

BFF permits 3 foreigners

Sports Reporter

Every Metropolis Senior Division football club can now include three foreign players in their line-ups from the coming football season.

The decision, one of several taken by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) at its executive committee meeting yesterday, reverses the ban imposed on foreign players following the 1988-89 season during the tenure of Maj. General Mahmudul Hassan as the BFF president.

That year the BFF had run into serious problems with FIFA, the world governing body of soccer, over the China Okorie affair. The BFF's ham-handed handling of the dispute between Abahani Kira Chakra and Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting over the signing of the Calcutta-based Nigerian star nearly brought severe reprimand from FIFA.

The brewing crisis was averted only after BFF was forced to tender an unconditional apology to FIFA at the behest of the then President H. M. Ershad.

According to the new BFF decision, any club interested in hiring the services of foreign players can register three overseas booters and field all of them in a game.

The decision means Federation Cup champions Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting, who will be representing Bangladesh in the forthcoming eight-team 10th Asian Club Cup championship scheduled to begin in Dhaka from July 19, can now reinforce their side by signing three foreign stars.

The BFF also finalised the soccer calendar for the coming season.

According to the new calendar, the inter-club transfers of players will be from August 1 to 7 instead of the previously announced July 29 to August 4.

The Federation Cup tourna-

ment will be held from Aug 16 to 31 with the champions earning the right to represent Bangladesh in the Asian Club championships and the run-

ners-up playing in the Asian Cup Winners' Cup.

The Senior Division league will start in Dhaka on Sept 3 and should be over by December 10, although the BFF will try to complete the single-league programme by mid-November. Next year the league will be played from January.

The Suhrawardy Cup junior national championship, earlier scheduled for August, will now be held next Dec-January.

The executive committee meet also formed two new sub-committees — one for running the Senior Division and other local leagues and another for examining the present BFF constitution and suggesting necessary changes in the light of practical experience.

BFF vice president Alamgir Farooq Chowdhury heads the seven-member league committee while joint secretary Sirajul Islam Bachchu will chair the constitution review committee.

However, the meeting failed to take a decision on the plea put forth by newly-registered players who had sought a reduction of the present three-year clause binding them to their first Senior Division teams to two years. The matter has been deferred for the time being.

Soccer fans of the city reacted positively to the decision to allow foreign players in the league saying it would help lift the standard of competition by expanding the pool of talent from which clubs may draw. According to many, the ban on foreign players had led to a deterioration of playing standards and the quality of our football in view of the severely limited local talent.

This had led to a situation where the leading clubs of the country were forced to pay exorbitant and unrealistic sums of money for the services of the few better Bangladeshi players. The BFF decision is likely to bring the prices of some of our over-rated players drastically down.

The executive committee meeting was chaired by BFF president Siddiqui Rahman.

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Dutch rout Soviets 4-0

PARIS, June 16: Dutch penalty corner striker Floris Bovenderker plundered the first genuine hat-trick of the European Cup hockey tournament as the Netherlands routed the Soviet Union 4-0 on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Bovenderker's striking was the major difference between two Group A teams who are both expected to reach next Friday's semifinals.

He converted two corners with direct shots and another of his efforts led to a penalty stroke, which he converted himself. With seven goals in three games, he overtakes Germany's Carsten Fischer as the tournament's top scorer.

Bovenderker converted the Netherlands' first corner of the match after 16 minutes and the stroke after 28 min-

utes to give his side a 2-0 interval lead.

He completed his hat-trick in the 41st minute. The other Dutch goal was a splendid opportunist effort by substitute Bastiaan Van Edt five minutes from time.

The Soviets enjoyed their share of the ball but failed to profit from four penalty corners and several other chances, often denied by Dutch goalkeeper Frank Leis-

tin.

The Dutch team's third win without conceding a goal, their best start in a major tournament, should ensure they take their place in the last four.

ENGLAND BT SPAIN

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