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Williamson blow for NZ

AFP, Chennai

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson faces another spell on the sidelines after scans revealed he fractured his thumb in the World Cup win over Bangladesh, his first match in seven months following a serious knee injury.

Coach Gary Stead said, however, that Williamson will remain with the squad and could return to the field "at the back end of pool play next month".

The 33-year-old injured his left thumb when struck by a throw while running between the wickets in Friday's eight-wicket win against Bangladesh in Chennai, forcing him to retire hurt on 78.

Batsman Tom Blundell will travel to India as cover but won't officially be part of the squad while Williamson rehabilitates, NZC said.

The injury soured Williamson's return to cricket after injuring his knee playing in the Indian Premier League in March.

"Firstly, we're all feeling for Kane to have this occur after all his hard work to return from his knee injury," Stead said.

"While it's disappointing, the initial diagnosis has given us some optimism he can still feature later in the pool play following a period of rest and rehabilitation.

"Kane is clearly a massive part of our side and a world-class player and captain - so we'll look to give him every opportunity we can to return in the tournament."

Can Trott's Afghanistan stun England?

AGENCIES

Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott admitted Saturday that his team "get it 70-80% right" but need to find an extra gear quickly if they are to end a demoralising run of 14 successive World Cup defeats.

Afghanistan have so far suffered convincing losses to Bangladesh and India at the tournament.

They lost all nine matches at the 2019 World Cup while winning just one against Scotland in their 2015 debut.

It doesn't get easier for Afghanistan who tackle defending champions England in New Delhi on Sunday.

"At times we get 70-80% of it right, but the other 20-30% that we don't get right really ends up costing us," said Trott, a former England international batsman.

"Starting the game well is going to be crucial against a very strong England side.

"But going forward for the rest of the competition as well, we need to start better with bat and ball and set the standard of how we want to play our cricket."

Against India, eight Afghanistan batters reached double figures with skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi making 80 and Azmatullah Omarzai 62 in a total of 272.

But India coasted to an eight-wicket win with spin wizard Rashid Khan claiming both victims.

In the opener against Bangladesh, it was the

batting which eventually misfired as Afghanistan collapsed from 83-1 to 156 all out in a six-wicket loss.

Trott backed Rashid to play a key role in Sunday's game. The leg spinner, a mainstay of Twenty20 franchise cricket around the world, has just two wickets from two games for the cost of 105 runs.

He has 174 ODI wickets in his career but managed only six at the 2019 World Cup.

Against England at Old Trafford, he went 0-110 as his team were routed by 150 runs.

"Rashid, can't speak highly enough about the guy, the way that he performs and his passion for playing for this side," said Trott.

England, on the other hand, will be at ease as they have created some breathing space following their 137-run rout of Bangladesh after going down in a nine-wicket loss against New Zealand in their opening fixture.

Ben Stokes is likely to miss out today's game as England look to delay his return from a hip injury until next week's marquee clash against South Africa. The 32-year-old, who missed games against New Zealand and Bangladesh, took part in training on Friday at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi meaning a cannot be entirely ruled out.

England captain Jos Buttler may look to shuffle his pace options by bringing in David Willey or Gus Atkinson to spread out the workload.

HIGHLIGHTS

» England and Afghanistan met only twice before, with both encounters coming in the previous two editions of the World Cup in 2015 and 2019. The Three Lions have come out on top on both occasions by significant margins.

» The venue for the match, the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi, has produced good batting tracks in both the South Africa-Sri Lanka and India-Afghanistan matches but has seen one-sided contests where South Africa and India came out on top.

» Former England captain Eoin Morgan's record 17 sixes in a 71-ball 148-run knock against Afghanistan in the 2019 World Cup stands as the highest number of maximums hit by a batter in a World Cup match. His 148 is also the highest individual knock in England-Afghanistan contests.

Argentina women smash T20I record

STAR SPORTS DESK

The Argentina women's cricket team smashed the record for the highest total in Women's Twenty20 internationals, hammering Chile for 427-1 at the St Albans Club in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Saturday.

Lucia Taylor scored 169 off 84 balls, the highest individual score in women's T20Is, and Albertina Galan hit an unbeaten 84-ball 145 as they blew past the previous highest total, 318-1, which the Bahrain women's team amassed against Saudi Arabia last year.

Chile, in reply, got bundled out for a mere 63 to suffer a 364-run defeat in the first match of the three-match series.

This is also the biggest win in terms of runs in women's T20Is.



SL captain Shanaka ruled out of World Cup

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka has been ruled out of the rest of the ICC ODI World Cup 2023 with a quad injury, ICC said in a press release yesterday.

The all-rounder has been replaced in the squad by Chamika Karunaratne, who was travelling with the Sri Lanka squad as a reserve player.

Shanaka injured his right thigh muscle during Sri Lanka's match against Pakistan on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old was later taken for scans which revealed that it will take him a minimum of three weeks to recover.

Shanaka's injury is a big blow for Sri Lanka, who are already in a tough spot after losing their first two matches in the tournament. They started with a 102-run defeat against South Africa before losing to Pakistan by six wickets.

Karunaratne, who has played 23 ODIs, hasn't played a 50-over game for Sri Lanka since this year's March.

Sri Lanka's next match in the World Cup is against Australia in Lucknow on Monday.

What to WATCH

T SPORTS AND GTV

ICC Cricket World Cup

England vs Afghanistan

Live from 2:30 pm

SONY SPORTS 2

European Qualifiers

Switzerland vs Belarus

Live from 10:00 pm

Wales vs Croatia

Live from 12:45 am

(Monday)

SONY SPORTS 1

Norway vs Spain

Live from 12:45 am

(Monday)

Lack of big partnerships hurting Tigers

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

After suffering heavy defeats in consecutive matches against England and New Zealand, Bangladesh now have a brief window to do some self-reflection about what went wrong in those games before their next match in the ICC ODI World Cup against hosts India on October 19.

Top-order failure, too much shuffling in the batting order, pacers not providing wickets upfront - these are coming up as the primary reasons behind their poor start.

But a look at the stats reveals that there is another crucial factor that has hurt Bangladesh dearly so far in the tournament: failure to form big partnerships.

In the first 12 matches in the World Cup, there have already been 13 century partnerships, with a couple of them surpassing the 200-run mark.

Seven out of the 10 participating teams have scored at least one hundred partnership in the tournament.

Besides Bangladesh, the Netherlands and Australia are the other two teams who still don't have



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan, who got injured during the team's last match against New Zealand, gets ready to board the Pune-bound flight from Chennai yesterday afternoon.

a century stand and unsurprisingly, all three teams currently find themselves in the bottom half of the points table.

Bangladesh so far have put up three 50-plus partnerships, one each in their three games.

The biggest of them came in Friday's match against New Zealand, when Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim added 97 runs for the fifth wicket to repair the innings after yet another batting collapse.

Consistently forming big partnerships is always a crucial factor in ICC events, where the wickets are usually sporting and runs, more often than not, flow off the bat.

However, forming big partnerships against quality sides in ODIs has been an issue for the Tigers for some time.

So far this year, Bangladesh have had eight century stands in 23 ODIs. Five of those came against Ireland while one each came against Afghanistan, India and Pakistan.

Interestingly, Towhid Hridoy, who has been pushed down the order in the World Cup to make way for Mushfiqur and Shakib higher up in the middle-order, was part of four of those eight century partnerships.

If anything, Bangladesh's first three matches have shown that the current think tank is more than willing to shuffle around the batting line-up.

Now, it's up to the management to go back to the drawing board and draw up a batting line-up which will give Bangladesh the best chance to string together some big partnerships, preferably in the top-order.



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India pacer Jasprit Bumrah jumps in the air to celebrate the dismissal of Pakistan batter Mohammad Rizwan during their World Cup fixture at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday. Bumrah took two wickets for 19 runs in seven overs as Pakistan were bowled out for 191 runs in 42.5 overs. Mohammed Siraj, Hardik Pandya, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja also took two wickets each. India, later, chased down the target with seven wickets in hand.

PHOTO: REUTERS