

Shakib, Hridoy maul Irish for Tigers largest victory

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Online Desk: A stellar allround show of Shakib Al Hasan and a fearless batting of debutant Towhid Hridoy helped Bangladesh seal their largest ever victory when they annihilated Ireland by 183 runs in the three-match ODI series opener on Saturday at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. Both of them failed to hit the well deserved century but their effort was instrumental in steering Bangladesh to a daunting 338-8, their highest ODI total in this history, going past 333-8 against Australia during 2019 World Cup at Nottingham.

Ireland were left clueless, jaded and out-of-sort against a relentless Bangladeshi attack, which eventually dismissed them for 155 in 30.5 overs. Bangladesh's previous biggest victory was against Zimbabwe by 169 at the same venue in 2020. Shakib struck 93 off 89 with the help of nine boundaries, a knock which was his third consecutive fifty plus knock. He hit 58 and a match-winning 75 against England in the last two ODIs. The talisman also reached 7000 runs mark as the second Bangladeshi batter after Tamim Iqbal when he was on 24 and became the only third player in the history with 7000 runs and 300 wickets simultaneously.

Hridoy became the third Bangladeshi batter after Farhad Reza and Nasir Hossain to hit a half-century on debut but he could have made it hundred as the first Bangladesh batter. He missed out the well deserved ton by eight runs after being out for 92 off 85, an innings laced with eight fours and two sixes. Nonetheless he is now the batter with highest score for Bangladesh on debut, eclipsing Nasir Hossain's 63. Shakib also will be equally frustrated to miss the century what could be his 10th ton in ODI cricket. He got dismissed by chasing a wide delivery of pacer Graham Hume. But the duo gave Bangladesh a well platform by adding 135 off just 125 balls after they were reduced to 81-3.

Pacer Mark Adair gave the side a solid start after his captain Andrew Balbirnie put Bangladesh into bat first as he swung one nicely to force Bangladesh skipper Tamim Iqbal edge a delivery at first slip for 3. Liton Das played some beautiful shots before being out on 26 while Najmul Hossain Shanto also failed to make his start count as he was out on 25. Shakib and Hridoy then put the side on track, treating the Irish bowlers in disdain. Both of the batters looked all set to reach the three figures before Shakib made the blunder by chasing a wide delivery.

In came Mushfiquir Rahim and immediately put the Irish bowlers on sword to pace the innings impeccably. Hridoy who was in Shakib's shadow for most of the time, then unfurled some powerful shots to reach his 90's quickly. They shared 80 off just 49 balls but Hume had the say again. He broke this partnership too, removing Mushfiquir who smote three sixes and as many fours for his 44 off 26. Like Shakib Al Hasan, Hume then frustrated Hridoy too by taking his wicket.

Yasir Ali, Taskin Ahmed and Nasum Ahmed, all played with freedom toward the end as Bangladesh ended up with the highest ODI total. Hume was the most successful bowler for Ireland with his career-best 4-60 while Adair, Andy McBrine and Curtis Campher took one wicket apiece. Ireland made a confident start with Stephen Doheny and Paul Stirling adding 60 in their opening stand in 11.2 overs. Shakib had Doheny caught by Mushfiquir on 34 to break through.

Fast bowler Ebadot Hossain, who returned figures of 4-45 for his career-best effort got into act, claiming two wickets in his consecutive two overs. He removed Stirling (34) and Harry Tector (3), the most inform batters of Ireland. Fast bowler Taskin Ahmed (2-25) and left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed (3-43) ripped through Ireland's middle order before Ebadot came back in his second spell to clean up the tail. Before being the last man out, George Dockrell made team-high 45.