

MOHINDER AMARNATH

Published 5.11.19

**#WhatDrivesYou
EXIDE**

The defeat at the hands of Bangladesh on a murky Sunday evening in Delhi should come as no surprise. T20s are a game of chance and the margin of error ensures that a reversal is possible. That said, Bangladesh are a fine team and it is not a surprise that they compete on equal terms with the best now. I was particularly impressed with the way the visitors have coped with all that has happened with the team in the last few days. First there was talk about the team not coming, then Tamim Iqbal withdrew from the tour and finally the ban on their talismanic all-rounder Shakib al Hasan – it was a lot to deal with. However, the team came out and played well to restrict India and then showed great calm to take their side over the line.

For India, every time Virat Kohli takes a break, the gap left by him only gets larger! The way he has taken his game to the next level is inspiring, and perhaps India missed his ability to adapt and plan in Sunday's game. Even the opposition seems to feed off the fact that they won't have to contend with him. Once the Bangladesh bowlers were able to restrict India to less than 150 they fancied their chances.

For the Indians, it was a disappointing start, but I am sure they will come out strongly in Rajkot. I hope they will resist the temptation of experimenting too much and focus on playing with the same combination. I expect Rohit Sharma to do well in Rajkot, and the rest of the batsmen to find some rhythm too. The Indians would be proud of their record against Bangladesh and would want to set the record straight.

The visitors on the other hand would be pleased with this performance. They are without two senior players and that absence will be felt more keenly in the Tests that follow. That's where the experience of players like Shakib will have been a big bonus, especially with all the excitement and hype around the day-night Test match. At present, however, the visitors should enjoy their first ever win against India in this format.

Gameplan

MOHINDER AMARNATH

Published 15.11.19

**#WhatDrivesYou
EXIDE**

During the T20 series I had mentioned that the absence of senior pros would hurt the team more in the Test series. The evidence of the first two days of the Test suggests that that certainly is not the case.

India looked fresh, aggressive and meant business. The pace bowling once again looked potent and that is always a heart-warming sight for me. Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami were both very impressive and even missed chances couldn't help Bangladesh cross 150. It is indeed happy days for Indian cricket since Jasprit Bumrah's return will only further strengthen this bowling attack.

It has to be said that the visitors' batting looked distinctly out of sorts with some very irresponsible shots being played by top order batsmen.

Ravichandran Ashwin was also in good form and made short shrift of any recovery plans that the Bangladesh team had.

As far as the batting goes, it was great to see Mayank Agarwal once again prove his credentials at the highest level. He played a classic Test innings where patience as well shot selection stood out for me. He's a charming young man and seems to be enjoying the fruits of a national caps after a very good run in domestic cricket.

Both Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli got out cheaply so the opportunity to score was grabbed by Agarwal as well as Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane and Ravinder Jadeja.

India already have a lead of almost 350 runs and might fancy their chances of finishing the game off by the fourth day.

The only blemish in the hosts' performance has been the catching. It's quite another matter that the Bangladesh team couldn't capitalise on these lapses, but going forward the support staff must work on this.

India would ideally not like to bat again so I don't see Kohli or Rohit batting again, which would be a disappointment for the Indore fans. However, Agarwal's batting was quite magnificent and would have made up for some of that.

MOHINDER AMARNATH

Published 21.11.19

**#WhatDrivesYou
EXIDE**

The Pink ball Test in Eden Gardens promises to be a magnificent spectacle which might redefine the way Test match cricket is played. I am delighted to hear that there will be a sellout crowd at the Eden Gardens. Truly, there is no other venue that loves and backs cricket as much as Eden Gardens does. The novelty of day-night cricket and the curiosity surrounding the Pink ball will ensure that fans will throng the stadium.

It was baffling that the Indian set-up had resisted hosting day-night Test matches and hats off to Sourav Ganguly for embracing the concept so early in his tenure as president. It does make a difference when you are BCCI President and have played Test cricket at the highest level. It would be a special moment for Ganguly to be host president on this occasion right there in his city!

There have been results in day-night Tests so far, and while there have been concerns voiced about dew, my sense is that batsmen will take time to get used to sighting the Pink ball. It is November and I don't expect dew to be much of a factor in this Test. Further, the conditions will be the same for both teams so, the longer format will even things out for the two sides.

India would definitely fancy their chances against Bangladesh especially after the visitors lost in three days in the Indore Test.

At present, two factors are bogging down the Bangladeshis. First, their clear aptitude for the shorter formats over Test cricket and second, the absence of senior pros in this squad. Add to this the fact that the Indian pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami are really bowling amazingly well. Yadav, too, has really shaped up well in the last season and looks clearly more mature now than he was a year or two ago.

I hope we have a full five days because the fantastic spectators of Kolkata deserve no less. Personally, watching a full house watching the men in white flannels is something I am certainly looking forward to.