

Miraz fifty takes Barishal to 170-3 against Rangpur in eliminator

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Online Desk: Fortune Barishal posted a challenging 170-3 against Rangpur Riders in an innings full of surprising shuffles in the batting line-up in the eliminator match of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2023 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka on Sunday. Make-shift opener Mehidy Hasan Miraz top scored for Barishal with 69 off 48 balls, while Mahmudullah made 34 off 21 balls, Karim Janat hit an unbeaten 33 off 25 balls and Bhanuka Rajapaksa chipped in with 17 not out off 10 balls.

For Rangpur, who fielded four brand new overseas players in Dwayne Bravo, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Dasun Shanaka and Nicolas Pooran, Shanaka was the pick of the bowlers with 2-23 from his three overs. Barishal did some major shuffling in their batting line-up in the eliminator after they were asked to bat first by Rangpur. The shuffling started from the top as Barishal sent Miraz to open the innings alongside Andre Fletcher, with regular opener Anamul Haque getting demoted.

Miraz justified his promotion by hitting five fours and a six in the powerplay overs to give Barishal a decent start. After Fletcher (12 off 16 balls) departed in the sixth over, Barishal sent Mahmudullah at one-down and not in-form captain Shakib Al Hasan, who has been in fine hitting form in the ongoing BPL. This change in the batting line-up also paid dividends as Miraz and Mahmudullah joined hand to form a 69-run second wicket partnership off 46 balls. Miraz was the aggressor, completing his half-century off 35 balls, while Mahmudullah gave him decent support from the other end.

The duo was seemingly setting Barishal up for a flourish in the final overs. But part-time medium pacer Shanaka spoiled their hard work, removing both batters in consecutive overs to reduce Barishal to 126-3 after 15.1 overs. Mahmudullah was the first to go, as he lost his leg-stump to Shanaka. Miraz then top-edged a length delivery from Shanaka and got caught by Hasan Mahmud. Barishal then promoted Karim Janat and newcomer Rajapaksa ahead of Anamul and Shakib. After struggling initially, the duo added 44 runs off 29 deliveries for the fourth wicket to take Barishal to a decent total.