

Hridoy's DPL appearance creates controversy

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan returned to winning ways in the Dhaka Premier League's (DPL) Super League on Sunday, but the day's highlight was Mohammedan skipper Towhid Hridoy's appearance in the match against Agrani Bank.

He was handed a two-match ban [Level 2] following two counts of misconduct -- first due to an altercation with on-field umpires and then due to public criticism of umpiring.

However, Hridoy returned, serving just a one-match ban as multiple stakeholders offered varying explanations as to how it was allowed.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as of yet has provided no clear explanation for it.

"We appealed on the decision, and they responded and reduced the sentence by a game. We got the letter from the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) that the ban had been reduced," Mohammedan official Sajjad Ahmed informed.

However, neither CCDM nor Mohammedan agreed to show the letter.

"I can't say anything regarding this. If the sentence was reduced from high level in the board, that's up to



them," Niamur Rashid, who was the match referee of the said game in which Hridoy had an altercation with the umpires, told The Daily Star.

Another technical committee member of DPL, Enamul Haque Moni, was also unsure.

"He [Hridoy] told the technical committee that he was sorry. They [Mohammedan] had sent a letter to reduce the suspension, but I don't have it. I don't know how he still played," Moni told this newspaper.

Umpires' committee, however, provided a completely different explanation. "We sent a memo to CCDM in this regard. There was a meeting of the match referees, usually convened during the mid-point of the tournament for reviewing purposes. The rule of seven demerit points equating to a two-match suspension has been changed. That's why he could play," an umpires' committee official informed.

Meanwhile, the umpires' committee chairman, Iftekhar Ahmed Mithu, informed that the second sentence, relating to the three demerit points, is "still under process and has not been completed," and the player can play till it is completed.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto could not resist the temptation of slashing at a wide short delivery even after getting himself set at the crease, picking out the man at backward point off a Blessing Muzarabani delivery on Day 1 of the Tigers' first Test against Zimbabwe at Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday. Shanto walked out after a 69-ball 40, while Bangladesh could only manage 191 in 61 overs before Zimbabwe finished the day in command, scoring 67 without a loss in 14.1 overs.

Same old batting collapse from same old Tigers

SAMSUL AREFIN KHAN from Sylhet

Before yesterday, the Test series against Zimbabwe was seen as a chance for Bangladesh to bounce back from the five consecutive home Test defeats and also as an opportunity for some Bangladeshi batters to get back into runs.

But after the abysmal batting display on the opening day of the first Test in Sylhet yesterday, those thoughts have been replaced by fears of a sixth straight home Test defeat and concerns about the team's batting ability in red-ball cricket.

After opting to bat first in a decent surface at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium, Bangladesh's batting crumbled against an average Zimbabwe attack as the hosts were dismissed for just 191 runs in their first innings.

The extent of the batting failure became even more apparent after Zimbabwe reached 67-0 at stumps, reducing the deficit to 124.

"The wicket was fantastic. Zimbabwe batters also batted really well. We lacked in execution and made tactical mistakes. When the boys were batting, they didn't look uncomfortable or lacked confidence. We made poor shot selections," Bangladesh team's senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin told the media in Sylhet yesterday.

A day before the opening Test, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain

“It was a great day for Zimbabwe cricket. I think the bowlers were too short in the first session. They didn't make the batters play enough. I told them to string a few overs together without giving away runs. We eventually removed [Najmul Hossain] Shanto, which led us to initiate a mini collapse.”

Zimbabwe's pace-bowling coach
Charl Langeveldt

Shanto had spoken about how he has been guilty of throwing away his wicket after getting set and how the batters in the team are working hard to do better.

However, there was no reflection of his words on the field.

After openers Shadman Islam (12) and Mahmudul Hasan Joy (14) departed in space of two overs, leaving Bangladesh at 32-2 in 11 overs, Mominul Haque and Shanto repaired the early damage by putting up a 66-run stand.

But just when it looked like Bangladesh

could post an imposing first innings total, Shanto, on 40, slashed an ordinary ball of Blessing Muzarabani to a man at point.

Mushfiqur Rahim, Bangladesh's most experienced batter, tried to pull left-arm spinner Wellington Masakadza only to be caught at mid-wicket after making only four runs.

Bangladesh's top scorer Mominul Haque (56) never looked at ease and ended his innings trying sweep the ball against the turn only to top-edge it and get caught at mid-wicket.

Unlike in many recent Tests, lower-order batters Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Jaker Ali could not perform a rescue act and Bangladesh got dismissed for a below par total.

Batters making the same mistakes repeatedly naturally draws questions over their commitment to improvement.

However, Salahuddin claimed that the players are trying to get better, even if the fruits of their efforts are still not visible.

"The boys are trying to change a lot of things mentally and they are very conscious about self-improvement. We have played very poorly today [yesterday]. But we can't say that they aren't trying and they don't have the urge to become great players. "You can make mistakes. But if you repeat the same mistakes, it is a big problem. We need to be careful about repeating the same mistakes."

SA YOUTH TT C'SHIPS

Bangladesh eye medals

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh table tennis teams are scheduled to leave for Kathmandu today to take part in South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships, which will be held from April 24-27, with the hope of securing medals.

The regional championships will also serve as qualification platform for upcoming Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships, with the champions in both men's U-19 and women's U-19 team events advancing to the 24th edition of continental championships.

Bangladesh, who became champions in men's U-19 team event in 2022 and finished behind champions Sri Lanka in 2024, are hoping to fight for the final in absence of India.

"We have a good team this time around. Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are of similar strength. So we believe we can play the final and win a medal," head coach Mostafa Billah told the reporters at a press conference at BOA Auditorium yesterday.

BTTF general secretary captain AM Maksud Ahmed Sonet said, "The preparation started on March 12, about a month after we took responsibility in the federation. There was flexibility in the camp due to Ramadan and Eid but we hope the players will produce good results as we also emphasised on fitness by appointing a fitness trainer."

Sonet informed that they will simultaneously train the players and test them through different tournaments in a bid to sharpen their skills and that they would also consider appointing a Chinese and a Japanese coach to groom players from the grassroots level.

He also claimed that they started the activities of federation with a Tk 4.5 lakh debt but they are optimistic about continuing all activities soundly in coming days, adding that they have requested the National Sports Council to have the federation's accounts audited to find out whether they have been any irregularities.

SHORT CORNER

Tahsin secures final IM norm



FM Tahsin Tajwar Zia earned the third and final norm for turning an International Master after beating Hungarian Grandmaster Gergely Aczel in the 10th and final round of Farago Ivan Memorial GM Chess tournament in Hungary on Sunday. The 19-year-old, however, will have to wait to get the IM title till taking his rating to 2400, which currently is 2354.

Bangladesh scrape past Indonesia in AHF Cup

Bangladesh survived a second-half scare to notch up a hard-fought 3-2 win over hosts Indonesia in their second match of the AHF Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday. With two consecutive victories, the four-time champions sit top of Pool B with six points, followed by Thailand, who secured four points from two matches.

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Anamul Haque Bijoy became the first Bangladeshi to score 50 tons in recognised cricket when he notched up an unbeaten 105-ball 110 to lead Gazi Group Cricketers to a comfortable seven-wicket win over Legends of Rugganj in a Dhaka Premier League Super League fixture at the BKSP-4 ground yesterday. Bijoy's record-setting ton means that the 32-year-old now has 23 List A centuries, 24 in first-class cricket, and three in T20s. He had already gone past Naeem Islam (46 tons) in January this year with a century in the Bangladesh Premier League. In the other matches on that day, league-leaders Abahani beat Gulshan Cricket Club by 50 runs in Mirpur, while second-placed Mohammedan picked up a seven-wicket victory over Agrani Bank at BKSP-3 ground.

PHOTO: BCB

Arsenal delay Liverpool's title party

REUTERS, Ipswich

Arsenal cantered to a 4-0 victory over Ipswich Town to end Liverpool's hopes of winning the Premier League title on Sunday, with Leandro Trossard scoring twice and the hosts' Leif Davis sent off.

Arsenal moved on to 66 points in second spot but Liverpool, who face Leicester City later, still only need to win two of their remaining games to secure the crown.

Arsenal took the lead through Trossard in the 14th minute and Gabriel Martinelli doubled the advantage with a simple finish in the 28th minute before Reid was shown a straight red card for raking his studs down the back of Bukayo Saka's leg.

Trossard grabbed his second in the 69th minute and Ethan Nwaneri added a late fourth to leave Ipswich stuck in 18th place. They will be relegated if they drop points again or 17th-placed West Ham pick up one more point.

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