

Kanan MSC's saviour

Sports Reporter



SYEED HASSAN KANAN

Brilliant goal keeping by national custodian Syeed Hassan Kanan saved the day for the Mohammedan Sporting Club when they scrambled into the semifinals of the Independence Day football tournament beating Mukhtjodha Sangshad 4-1 in a nail-biting tie-breaker yesterday at the Mirpur Stadium.

Both the teams were locked at 1-1 at the breather.

Ma-O-Moni Cup Winner Cup champions Mohammedans will meet national champions Bangladesh Army in tomorrow's second semifinal at the Dhaka Stadium at 3:15 pm. Reigning champions Abahani will face BRTC in the first semifinal match today at 3:15 pm.

In the 22nd minute Naqub put Mohammedans ahead with a neat passing off Mamun's pass (1-0).

Earlier Naqub wasted a sure chance when he shot wide after dribbling past a couple of defenders from a handshaking distance. Zakir was another culprit who also

Nazir Hossain had to show six yellow cards in a bid to control the game. Tito, Kanan and Mamun of Mohammedan Sporting and Rana, Mustafa Babu and Omar Farouq of Mukhtjodha were shown yellow cards for foul play.

All the three penalty shots taken by Mukhtjodha boys Shamim, Jewel and Rana were saved by Mohammedan custodian Kanan who displayed a superb performance in an otherwise dull game.

In the tie-breaker Kaiser Hamid, Nakib and Jonny scored one each for Mohammedan and took their team to the semifinal.

Mohammedan SC: Kanan, Abul, Kaiser Hamid, Salauddin, Johnny, Titu, Roxy (Mustakim), Elias (Ayaz), Mamun, Zakir and Nakib.

Mukhtjodha Sangshad: Shuhun, Jewel, Shiper, Mustafa Babu, Barun(Faruq), Shamim, Fatz Babu, Rana, Shaheed (Prince), Mitan and Riz.

Referee: Nazir Hossain.

TODAY'S SEMIFINAL MATCH
Abahani vs BRTC (Dhaka Stadium 3:15 pm)



Mohammedan's Mamun wins possession during yesterday's Independence Day soccer quarter-final at Mirpur Stadium

Rangpur win 1-0

Sports Reporter



Rangpur DSA moved into the group semifinals of the Yuasa 11th national youth hockey championship scraping home by a solitary goal against Narayanang DSA in the inaugural match of the meet yesterday at the hockey stadium.

Minister for Industries Shamsul Islam Khan formally opened the nine-day long championship organised by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation. NSC chief Major General

Mahbubur Rahman was also present at the opening ceremony.

Sixteen under-19 teams, including reigning champions Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) and last year's runners-up Dhaka DSA divided into four groups are participating on a knock-out basis.

Rangpur surged ahead in the 12th minute of the match when Halimur Reza Milon scored a spectacular field goal somewhat against the run of play. Narayanang dominated most of the proceedings but their goal-shy forwards, specially Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, cut a sorry figure when he single-handedly wasted at least five easy scoring chances.

Both teams failed to impress the sparse crowd with their listless game.

Rangpur will play Sylhet DSA in today's group semifinal match starting at 4 pm.

After the match Narayanang DSA have protested against Rangpur DSA for fielding over-age players and the tournament committee will decide the issue in today's meeting.

NSC recasts BHF

The National Sports Council yesterday recast the ad-hoc committee of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation with Alamgir M. Adel and Shamsul Bari as president and general secretary respectively, reports BSS.

Mahmudur Rahman Momin and former general secretary Mirza Farid Milu have been made vice-presidents while Chowdhury Shabbir Ibne Yousuf has been made treasurer.

The new committee are as follows:

President - Alamgir M. Adel, vice-President - Mahmudur Rahman Momin and Mirza Farid Milu, General Secretary - Shamsul Bari, Joint Secretaries - Ehtesham Sultan and Nurul Amin, Treasurer - Chowdhury Shabbir Ibne Yousuf, Members - Bashir Ahmed, Abdus Sadeq, Ibrahim Saber, Abul Hossain, Pratap Shankar Hazra, Habibul Alam, Delwar Hossain, Abdur Razzak, Borhanur Rashid and one representative each from the Army Sports Control Board, Bangladesh Police Sports Control Board, Bangladesh Railway Sports Control Board, Rajshahi DSA and Jessore DSA.

TEAMS

Rangpur DSA: Firoz, Rubel, Azad(Sohel), Babu, Bhutto, Khokon, Tara, Mitu Sr, Milan, Rana and Mitu Jr.

Narayanang DSA: Shariful, Shabab, Azharul, Subrata, Aslam, Shaban Shah, Sabbir, Kalam, Abdullah, Mozful and Biplob.

Umpires: Shahebuiddin Chaklader and Aslam Ahmed.

Today Chittagong DSA will meet Narsingdi at 8 am, Patuakhali DSA will face Mymensingh DSA at 2:30 pm and Rangpur DSA will take on Sylhet DSA at 4 pm.

Brothers declared champs

Sports Reporter



The tournament committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board, meeting yesterday to decide the fate of the abandoned Navana Premier Division cricket league title deciding play-off match between Brothers Union and Bangladesh Biman at the Dhaka Stadium Wednesday, decided to award the game to Brothers Union following Biman's refusal to play in protest against umpiring decisions.

The league committee's decision means that Brothers Union who had held the whip-hand in the match, achieved their maiden Senior Division league title in any sport. The Gopibagh side, who had finished the league proper as joint leaders with Bangladesh Biman securing 16 points from nine matches each, will at long last have something to cheer about after several expensive but failed campaigns over the years.

The league committee also recommended disciplinary action against the two umpires whose conduct of the match

led to the game being abandoned with Biman precariously poised on 108 for seven in reply to Brothers Union's 214 for eight in 43 overs.

Umpire Wajed Ali Khan Pontir, whose decisions aggravated the situation, has been found guilty by the committee which recommended that he be suspended from conducting any type of cricket match for at least five years. Pontir's colleague on the day, Manzur Milky, got off slightly lightly, the committee recommending a two-year ban for him.

Nat'l cricket from today

Sports Reporter



The national cricket championship begins today at various venues around the country with a record 49 teams taking part.

This year's competition, once again pushed to the hot month of April, has forty district teams, Bangladesh Railway, Bangladesh PWD, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Bangladesh Agricultural University and Rajshahi University taking part in the preliminary zonal competitions at six zones.

Last year's four semifinalists - Dhaka University,

Chittagong, Bangladesh Biman and Narayanang DSA - will play in the final round of the meet, to be held after Eid-ul-Fitr at a venue yet to be decided.

The limited-over competition is organised annually by the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB).

The 45 teams taking part in the preliminary phase have been split into clusters or zones of eight and seven teams.

Following are the zones:

Zone A (at Pabna): Faridpur, Comilla, Chandpur, Ghazipur, BUET, Narsingdi, Sylhet and Tangail.

Zone B (at Faridpur):

Jhalakati, Patuakhali, Brahmanbaria, Madaripur, Noakhali, Sunamganj, Feni and PWD.

Zone C (at Jessore): Mymensingh, Sathkira, Gopalganj, Bagerhat, Meherpur, Khulna, Serajganj and Narail.

Zone D (at Nilphamari): Bangladesh Railway, Jessore, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Kushtia, Thakurgaon and Dhaka.

Zone E (at Thakurgaon): Dinajpur, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Pabna, Panchagarh, Gaibandha, Nawabganj and Nilphamari.

Zone F (at Joypurhat): Rajshahi University, Kishoreganj, Kurigram, Majikganj, Barisal, Sherpur and Jhenaidah.

Sampdoria beat Napoli

GENOA, Italy, Apr 4: Superb goalkeeping by Gianluca Pagliuca on Wednesday helped Sampdoria to an Italian Cup semifinal victory over Napoli and kept them on course for a League and Cup double, reports Reuter.

The league leaders scored through Gianluca Vialli and Giovanni Invernizzi in two rare attacks. Invernizzi's 88th minute goal winning the tie for Sampdoria 2-1 on aggregate.

Sampdoria meet AS Roma, who knocked out AC Milan on Tuesday night, in the final.

Napoli were much im-

proved on the side that lost 4-1 to Sampdoria in the league at the same ground 10 days earlier.

While Pagliuca's saves kept Napoli at bay, Vialli won a penalty in the 26th minute, forcing Napoli's stand-in captain Ciro Ferrara to foul him, and scored from the spot.

As extra time looked inevitable, Vialli won a throw-in near the Napoli penalty area, took it himself with a long throw to Giuseppe Dosena, whose fine pass found Invernizzi in space. The midfielder gave keeper Giovanni Galli no chance.

Napoli captain Diego Maradona, back home in Argentina after a positive dope test and facing a possible two-year ban from soccer, scored in Napoli's 1-0 victory in their home leg on March 12. But poor finishing prevented Napoli from building a bigger lead.

Pagliuca, Italy's third choice international keeper, made a string of vital saves, two in the final minute from a free kick by Giuseppe Incecatti and a header by substitute Andrea Silenzi, to spoil Napoli's hopes of honours after a troubled season.

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Romanians hold the Swiss

NEUCHATEL, Switzerland, Apr 4: Switzerland and Romania played to a scoreless tie Wednesday in a Group 2 qualifying match for the 1992 European Championship, reports AP.

The result left Scotland leading the five-team playoff with six points from four games. Switzerland is next, five points from four matches, followed by Romania with five points in five games. Bulgaria is four-from-four, while San Marino is winless in three outings.

With a win, Switzerland would have become group leader on goal difference. Romania was better than the

Swiss team in the second half but lacked the conviction to pull off the win.

"They were technically much better," said Swiss coach Uli Stielike, the former West German international. "What I don't quite understand is why they didn't push for a win."

Switzerland, its attack and midfield below form and off target, failed to capitalize on several first-half scoring chances. The Romanians further blunted the hosts by slowing down the pace of the game.

Romania became more aggressive after a cautious first half.

Swiss goalkeeper Stefan Huber made several good saves after the break against a Ro-

manian attack powered by Florin Raduciotu and team captain Marius Lăcătuș, both playing for clubs in Italy's first division. Real Madrid's Gheorghe Hagi created pressure from midfield.

Romania relied almost entirely on veterans of last year's team that reached the World Cup finals, though most of the players have scattered to West European leagues.

Hungarians win

Meanwhile, in Limassol, Cyprus, Hungary beat Cyprus 2-0 (halftime 2-0) in a European soccer championship Group Three qualifier on Wednesday.

Scorers: Jozsef Szalma (15th min) Jozsef Kiprich (40th).

Sampras has to struggle

ORLANDO, Florida, Apr 4: Second-seeded Pete Sampras survived a challenging test from Italian Diego Nargiso before posting a 6-3, 7-6 victory on Wednesday in the second round of the \$225,000-dollar Orlando tennis classic, reports Reuter.

Sixth-seeded American Jimmy Arias also escaped a threat before advancing with a 6-7, 7-6, 6-1 win over 17-year-old high school student David Witt, who ousted veteran Tim Mayotte in his first-round

match.

Also needing three sets to advance were fourth-seeded Derrick Rostagno, a 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 winner over Sweden's Thomas Hogstedt, and eighth-seeded David Pate who beat fellow-American Jeff Tarango 6-2, 6-7, 6-1.

Sampras, the US Open champion, struggled with his serve throughout the match against Nargiso, an aggressive left-handed who despite his ranking of 115 can challenge anyone when he gets into a groove.

"I never played him before," said the 19-year-old Sampras. "I knew he was dangerous."

Sampras's service woes kept opening the door for the 21-year-old Nargiso. Fortunately for the American, Nargiso failed to capitalize on his six break point opportunities.

Sampras broke Nargiso in the eight game of the first set

when the Italian sailed a backhand volley long. He then held serve to take the set.

There were no breaks in the second set and from 5-5 on, fans were treated to some spectacular shotmaking.

Nargiso led 5-3 in the tiebreaker, but could not hold his lead despite having a set point at 7-6 on Sampras's serve.

"I didn't play quite as well as I'd like to, but I thought I hung in there well," said Sampras. "The reason why I didn't play well is because he did."

With an amateur playing in his third professional tournament, continued to show his potential.

Arias was down a set and facing a break point at 4-all in the second set, but worked his way out of the jam. He held serve, saving break point with a backhand volley, and took the tiebreak 7-3 before crushing through the final set.

'Bobo' owes it to Becker

ZAGREB, Apr 4: Yugoslav tennis star Slobodan Zivojinovic thanked Boris Becker on Wednesday for stepping in and saving his rapidly sinking career, reports Reuter.

Zivojinovic, the 1986 Wimbledon semifinalist once ranked 19th in the world, became dramatically overweight last year and saw his ranking fall to 372nd.

But he bounced back during Yugoslavia's 4-1 win over Czechoslovakia in the Davis Cup quarter-final match last weekend, and said he owned everything to Becker.

"He was marvelous," Zivojinovic told Radio Zagreb. He started asking people around what was happening to me and then he met me and told me I was too good to get rotten.

"So I sat down and thought it over. If Becker bothered to tell me so, maybe I'd better try again."

Zivojinovic, 28, said he had been bored with the "travelling, hotels and empty people" of the tennis circuit.

But he added: "I've lost 15 lbs in the past four months and I am as strong as a bull again. I want to play and I will be back soon."

He added: "I can last for years still. I love tennis and I am very grateful to Becker. He is such a big star and yet he showed he could care about others."

Menem comforts Maradona

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 4: Argentine President Carlos Menem offered Diego Maradona some comfort here on Wednesday as the fallen football idol stayed in hiding, reports AP.

Mr. Menem, facing allegations that some of his laws have been involved in laundering millions of nardo-dollars, said: "I don't think we should crucify him but help him, and since there has been no sentence, he is presumed innocent."

Maradona, who has an "official" passport and has been honoured with the title of "ambassador for sport," fled into hiding here on Tuesday after being suspended by the Italian Football League. Traces of cocaine were found in his urine sample after a league match on March 17.

"After raising him to the level of a holy idol, we cannot

crucify him in the cruelest way, we have to think about it," Menem told a local radio station.

Argentinian Football Association chairman Julio Grono also said he was standing by the 30-year-old national football captain saying the method of drug testing was "not clear."

Maradona said on Tuesday that he wanted to be left alone for two weeks.

His temporary ban will be extended this week to up to two years and enforced by the world football body FIFA.

But the Pagina 12 newspaper reported here Wednesday that an official of the Boca Juniors Club hoped to pull in the crowds to watch Maradona in friendly matches between teams who are not affiliated to FIFA. Television fees were expected to be high.

Shadow-boxing helps Marsh step out of the swamp

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Apr 4: With Australia's Test series against West Indies billed as cricket's world heavyweight championship it is perhaps appropriate that Geoff Marsh, currently the touring team's most successful batsman, prepared by taking up boxing, reports Reuter.

Marsh, 32, had previously concentrated on endurance work - swimming and running - but last Australian winter he went to a south Perth gym three times a week for shadow boxing, punchbag work and sparring.

"It was something different and mainly to sharpen up my reflexes," said Marsh, already a fine gully fieldman.

It appeared to have worked. The right hand opening batsman's immediate reward was a successful start to his first full domestic season as captain of Western Australia and an aggregate 314 runs at an average of 44.85 against England in the Ashes series.

But doubts remained about his ability to stand up to the West Indian pace bowlers who gave him a torrid time in 1988-89 in Australia when he managed just 227 runs at 22.70.

In addition, England's Devon Malcolm unsettled him at times and his habit of taking his eye off the short ball led to suggestions that he should pack an extra supply of helmets.

A return of 12 runs in three innings in the warm-up games at the start of the tour increased the doubts.

But Marsh's reply was emphatic as he followed a first Test innings of 69 with two successive one-day international centuries and Australia's top score of 94 in the Guyana



Test - which West Indies won to go 1-0 up in the five-match series.

concentration was remarked upon back in 1977, when, as vice-captain of the under-19s, he hit a century at Lord's.

He roomed that Tour with David Boon. With whom he later opened regularly for Australia and who, with Mark Taylor, make up the so-called "engine room" of the side.

Like Taylor, Marsh is a product of the Australian out-back one of a proud tradition of country players stretching back through Doug Walters to Sir Donald Bradman and beyond.

He learned the game playing with his brother Steve and father Ned in the backyard, and, by dint of hanging around in the event of a team being a man short, played his first club game at the age of eight.

He made his state debut in a Packer-ravaged Western Australia side on his 19th birthday on New Year's eve 1977 but did not play for Australia until late 1985.

No visiting team has come from behind to win in the West Indies and Australia's vice-captain said: "They are a good side and it will be very hard to come back."

"They were tougher than us in Guyana and Trinidad it is going to be very important."

Marsh believes the fourth Test in Barbados - where he hit 113 in a one-day international - could provide the best chance of a win for Australia.

"Although people say it is hard work facing the West Indies on quick, bouncy wickets it will suit our guys as we are used to those wickets," he said.

"But it was always going to be tough to beat the best in the world. Like a boxer going 15 rounds with Mike Tyson, you know you are going to cop a few but if you hang in there you might just get one in."

more shots so that they do not tie me down. However, it is not that easy when you bowl as well as they did in Guyana."

Or as slowly. The funeral over rates do not help in trying to build an innings, especially when batting in high temperatures while wearing a lot of Bulky - but necessary - protective equipment.

"something has got to be done about it, but the rules say they can take as long as they like and we have to come to terms with it," said Marsh.

"We are in their territory and we play their rules, that's fair."

"If we had four fast bowlers we would probably do the same thing. You have to learn to be able to switch on and off."

Marsh's powers of concentration are considerable. When he lost his Test place last season through injury, he came back to hit an unbeaten 355 over 10 and a half hours for his state.

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Cahill out of Davis Cup

MELBOURNE, Apr 4: Darren Cahill has undergone a knee operation and will not play in Australia's Davis Cup second round tennis match against France on May 3-5, team officials said, reports AP.

Cahill, a likely choice to play singles in France, will be out of action for up to eight weeks, Australian captain Neale Fraser said Thursday.

"You learn to live with these problems players have," Fraser said.

Former Wimbledon champion Pat Cash also might miss the match.

Cash this week withdrew from the Hong Kong Open, citing a back injury. Cash has a long history of back problems.

Fraser is expected to name an Australian team from Cash, Richard Fromberg, Wally Masur, Todd Woodbridge, Mark Woodforde and John Fitzgerald.

Australia defeated France last year at Royal King's Park in Perth, but Fraser said the French would prove a "different proposition" on their favorite clay courts.