

## Cricket

# New boys choke on starter

David Hopps at Chelmsford

Bangladesh have waited a long time for their first World Cup match but when it came it could not have been a more galling experience. On the field, New Zealand served up a comprehensive six-wicket defeat with 17 overs to spare; around the boundary Essex's catering ideas extended little further than offering devout Muslims an unwelcome supply of cold bacon rolls.

Whatever ambitions had been fired by Bangladesh's World Cup qualification, by dint of winning the ICC Trophy and their subsequent elevation to full one-day status, an orderly New Zealand performance reacquainted them with reality.

No matter. "Bangladesh, show them your appearance," exhorted one banner in a passionate, and largely Asian, capacity crowd. The appearance was of a side, and its supporters, vastly enjoying themselves.

Bangladesh boasts 1,500 clubs and 100,000 registered players. They are as passionate about cricket as Brazil are about football. Their potential is vast. But their total of 116 was the lowest by a non-Test nation on World Cup debut, outstripped by the likes of Canada, UAE and Scotland.

Enthusiasm counted for nothing against a New Zealand side who already have been held to be underrated so often that they are in danger of becoming overrated; a side replete with adaptable batsmen and endless all-rounders; the style of side England consid-

ered becoming two years ago under Adam Hoolioake before abandoning the idea.

By the 21st over, Bangladesh were 51 for seven and the jocular devotion of their supporters was being sorely tested. Their batting possessed flair, naivety and first-day nerves in roughly equal quantities. In the cold and overcast conditions of an English May, a boon to New Zealand's collection of medium-pacers, Bangladesh's capitulation was swift.

A slow pitch did not seam excessively but it seemed enough. Shahriar Hossain was Bangladesh's leading scorer in club cricket last season, Mehrab Hossain registered their first international one-day hundred. Both fell lbw to inswingers in Geoff Allott's first two overs.

Aminul Islam, the captain, is famous enough in Bangladesh that he is universally known as "Bulbul", which translates as little bird. But he lost his middle stump slogging at Chris Cairns.

And so it went on. There was no chance to differentiate between Khaled Masud and Khaled Mahmud — the former is a wicketkeeper, the latter, at a shade over five feet, is one of the smallest men in world cricket — when they had already departed from the scene.

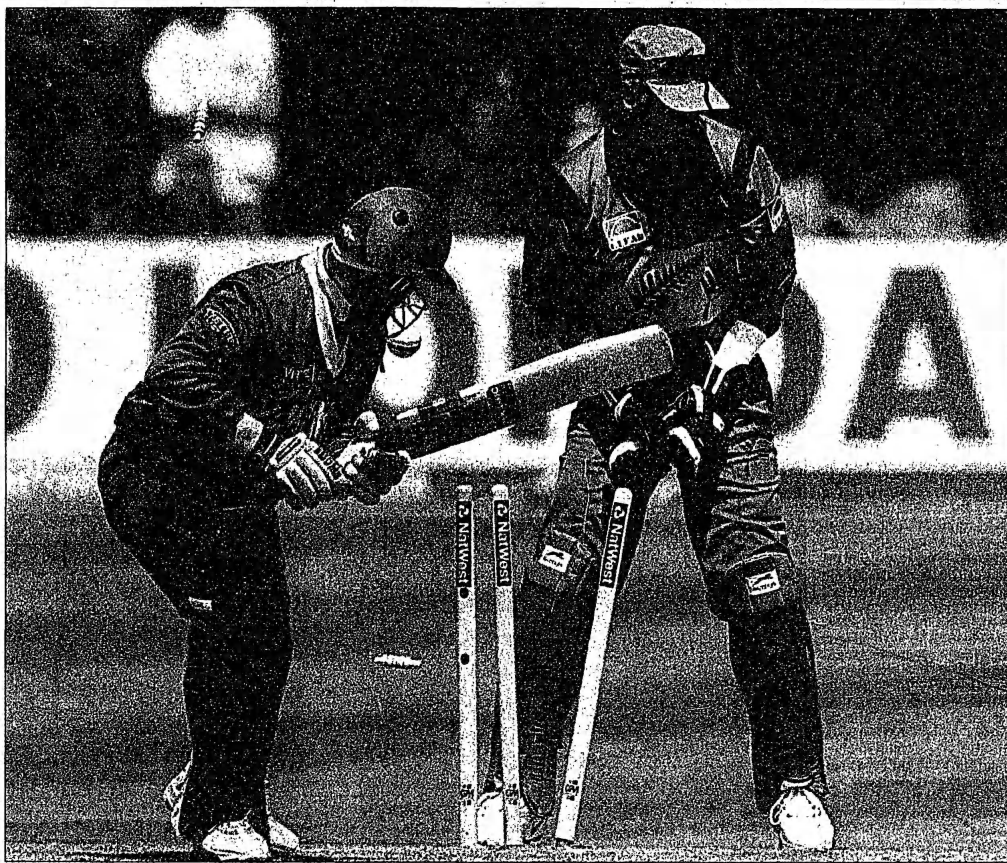
What remained was largely irrelevant. Hasibul Hossain managed to pepper the TV gantry with a straight six against Chris Harris but even he was unlikely given by the Zimbabwean umpire Ian Robinson, who failed to rule Allott's chest-high full toss an illegal delivery.

Gavin Larsen, in his third World Cup and greyer round the temples these days, does not waste such opportunities and three wickets brought him the man of the match award.

"It was like being back in Wellington," Larsen said. "There was a gusty wind to bowl into and it was pretty cold. It felt like an away match but that helped to ginger us up a bit."

Strangely, though, the Kiwis were troubled only three days before their meeting with Australia in Cardiff. Their reply was overly tentative and, as their stroke players perished, the abiding memory was a stodgy 35, from 86 balls, from Matthew Horne.

"It was the sort of match we wanted to get out of the way," said the captain Stephen Fleming. "Sometimes the edge and the intensity isn't quite there. Too much doesn't have to go wrong for matches like this to become a bit of a disaster."



Unkind cut... Enamul Haque is bowled by Chris Harris as Bangladesh fail to play themselves in at Chelmsford. Photograph: Tom Jenkins

## Bangladesh bubble yet to burst

Their coach Gordon Greenidge was unimpressed but their fans remain ecstatic

Paul Weaver

After it was all over the Bangladesh supporters were still celebrating, tottering on the top of a multi-storey car park which overlooked the ground and clinging on to the fragile branches of swaying trees.

Some were chanting "God is Great", others flew a banner saying "Bangladesh, The Last Asian Team to Win the World Cup". The team's coach Gordon Greenidge, a World Cup winner with West Indies in 1975 and 1979,

looked bemused by it all. He sat in head-shaking silence.

Bangladesh arrived here a month before the tournament to acclimatise but it was so cold they had to shelter in a succession of indoor schools. "It was 37 degrees at home and just two here," said one player with a shudder.

Yesterday marked their first appearance in any World Cup, the biggest moment since they took up the game after the abortive Sepoy Mutiny against their British rulers in 1857.

Their defeat, by a considerable margin, did little to deflate their magnificent supporters for whom just being here is enough. Most live locally, or in London, but more than 100 had made the journey from Dhaka.

"We have already reached the World Cup final," beamed one. "We play Scotland in Edinburgh on May 24." The players Scotland should watch for are the left-arm spinner Mohammed Rafique and the batsmen Akram Khan and the cap-

tain Aminul Islam, a former professional footballer.

"They supported us like anything today," said Islam. "We are most grateful. I don't think we were so nervous. We just got out."

Beside him the hard old pro Greenidge shook a gnarled and wise head. "There were too many attacking shots," he said. "You expect that from one player but not from your best six batsmen. Unfortunately we don't have microphones to go in the players' ears." But there would be no

guarantee that the players would listen anyway. Even while Greenidge was tearing his hair out after the match his players were grinning away and indulging in their nicknames.

Hasibul Hossain is "Shanto" (quiet) and Naimur Rahman is "Dur-joy". A colleague said: "It means 'unbeatable Napoleon'." Khaled Mahmud is "Shujon" (the beautiful one) and Shahriar Hossain is "Bid-doot" (the powerful). Greenidge looked like Grumpy (the fed-up one).

### Scoreboard

#### BANGLADESH

Shahriar Hossain lbw b Allott	0
Mehrab Hossain lbw b Allott	2
Akram Khan c & b Larsen	16
*Aminul Islam b Cairns	15
Khaled Masud b Larsen	4
Naimur Rahman lbw b Larsen	18
Khaled Mahmud c Tweedie b Cairns	3
Mohammed Rafique lbw b Cairns	0
Enamul Haque b Harris	23
Hasibul Hossain c Horne b Allott	16
Monjurul Islam not out	6
Extras (b4 w5 nb4)	13
Total (37.4 overs)	116

Fall: 0, 7, 38, 38, 46, 49, 51, 85, 96.

Bowling: Allott 8.4-0-3-3; Nash 10-1-30-0; Cairns 7-1-19-3; Larsen 10-0-19-3; Harris 2-0-14-1.

#### NEW ZEALAND

M Horne lbw b Naimur	35
N Astle c Aminul Islam b Monjurul	4
C McMillan c Rahman b Hasibul	20
*S Fleming c Masud b Mohammed	16
R Tweedie not out	30
C Cairns not out	7
Extras (b1 w4)	5
Total (for 4, 33 overs)	117

Fall: 5, 33, 78, 105.

Died not bat: A Parore, C Harris, D Nash, G Larsen, G Allott.

Bowling: Hasibul 10-2-33-1; Monjurul 9-3-23-1; Khaled 7-2-12-0; Enamul 3-0-21-0; Mohammed 3-0-22-1; Naimur 2-0-5-1.

Umpires: S Venkataraghavan and J Robinson.

New Zealand won by six wickets.

## Malcolm makes merry

Andy Wilson

at Old Trafford

Northants 404-8 dec & 256-0 Lancashire 350-6 dec & 121 Northants won by 189 runs

The outcome of a contrived final day of this rain-affected match was determined by one ball which summed up the respective fortunes of Devon Malcolm and John Crawley.

last summer, but found only Mal Loye at midwicket. He now has 45 runs from five innings this year, and Lancashire have only 25 points from four matches. Welcome to county captaincy.

In contrast Malcolm added the wickets of Paddy McKeeown and Glen Chapple to complete figures of four for 37, Northants' first win of the season and their first champi-

But this was an appalling batting performance by Lancashire, "probably the worst we've played since I've been here," said Crawley. "In many ways we should have been the only winners when they gave us 311 in 64 overs, but instead we've been bowled out in 48, which was terrible."

Almost as terrible as the first session, in which Matthew



● Australian players writing newspaper columns during the World Cup are to have their articles vetted, after the row over a piece attributed to Shane Warne in which he said

ford the risk that Shane offends again. I'm afraid he'll have to put up with it." Warne has already been fined, reprimanded and given a suspended two-game ban.

In the light of renewed tensions between the two countries, the board has decided to send an advance party to Sri Lanka to review security standards for the Australian tour in September.

The decision was prompted by a call from the Australian Cricketers' Association for the ACB to provide round-the-