

Wounded Australia seek change of fortune

SPORTS DESK

After getting hammered by India in the opening match, hosts Australia would be hoping that the change of ball will result in a change of fortunes for them as the much-anticipated pink-ball Test between the sides begins at Adelaide Oval today.

These two sides have faced off in a day-night Test only once before, at the same venue back in December 2020, in which Aussies bundled India out for just 36 -- their lowest ever total in Tests -- to set up an eight-wicket win in the series opener.

India, however, recovered from that early set back and won the series 2-1.

This time, it is the hosts who are in need of redemption.

India had to field an understrength eleven in the first game, with regular skipper Rohit Sharma and star batter Shubman Gill missing out. Both are set to play in Adelaide with Devdutt Padikkal and Dhruv Jurel likely to lose their spots.

Rohit is set to demote himself down the order to allow KL Rahul to open the innings, rewarding him for his patient 26 in the first innings then a solid 77 in the second in the Perth Test as an opener.

"KL will open. The way he has batted



Everyone has got a lot of personal pride, professional pride. So there's pressure on you anytime you play, let alone with the scoreboard being down 1-0.

Australia captain Pat Cummins

outside India, he deserves it. I will bat somewhere in the middle," said Rohit.

Meanwhile, Australia captain Pat Cummins admitted the pressure was on.

"Any Test match there is pressure. When you're down there's a little bit more, especially when you are at home. But we

have been in similar situations in World Cups or other series," he said.

Pacer Josh Hazlewood, the chief destroyer in India's 36 run capitulation four years ago with figures of 5-8, has been ruled out this time due to a side strain. Seamer Scott Boland will replace him.

• The Adelaide Test is set to be the second pink-ball Test between Australia and India and will be the 23rd day-night Test overall.

• The first pink-ball Test between the sides had also taken place in Adelaide back in 2020, a match the hosts won by eight wickets after bowling out India for 36 in the second innings -- their lowest ever team total in Tests.

• Australia have played 12 day-night Tests, more than any other team. They have won 11 of those games with their only defeat coming against the West Indies in Brisbane in January this year.

• India have played four pink ball Tests and other than the loss against Australia, they have come out victorious on the other three occasions.

• India have played 13 Tests at the Adelaide Oval and have won two, lost eight and drew three.

'Huge challenge' for Tigers in Champions Trophy build-up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's focus now shifts to the white-ball series on their current tour of the West Indies, starting with the first of three ODIs in St Kitts on Sunday.

The Tigers will be hoping to carry the momentum from their big win in the second Test in Jamaica that helped them bounce back and draw the two-Test series 1-1, but it will be a tricky task given they face the challenge of finding the right balance amid notable absences in a series that is considered as a build-up to the 2025 Champions Trophy.

Bangladesh will be aware that they lost four of the last ODI five series, home and away, in their most favoured format, including a 2-1 defeat against Afghanistan in the UAE in November.

Liton Das, who missed the Afghanistan series due to illness, returns for the Windies white-ball series but the fact that several key players are unavailable for the final ODI series ahead of the Champions Trophy will definitely be a headache for head coach Phil Simmons.



"It's actually a huge challenge, a lot bigger than this [Test series]. Quite a few senior players are missing," Simmons told broadcasters after the Jamaica Test.

Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto [groin], Mushfiqur Rahim [finger], and Towhid Hridoy [groin] will be sitting the series out due to injuries while Mustafizur Rahman will be unavailable due to family reasons. Shakib Al Hasan, meanwhile, is not in the picture since he was unable to return to the country for his final Test last month due to security concerns.

"For me, it would be nice to see some of the other youngsters around and see what else to work with," Simmons added.

The likes of Jaker Ali and Afif Hossain will look to fill up the void in the middle order but the main concern for the Tigers remains the opening slot. Soumya Sarkar got starts in the Afghanistan series but has not been able to make a big score. It would be a big litmus test for him and opening partner Tanzid Hasan Tamim in the pacy bouncy conditions of the Caribbean.

Parvez Hossain Emon, included in the ODI squad, will likely be considered a back-up for the opening position.

The last time Bangladesh played a ODI series in the West Indies, they won 3-0 in the spinning conditions of Guyana. And, it would be yet another chance for Nasum Ahmed to stake his claim, having impressed with bat and ball in the last series against Afghanistan.

Without Mustafizur, Bangladesh still have a strong pace bowling contingent to test the West Indies on their soil. Tanzim Hasan Sakib returned to the squad after a lay-off due to injury while Hasan Mahmud replaced Mustafizur.

All eyes would be on speedster Nahid Rana, who impressed in the third Afghanistan ODI before he scalped five wickets in the second Windies Test to pave the way for a momentous Test win.

The team management will be well aware of his workload but hope the youngster can leave a mark in the ODIs, with Simmons saying he would like Rana in the T20I squad as well.

HOCKEY JUNIOR WORLD CUP Foreign coach, extended training promised

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has plans to provide "best efforts" to prepare the U-21 team ahead of next year's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup in December, India.

The team returned home yesterday after finishing fifth in the AHF Hockey Junior Asia Cup in Oman, securing their first-ever spot in the Junior World Cup with three wins, two draws, and one loss in six matches.

The BHF organised a reception for the history makers at Falcon Hall in the city, where BHF president and Air Chief Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan welcomed each player and official with flower garlands before awarding the 21-member youth team contingent -- comprising 18 players, coach, manager and physio -- a cash prize of Tk 5 lakh.

"As we have already secured a ticket for the Junior World Cup, we will do everything necessary for the youth hockey team. We will aim to have a six-month-long camp instead of three months and, if needed, bring in a foreign coach alongside our local coach," Mahmood said during his speech.

He also shared plans to keep the players engaged through domestic competitions.

"We are optimistic about resuming domestic competitions. The Victory Day Hockey Tournament will

take place in late December, followed by the women's hockey league in January and the domestic league for men in March," the BHF president informed.

Congratulating the players, officials, and sponsors for the achievement -- as Bangladesh had never appeared in a hockey World Cup at any level -- Mahmood added, "This is a significant accomplishment in the



month of December. By qualifying for the Junior World Cup, you have created an opportunity to aim for the Senior World Cup in the future. We will provide our best efforts... as you face bigger hurdles in the coming days."

The BHF president acknowledged the challenges of running a three-month training camp for the Junior Asia Cup, especially as most federation officials were absent after August 5. He expressed his commitment to continuing the camp with better facilities, improved diets, and accom-

modation from the Oman tour.

The players and the coach emphasised the need for a comprehensive training camp to prepare for the main event.

Forward Rakibul Hasan Rocky, Bangladesh's top scorer with seven goals, said, "The federation should start the camp as soon as possible as we'll face top opponents like the Netherlands, Germany, England, and

Argentina."

However, head coach Moududur Rahman Shuvo believes keeping players engaged through regular competitions is as important as long-term training.

"Running a year long training camp may not be feasible, but we can keep players engaged through domestic competitions such as the Premier Hockey League and franchise-based hockey, which meet international standards due to the participation of world-class players," Shuvo said.

Tigresses lament poor batting in final stretch

SPORTS REPORTER

Poor batting in the second half of their chase cost Bangladesh women's cricket team the opening WT20I of the three match series against Ireland, as the hosts lost the game by 12 runs in Sylhet yesterday.

Chasing 170, openers Dilara Akter (49 off 41 balls) and Sobhana Mostary (46 off 35 balls) formed a record 103-run partnership.

There was a momentary slump after the partnership ended but Sharmin Akther and Tai Nehar (19 off 14 balls) did well to recover the momentum, leaving 18 runs required off the last two overs for the Tigresses to complete their biggest ever run chase in WT20Is.

But the penultimate over from Orla Prendergast (3-24) ended up being a maiden double wicket over and only five came of the 20th from Arlene Kelly as the match slipped away from Bangladesh.

Set batter Sharmin, who remained not out on 23 off 13, faced only one out of the last 12 deliveries, of which she took a single.

After the match, Mostary lamented about the missed opportunity.

"If the 19th over hadn't been a maiden and if we required 10 to 12 runs in the last over, we could have chased the target," Mostary said.

Earlier, Irish skipper Gaby Lewis (60 off 42) shared a 107-run stand with player of the match Leah Paul (79 off 45) after they won the toss.

The second match will be held on Saturday.



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Young Tigers face Pakistan in Asia Cup semi

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team will be looking to reach the final of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup for the second consecutive time when they take on their Pakistani counterparts in the first semifinal at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in the UAE today.

The reigning champions earlier finished as Group B runners-up after losing their third and final group stage match to Sri Lanka by seven runs at the same venue on Tuesday. Before that defeat, they had won against Afghanistan and Nepal by 45 runs and five wickets respectively.

Meanwhile, Pakistan went undefeated in the group stage, winning against India, UAE and Japan in Group A.

In the day's other semifinal, Sri Lanka will take on seven-time champions India at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. Sri Lanka finished as Group B champions with three wins while India finished as Group A runners-up.

Both matches will start at 11:00 am Bangladesh time.

SHORT CORNER

'I have not got all my BPL contract money'

South Africa leg-spinner Imran Tahir accused Rangpur Riders of not paying the cricketer's full payment for his services in the last edition of the Bangladesh Premier League. "I would like to win it for Guyana, and for personal reasons as well. I played for Rangpur Riders in BPL last year and have not got my all contract money," Tahir said before stepping onto the field for Guyana Amazon Warriors in a Global Super League (GSL) game against Rangpur on Wednesday.



Rashid, Nabi decry Taliban's stance on women's education

Afghanistan cricket stars Rashid Khan and Mohammad Nabi have expressed their disappointment over the Taliban's reported closure of institutes for women training as nurses and midwives. They described the move as "deeply saddening and heartbreaking" and highlighted Islam's emphasis on education for everyone. Both cricketers took to X to urge the Taliban to reconsider their stance and restore Afghan girls' right to education, enabling them to contribute to the nation's development.

Kings, MSC to vie for early BPL advantage

Last season's champions Bashundhara Kings and runners-up Mohammedan Sporting Club are set to face off in Cumilla today (2:30pm, Bangladesh time), marking an early and crucial clash in the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) title race.

Read full stories on The Daily Star website.

De Bruyne played 75 fantastic minutes

AGENCIES

Kevin De Bruyne made the most of his first start since September with a goal and an assist in Wednesday's 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest, saying he was happy Manchester City earned three points after four straight losses in the Premier League.

"I think it's just important that we won a game," the 33-year-old midfielder told his club's official website. "We started the game well, created some opportunities, maybe a few mistakes, I think myself as well. But, you know, happy with the way that we performed."

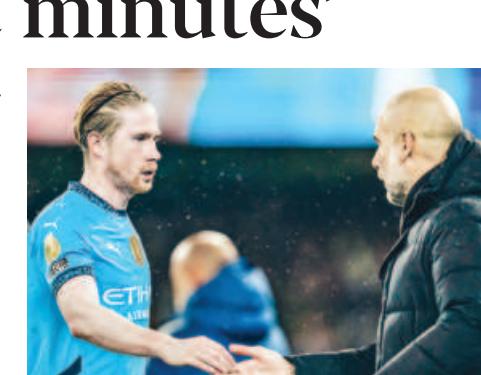
City coach Pep Guardiola dismissed suggestions before the game that there had been a rift with De Bruyne as he has been carefully managed back from injury problems.

"Last season was many months (out injured) and this season as well. I'm so happy he's back," said Guardiola.

"He fought a lot. In respect to his physicality and minutes against Feyenoord was not good and that's why I decided not to play at Anfield (against Liverpool) for the rhythm they play."

"But the minutes he played at Anfield were really good and today he played 75 fantastic minutes."

The Belgian, who has come on as a substitute in recent matches after missing a month with a groin strain, said injuries have



plagued City's bid to secure a fifth league title in a row.

"It's been a tough time but we tried to change it. Unfortunately we've got a few guys who are maybe injured so, it's what is happening this year. But we'll try and recover as quickly as possible."

De Bruyne was also pleased that City, who have lost key defensive midfielder Rodri for the season due to a cruciate ligament tear, kept their first clean sheet in eight matches in all competitions.

City, fourth in the standings with 26 points, visit Crystal Palace on Saturday.