

Umpire's call sparks call for change

SPORTS REPORTER

Experts as well as fans have called for change in ICC's law relating to the ball being dead after the umpire signals out after such an incident proved crucial in Bangladesh's four-run loss to South Africa in a T20 World Cup fixture in New York yesterday.

On-field umpire Sam Nogajski was in the thick of things as it was his decision to signal Mahmudullah out in the 17th over which sparked the whole incident and seemingly cost Bangladesh the match.

Mahmudullah was given out lbw by Nogajski after the right handed batter failed to make contact with an in-swinging length ball from Ottneil Baartman. The ball, which clearly looked to be going down the legside without disturbing the stumps, brushed off Mahmudullah's front pad and rolled down to the boundary.

The umpire raised his finger and upon a player review, Ball Tracking revealed that the delivery was indeed missing the stumps. Despite the successful review, Bangladesh were left ruing the four leg byes which were not added to their tally owing to ICC's ruling on such situations.



As per the ICC law, once the umpire gives a decision, the ball is deemed dead and runs gathered during that phase will not be considered.

If the umpire had not given him out, Bangladesh would have had four leg byes added to their total.

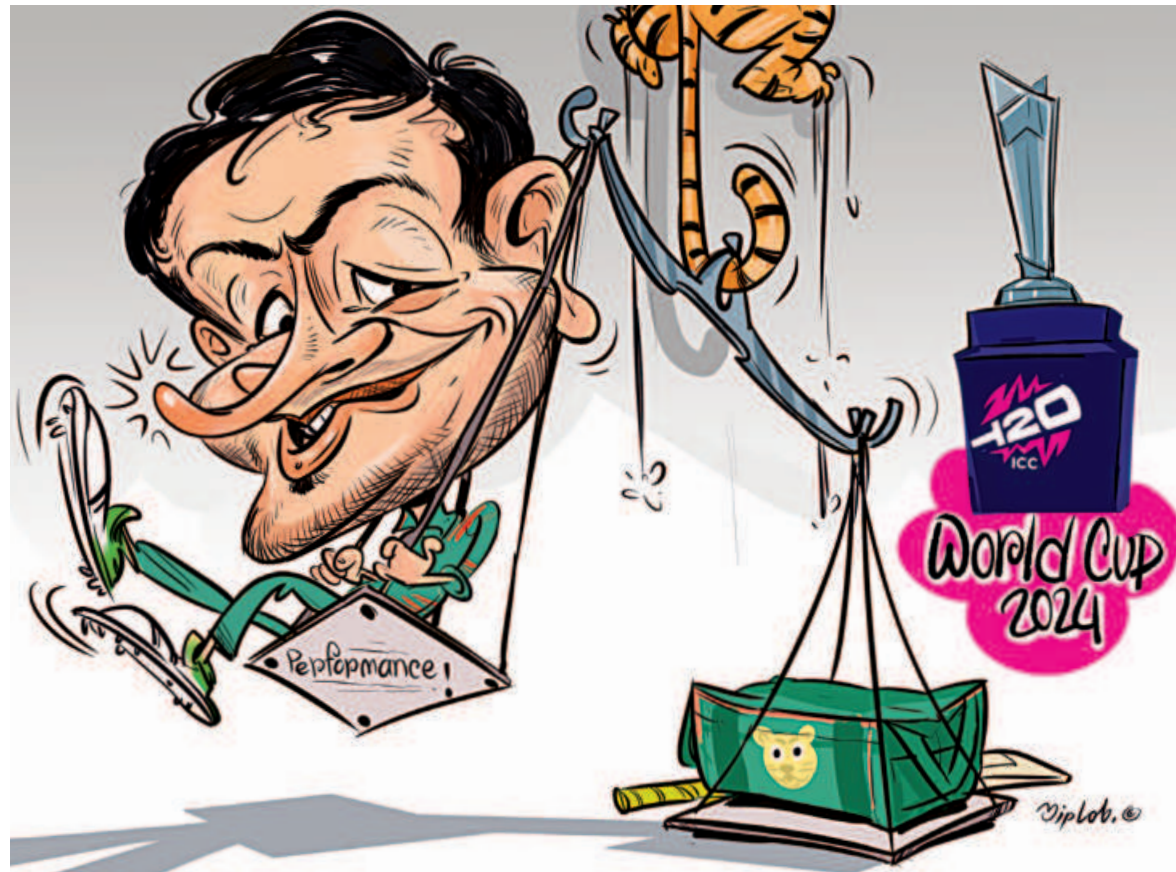
Former New Zealand pacer and renowned commentator Simon Doull criticised the umpire's lbw decision, brought forth the gravity of the implications the ruling has on games and called for a change.

"Just imagine this happens in the final and let's say India are on the wrong end of that in a final," Doull told Cricbuzz yesterday.

"There's got to be something changed in the way the system works because that was a howler, an absolute howler. It was a poor decision and it was never hitting the stumps and he [the umpire] had just thrown his finger up so quickly like a gunslinger.

"We've got to say that they've made some great decisions, there's been some very good umpiring throughout the tournament but that one wasn't and the result should've been four leg byes.

"Let's say that happens in the final ball of the T20 World Cup and one team loses on a really poor decision. There's got to be some way of changing this because it is happening more often than not. Every time, I have this question brought up pre-tournament or before an ICC event, they're like we can't do anything about it and it's not going to be significant in the course of a game. Well, it is significant and it will be in the course of a game. It is now costing games and we can't have it."



TIGERS NEED SHAKIB to make his experience count

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Marginal calls, full tosses not being put away or the general inconsistency of Bangladesh top-order were all cause for concern in Bangladesh's loss to South Africa in New York in a hard-fought contest on Monday. But the situation would not have gotten so desperate had Bangladesh's key player Shakib Al Hasan left a mark on the game coming in at number four in what was another crucial T20 World Cup game for the Tigers.

Shakib's stay at the crease lasted just four deliveries before he was holed out at mid-wicket, unable to connect a pull shot against Anrich Nortje. Shakib's soft dismissal saw South Africa back in the hunt.

Naturally, following the game there was scathing criticism regarding Shakib's performances.

Shakib's last fifty in the format came before the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia, during the tri-nation series in New Zealand also involving Pakistan.

He has not enjoyed the best of circumstances leading up to this edition. Bar a match-winning bowling performance against Zimbabwe recently, his all-around performances against both Zimbabwe and then in the three-match T20I series against USA in Texas have been missing.

His troubles with the bat have been evident in the two World Cup matches so far. If it was expected that he would take control of the South Africa game, Shakib failed to live up to expectations. Now if Bangladesh are to advance to the next round and trouble opponents in the Super Eight, Shakib's

contribution would be crucial.

"If he wants to play in front of Towhid Hridoy in the middle order, he has to play with a cooler head and take responsibility. We can see that these are not 200 run wickets, so it becomes easier for an experienced player like Shakib," his mentor Nazmul Abdeen Fahim told The Daily Star.

"If he can control the game, it will be better for everyone since the top-order is not doing well. Of course, you can't match expectations all the time, but you have to do it on and off," added the veteran coach and analyst.

Shakib's bowling has perhaps

been a bigger concern. It was Bangladesh's most expensive bowler against Sri Lanka and bowled just one over against the Proteas, the first time in his career that it happened. It also upsets Bangladesh's bowling plan, especially with spin likely to be decisive in the West Indies.

"He has a very important role because there are only two specialist spinners in the side. He has to bowl in Powerplay and if he can't fulfil that, Bangladesh's bowling strategy suffers. At times it's important for spinners to bowl

in Powerplay and then also key in middle overs. If he can't bowl, we have to go to Mahmudullah but you can't always expect him to perform even as he [Mahmudullah] did excellently against South Africa," Fahim said about Shakib's bowling.

Shakib now has a chance to make it count on surfaces offered in West Indies and gain momentum against lower-ranked opponents in Netherlands and Nepal.

Fahim expects Shakib – the leading wicket-taker in the tournament's history but is yet to get a wicket in this edition – to get more turn.

"Given the immediate



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Nazmul Abdeen Fahim
Esteemed coach

Can USA slay another giant?

STAR SPORTS DESK

The Group A fixture of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup between Asian powerhouse India and co-hosts USA on Wednesday at the Nassau County Cricket Stadium in New York is set to be the first ever international match between the two teams.

Aside from it being a landmark game, the outcome of the match bears significance given the context of the group as the winner get to seal their entry into the Super Eight.

While this match was deemed a total mismatch ahead of the marquee event, with former champions taking on an associate nation, USA have shown that they are no pushovers.

The tournament opener saw the co-hosts earn bragging rights over neighbours Canada, but very few expected them to produce one of the biggest upsets in history in their next outing against Pakistan – stunning the 2009 winners following a Super Over contest to garner attention in a country where the attention to cricket is yet to gain traction, leading to players like Saurabh Netralvakar and Aaron Jones becoming overnight household names.

USA skipper Monank Patel said "beating Pakistan was a big achievement" but it was apparent that the so-called minnows had their feet on the ground.

"Before the tournament I said that we want to focus on one game at a time, and our focus will be on playing against India now," Monank said after his side's monumental win over Pakistan, whose campaign took a nosedive after India defeated them in a thriller at the same venue.



by fellow quick Arshdeep Singh, all-rounder Hardik Pandya finding some sort of form following a forgetful Indian Premier League campaign has been the surprising positive aspect.

On the batting front, keeper-batter Rishabh Pant has flourished but the likes of star batter Virat Kohli



Although the possibilities of bad weather intervening today remain slim, if it happens, it will mean elimination for Pakistan and Ireland as well.

India, on the other hand, even though the men in blue can't complain about how the results have gone in their favour so far, they are yet to fire as a collective unit.

While ace pacer Jaspit Bumrah has played to his reputation, backed

-- tournament's all-time leading run-scorer -- T20 specialist Suryakumar Yadav and Shivam Dube, who made the cut in to the side on the back of IPL exploits, will be desperate to stamp their authority.

However, finding batting form for the big shots will be a challenge due to the playing conditions in store, with Nassau County producing several low-scoring affairs, increasing the likelihood of yet another upset.



Kroos hoping for 'cheesy' career end with Euro win

AFP, Herzogenaurach

Germany veteran Toni Kroos is hoping to sign off from his club and national career with a dream victory on home soil in Euro 2024 -- and admitted on Tuesday the prospect was almost "a bit too cheesy".

Kroos, who won the 2014 World Cup with Germany and most recently lifted the Champions League for a sixth time after Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Borussia Dortmund in June, is set to retire after the European Championship.

Kroos stepped down from international duty after Germany's last-16 Euros exit to England in 2021 but answered a call from manager Julian Nagelsmann to return in February this year.

Speaking on Tuesday at Germany's Euros training base in the Bavarian village of Herzogenaurach, a "hungry" Kroos said he would not have come back if he did not believe in a sentimental ending.

"That ending would be a bit too cheesy, with the Champions League and the European Championship, but I'll take it. I want to win the tournament this summer," Kroos said.

Germany face Scotland in Munich on Friday in the tournament's curtainraiser.

SHORT CORNER

Lewy to miss Poland's Euro 2024 opener

Poland captain Robert Lewandowski will miss their Euro 2024 opener this weekend with a thigh injury, the Polish football federation's doctor said on Tuesday. Lewandowski, 35, suffered the injury in Monday's win in a friendly against Turkey and will be absent to face the Netherlands on June 16.

Afridi vows to reveal who 'spoiled' Pakistan team

Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi said that he will reveal how the team was 'spoiled' by their own people but only after the ongoing T20 World Cup comes to an end. Afridi said this in an interview with a local TV channel in Pakistan where he was a guest alongside current Pakistan pacer Mohammad Wasim Jr.

Tickets for CR7's training session on offer for up to 800 euros

Tickets to watch Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo train with the national team in an open session on Friday at their Euro 2024 tournament base in Westphalia are on sale for as much as 800 euros (\$858.32). Ronaldo, the leading scorer in men's international football with 128 goals in 204 official matches, will be playing in his sixth Euros, having reached the final on his tournament debut in 2004 and winning the competition in 2016.

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China survive WC qualifying scare

AFP, Hong Kong

China squeezed into the third and final round of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup despite suffering a 1-0 defeat at South Korea on Tuesday, with Indonesia also progressing.

Paris Saint-Germain's Lee Kang-in scored just after the hour in Seoul for South Korea, who were already into the next qualifying phase as group winners.

The damaging loss left China's World Cup hopes hanging by a thread, but Thailand failed to take advantage as their dreams of progressing fell agonisingly short.

They needed to beat basement side Singapore by three goals in Bangkok to leapfrog China into second place in Group C of the second qualifying phase, but the Thais could only win 3-1.

In contrast to the crushing disappointment in Bangkok, Indonesia celebrated reaching the third qualifying round for the first time with a 2-0 home victory over the Philippines.

Indonesia joined Iraq in advancing out of Group F, with Thom Haye and Rizky Ridho the goal-scoring heroes on the night in Jakarta.

Elsewhere, coach Hajime Moriyasu warned Japan that the final qualifying round will be "a completely different level" after thrashing Syria 5-0 to go through with a 100 percent record.

Syria were left to sweat on a place in the next phase.

North Korea need just a point at Group B bottom side Myanmar later Tuesday to leapfrog Syria and progress.

In a dead rubber in Group I, Australia thrashed Palestine 5-0 in Perth with Portsmouth's Kusini Yengi scoring twice, one from the spot. Both sides were already into the next phase.

Like Japan, Australia had maximum points in the second phase and did not concede a goal in six games.