

Can Tigers escape their OWN TRAP?

SPORTS REPORTER

After falling into the spin trap they had laid themselves in the second ODI, Bangladesh are heading into today's third and final match of the series against the West Indies short of confidence as the visitors have seemingly cracked the code on how to win in the Mirpur turner.

The hosts successfully spun a web around the Caribbean side in the first ODI, winning it by 74 runs, but were surprised by the tourists in the following game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Thursday, losing the bout in the Super Over.

The West Indies bowled an unprecedented 50 overs of spin in that game with three frontline spinners -- Akeal Hosein, Roston Chase and Khary Pierre -- and part-timers Alick Athanaze and Gudakesh Motie completing their quota of overs.

The Tiger batters struggled to rotate the strike against them, evidenced by 193 dots in the innings. Forty seven percent of their runs came from boundaries, while for the West Indies, the number was only 35.6 percent -- a clear indication that the visiting batters fared better with singles and doubles.

West Indies had come prepared for the



PHOTO: STAR

ambush by spin in Mirpur, having sent some of their players to Chennai prior to the series to train and from the looks of it, the move has paid dividends.

Asked why Bangladesh opted for such spinning turfs which do not allow batters to flourish when better wickets come around, Soumya Sarkar, who made a sluggish 45 off 89 balls on Thursday, revealed it was the management's

decision.

"I already said that wicket and weather are not in our hands; they are in the hands of the management. We players don't think about these things. We try to cop up with whatever situation we are given," he said.

It reveals the glitches in planning from Bangladesh's side of things. The team management perhaps felt spin was the

chink in West Indies' armor that could be exploited but it did not turn out that way in the second ODI.

So far in the series, the top order of Saif Hassan, Soumya and Najmul Hossain Shanto has not provided stability, the middle-order has remained adamant to bat only for survival and late flourishes from Rishad Hossain has pushed the total past 200.

There is also criticism on why Rishad, who hit an unbeaten 14-ball 39 in the second game, was not sent in for the Super Over.

Captain Mehidy Hasan Miraz also seemingly miscalculated the overs at the death as part-timer Saif Hassan had to bowl the final over even though death over specialist Mustafizur Rahman had two overs left in his quota.

For the hosts, today's match is not just about winning the series, it's also about regaining lost pride after losing the spin battle on Thursday.

In order to bounce back from the defeat, the management has to get their plans right, the skipper must take better calls, and the batters need to figure out a method to churn out risk-free runs. If not, a fifth straight ODI series loss is very much on the cards for the Tigers.



Bangladesh T20I skipper Litton Das was all smiles during training in Mirpur yesterday. After being sidelined with a side strain for over a month, Litton is expected to return to competitive cricket through the upcoming three-match T20I series against the West Indies, scheduled to begin on October 27 in Chattogram. "He has already started batting and hasn't made any complaints yet. Alongside batting, his running and everything else also look fine; there are no issues," Bangladesh Cricket Board's chief physician Debashis Chowdhury told The Daily Star on Wednesday. All three matches will be played at the Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Chattogram, with the final two games scheduled for October 29 and 31.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Coach Saeed pleased as records tumble

SPORTS REPORTER

The 34th National Swimming, Diving and Water Polo Championships witnessed three more national records fall on the third day of competition, bringing the total number of new records to 15.

Promising swimmer Samiul Islam Rafi continued his exceptional performance, setting his sixth individual national record at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

Egyptian swimming coach Saeed Magdy expressed his satisfaction at the steady stream of broken records, despite facing a number of challenges in preparing the national swimmers for the upcoming South Asian Games.

In the day's events, Rafi of Bangladesh Navy improved his own national record in the 100m backstroke, finishing with a time of 00:57.95 seconds -- bettering his previous best of 00:58.45 seconds.

Meanwhile, Tonmoy Mali of Bangladesh Army broke his teammate Sukumar Rajbangshi's record in the 50m breaststroke, clocking 00:29.59 seconds, surpassing the previous record of 00:29.90 seconds.

The third record of the day came in the women's 4x400m freestyle relay. The team of Anny, Rupa, Juthi, and Tumpa clocked 09:50.01 seconds, breaking the previous national record of 09:52.09 seconds.

While observing the competition, coach Saeed made a point of personally engaging with the swimmers, offering encouragement and feedback.

"Actually, our swimmers here are hard-working, disciplined, and giving their best. They are improving



week by week. At this stage of the competition, many national records have already been broken, which shows real progress," said Saeed, voicing high hopes for both Rafi and Kajol Mia.

"Their qualifications are very good, and I believe in their potential. What they've been missing is high-quality training. Now, with improved support, we can already see how much they are developing. I believe that for next year's Asian competition in Japan, we can have at least two male swimmers -- Rafi and Kajol -- qualify among the top six."

Despite the success, Saeed expressed some frustration over the lack of functional infrastructure, particularly the electronic timing board, which has remained inactive since its installation in 2019.

"I wish we had Omega timing systems here to be more professional and to prepare our swimmers for international-level competitions. Official timings are crucial for international qualification. But for now, we are working with what we have, and doing our best to support the swimmers. That is the main focus," the head coach added.

Since arriving in mid-July, Saeed has been training 38 national swimmers, including 18 women. However, he faces significant difficulties due to the open-roof pool, which hampers training during rain, and poor water quality, which poses health risks.



SPLASH OF JOY: Bangladesh Army's Romana Akter did not let go of the chance to celebrate her fifth gold medal with her four-and-a-half-year-old daughter after finishing first in the 100m butterfly event on the third day of the 34th National Swimming Championships at the National Swimming Complex in Mirpur on Wednesday. Romana's daughter, Falak Ahmed Ruzba, enjoyed splashing around in the pool, making her mother's achievement even brighter.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

43 GOALS IN A DAY!

Goals flooded in as 43 strikes were recorded in just nine Champions League fixtures, with PSG, Barcelona, and Arsenal delivering statement wins on Tuesday.

- This was the third-highest single-day total in Champions League history, behind January 29 this year (64 goals in 18 games) and October 1, 1997 (44 goals in 12 matches).
- Ousmane Dembele marked his return from injury -- and his first appearance since winning the Ballon d'Or -- with a goal, as PSG made it three wins in three to top the table.
- Barcelona's Fermin Lopez became the first Spanish player to score a Champions League hat-trick for the club. Barca sit ninth with two wins and one loss.
- Arsenal reached 100 wins in the competition -- only the third English side after Manchester United (125) and Chelsea (102) -- and seventh overall. The Gunners, alongside Inter, remain the only teams yet to concede a goal this season. Both also boast perfect records, with Arsenal currently third in the standings.
- Manchester City's Erling Haaland netted his 15th goal of the season -- and 24th for club and country -- equalling Cristiano Ronaldo's 2018 record of scoring in 12 consecutive club matches. City's unbeaten run (two wins, one draw) sees them move up to fifth.



RESULTS

Leverkusen 2-7 PSG
Barca 6-1 Olympiacos
Arsenal 4-0 Atletico
PSV 6-2 Napoli
Newcastle 3-0 Benfica
Villarreal 0-2 Man City
Union Saint-Gilloise 0-4 Inter
Copenhagen 2-4 Dortmund
Kairat 0-0 Pafos

PHOTO: REUTERS

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SHORT CORNER

Bangladesh volleyballers off to sparkling start in CAVA Cup

Bangladesh, who will now face Nepal on Thursday as six participating nations are playing in a round-robin tournament, initially faced a bit of a challenge from Maldives but ended up winning 3-0 on the opening day of the Cava Cup at Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

BFF appoints Cameron Lord to boost women's team fitness

The Australian becomes the second foreign member of Peter Butler's backroom staff, joining the English head coach who had repeatedly emphasised the need to raise the team's physical standards following their success in the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers.

Zimbabwe crush Afghans for rare Test win by an innings

Zimbabwe won a Test by an innings for only the third time when they defeated Afghanistan by an innings and 73 runs at Harare Sports Club yesterday, with two days to spare. Zimbabwe beat Pakistan by an innings in 1995 in Harare and repeated the feat against Bangladesh six years later in Bulawayo.

Bangladesh kabaddi near bronze at Asian Youth Games

Bangladesh youth kabaddi team are on the verge of winning a bronze medal at the 3rd Asian Youth Games after beating Pakistan 56-29 with four lonas in their fifth match of the men's kabaddi event at the Isa Sports Centre in Bahrain yesterday.

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