

Captaincy changes hurting Bangla cricket

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Modern day cricket tours are such that some teams actually play a Test series and then go back home and then return a few weeks later to play a limited overs series or a T20 series. Of course it does not happen in far off places like West Indies or New Zealand but it happens in England and Australia especially since their seasons are long and spread out and so they invariably have two teams touring their countries during a season. In England this year Bangladesh toured in the first half of the summer for Tests and Pakistan after finishing their 'home series' against Australia in England will stay on for a Test and one-day series against England. While this series between Australia and Pakistan is being played Bangladesh play three one-dayers against England and one-dayers against Ireland too. It will thus be a rare period of no international cricket for England players for most of July and they will no doubt follow the Pakistan v Australia series if only to try and gain more information about the new Australian players so that they can be prepared for the Ashes series in Australia later this year.



Bangladesh have shown over the years that they can play one good game in limited overs cricket which catches the opponents on the wrong foot. England were the latest team to be caught so and they lost the second ODI quite tamely but Bangladesh were back to their careless methods again and lost the third and final one dayer to lose the series. The problem with Bangladesh cricket is the lack of consistency for what they have shown is that

they do have individual talent but somehow that does not seem to combine effectively when needed against the better Test sides. Their changing of skippers often also does not help and to have changed the captains in the middle of a season was probably not the best move. It is never easy for a displaced skipper to suddenly find himself playing under another player and it does take some time before the displaced captain finds his concentration and form again. Mind you in Bangladesh's case Mashrafe Mortaza was the chosen captain before injury forced him out of the game for more than a year and so Shakib al Hasan took over. It was thus pretty much a case of Mortaza coming back to full fitness and then taking over the job again. Hopefully all this will not affect Shakib who is a fine allrounder and one who plays cricket intelligently too.

The one-dayers between Bangladesh, England and Ireland were pretty much predictable though Ireland surprised Bangladesh with a fine performance to win the first game but lost the second. England's batsmen may have faltered in the second ODI but they were quick to cash in again a benign Bangladesh attack to score big and boost their career stats.

What was an unfortunate injury to Ian Bell was just the opening that the highly talented Ravi Bopara needed and he has shown in recent games that not only is he a terrific striker of the ball but also a pretty handy bowler. It is this additional skill that could well help resurrect his stalled career and help him to a more secure place in the team. His place in the Test team has been taken by Ian Trott who has had a field day against the Bangladeshis scoring his first Test double century earlier in the season and now getting a century in the deciding game as also almost getting a ton in a lost cause in the second ODI. He is thus the CEAT International Cricketer of the Week for those deeds with the bat.