

## Tanzid's six sixes and the MYTH OF POWER-HITTING

ASHFAQ UL ALAM

Till Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana rolled up to bowl the second delivery of the fourth over in the third T20I last Wednesday, Bangladesh opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim was going through a six-hitting rut.

The opener had gone without clearing the ropes in his last four innings, which for most Bangladeshi batters would not seem long enough to be termed as a rut, but for Tanzid, who had hit at least one maximum in his last nine white-ball innings for the Tigers, this was sufficient.

Standing at five feet and eight inches, with an athletic but lean build, Tanzid does not really fit the bill of what a six-hitting menace in T20s should look like.

But looks can be deceiving, as stats show that in the running year, the southpaw from Bangladesh has been one of the most consistent six-hitters in world cricket.

In all competitive T20s since January 2025, including the third T20I against Sri Lanka, Tanzid has hit 55 sixes in just 20 innings, the highest among Bangladeshis and the eighth most in the world.

In T20Is, his stats look even better, as in nine innings he has smashed 21 sixes, second-highest among all Test-playing nations behind India's Abhishek Sharma and New Zealand's Tim Seifert, who have 22 sixes apiece.

Parvez Hossain Emon, Tanzid's current opening partner in both white-ball formats for the Tigers, is the second among Bangladeshis in both the T20 and T20I lists. Emon has hit 37 sixes in 20 T20 innings, the same number of

outings as Tanzid, and 14 in eight T20I knocks.

The fact that Tanzid leads Emon by 18 sixes in the T20 list and by seven in T20Is is a bit surprising considering the differences in their batting style.

While Tanzid is more like the conventional left-handed opener, dependent more on his natural flair, intrinsic timing, and picking gaps, Emon is a bottom-handed batter, who relies on brute force to bludgeon the ball across the ropes or at least hit it high enough to take advantage of the early field restrictions.

Considering the direction the art of batting is moving at the moment, Emon's approach is more in line with the times' need.

Young batters worldwide are leaning more towards learning the skill of muscling the ball over the ropes, as with the proliferation of T20 and T10 leagues, there is more money to be made by learning how to hit sixes in command.

But where many batters falter, especially in Bangladesh, is that swinging at every ball from the hips like baseball is not the only way to hit sixes.

"You don't need just big muscles or power to hit sixes," Rohit Sharma, former India captain and the person with the most sixes in T20Is (205), said this back in 2019, after hitting a match-winning 43 ball 85 against Bangladesh in a T20I in which he hit Mosaddek Hossain for a hattrick of maximums.

"You need timing, and you need to hit it from the middle, your head should be still, your body needs to be in the right position. When you take care of these things on a good wicket, you will be able to hit sixes," he added.

From the looks of it, Tanzid follows Rohit's

school of thought, as the left-hander kept his head steady, got in position early, transferred the weight at the precise moment, struck the ball at the perfect spot, and extended his follow-through just enough to end his six-hitting rut with an exquisite lofted cover drive.

That one shot opened the floodgates in Colombo, as Tanzid hit five more sixes, all against spinners, all conventional shots, zero wild hoicks. His six sixes paved the way to a maiden series win for the Tigers and showed that even now, the old principles of batsmanship hold merit.

For Tanzid and Bangladesh, the next challenge is the three home T20Is against Pakistan starting on Sunday, and it would be interesting to see whether the opener adds to his six-hitting streak in the series or falls victim to the mercurial Mirpur pitch.

## BCB in discussion to play Afghanistan in October

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is in discussion with Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) to schedule a three-match ODI and a three-match T20I series in October to make up for the postponed series against India which was scheduled for August.

Bangladesh were slated to play two Tests, three ODIs and as many T20Is against Afghanistan in July 2024 in Greater Noida, India before a revised proposal saw the Tests omitted. Later, the revised series was postponed as BCB felt conditions at Greater Noida would not be ideal for an international series at that time of year.

"Yes, we are in discussion with ACB regarding a three-match ODI and three-match T20I series in October. It is part of an earlier plan and we are rescheduling the series which was set to be played last year," in-charge at cricket operations Shahriar Nafees told The Daily Star. "The two Tests will be played at some other time, we are discussing the white-ball series right now," Shahriar added.

The venue is still to be decided with Shahriar informing that ACB, as the hosts, will decide on the venue.

## India consider Bumrah gamble for crucial Manchester Test

REUTERS, London

Jasprit Bumrah is a weapon India must use sparingly but with the five-Test series against England on the line, the tourists are considering playing their pace spearhead in the fourth Test in Manchester next week.

The team management has decided that Bumrah, whose workload has been carefully managed since he returned from a back surgery earlier this year, will play three of the five Tests in England.

A victory in Manchester would give England an unassailable 3-1 lead. To prevent that, India are considering playing Bumrah, who skipped the Test in Birmingham, in match rather than him for the final Test at the Oval.

"We know we have got him for one of the last two Tests," assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate told reporters after a training session on Thursday.

"It's pretty obvious that the series is on the line now in Manchester, so there will be a leaning towards playing him."

"But again, we have got to look at all the factors: how many days of cricket are we going to get up there, what do we feel is our best chance of winning that game, and then how that fits in together with the Oval."

Arguably the best all-format bowler of his era, Bumrah registered five wicket hauls in both the Tests he played in England, though India lost both in Leeds and Lord's.

Meanwhile, India wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant, who suffered a finger injury at Lord's, did not bat in Thursday's practice.

India assistant coach Ten Doeschate was confident Pant will reprise his usual roles in front in Manchester.

"He batted with quite a lot of pain in the third test and it's only going to get easier and easier on his finger," Ten Doeschate said.

## Sapna Rani: this one's a keeper

The term 'complete footballer' is often used lightly, but it fits in Sapna Rani's case. Her name -- meaning 'Queen of Dreams' -- carries poetry; her play carries purpose. One may not always find her on the highlight reel, but notice when she's not there on the pitch. That's because Sapna does more of the seemingly invisible work: scanning space, intercepting threats, recovering possession, with the same tenacity as she detects a goal-scoring opportunity.



## Feel we have edge over Pakistan at home: Naim

SPORTS REPORTER

Just a day after the Bangladesh team's return following the T20I series triumph in Sri Lanka, the Tigers had an optional training session on Friday ahead of their three-match T20I series against Pakistan.

Opener Mohammed Naim was the only player to show up in the afternoon at the academy ground in Mirpur, perhaps realising that he might be called up to replace Parvez Hossain Emon, who was dismissed on nought twice in Sri Lanka.

Naim, who worked out a sweat during his range-hitting drills, however, clarified to the media that he wanted to work on his game, and his session was not designed for the Pakistan series, slated to begin on Sunday.

Bangladesh lost the last series away to Pakistan 3-0 in May-June this year. However, Naim felt that the home advantage keeps the Tigers ahead this time around.

"Definitely, at home, I would feel that Bangladesh are ahead," Naim told the media yesterday.

"We got a winning momentum, and we would like to carry it. Since we are playing at home, we know how the games usually go in Mirpur."

"Haven't seen the wicket yet. I just



completed an individual session, and the momentum the team has is very good. We are not bothered about what happened in the past," he added on the recent record against Pakistan.

Naim's only appearance in the Sri Lanka T20Is saw him bat at number four, a position he was not prepared for.

"To be honest, as Jaker [Ali] was injured, I had to play at four. I was actually supposed to bat at five, and after discussing with Sir [senior assistant coach Mohammad Salahuddin], I batted there. Normally, I wasn't supposed to play [the game].

"If I had known that such an opportunity would come ... because to be honest, I wasn't mentally prepared. I am always prepared for opening roles, and even now in the individual session, I was preparing how to handle things as an opener. Since I wasn't mentally prepared, next time if an opportunity like that comes, I would be prepared," he added.

Naim did bat till the end in the only Sri Lanka T20I he featured in, but Bangladesh lost that game, and the left-handed batter's approach with the willow was questioned due to the lack of impact it created.

"It's not like when I am set, I don't bat in the middle of the innings. But when you start from the middle suddenly, naturally, I do not know the struggles of batting in that position, even if from the outside it seems easy," Naim explained his approach in that game.

## Footballers to bear the brunt of lower budget of clubs

ANISUR RAHMAN

With less than a month remaining before the transfer window of the Bangladesh Premier League closes, footballers are struggling to secure suitable contracts for the upcoming 2025-26 season due to financial constraints faced by the participating clubs.

Last season's runners-up, Abahani, have already begun their pre-season training on Thursday ahead of their AFC Challenge League encounter against Kyrgyzstan's FC Muras United on August 12. However, other clubs -- including Bashundhara Kings, who will also compete in the same tournament against Syrian outfit Al Karamah SC -- are still in the negotiation stage with players.

Since the political changeover on August 5 last year, footballers have faced difficulties securing decent payments from clubs, many of which were forced to cut previously agreed salaries due to the absence of key officials and management reshuffles across several teams.

The withdrawals of Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel from the top-tier league also left a number of recognised footballers playing for token payments. Some, including national players such as Masuk Mia Jonny, Matin Mia, and Biplu Ahmed, sat out the entire season without signing for any club.

The last season concluded on May 29, but most clubs are still struggling to

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Bangladesh defender

TOPU BARMAN

secure funding to form their squads for the upcoming season. As a result, footballers are likely to receive lower payments compared to last year.

The situation isn't good for players overall. Most are struggling to get good offers from clubs. I'm not even sure if my former club, Brothers Union, will retain me," said former national team forward Sazzad Hossain, who is on the lookout for a slightly better deal this time. As a professional footballer, one needs to spend nearly Tk 1.5 lakh on boots, accessories, and food, he said.

National team defenders Saad Uddin and Topu Barman said their previous club, Bashundhara Kings, have yet to begin discussions for the upcoming season. They expect talks to take place sometime

next week.

"As far as I know, most clubs are planning to form low-budget squads. That means players will have to accept reduced payments again, and we really don't have much choice," said Saad. "Many players haven't even received full payment from last season."

Topu said: "The current situation is very tough for players. We sacrificed a lot last season. I believe footballers deserve better contracts, especially considering how football is slowly reviving in the country."

Conversations with several club officials revealed that most teams have significantly reduced their budgets for the upcoming season.

Rahmatganj MFS coach Kamal Babu claimed that last season the highest payment to a local player was Tk 1.2 lakh while it could be at best Tk 8 lakh this season.

Rashed Islam, manager of Fortis FC, said: "Our budget will be around 50-60 lakh less than last season. We have taken seven to eight players from BCL through trial, so that we can accommodate players with reduced budget."

In addition, the mandatory requirement to include five U-20 players in the squad, along with the lack of restrictions on signing South Asian players, has also contributed to lower pay offers for senior players, it is believed.



With much speculation surrounding the nature of the surface, Pakistan skipper Salman Ali Agha and teammates inspect the wicket at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Friday ahead of their three-match T20I series against hosts Bangladesh. The Mirpur surface tends to stay slow and low, and with the frequent rain during this time of the year, Pakistan players were attempting to get an idea about how things would turn out in the upcoming series on their first day of practice. The first match will be held on July 20.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED