

Williamson to miss World Cup opener

AFP, Hyderabad

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson will miss the opening match of the ODI World Cup next week to recover from a knee injury, the country's cricket board said Friday.

Williamson was part of the team's Friday warm-up match against Pakistan in Hyderabad but only as a batsman and will aim to bat and field in the second warm-up fixture on Monday.

New Zealand cricket said in a statement that the captain would "continue to progress his knee rehabilitation".

"Right from the start we've taken a long-term view on Kane's return to play," head coach Gary Stead said.

"His recovery is tracking well and it's now a matter of making sure he can cope with the rigours and intensity of international cricket," he added.

"We'll continue to take a day by day approach to Kane's rehabilitation and certainly won't be putting any pressure on him to return before he is ready."

Wicketkeeper-batsman Tom Latham is leading New Zealand against Pakistan.

Williamson was included in the team despite concerns over his injury from this year's Indian Premier League.

He comes off a six-month lay-off as New Zealand look to build on their runners-up finish in the last edition of the 50-over World Cup in 2019, when they lost a dramatic final to England.

The Black Caps will play their second and final warm-up against South Africa in Thiruvananthapuram before the tournament opener on October 5 in Ahmedabad.

'Unfair on Maxi to say he's not a specialist spinner'

REUTERS

Australia will head into the 50-over World Cup in India with only one specialist spinner in Adam Zampa, but chief selector George Bailey said on Friday that all-rounder Glenn Maxwell could also be considered a frontline option.

The five-times champions finalised their squad on Thursday and were forced to leave out left-arm spinner Ashton Agar, who was in their preliminary group of 15 players but failed to recover from a calf injury.

Bailey said Maxwell, who claimed a career-best 4-40 in Wednesday's win over India to help Australia avoid a series whitewash, was always in their plans as a spin option.

"It's unfair on Maxi to say he's not a specialist spinner. His Twenty20 and one-day international spinning record is pretty handy and you can very much consider him a frontline option," Bailey told reporters.

Australia brought in batsman Marnus Labuschagne instead of Agar and opted to carry injured opener Travis Head with the hope that he will be fit for the latter part of the tournament.

"More broadly across the squad, when you're limited to 15 players, there are compromises," Bailey added. "We also wanted to make sure we have the option of having Travis later in the tournament so effectively it's 14 for a period of time."

"It was about trying to balance up the immediate needs. We think Zampa and Maxwell can do a really good job and we've still got plenty of options there for quicks and backup all-rounders as well."

Bailey said he was impressed by Labuschagne's solid displays in recent matches against South Africa and India.

Australia begin their campaign against hosts India in Chennai on Oct. 8.



Bangladesh batter Liton Das, who has been struggling for form in the build-up to the World Cup, appeared to have found his rhythm with a 56-ball 61-run knock against Sri Lanka in the Tigers' first World Cup warm-up match in Guwahati yesterday. [Bottom] Liton was aptly supported by a young Tanzid Hasan Tamim, who smashed an 84-ball 80, as Bangladesh's openers showed promise for the first time in a long while.

PHOTO: AFP

Liton-Tanzid find the right cue from warm-up win

SPORTS REPORTER

Over the course of the last 12 months, the highest stand by a Bangladesh opening pair had been 102 that Liton Das and Tamim Iqbal had notched. Without Tamim in the World Cup squad, and amidst the ongoing form concerns of openers ahead of the World Cup, youngster Tanzid Hasan and the formidable Liton finally found the runs they needed under their belt ahead of a huge tournament during the first warm-up fixture against Sri Lanka in Guwahati yesterday.

Bangladesh's opening partnerships have averaged just a tad above 20 across the last 10 ODIs. Yesterday, in chase of the Lankans' 263, the two openers strung together a 131-run stand, the highest in the last two years.

With Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- a makeshift opener -- the only backup at the moment, the way the two openers began with composure reflected the confidence the team management had projected on them, especially through Tanzid's selection.

Liton had been struggling over the course of a year, averaging just over 24 in ODIs across 20 matches.

Both openers played well within themselves at the start of the chase, perhaps taking a cue from how the Lankan openers had begun the previous innings. With not much movement on offer for the bowlers, the left-right combination



remained organised.

What both had in common was allowing the ball to come to them, Liton exhibiting that trait to particular effectiveness, putting away deliveries on his legs, even waiting for the movement before flicking Kasun Rajitha for four. Tanzid slashed one through the off-side to get things going before coming up with a controlled pull for another four. Once set, he looked like he had all the time to pull Lahiru Kumara for four.

Once Liton got the start, the familiar strokeplay came, hitting a spinner over extra cover for four. That seemed to settle him and amidst some streaky boundaries, he reached his fifty in just 39 deliveries. Liton fell after a 56-ball 61, laced with 10 fours.

Tanzid missed out on a ton,

falling after an 88-ball 84 but he would look to carry on that momentum into the tournament proper.

Tawhid Hridoy fell for a duck but Miraz struck a 64-ball 67 with Mushfiqur Rahim unbeaten on 35 in an unbroken 76-run stand to take Bangladesh to a seven-wicket win with eight overs to spare.

Shakib Al Hasan sat out the game but he had high hopes about the opening pair.

"I would expect just one thing from them [Liton and Tanzid] which is that on the day that they get a start, they win the match,"

SCORES IN BRIEF
Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka Sri Lanka: 263 all out in 49.1 overs (Nissanka 68, de Silva 55; Mahedi 3-36, Miraz 1-32)
Bangladesh: 264 for three in 42 overs (Tanzid 84, Miraz 67*, Liton 61; Kumara 1-30, Hemantha 1-45)
Result: Bangladesh won by seven wickets

Shakib had said during an exclusive interview with T Sports recently.

The captain and team management have kept the instructions simple for the opening pair and with some momentum, the top-order too would find some relief if both openers carry on with some consistency.



Mohammad Rizwan was on song yesterday, smashing a hundred in Pakistan's official World Cup 2023 warm-up game against New Zealand in Hyderabad. Rizwan and Pakistan captain Babar Azam stitched together an innings-rebuilding 114-run third-wicket stand in a game that was played behind closed doors due to security concerns.

PHOTO: AFP

KIWIS beat Pak in WC warm-up

AFP, Hyderabad

Rachin Ravindra and returning Kane Williamson played key knocks as New Zealand chased down 345 to thrash Pakistan by five wickets in a World Cup warm-up match on Friday.

Chasing 346 for victory, New Zealand lost an early wicket before Ravindra (97) and Williamson (54) put on 137 to put their team on course and they achieved the target with 6.2 overs to spare in Hyderabad.

Mohammed Rizwan hit 103 and Babar Azam made 80 in Pakistan's 345-5 after electing to bat first but the Kiwi batsmen made the total look easy against an attack missing pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Williamson, who returned from a six-month lay-off due to his knee injury and played the match only as a batsman, looked impressive in his 50-ball stay before he retired out.

"It held up pretty good," Williamson, who will miss the tournament opener against England on October 5, said about his knee after the win.

"Little bit of icing after that (knock). But that's part of the process. Fortunate with that recovery and being named in the squad was exciting to me."

Rain frustrates Proteas, Afghans

AFP, Thiruvananthapuram

The World Cup warm-up match between South Africa and Afghanistan at Thiruvananthapuram was abandoned without a ball being bowled on Friday.

Heavy rain frustrated both sides who now have one further warm-up to get the plans in order before the tournament gets underway next week.

The Proteas, whose captain Temba Bavuma has had to travel home for family reasons, will hope the weather improves in Thiruvananthapuram before their final warm-up against New Zealand on Monday.

Bavuma is expected to re-join the squad for South Africa's opening match of the tournament against Sri Lanka in Delhi on October 7.

Afghanistan have a final warm-up against Sri Lanka in Guwahati on Tuesday before opening their tournament against Bangladesh in Dharamshala, also on October 7.

Confident Imranur moves into semis

SPORTS REPORTER from Hangzhou

Bangladesh sprinter Imranur Rahman expectedly qualified for the semifinals of 100m sprint in the Asian Games after finishing third in Heat-5 at Hangzhou Olympic Centre Stadium last night.

Courtesy of a timing of 10.44 seconds, he finished overall 17th among 33 athletes to qualify for the 24-athlete semifinals.

"This performance was not amazing ... but I am hopeful to do better in the semifinals," Imranur told the reporters in the mixed zone.

Both the semifinals and the final are scheduled to be held today.

"I think if I can clock my career best of 10.11 seconds, it is possible to go to the final," said Imranur, who became the third Bangladesh sprinter in 25 years to reach Asiad semis in 100m event.

Golfer Siddiquir loses momentum

SPORTS REPORTER from Hangzhou

Siddiquir Rahman failed to maintain his first-round momentum into the second round of the Asian Games' individual golf event at West Lake Golf Course yesterday.

Siddikur, who was 11th overnight, started the day with a bogey but bounced back with two birdies in the front nine. The ace Bangladesh golfer kept mixing birdies and bogeys to eventually settle for an even-par score for the day, finishing with a total of 137 after two rounds.

Siddiquir is placed 25th, while compatriot Jamal Hossain stands 39th with an overall score of 143.



Fencing team eliminated
Bangladesh yesterday suffered elimination from the first round of the fencing women's sabre team event in

Hangzhou Dianzi University Gymnasium after falling 45-17 to superior Hong Kong.

SA Games gold medalist Fatema Mujib, Rokhsana Khatun, and Farjana Easmin represented Bangladesh, with Nipa only putting up a good fight against Wing Kiu Chu in one of the three games but ended up losing 5-4.

Swimmer Sonia produces a mixed bag
Sonia Akhter finished 27th out of 32 swimmers in the 50m butterfly event after she failed to match her personal best timing at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Aquatic Sports Arena yesterday.

The Army swimmer, however, improved her timing in the 50m freestyle, recording 30.11 seconds, which was 00.11 less than what she had clocked during the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

"I am happy with my timing because I bettered my timing in freestyle on the back of only five-month training," said Sonia.

Shooters continue to disappoint
In the women's 10m Air Pistol event yesterday, Anjila Amjad Antu, Fahmida Alam, and Armin Asha finished 33rd, 44th, and 53rd out of 56 shooters, respectively, and their combined points resulted in to Bangladesh finishing 13th out of 14 teams with a score of 1670.

The men's 50m Air Rifle team event saw Bangladesh finish last among 14 participating nations following a score of 1705. Robiul Islam (571), Abdullah Hel Baki (570), and Shovon Chowdhury (564) finished 34th, 36th, and 42nd among 54 shooters, respectively.