

Dravid not as good as Ganguly

There are only three words that come to mind when one thinks of India's performance against Bangladesh yesterday, SHAME, SHAME and SHAME. Who would have thought that there would come a day that we would actually be taking down cricketing notes from a team like Bangladesh.

For that is precisely what happened when India lost by a shameful five wickets before being bundled out for a meager 191. I don't care how bad or good the pitch was or whether Rahul Dravid had misread the pitch or not, India's performance was simply inexcusable. The way they played was simply appalling and the sad part was that the Bangladeshis did not do anything special. They simply did the basics right and got the ball in the right areas. Like I had said in my previous article that on these Caribbean pitches that is all that one needs to do. Mortaza, Rasel and the three left arm spinners were nothing special. They just bowled a tight line and length. The main problem was that the Indian batsmen did not apply themselves properly given the situation. I don't know whether they were over confident or nervous but I am sorry to say that they looked like complete amateurs out there. Ironic for a team that boasts of having players who are playing their 4th and 5th World Cup.

Virender Sehwag should just be dropped. He has been given enough chances to prove himself and it is simply not working out. They should simply promote Uthappa up the order to open the innings with Ganguly. The team could get Dinesh Karthik to bat down the order instead. Secondly, Ajit Agarkar is another one who should serve drinks for the rest of the matches. He hasn't bowled exceptionally bad but that's not the point. He simply doesn't look like a wicket taking bowler at the moment and seems to have no venom in his bowling. Instead it would be a better idea to get someone like Sreesanth to bowl.

As far as batting goes I don't know whether they need some pep talk or need to spend some more hours in the nets, but if a batting line up like ours can't delivery the goods against a team like Bangladesh not even God can save us. They simply did not apply themselves. For example, the way Tendulkar got out was shocking. How could a batsman of his caliber and reputation misread a spinner like Abur Razzak of Bangladesh who wasn't even turning the ball a great deal? Razzak was simply bowling wicket to wicket and mixing up his pace a bit. But surely a player like Tendulkar should have read that. If the runs had dried up then all that was required was to keep wickets in hand and milk the bowling with singles and two's.

When the Bangladeshis came out to bat they put to rest any doubts about the pitch. They batted with confidence and aggression and the 17 year old Tamim Iqbal gave the Indians a lesson in batting. Throughout their innings they kept playing their shots with ease and showed no signs of being unduly bothered by the track. In the end it proved to be a comfortable victory for them.

Another facet of the game that was shameful to see was the obvious lack of aggression and enthusiasm when the Indian bowlers came out to bowl. Their body language was sluggish and right from the beginning they did not look like they were going to give the Bangladeshis a fight. There was absolutely no aggression in their steps and Rahul Dravid as a captain and motivator of the team was absolutely PATHETIC.

Yesterday's match proved conclusively that Rahul Dravid is completely incapable of leading. His personality is not that of a leader and he has zero aggression on the field. This was the perfect

opportunity for him to get his troops motivated and prove his critics wrong; something that he failed to do miserably. What is really irritating and frustrating to see is Dravid's reaction when the bowler gets hit for a boundary or a six; he simply stands there with an expressionless face and slumps his shoulders further. Instead he should be rushing to the bowler and putting more pressure on the batsman, something that Ganguly used to do. I am sorry to say that he simply lacks the spirit of a team leader.

I don't know where India can go from here. I guess they will have to pick themselves up and forget about this match and concentrate on the next one against Bermuda on Monday. But the performance against Bangladesh has proved that for the moment the thought of India winning the World Cup is a distant dream and with Rahul Dravid at the helm I suppose it's an illusion. For the moment at least...

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