

Slow coaches at top an impending problem for Tigers

ASHEAQ-UL-ALAM

A show of 'Power' had been missing in 'Powerplays' for Bangladesh in the past editions of the T20 World Cups, as batters have more often than not failed to make use of the field restrictions in the first six overs -- a handicap that has hindered the team's fortunes in the competition.

In the last five editions of the T20 World Cup, the average strike rate of Bangladeshi batters in the Powerplay was 98.33, which means the team has struggled to put 36 runs on the board in the first six overs.

In the 2021 edition in the UAE, for example, Bangladesh's Powerplay run rate was below six in six out of their eight matches.

Bangladesh's Powerplay strike rate in T20 World Cups since 2012 is the second lowest amongst all Test-playing nations, with Zimbabwe (91.08), who were not part of the 2021 edition and could not qualify for the upcoming edition, occupying the bottom spot.

England, two-time winners, are topping this chart with a Powerplay



Bangladesh coach Chandika Hathurusingha said he expected 'big things' from Liton Das in the T20 World Cup and opined that Soumya Sarker is a match-winner 'when he is at his best'. He also hoped Soumya will win a couple of games for Bangladesh.

latching onto every opportunity to hit a boundary.

The Tigers have picked three openers for this edition -- two experienced ones with questionable form and one in-form youngster who hasn't been tested against the best in the format.

Liton Das, the only right-hander of the three, will be playing in his third edition this time and averages exactly 20 in 13 innings in T20 World Cups at a strike rate of a shade above 113.

The wicketkeeper-batter hit his lone half-

media yesterday.

Soumya Sarker is the most experienced opener in the side in terms of T20 World Cup appearances, having featured in the last three editions and playing 15 matches.

However, his underwhelming strike rate of exactly 100 and paltry average of 13.06 indicate that the left-hander has never quite played to his potential in the tournament.

"I think he has underperformed so far. We have seen glimpses of his best from time to time... When he is at his best, he is a match-winner. I hope he will win a couple of games for us," Hathurusingha said in the same video.

Tanzid Tamim, the youngest of the three, has just five T20s under his belt, all of which were against Zimbabwe in the recently-concluded series. He finished as the highest run-getter in the series with 160 and looked in much better touch than Liton and Soumya.

If Tanzid opens with Soumya, as they did in the final two T20s against Zimbabwe, then Bangladesh are likely to send right-hander Towhid Hridoy at No. 3 and push back skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto at No. 4.

While Hridoy has looked in form, albeit a tad inconsistent, Shanto was seen

Team Powerplay strike rates in last five T20 World Cups

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|---------------|--------|
| ENGLAND: | 121.80 |
| SOUTH AFRICA: | 119.62 |
| AUSTRALIA: | 118.89 |
| IRELAND: | 116.63 |
| NEW ZEALAND: | 112.11 |
| SRI LANKA: | 111.65 |
| INDIA: | 110.39 |
| AFGHANISTAN: | 106.22 |
| WEST INDIES: | 103.53 |
| PAKISTAN: | 103.41 |
| BANGLADESH: | 98.33 |
| ZIMBABWE: | 91.08 |

strike rate of 121.80. West Indies, one of the hosts of the upcoming edition, are near the bottom of this list with a strike rate of 103.53.

However, with their barrage of big hitters lower down the order, two-time champions West Indies can afford to start slow; Bangladesh do not have the same luxury.

The forthcoming edition might not be a run-fest, with pitches expected to provide something for the bowlers as well.

Still, if Bangladesh are to do well, their top order, especially the openers, have to strike the balance between caution and aggression from the start and try not to throw away their wickets while

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

century in the tournament in the last edition, a swashbuckling 60 off 27 balls against India that almost took Bangladesh home in a rain-hit affair.

But this time around, the right-hander is not a sure starter in the eleven as his form is at an all-time low, with his strike rate being below 98 in T20s so far this year at an average of 13.16.

Still, the selectors kept faith in the experienced batter and coach Chandika Hathurusingha said he is expecting 'big things' from him in the World Cup in a video posted by Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on social

struggling to get a score against Zimbabwe.

The experienced top-order batters not being in form is not a good sign for Bangladesh, but perhaps, there is a risky solution in sight.

Shakib Al Hasan excelled at No. 3 in the latter half of the last BPL, and sending him up the order in that free-flowing role could solve Bangladesh's Powerplay woes, something Shanto said he was open to doing in the final press conference before the team left for the USA.

Given the team's dire straits at the top, perhaps it is time for the management to think out of the box and try something unconventional to jumpstart the proceedings.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



Bashundhara Kings players and officials celebrate with the Bangladesh Premier League trophy following a 2-2 draw against Bangladesh Police at the Kings Arena yesterday. Although Kings had confirmed their fifth consecutive league title last week with three matches left, the match against Police was their last of the campaign at home venue, which prompted the game's local governing body to hand over the trophy in a festive atmosphere and in presence of dignitaries.

PHOTO: BFF

SHORT CORNER

Foden voted Premier League Player of the Season

Phil Foden has been voted the Premier League's player of the season, the league announced on Saturday after the 23-year-old had the best campaign of his career to help put Manchester City within reach of their fourth consecutive league title. Foden has scored 17 goals and grabbed eight assists in 34 league games this season and can become the youngest player to win six Premier League titles. He has 25 goals and 11 assists in all competitions.

I felt sorry for Hardik: Mark Boucher

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians finished their woeful season with yet another defeat on Friday, with captain Hardik Pandya's own performance a reflection of their struggles in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Pandya was jeered again on Friday as Mumbai signed off their campaign with their 10th loss to finish at the bottom of the 10-team league.

Storm in Houston puts start of Bangladesh-USA series in doubt

A major storm in Houston, Texas has destroyed the temporary infrastructure at the Prairie View Cricket Complex, where Bangladesh are scheduled to play a three-match series against the USA starting on May 21. "The start of the USA v Bangladesh T20I series scheduled for May 21 is currently in doubt after a major storm system ripped through the Houston area on Thursday. The majority of the temporary infrastructure recently installed at Prairie View Cricket Complex has been destroyed," ESPNcricinfo's USA correspondent Peter Della Penna wrote on X.

Barca convey me 'calmness and confidence': Xavi

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez insisted he still felt he had the confidence of President Joan Laporta on Saturday, despite intense speculation over his future. However, Laporta was reportedly angry with Xavi's words earlier this week when the coach highlighted Barcelona's financial difficulties in contrast to the might of eternal rivals Real Madrid.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

CITY EYE HISTORY as Arsenal dare to dream

AFP, LONDON

Manchester City go into their last match against West Ham with a two-point lead, knowing that victory would secure the title for an unprecedented fourth successive season. If Arsenal beat Everton, a defeat or even a draw would not be enough for Pep Guardiola's men, who have an inferior goal difference by one. Arsenal, who also finished second behind City last year, are seeking to become English champions for the first time in 20 years. Guardiola's men have dropped just six points since mid-December, in draws against Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal. Mikel Arteta's men have set a club record by winning 27 Premier League games this season, but that still might not be enough to dethrone City. "We have to give ourselves the opportunity to live a beautiful day on Sunday, where the dream is still alive and is possible," Arteta said. "It's a football and once we are there we just have to live the moment."



EUROPEAN PLACES

Liverpool and Aston Villa are secure in third and fourth -- which guarantee entry into the Champions League, leaving the remaining attention on qualification for next season's Europa League and Conference League. Tottenham need only a point away to relegated Sheffield United to guarantee fifth place,

sending them directly to the Europa League group stage. Defeat would allow Chelsea, three points behind with a better goal difference, to leapfrog them by beating Bournemouth. Mauricio Pochettino's Blues would be secure in sixth with at least a point but defeat would open the door to Newcastle, who travel to Brentford. Manchester United, who play at

Brighton, can realistically only climb to seventh due to their negative goal difference. Erik ten Hag's side need to better Newcastle's result to do so. However, they would also reach the Europa League by winning the FA Cup. Should City win that final next week, the cup winners' Europa League group-stage spot would pass to the sixth-placed finishers, with seventh place bringing Conference League football.

RELEGATION

Sheffield United and Burnley will be joined in the second-tier Championship next season by Luton, barring a spectacular combination of scorelines on the final day. Luton are three points behind Nottingham Forest and would need a win over Fulham, defeat for Forest against relegated Burnley and a huge swing in goal difference to survive. If Luton's fate is sealed then all three promoted teams will go straight back down for only the second time in the Premier League era.



Champions Bayer Leverkusen edged past Augsburg 2-1 at home on the last matchday yesterday to become the first team in the history of the Bundesliga to complete a full season without a loss. Xabi Alonso's treble-chasing team also stretched their record unbeaten run across all competitions this season to 51 matches. Victor Boniface intercepted a ball from Augsburg keeper Tomas Koubek to tap in for the lead in the 12th minute before Robert Andrich doubled the advantage from close range in the 27th.

PHOTO: REUTERS