

Cricket Test Match: Bangladesh's Victory Over Australia

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Theme: [History](#)

The cricket punter will be delighted by this result. Those favouring status quos and sides with long stretches of dominance will not. The first test match between Bangladesh and Australia in Mirpur was unnervingly close, delighting the home team which still remains callow in international cricketing competition.

Prior to playing the touring Australian side in the test opener of a two-match series, the Bangladeshi record of victories was skimpy, being roughly one in ten. Material, however, was being added. Over the last twelve months, both England and Sri Lanka have afforded scalps to a team that is, least at home, is on the rise.

For Steve Smith, the smarting Australian skipper, history was again being made against his side. Yet again, it was made with the tantalising play of the turning ball on dusty zipping pitches. Chasing a modest 265 for victory made more problematic by conditions, the survivors from the previous day were starting at a cool, confident 2/109.

David Warner, already a masterful centurion and a battling Steve Smith on 37, seemed in charge. But this entire match has been a sequence of false hopes and marked collapses, punctuated by sessions of gritty holdouts and rearguards. The loss of eight wickets for a paltry 86 runs doomed the Australian effort, but it would be folly to dismiss it wholesale.

Stunning as this home team display was, the turning ball remains that all bewitching means that undoes current Australian sides. Solid gains are whittled away; inroads are made with destabilising guile. Poor shot selection, naturally, plays its part. There are also undue burdens played on Warner and Smith, who, when on song, keep the effort consistent and even formidable.

Sri Lanka encountered many of these problems when rolling the visiting Australians with a near casual ruthlessness in a 3-0 home series victory; humbler, less experienced Bangladesh risk doing the same.

The hatchets were duly procured by an unforgiving Australian press. For a scathing Peter Lalor, Australian sides had developed an aversion to winning on the subcontinent spanning 23 matches over 12 years, the result of contracting "an almost fatal dust allergy." [1] (Not entirely: Australia did net two lonely victories.)

Chip Le Grand of *The Australian* did not stretch the invalid theme, preferring to employ that tried approach of damning the victors with faint praise while heaping opprobrium upon the defeated. [2] Paupers on about \$26,136 a year, in other words, had triumphed over the millionaires, the seditious underclass over the hapless ruling class.

“Although Warner earned his keep with a brilliant second-innings century, others played like millionaires.”

Glen Maxwell was singled out for special treatment, having made a “reckless shot to the first ball after lunch”. For Le Grand, the question had to be asked:

“Did our national team expend too much energy on the Australian Cricket Association picket line and not enough in the nets?”

The *Herald Sun* pressed the remuneration issue, reminding readers about those cricketers who had been in an ongoing pay dispute with Cricket Australia that had yielded them a five-year agreement worth some \$500 million.

“What happened in Dhaka was on one hand wonderful for world cricket and on the other embarrassing for a pack of overpaid prima donnas.”

By all means, strike over pay, went the paper, but “make sure you back it up in the field of play. Losing to Bangladesh is hardly doing that.”

Such acid commentary suggests, according to the solid observations of Assistant Editor to ESNcrinfo Daniel Brettig, the lingering damage sustained by the pay dispute.[3] Cricket Australia’s targeting of the national team during the sniping sessions opened a hunting season that has yet to close, despite the official memorandum of understanding between the combatants.

Another facet of the rage directed against the Australian team comes from the old wisdom of playing foes that merit attention. To lose against a formidable, long engaged opponent (Brettig calls them “bankable”) such as England or India is a far bitter pill to swallow than losing to the unknown, the minnow, the usurper.

Rather than taking the stern, austere ground of criticism, one directed against the well paid, Bangladesh should be feted. Former test players certainly thought so, with India’s Sachin Tendulkar exclaiming that,

“Test cricket is thriving.”[4]

But it was the comment from Pakistan’s formidable bowling all-rounder Wasim Akram that summed up the celebratory note, the exhilaration of the gladiatorial context that tends to get lost in the monetary equation. “Great to see Bangladesh win against mighty Australians. Test cricket still is and always will be the ultimate form of the game.”[5]

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Notes

[1] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/cricket/this-is-awful-but-the-solution-is-hard-to-find-for-australia/news-story/1e8d2428ecb65c7ede4e52de4dc9ab83>

[2] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/sport/cricket/not-a-bad-wicket-136m-a-year-to-lose-to-cricketers-pau-pers-bangladesh/news-story/32c4744bf6458db1e88c1320b786eb4b>

[3] http://www.espn.com/cricket/story/_/id/20513476/unwanted-history-yes-disaster-no

[4] https://twitter.com/sachin_rt/status/902799242238066688

[5] <https://twitter.com/wasimakramlive/status/902816543020654592>

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