswana, Angola, Comoros, and Madagascar showed their fighting character.

Bangladesh, however, tasted a win against Cambodia in eight international matches they played last year in which the men in red and green could draw against Mongolia and Indonesia. Now it remains to be seen who can win in a battle between two equally matched sides.