

Bethlehem, July 20: Bangladesh head coach Andrew Ord is concentrating on the next two matches of the AFC U23 Championship qualifier after a big loss against Jordan.

Commenting on Bangladesh's 7-0 loss, Ord said it was probably not the right time to look into the defeat too deeply since there are two more games remaining. "Our focus is on the upcoming matches. After the tournament, we will sit together and analyze our performance."

Ord was did not beat around the bush and acknowledged that the result reflected Bangladesh's current level of football.

"Everybody needs to sit around a table and commit to change. Scores like this have become the norm for Bangladesh. It is painful to say this, but the truth is results like this (and Jordan defeating the senior team 8-0) clearly shows that this is our level."

Also in charge of the national U23 squad, Ord blamed lack of fitness and lack of exposure to high level competitive matches for the dismal performance.

"It's one thing to survive 90 minutes but quite another thing to be fully conditioned to play 90 minutes at peak performance." Ord said players needed to have at least 6 or 7 proper matches to get up to that level.

Comparing the difference in preparation, Ord pointed to the reasons behind the gulf of difference between the two sides. "Jordan prepared for 8 months. They cooperated with the clubs who released their players for one day each week to improve teamwork, coordination, train and be successful."

Ord said the players were in 90 minutes for their clubs every week. But that was not the case in Bangladesh. "The BPL ended in December, which was 7 months ago. The way our players prepare does not compare to that of other countries. It is impossible for them to compete at this level now."

The coach pointed out that a player had to be substituted in the first half as he was too tired physically and mentally.

Asked about the mentality ahead of tomorrow's game, Ord was optimistic and remained hopeful.

"We always have to go into a game with the objective of winning. As a result, if we draw, it'd be a success. If we go out with a losers' mentality, trying to save ourselves from shame, then we are already beaten."

Ord criticized the U23 for being mentally fragile and said he could not believe how fragile the boys are mentally. "They are scarred by previous results. This fear affects them, making them nervous when they are away from Bangladesh."

The national head coach ended the presser by commending the passion of the youngsters and urged the fans to support the players instead of mocking them.

"All I can say as a coach is that yesterday the players gave everything they had. That is all we can ask. We need to give them our utmost support."