

Homeless World Cup brings message of hope

REUTERS

Hundreds of football players from around the world will step on to the pitch on Saturday to compete in the Homeless World Cup, an international competition held this year in California for people living without permanent shelter or in rehab centers.

The 40-team tournament, which runs from July 8-15 at the University of California at Sacramento, is the brainchild of Homeless World Cup Foundation.

"Football is a unifying force, it's incredibly powerful and in my view, more generally, it really has a lot of power to tackle some of the most serious problems in the world," said Mel Young, co-founder of the foundation.

The foundation said the players come from a range of situations: refugees, asylum seekers or people forced into shelters or on to the street because of a lack of affordable housing.

All participants have been paired with partner organizations in their home countries that provide mental and physical health support, Young said. When ready, players receive help finding work or a home.

"It's all about helping them move on and change their



lives," Young said.

This is the first time the Homeless World Cup will take place in the US. Previous tournaments were in South Africa, France, and Denmark.

There are two different fields of play, the World Cup, which consists of both men's and co-ed teams, and the Women's World Cup, featuring women-only matches.

Games are played with four players per side, on a field closer in size to a tennis court than a regular soccer pitch. This leads to faster-paced and higher scoring games, with each lasting for 15 minutes each.



Ajax players paid tribute to Edwin van der Sar by entering the field for their friendly match against FC Den Bosch with all eleven players wearing a goalkeeper's jersey with the name of their former top goalkeeper and general manager, who remains in intensive care following a cerebral hemorrhage on Friday. PHOTO: TWITTER

Tigresses looking for the 'winning moment'

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's team will take on their Indian counterparts in the first of the three-match T20I series today in what will be their first match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in 11 years.

Skipper Nigar Sultana

Joty was eying a historic series win against the visitors and hoping a crowd would turn up to support them. Joty was hoping for that one elusive win to get them into gear against a top side, having come close on a couple of occasions.

"If we can win the opening game, you can understand how the tournament will go. There is nothing better than a win to motivate a team. Everything changes after the winning moment. We are looking for such a win," Joty told the media at a press conference yesterday.

"Why not?" she replied when asked about their chances of winning the series.

Bangladesh are hoping their strengths will prove adequate, especially in terms of the

bowling unit. It was learned that the wicket in Mirpur would be conducive to spin.

"I think our bowling attack is the best and if we can take our chances early and bowl according to our plan, no one can be a threat," she said.

Shorna Akhter had impressed in the U-19 World Cup and had been included in the side in place of Rumana Ahmed as the team management felt they needed to start preparing the younger stars as the team builds up to the 2024 Women's T20 World Cup at home.

"I would say Shorna Akhter is a game-changer. We saw her potential in the Under-19 side, like how she scores in pressure moments. We missed her in Sri Lanka due to injury but she made a strong comeback. She plays all over the ground and she also bowls good leg spin," she said.

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur said their support staff had a good idea of the new players in the Tigresses line-up. "They are very competitive when they are playing good cricket and we just want to keep things very simple," she said.



Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran celebrates reaching his fourth ODI ton as Shakib Al Hasan looks on during their second ODI against Bangladesh in Chattogram on Saturday. Zadran's opening partner Rahmanullah Gurbaz also scored his fourth century in ODIs as the duo piled misery on the Tigers. [Bottom] Meanwhile, Bangladesh's stand-in skipper and opener Liton Das could not make an impact, scoring only 13 off 15 deliveries. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Off-field chaos seeps onto the pitch

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket has been in a state of total chaos over the past 48 hours or so since the retirement saga surrounding Tamim Iqbal in the midst of their three-match ODI series against Afghanistan and that reflected on the field yesterday in the second ODI in Chattogram.

The off-field distraction that saw the ODI captain shockingly leave the team impacted the hosts, who were looking to save the series after losing the first ODI by 17 runs (DLS method) on Wednesday.

Bangladesh looked wayward and off course ever since stand-in captain Liton Das elected to bowl as Afghan openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran came out all-guns-blazing. Both openers scored centuries during a 256-run partnership -- the highest by an Afghan duo in ODIs -- as the visitors piled up a huge total of 331 for nine in 50 overs.

Gurbaz and Zadran made Bangladesh's bowling attack look ordinary, with the likes of Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud and Ebadot Hossain being smashed all around the park.

None of the seamers were able to get any purchase from a surface that was rather flat compared to the previous game and, when the situation looked dire and demanded something different, the bowlers remained toothless.

Even Shakib Al Hasan looked ordinary in the face of a terrific batting display from Gurbaz, who was the first to smash his fourth ODI hundred overall and second against Bangladesh. Ibrahim Zadran also joined the party by registering his fourth ODI century.

Shakib eventually broke the record opening stand by dismissing



Gurbaz after he had scored 145 off 125 deliveries with the help of 13 fours and eight sixes. Ibrahim followed him back to the pavilion soon and although a solid platform was laid, the hosts managed to pull things back afterwards.

At one point, a total near 350 seemed reachable for Afghanistan, but they managed to add just 75 runs in the last 14 overs for the loss of nine wickets. Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Shakib

and Mehedi Hasan Miraz bagged two wickets each, but the damage had already been done.

With the Asia Cup and World Cup later this year expected to feature sporting pitches, it will be important for the Tigers think-tank to come up with ideas about how the team can have an impact in such conditions, especially after yesterday's display.

The situation did not get any better after Bangladesh went out for their innings, faced with the challenge of completing their highest successful ODI chase, as the top order collapsed miserably against a quality bowling attack.

Liton failed yet again after being caught at short mid-wicket while trying to pull Fazalhaq Farooqi and departed for 13 while the in-form Najmul Hossain Shanto was bowled by a brilliant Mujeeb Ur Rahman delivery after scoring just one run.

Naim Sheikh, who staged a comeback to the side as a replacement for Tamim, also failed to fire. He was dismissed after a laborious 21-ball nine-run knock, which left the hosts tottering on 25 for three inside the Powerplay.

Things quickly went from bad to worse. Mushfiqur Rahim put up a solo resistance by scoring 69, but Bangladesh could only reach 189 for nine, with Ebadot unable to come out to bat due to injury. It seemed that the off-field chaos had indeed affected the Tigers.

De Gea confirms Man Utd exit

AFP, London

David de Gea announced Saturday he is leaving Manchester United after 12 years, saying "it's the right time to undertake a new challenge".

The Spanish goalkeeper, who won the Premier League Golden Glove award for most clean sheets last season, was criticised for a number of high-profile errors in the final weeks of the campaign.

His contract with United expired at the end of June, with no new deal agreed despite talks that took place throughout the season. United have been linked with a move for Inter Milan keeper Andre Onana.

In a message on social media, De Gea said: "Now, it's the right time to undertake a new challenge, to push myself again in new surroundings. Manchester will always be in my heart, Manchester has shaped me and will never leave me."

"I took incredible pride every time I pulled on this shirt, to lead the team, to represent this institution, the biggest club in the world was an honour only bestowed upon a few lucky footballers."

Australia fume after Carey 'controversy'

AGENCIES, Leeds

A controversy-filled Ashes series took its most absurd turn yet when Cricket Australia vehemently denied suggestions that wicketkeeper batsman Alex Carey walked out of a Leeds barbershop without paying a £30 bill.

Sir Alastair Cook, the former England captain, claimed on BBC Test Match Special that, when having a pre-Test haircut, he had got chatting to his barber.

"The barber says the Australians had been in," Cook said. "He didn't know his cricket very well, so he was telling me what they looked like. He said Marnus [Labuschagne], the funny one. Then David Warner had a haircut, Usman [Khawaja] had a haircut and he says, 'Oh there's another one...'"

"He says, 'One of them, I think Alex is his name'. I said, 'Alex Carey, wicketkeeper?' He says, 'He hasn't paid'. It was one of those cash-only barbers, and he promised him he would do a transfer later on in the day. True story. He might have paid by now."

The barber, Adam Mahmood of Doc Barnett's Barber Shop, explained his version of events to the Sun.

"They all came in just before we shut,"

he said. "We cut their hair and had a great laugh."

"But we don't accept cards and Alex said he had no cash on him. Well, there's an ATM literally round the corner he could have run to. He could have nipped back to their hotel and been no more than five minutes but instead he said he would transfer it. Maybe he forgot. I'm giving him the benefit of the doubt but if it's not paid by Monday, I won't be happy."

Remarkably, the Australia camp reacted angrily to the suggestion that Carey has not paid, saying that he had not even had a haircut in Leeds and that while another player had been to the barber's, he had paid. They said they would return with the receipt later on Saturday to clear up any confusion.

Steve Smith, the vice captain, took to new social media platform Threads, to say: "I can confirm Alex Carey has not had a haircut since we were in London. Get your facts right The Sun."

Carey has received a rough reception from the crowd at Leeds after stumping Jonny Bairstow at Lord's, when the England batsman believed Cameron Green's over to be complete and the ball therefore dead.

Afghanistan's 142-run win over Bangladesh in the second ODI in Chattogram yesterday saw the visitors seal the series 2-0 with a game in hand.

This is also Afghanistan's first-ever series win over Bangladesh. The Tigers won the two other series against the Afghans -- both by the same margin of 2-1.

Afghanistan's 142-run victory against Bangladesh is also their highest-margin win over the Tigers in the format.

Afghanistan's 331 for nine yesterday is their third-highest ODI total. The Afghans were just eight runs shy of surpassing their highest total of 338 in the format which they scored against Ireland in 2017.

The 256-run opening stand between Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran is Afghanistan's highest partnership for any wicket in ODIs.

Afghanistan's spin trio of Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi, and Mujeeb Ur Rahman have now taken 402 wickets in ODIs between them. They reached the 400-wicket milestone when leggie Rashid removed Afi Hossain for a golden duck yesterday.

Barishal rope in Tamim for BPL 2024

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal will be playing for Fortune Barishal in the 2024 Bangladesh Premier League, the franchise confirmed in a statement yesterday.

"Bangladesh's ODI captain Tamim Iqbal will be playing for Fortune Barishal in the upcoming 2024 BPL. Fortune Barishal chairman Mizanur Rahman confirmed that Tamim signed a one-year deal with the franchise," read the statement.

The news of Tamim signing for Fortune Barishal comes just a day after the cricketer made a U-turn on his retirement from international cricket.

In the previous BPL, Tamim represented Khulna Tigers, who could not make it past the league stage.

Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan captained Barishal in the last two editions of the country's only franchise-based T20 tournament. Under Shakib's captaincy, Barishal exited the tournament from the Eliminator last season while they ended up as runners-up in 2022 after losing by just one run against Cumilla Victorians.

The upcoming BPL is expected to begin after the national elections in January next year.

