

PLAYER OF THE FINAL

Tamim Iqbal

PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT

Mehedi Hasan Miraz

MOST RUNS

Mohammad Naim (511)

MOST WICKETS

Taskin Ahmed (25)

BRIEF SCORES

CHITTAGONG KINGS

194 for three (Emon 78, Nafay 66 Clark 44; Mohammad Ali 1-21)
Fortune Barishal: 195 for seven (Tamim 54, Mayers 46; Shoriful 4-34, Naeem 2-18)

RESULT

Fortune Barishal won by three wickets



PHOTO: STAR

Tamim and Co triumph as ‘power and experience’ combine

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN

Fortune Barishal were left with a daunting task yesterday at the end of Chittagong Kings’ innings in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in Mirpur, but they ended up creating history with a three-wicket victory to clinch back-to-back BPL titles.

Riding on fifties by openers Parvez Hossain Emon (78 off 49 balls, not out) and Khawaja Nafay (66 off 44 balls), Chittagong had already posted 194-3 after being sent in to bat first, and in order to chase the target, Barishal needed to break Comilla Victorians’ two-season-old record of chasing 175 runs in a BPL final.

The target could have been even bigger if Barishal’s bowlers had not brought some resistance in the last four overs, where they conceded only 31 runs. Barishal’s Pakistani pacer Mohammad Ali spent only 10 runs in overs 17 and 20, while Kyle Mayers and Ebadot Hossain went for nine and 12 runs, respectively, while bowling one over each.

On the flat surface of the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, where a lot was offered for the batters on the day, the target suddenly seemed very much gettable, and the way Barishal skipper Tamim Iqbal approached in the powerplay, they gained all the momentum to push for history at the jam-packed gallery -- mostly occupied by Barishal’s red jerseys.

“I thought a lot of credit goes to the bowlers who bowled in the last four overs. At one stage, it was looking like 220. As

soon as we got into the dressing room, we were saying the wicket was good and they were 20 runs short,” Tamim said during the post-match presentation ceremony.

While Tamim took the attacking approach early in the run chase, his partner Towhid Hridoy seemed more focused on giving him company. Tamim, who reached his fifty off just 24 balls, put up a 76-run stand with Hridoy that set the foundation for their big run chase.

Despite losing his wicket to Shoriful Islam -- Chittagong’s standout bowling performer on the day with figures of 4-34 -- it played a catalyst role in their pursuit of Chittagong’s total, which they surpassed in the last over.

This was Tamim’s third BPL final appearance and, as in the previous two

occasions, he played a significant role in helping his side sail to victory. In 2019, Tamim made an unbeaten 141 off 61 balls to help Comilla Victorians become champions, while last year, he scored a vital 39 off 26 balls and formed a 76-run opening stand with Mehedi Hasan Miraz to guide Barishal to their maiden BPL title.

With this victory, Tamim also maintained a 100 per cent record of winning in all BPL finals. “We have the power, we have the experience, and it all came together very nicely,” said Tamim, who also informed that they have planned to visit Barishal with both of their BPL trophies on February 9 after being unable to do so last season.

Chittagong skipper Mohammad



ROLL OF HONOUR

2011-12 Dhaka Gladiators
2012-13 Dhaka Gladiators
2015-16 Comilla Victorians
2016-17 Dhaka Dynamites
2017-18 Rangpur Riders
2018-19 Comilla Victorians
2019-20 Rajshahi Royals
2021-22 Comilla Victorians
2022-23 Comilla Victorians
2023-24 Fortune Barishal
2024-25 Fortune Barishal

Mithun also felt that they were 10-15 runs short in their innings and credited Barishal’s bowlers for their comeback.

Meanwhile, Tamim, who recently announced his international retirement, was given a befitting farewell after the final -- followed by a laser show -- by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). During the ceremony, he once again recalled his father, Iqbal Khan, whose dream was to see him represent Bangladesh.

“I’m pretty sure he would have been proud of what I have done for this country,” said Tamim, asking the fans to support only Bangladesh, not individual players.

“Please support the team. They are young, they will make mistakes -- it is your team.”

Hurting Talha ‘living the dream’ of forging fast bowlers

A dramatic last-ball boundary shattered Khulna Tigers’ Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) campaign to a heartbreaking end on Thursday. Yet, head coach Talha Jubair deserves credit for guiding a team lacking star power to the penultimate hurdle, marking another chapter in the former national pacer’s coaching journey. The 39-year-old spoke to **The Daily Star’s Samsul Arefin Khan** about why he prefers being a bowling coach, the evolution of Bangladesh’s pace bowling and more. Here are the excerpts from the interview:

The Daily Star (DS): It must be difficult to get over such a heartbreaking defeat to Chittagong Kings.

Talha Jubair (TJ): What I felt was that we were kind of relaxed after Chittagong lost a couple of quick wickets. Jason Holder then conceded a six and a four in the 18th over. If we had 30 runs to defend in the last over, we could have bowled the 19th over with Musfik [Hasan] and kept the last over for Hasan [Mahmud]. But when it required only 21 runs, [Mehedi] Miraz didn’t take that risk... I’m not blaming anyone. The way our players played in the tournament, I’m so proud of them.

DS: At one stage, it looked like you guys wouldn’t be able to make the playoffs. Then you won back-to-back matches to reach the knockouts and also beat Rangpur Riders in the Eliminator. What was the team’s mindset during

that phase?

TJ: Actually, we never thought of losing the game against Rangpur. The way we batted, especially [Mohammad] Naim, was absolutely awesome. In the Eliminator, if I told you that we planned to beat Rangpur in a similar way, I would be lying. When I heard that Sunil [Narine] didn’t come and Ifitikhar [Ahmed] wasn’t playing, I became confident but the way we beat them, I couldn’t even have imagined.

DS: Can you describe your coaching journey so far?

TJ: I couldn’t lengthen my career as it should have gone. That disappointment will remain until my death. So my main purpose right now is to help produce more pace bowlers for Bangladesh.

My wife has sacrificed a lot to help me take up coaching as a profession. Khaled Mahmud Sujon bhai gave me a big break by allowing me to work with Dhaka Dynamites when I had just come into coaching. I also worked for Abahani in the same year as a bowling coach. Then Sujon bhai made me the head coach of Shinepukur Cricket Club for the next season. I also worked as the head coach of Dhaka Metro. Then I got U-19 responsibilities. I feel so proud that I’m living my dream of working with the pacers.

If anyone proposes that I become a head coach and another offers me the role of bowling coach, I may choose the second option. I prefer being a bowling coach because I own that place.

DS: Has your disappointment from your playing days subdued to some extent now that you’re in coaching?

TJ: To be honest, it has reduced quite a bit. But when players like Nahid [Rana], Ripon [Mondol], Ashikur Zaman, Musfik, Shoriful [Islam], Khaled [Ahmed], and even Taskin [Ahmed] play really well, I feel so proud. The more pace bowlers I produce, the more my disappointment will reduce gradually.

DS: What are the differences you see in current pacers compared to your generation or before?

TJ: I think currently, players face pressure situations more than at any other time, and that improves their game sense. That’s why they think about the game so much, because they know that without work ethic and hard work, they can’t reach the next level.

Fate of women’s football in Tabith’s hands

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Tabith Awal will make a call on the report prepared by a seven-member special committee regarding the ongoing impasse over women’s football team’s camp, even though it is uncertain whether the president will declare the findings of the report today or will take more time before making it public.

BFF’s senior vice-president and head of the probe committee Imrul Hassan on Thursday night told reporters that they had forwarded the report to the president, who he said would either discuss it with the executive committee or will himself take a decision on delivering the verdict on the feud between 18 senior players and the head coach Peter Butler.

Hassan also said that discipline was the key factor in considering the recommendations made in the report while acknowledging the contribution of the players in bringing success for the nation.

The Daily Star tried to reach Tabith, also a politician and a businessman, for a comment but he did not answer the calls and the text messages.

The 18 senior players led by captain Sabina Khatun have been boycotting the national team’s training camp since Butler took over the camp on January 29 after returning from the UK. The senior players, who had a public rift with the coach during last year’s successful title defence of SAFF Women’s Championship, blamed the coach of driving a wedge among the players, of bodyshaming them and of questioning their personal lives. They also threatened to retire *en masse* if the Englishman was not removed from the job. Butler, meanwhile, has publicly announced that he would not stay in charge if the boycotting players were brought back into the camp.

The Daily Star contacted a number of members of the special committee, who interviewed 30 squad members as well as the coach before preparing the recommendation report. And the common impression from them is that a middle-ground might be reached.

A member of the special committee told The Daily Star that the BFF president will sit with both the players and the coach before making a final call on the issue.

“It’s not matter of leniency or strictness. It’s a matter of well-being of women football in general and of course of our women footballers. Hence I believe whatever our president will decide, will be best for football,” said Fahad Karim, a member of the committee and a BFF vice-president.

Sayed Hasan Kanon, a former national team player and member of the committee, said he believed no harsh measures will be taken for the good of women’s football.

“These girls are our national asset. They have done a lot for the country,” Kanon said. “They may have done something wrong and breached discipline which they shouldn’t have. But we are considerate about them. We don’t want the careers of these girls spoil.”

With both parties seemingly rigid in their stance and with two important international matches lined up later this month, this is the first real challenge for Tabith as the president of the federation. And only a sensible and accommodating approach from him might help him and the country’s football overcome the challenge.



Australia wicket-keeper Alex Carey celebrates with Steve Smith after scoring a century during Day 2 of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday. Carey remained unbeaten on 139 at stumps and had Smith not out on 120 at the other end as Australia finished the day at 330-3, leading by 73 runs.

PHOTO: AFP