

Butler blames defence after labouring win

SPORTS REPORTER

Coach Peter Butler blamed his defence after Bangladesh women's team laboured to a 4-2 win against Bhutan in the second match of the two FIFA friendly matches at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu on Saturday.

The charges of Butler had fought back from a goal down to win the first match 5-1 on Wednesday, but the performance in the second match was much worse from the reigning SAFF women's champions as they went two goals down before finding their feet and edging past the home side.

The coach had made six changes to his starting eleven, including drafting in last match's hat-trick hero Mosammam Sagarika as well as Mile Akter in goal. However, the women in red and green made a terrible start, conceding a 15th minute lead when a defender failed to clear a long ball from midfield, with Deki Lhazom chesting the ball home following a cross from



skipper Pema Tshering.

It was only the second goal that Bangladesh had conceded against their South Asian counterparts in six

meetings, but things would go from bad to worse for the visitors as Lhazom doubled the home side's lead seven minutes later, smashing home from the centre of the box with Mile failing to stop the straightforward attempt.

Butler, who was highly critical of his team's critics following the first match, said the physical inferiority of his side and the style of play of the opposition caught them off guard.

"I thought we defended very very poorly," Butler said after the match. "Even though we dominated possession -- we probably had 75-80 percent possession but with the way they play (which is) very very direct and with us not being of big size, anything over the top causes a few problems."

The coach made an early change, bringing on reliable midfielder Maria Manda in place of Sapna Rani as Bangladesh slowly took control of the midfield. But it was captain Sabina Khatoon who reduced the margin in the 35th minute with a clever finish

following a long-ball from Masura Parvin before Sagarika equalised with a fine chip following some clever play inside the box by Sabina and Matsushima Sumaya five minutes later.

Sagarika then wasted two glorious chances early in the second half before substitute Ritu Porna Chakma's deflected shot handed the visitors a fortuitous lead in the 62nd minute. The left-winger ensured Bangladesh's victory with her second goal 24 minutes later, finding the net from a goalmouth melee as Bangladesh maintained their 100 percent win record against Bhutan.

Despite the lacklustre performance, Butler felt it was more of a case of the opposition improving than his charges regressing.

"I think you have to give credit where its due. They've improved," Butler said. "They don't have a real methodology in terms of how they play. If you don't defend stoutly and strongly and resolutely, you're going to get found out."

Jessy to officiate in Women's Asia Cup final

SPORTS REPORTER

Even though Bangladesh crashed out of the Women's Asia Cup with a crushing defeat to India in the semifinal, there will be some Bangladeshi representation in the final between India and Sri Lanka in Dambulla today in the form of umpire Shathira Jakir Jessy.

Jessy, who is officiating in the Asia Cup for the first time, confirmed The Daily Star yesterday that she has been chosen as one of the three umpires for the all-important match and will be working as an on-field umpire.

The former Bangladesh cricketer, who has officiated in five matches in the tournament -- three as an on-field umpire and two as a TV umpire -- explained that she was chosen for the final as one of the best umpires in the tournament and not as a neutral umpire.

"They selected me on the basis of performance. They have ranked the umpires on the basis of their performance in the Asia Cup and I was amongst the top three," Jessy said.

"Earlier, they would only choose neutral umpires. But this time they have changed their policy, now they are giving it to the best performers. Even if Bangladesh had qualified for the final, I would've been chosen," she added.

'There is every possibility of bigger humiliations'

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Bangladesh's lacklustre Women's Asia Cup mission ended on Friday with a humiliating 10-wicket defeat to India in the semifinal, a drubbing that could be the precursor to more such embarrassments in the forthcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup at home.

The Tigresses have been struggling since the start of the year and went into the regional competition after conceding back-to-back series defeats to Australia and India on home soil.

The players then featured in the Dhaka Premier Division Women's Cricket League and also had a two-week training camp at the BKSP ahead of the meet, but could hardly put up a fight against hosts Sri Lanka in their opening game, which they lost by seven wickets.

Bangladesh went on the win against Thailand and Malaysia to book a place in the last four, where they came across seven-time champions India, against whom they had conceded a 5-0 defeat in a five-match series recently.

In the semifinal, the difference in quality of the two sides came to the fore as the Tigresses got mauled by their Indian counterparts in all three departments.

As Bangladesh are bracketed with tough opponents like England, the

West Indies and South Africa in the T20 World Cup, which is set to start on October 3, things aren't looking great for the hosts at the moment.

"There is every possibility of bigger humiliations in the upcoming World Cup," Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, who mentored the women's team during their 2018 Asia Cup success in



Malaysia, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It wouldn't be surprising if we don't do well. There will be more criticism and I don't think they [players] would be able to handle that. I think it would be even more difficult for them."

"There was a time when we gave tough fight to India while Pakistan and Sri Lanka were similar to us. But now the latter teams have reached a new

level while we are going backwards and becoming like Thailand and the UAE," he added.

Fahim was critical of the quality of women's domestic cricket in Bangladesh while he lambasted the team management for their continuous failure.

"The quality of our domestic cricket is so poor that we can't actually think of getting players for international level from there. Our domestic cricket is little better than Thailand and the UAE and because of that, we feel comfortable playing against them."

"There was an attempt to develop women's cricket [after Asia Cup win]. But I don't know how things have gradually regressed in the last two to three years. I think we lack a competitive culture in our cricket. We should have been in the place behind India but above Pakistan, Sri Lanka. But we failed to maintain the continuity. I think it's not clear to many for what objectives and purpose we play cricket."

"I don't think the current management of the women's team can bring better results. This management has been working with the team for quite a long time. If they could've gotten better results, they would have done it by now. I fear that things can go worse," he concluded.

Emotional Endrick realises Madrid 'dream'

AGENCIES

A visibly emotional Endrick was presented as a Real Madrid player in front of a packed Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday, with the Brazilian teenage sensation revealing that he had long dreamt of becoming a Real Madrid player.

Madrid agreed a deal to sign forward Endrick from Palmeiras in December 2022, but the prospect could not formally join the club until his 18th birthday on July 21, 2024.

"This is crazy," Endrick said. "I am so happy, since I was a kid I have always been a Madrid fan and now I am going to play for Madrid."

"I am here, I am going to play, I am so happy, my family are as well. I don't have words to describe what I am feeling. I always wanted to be here. I wanted to play for Madrid. It was a dream. Today it is a reality."

The stadium was packed, with only just over 200 tickets left available to the general public on the morning of the event, as fans turned out. In particular, there was a strong Brazilian contingent to the crowd, wearing shirts of their country, Palmeiras, and various Real Madrid legends.

Also in attendance were Endrick's parents,



girlfriend, wider family and entourage.

Endrick will compete for a place in the Real Madrid attack alongside Brazil teammates Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo, and another new arrival, Kylian Mbappe.

The Brazilian teenager underwent a medical and put pen to paper on his contract at Valdebebas yesterday morning, before heading to Chamartin at midday to be officially presented in front of fans.

It was also confirmed that he would don the number 16 jersey during his first season at the club. The number had been vacant, having last been worn by Alvaro Odriozola before his return to Real Sociedad last summer.

Endrick is now expected to travel to the U.S. on Sunday for the club's pre-season tour, where he will arrive ahead of his Brazil teammates who were also at the Copa América and who are not expected to arrive until late next week.

That means that the teenager will work alongside Carlo Ancelotti and his teammates with the hope of featuring in some of their upcoming friendly fixtures against AC Milan, Barcelona, and Chelsea, ahead of the European Super Cup where the Champions League winners will play Europa League winners Atalanta in Warsaw, on August 14.



England batsman Joe Root celebrates after reaching his 63rd Test half-century on Day 2 of the third test against the West Indies at Edgbaston yesterday. Root rescued England after they slumped to 54 for five in response to West Indies' first innings total of 282 as the right-handed batter put away seven fours for his 87 and put together a 115-run stand with skipper Ben Stokes. He also reached another milestone as he became the seventh player to score 12,000 runs in the format and leapfrogged Brian Lara into seventh place in the list of all-time leading run-getters.



"It's not logical for me that you have someone withdraws from singles and you call up a doubles player to play singles. I don't think it's a good image for the sport, to be honest."

Novak Djokovic called for a change in the rules governing late call-ups at the Olympics after his 6-0, 6-1 rout of unranked Matthew Ebden in just 53 minutes on Saturday.

Rejaur, Mondol earn HP lead over Pak Shaheens

SPORTS REPORTER

Pacers Ripon Mondol and Rejaur Rahman Raja starred as Bangladesh Cricket Board High Performance (HP) Unit bowled out Pakistan Shaheens for 179 in their first innings on Day 2 of their four-day match at the Marrara Oval in Darwin yesterday.

Ripon claimed 4-71 while Rejaur took 3-33, helping the HP Unit to a 79-run first innings lead.

The HP team then reached 84-3 at stumps on Day 2, with Skipper Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Aich Mollah unbeaten on 39 and eight respectively, extending the lead to 163.

Earlier, Pakistan Shaheens resumed the day's play on 39-2, in reply to HP unit's first innings tally of 258.

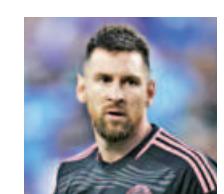
Rejaur struck on the second over of the day, getting Omair Yousuf caught for seven.

The Shaheens lost two more wickets in quick succession and were stuttering on 69-5 before Kamran Ghulam and Tayyab Tahir formed a 78-run partnership for the sixth wicket to steady the innings.

Rejaur broke the stand by getting Kamran caught behind for 48. His departure initiated another collapse as Pakistan Shaheens lost their remaining four wickets for just 32 runs.

SHORT CORNER

Injured Messi out for defending champ Miami as Leagues Cup begins



Lionel Messi will not play for Inter Miami as the defending

Leagues Cup champions begin their repeat bid on Saturday (Sunday morning in Bangladesh time) at home against Puebla, Miami coach Gerardo Martino said Friday. The 37-year-old Argentine striker suffered a right ankle injury in his nation's victory over Colombia in the Copa America final this month.

Zimbabwe keeper Madande sets new Test record of 42 byes against Ireland

Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Clive Madande broke a 90-year unwanted record when he conceded 42 byes in a Test innings against Ireland on Friday. The runs given away by the 24-year-old Madande, enduring a tough debut after he was out for a duck on Thursday's first day at Stormont, were more than Ireland's 40-run first-innings lead as they made 250 in reply to Zimbabwe's 210.

ECB to pay Zimbabwe touring fee for 2025 Test

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will become the first host board in the modern era to pay a touring fee in bilateral cricket when Zimbabwe arrive for a one-off Test next year, ECB chief Richard Gould said. Gould told Sky Sports on Friday that the ECB and other financially strong boards, such as the Indian and Australian boards, had a huge responsibility to ensure the competitiveness of Test cricket.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

PHOTO: REUTERS