

Bangladesh A throw game away

SPORTS REPORTER

In a shocking turn of events, Bangladesh A cracked under pressure and eventually lost by 51 runs in the semifinal against India A to exit the ACC Emerging Asia Cup at the R.Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

The outcome, however, set a clash between archrivals India and Pakistan in the final of the tournament, scheduled for July 23 in Colombo.

Chasing a modest 212-run target, Bangladesh imploded despite a solid start by the openers, who added 70 inside 12 overs. But Bangladesh suffered a horrible collapse in the middle to be eventually bundled out for 160 in 40.2 overs.

The batting line up started to crumble since Mohammad Naim departed after scoring 38 off 40 deliveries, striking six fours. Tanzid Hasan followed suit soon as he departed to Nishant Sindhu after scoring 51 off 56 balls.

Bangladesh lost their last nine wickets in the span of 17 overs, while adding just 66.



When the situation required a calm approach, Bangladesh A, consisting of six players who represented the senior side in the past, were unable to keep their composure against an inexperienced Indian side with all uncapped cricketers.

Skipper Saif Hassan went for a big shot and was dismissed on 22 off 24 balls while Soumya Sarkar was caught at slip, scoring just five as the Bangladesh batters started to panic.

"I think we were in the game and I think just a bit of batting collapse in the middle order [took the game away]. Everything was going according to the plan and it was a good total for us [to chase] and we had a great start. But in the end we collapsed," Saif said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"The plan was to remain positive but we should have given value to our wickets and I think we played some rash shots. We could have minimised our mistakes. If we could have taken some time, it would have been better but we lost the game there," Saif added.

Earlier, electing to bowl, Bangladesh came up with a collective approach to bundle out India for a modest 211 runs in 49.1 overs.

India A skipper Yash Dhull scored an 85-ball 66 to take his side's total beyond the 200-run mark after a struggling start.



Vice captain Nahida Akter, Sobhana Mostary, Sanjida Akter, and Murshida Khatun were upbeat during practice yesterday as Bangladesh women's cricket team look to clinch their maiden ODI series win over India with a win in the final game of the three-match series in Mirpur today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mindset to bat longer key for history-seeking Tigresses

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh bowlers have made their presence felt in this ODI series against India but the visitors, with Harmanpreet Kaur, Jemimah Rodrigues among others, have shown their experience when the game was in balance in the second fixture to level the series.

Coming into the series deciding third ODI, the onus would be on the Bangladesh batters to bring forth their knowledge of the conditions, which could prove decisive. Having to deal with injuries to key batters would also be a headache for the home side at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur today.

Slow and low tracks have offered quite a bit of turn for the spinners and while India batters have struggled in these conditions, their Bangladeshi counterparts did not capitalise.

Fargana Hoque and Ritu Moni looked in control with a 68-run stand but lost their way in the second ODI, triggering a batting collapse.

Head coach Hasahan Tillakaratne was well aware of the batting collapse, saying that the mental aspect for batting for a longer time was still lacking. Fargana lost her wicket while batting to the situation and the team management have focused on those situations.

"Yes, it [batting collapse] is a big concern. Most difficult thing is to get in and once you get a good start you don't throw your wicket away. Biggest concern is eating up lots of dot balls. Also, in the Powerplay we are very much behind with the rate, so we have had few discussions.

We played them [Bangladesh] in the Asia Cup in Sylhet last year. From that to now, they have grown, the bowling aspect for sure. But I would say their fielding efforts have also been amazing. On these sorts of wickets, their bowling attack is definitely good. Marufa [Akter] has a very different action and due to her action, she is quicker than we feel. So, her ball definitely skids a little more than what we expect from her release point.



India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana

I am sure they will come up with some good performance tomorrow," Hashan was hopeful.

The home side need the top-order to click unless they want the lower-middle order to once again deal with a crisis. Murshida Khatun played some scintillating shots at the top but was unable to put a high price to her wicket, something Hashan pinpointed.

"She [Murshida] got a good start and she threw away the wicket. That is where we need to work with them, we need to be a little patient with them.

"They are technically sound but the mindset is not prepared to play long innings. Also, the fitness is a little below-par, so we are working with them right now," he added.

Skipper Nigar Sultana and batter Shorna Akter are still struggling with

fitness, with the latter unable to play any of the ODIs so far this series. Fahima Khatun, who came to the press conference yesterday, said their discussions have been around putting up a healthy score. Marufa Akter has been a standout pacer, rattling India in the first game while leg-spinner Rabeya Khatun has been consistent.

India's Smriti Mandhana was effusive in praise of Marufa.

"So, her ball definitely skids a little more than what we expect from her release point. Definitely, a very good cricketer, I would say. I had a small chat with her after the [first] match. Just congratulating her and saying that her efforts have really inspired all of us as well," Smriti said.

The Tigresses will know that their strength lies in bowling and another bowling performance like the first ODI may well lead to another historic win.

Abahani close trophyless season with win

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani ended the 2022-23 season with a 1-0 win against Azampur FC in their final Bangladesh Premier League game at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

However, Abahani, the country's most successful outfit in football, ended the season trophyless – the fifth time since the introduction of the professional football league in 2007 that Abahani failed to win a trophy in top-flight competition.

Nabib Newaj Jibon scored the decisive goal in the 70th minute yesterday to help the Sky Blues finish second in the BPL table with 40 points from 20 matches.

Since the inception of Kings in 2018, six-time professional league champions Abahani have won three domestic titles. Abahani beat Kings in the Federation Cup in 2018 before clinching the Federation Cup and the Independence Cup last season. Abahani lost the Federation Cup final this season against archrivals Mohammedan while they exited from the semifinal in the Independence Cup.

Interestingly, the points gap in BPL between Abahani and Kings only increased in recent times.

Mbappe-PSG saga to stretch

AGENCIES

It is likely that Paris Saint-Germain will do everything in their power to convince French superstar Kylian Mbappe stay at the club beyond the 2023-24 season and also avoid the worst-case scenario where he gets to leave PSG as a free agent.

According to Defensa Central, the reigning French champions have offered Mbappe a contract worth an unprecedented one billion euros, one that would keep the 24-year-old for a further 10 years. However, it was revealed earlier this week that Mbappe seeks to sit idle on his existing contract, set to terminate at the end of next season, in order to induce a move this transfer window.

Spanish giants Real Madrid remain the likely destination for Mbappe, while there have been rumours of Manchester United and Arsenal being interested in roping the hot-shot striker.

With Lionel Messi gone and Mbappe departure on the cards, more bad news could be in store for PSG since, as per Guardian, midfielder Marco Verratti is on Liverpool's radar.



Jonny Bairstow raises his bat to the crowd after a quickfire 99 not out that helped England amass 592 in their first innings and ensure a 275-run lead on the third day of their must-win fourth Ashes Test against Australia at Old Trafford on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP



Aitana Bonmati celebrates scoring the second goal as Spain issued a warning on Friday, beginning their Women's World Cup campaign in scintillating fashion by beating Costa Rica 3-0 in their Group C opener on Friday at Wellington Regional Stadium. The Spaniards, one of the tournament favourites, fired a total of 46 shots against opponents who spent nearly the entire game defending.

PHOTO: AFP

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