

Mohun Bagan prove too good for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani once again failed to move into the AFC Cup group stage following a 3-1 defeat against Mohun Bagan Super Giants at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata last night.

The six-time Bangladesh Premier League winners, who had become the first Bangladeshi club to progress to the inter-zonal semifinals in 2019, conceded three goals after taking an early lead against the Kolkata giants.

Abahani coach Mario Lemos made four changes from the match that beat Club Eagles of Maldives last week, bringing on Shqahidul Alam Sohel, Shushanto Tripura, Asaduzzaman Bablu and Youssef Mohammed.

Cornelius Stewart gave the Sky Blues a 17th minute lead, poking home a rebound after Mohun Bagan keeper Vishal Kaith fluffed Emeka Ogbugh's shot.

The Mariners, though, put on tremendous pressure on the visitors, earning a spot kick in the 35th minute which Australia's Jason Cummings buried to get the hosts on level terms.

The hosts' pressure only mounted after the restart, with Abahani defender Milad Soleimani turning in Hugo Boumous' cross into his own net on 58 minutes before Armando Sadiku made it 3-1 two minutes later, guiding home Liston Colaco's low cross into the goalmouth.

Lemos brought on Faysal Ahmed Fahim for Shushanto Tripura and Mohammad Sohel Rana for Muzaffarov, and Rahim Ali for David Ifegw later on, but those changes failed to bring a change to the Dhanmondi giants' fate.



Liton Das was seen taking instructions from Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as the Tigers' ODI vice-captain went straight back to business following his stint in the Lanka Premier League, where he played alongside Shakib Al Hasan for the Galle Titans. [Below] Shakib experienced a different kind of busy afternoon as commercial engagement saw the Bangladesh captain fly to Barishal in a helicopter to inaugurate the Alhaj Nur Mohammad Munshi Hospital.

PHOTO: BCB/TITU DAS

Tanzim comes in for Ebadot

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday named 20-year-old pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib as replacement for Ebadot Hossain for the upcoming Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Ebadot had suffered an injury to his left leg during the Afghanistan ODI series which consequently ruled him out of the Asia Cup.

"Ebadot had undergone six weeks of rehab following the injury. We have had multiple MRIs done during this time and the reports suggest that his ACL is still a concern and requires further management. Therefore, he misses out on the Asia Cup," BCB chief physician Debashish Chowdhury yesterday said in a media release.

Ebadot's replacement Tanzim comes from the same batch as Shoriful Islam, Tawhid Hridoy, Shamim Hossain, and Tanzid Tamim who lifted the U-19 World Cup in 2020.

Tanzim impressed in the recently concluded Emerging Asia Cup in Sri Lanka, bagging nine wickets in three games to end as the tournament's fourth-highest wicket-taker. He had also churned up 17 wickets during DPL's latest season for Abahani.

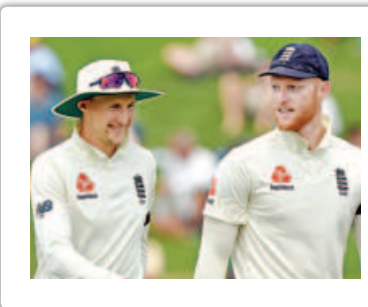
Stokes the best England has ever produced: Root

AGENCIES

England batter Joe Root has deemed Test skipper Ben Stokes as the best player that the country has ever produced as he praised the match-winning ability of Stokes on Tuesday.

Stokes retired from ODI cricket in July 2022 but reversed his decision and was named in England's provisional squad for the ICC Men's World Cup later this year in India.

"You look at the two World Cup finals we won, and he won for us. Even the one we lost against West Indies in 2016, he still took on the big moment - he wanted that final over. To be able to come back from that in the manner that he has and deliver some of the things he has done in an England shirt is a testament to what a legend he is in the game. Probably, I think, the best player we've ever produced as a country," Root told ESPN Cricinfo on Tuesday.



His return from retirement was hinted in England's ODI and T20I head coach Matthew Mott's recent interview with The Daily Mail, in which he stated, "Jos Buttler will probably lead the way on that communication, but Ben's pretty straight with all of us. We will see if he's keen."

Stokes was one of the heroes of England's win over New Zealand in the epic finale at the 2019 World Cup. When the chips were down, Stokes produced a Player of the Match-winning knock of 84* to force the game into a Super Over.

After his World Cup heroics, Ben Stokes played only 10 ODIs as England adopted a strategy to balance players' workloads across various formats. Eventually, Stokes decided to step away from ODIs to extend his career in other formats. He is poised to make his ODI comeback in England's upcoming four-match series against New Zealand, starting 8 September.

Shakib's hour arrives to 'manage everything'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Shakib Al Hasan will have to manage things in more ways than one in the next few months. Having once captained Bangladesh in the biggest cricket event in 2011, the 36-year-old finds himself at the helm of the ODI side again just ahead of the World Cup after Tamim Iqbal stepped down from captaincy.

The Asia Cup and the World Cup are the targets and Shakib, who continues to show an impeccable talent of managing various facets that transcends the periphery of the field.

Shakib had returned to the country on Monday and yesterday morning was travelling to Barishal to inaugurate a hospital. Later in the evening, he fulfilled another commercial commitment in Dhaka.

"If I don't work, I would become insane," Shakib had famously said once when it appeared that there was a lot on his plate amid frequent travelling.

He has only pushed boundaries in that regard. In Barishal, a huge crowd acknowledged Shakib's presence in the city. Asked about his dream, Shakib replied, "The dream is the World Cup and Asia Cup. The rest we will see later."

Prior to the Barishal trip, the all-rounder featured in the G20 Canada T20 league in Canada

before heading to Sri Lanka to play the Lanka Premier League. He then headed to Dubai for a commercial engagement on Monday.

Asked about his engagements in between cricket and the enormous distance covered in the space of days, Shakib said, "As a professional cricketer, we have to manage such things. Since there isn't a lot of time, a way has to be found to manage everything in the little time that's available. It's a little busy but I enjoy it."



Shakib, with a little time left before huge assignments, would have to manage quite a lot.

His relationship with Tamim had been a major talking point ever since Bangladesh Cricket Board president revealed in an interview that the two were not on talking terms. Following Tamim's retirement saga, the experienced opener returned to the nets for a batting session a few days back.

The southpaw would likely now return for the New Zealand series sandwiched between the two big events.

Cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus had recently said: "We all want Tamim to return to his previous self. He is recuperating from a big injury and everyone is supporting him."

Part of that management skill would have to come from Shakib as well, in order to make the dressing room geared up with one singular focus. Along with the seniors, Shakib would now be managing youngsters from that U-19 group who tasted World Cup success in 2020. It is time to rope everything in and become a team ahead of big events.

Back in 2019, Shakib had worked with a singular focus to get ready for the World Cup despite an imminent ICC ban hanging over his head. This time he does not need that "kick", he said yesterday. "Just trying to be as fit as possible," he added.

Shakib's fitness work is already exemplary, but now he must ensure the team's energy points towards the same goals. This time as a World Cup captain, he is far from the youngster he was in his previous tenure. His remarkable feats in the 2019 campaign gained him individual accolades but the team did not leave a mark. In the driving seat this time, only time will tell what Shakib has in store.



Shuttlers win three gold medals in Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

It was double delight for SS Sifat Ullah as the teenage shuttler bagged two out of Bangladesh's three gold medals in Badminton Asia South Asia (U-17 and U-15) Regional Junior Championships in Kathmandu yesterday.

Sifat beat Sri Lanka's Thidasa Weragoda 21-16, 12-21, 21-17 to win gold medal in boys' singles in under-17 category. Sifat then paired up with Rajon Mia to win the boys' doubles event with a 21-11, 21-11 victory against Nepal's Kabir KC and Abhay Mahara.

In the under-15 category, Wali Ullah won gold in boys' singles event by handing a 21-15, 21-15 defeat to compatriot Mostakim Hossain in the final.

Wali Ullah and Mostakim then paired up to compete in the final of under-15 boys' doubles event where they suffered a 21-15, 19-21, 21-23 defeat to Sri Lanka's Kenth Aruggoda and Senuth Semutha Perera.

Bangladesh also won three bronze medals - two in mixed doubles and one in girls' doubles event of the tournament, where Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives took part.

Marsh available to captain Australia for as long as needed

REUTERS, Melbourne

Mitchell Marsh said on Tuesday he will gladly captain Australia for as long as required as the all-rounder prepares to lead the T20 and ODI sides on a tour of South Africa that includes three ODIs and five T20Is.

Marsh is stepping in for injured ODI captain Pat Cummins while Cricket Australia has yet to decide on a T20 skipper for the long term following the retirement of Aaron Finch.

"It's certainly been a crazy year. Throw in getting married, it's been a good one," he told reporters in Sydney. "We'll get through South Africa and see how we go. I'm available to captain for as long as the team needs me. We'll see where it all ends."

Cummins, who also captains the test side, is expected to link up with the squad in India ahead of the 50-overs World Cup which starts in October.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain's prime minister Pedro Sanchez poses for a photograph with the players, coach Jorge Vilda and president of Spanish FA Luis Rubiales at Moncloa Palace in Madrid yesterday during a reception of the Spanish women's football team, who won the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand recently. The Spanish premier, meanwhile, said Rubiales' apology for kissing star player Jenni Hermoso on the lips after the World Cup final victory was insufficient.

'Only allow yourself to define who you are'

AFP, Budapest

Sha'Carri Richardson took no prisoners on the track in storming to women's 100m world gold in a mirror image of her pugnacious style off it - which though not to everyone's taste has earned praise from track legend Michael Johnson.

Richardson, 23, recorded a championship record of 10.65sec to stun the far more experienced Jamaican powerhouse duo of Shericka Jackson and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and win her first global title on Monday.

Richardson thrives on confrontation and in a feisty display at the post-race press conference the American said it was as much 'the haters' as her close circle that had driven her to success.

"The haters", in her view, are those who waded in after she had to miss the Tokyo Olympics two years ago when her US trials results were annulled following a positive test for marijuana.

"I always say never give up," she said after Monday's triumph from lane nine. "Never allow the media, never allow outsiders, never allow anything but yourself to define who you are. I would say always fight, no matter what, fight."

Her initial contrition about the marijuana - which even earned praise from US President Joe Biden - and explanation that she had smoked it after being told of the death of her biological mother, Shayaria, seems to have hardened



into something close to bitterness.

Richardson has complained that she was treated differently to teenage Russian ice skater Kamila Valieva, who competed at last year's Beijing Winter Olympics despite testing positive for a banned substance, because the latter is white and she is black.

The IOC were not impressed, responding "there is nothing in common between these two cases."

Although Valieva was told a day after Russia won gold in the team event that she had tested positive before the Games for the banned drug trimetazidine, she was allowed to carry on competing.

Richardson is an avowed worshipper of controversial women's 100m and 200m world record holder Florence Griffith-Joyner, who died aged just 38.

Her forthright style has earned her plenty of detractors but Johnson is firmly in the camp of the admirers.

"She's very authentic, she doesn't make excuses," Johnson, the former 200m and 400m world champion who is working as an analyst for BBC, said after her stunning run.

"Some people love to love it and some people love to hate it. I think it's great for the sport because she has a personality that is unmatched."

"The sport needs this now, to draw in people who are not just track fans."