

Penalty comes to Abahani's rescue

Sports Reporter

The flamboyance of Curzon, one of the most charismatic goalkeepers of recent times, was not enough to save the bacon for Agran Bank as their infinitely stronger opponents, reigning champions Abahani Krim Chakra, recorded their thirteenth straight win in this year's league by virtue of a dubious penalty kick yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium.

This, however, is not to take away anything from the skyblues who had only themselves to blame for ensuring two points in so unconvincing a fashion.

The expectations were sky high on the part of the supporters of the men from Dhanmondi who fielded the Russian trio and Alexander Polynkov (Sasha), the latest foreign recruit in the Abahani ranks, did not set anything afire in his maiden appearance. He had a couple of shots directed towards the Agran Bank goal but a fully charged Curzon and the Bank defenders came in his way. Otherwise Polynkov was never in the thick of action like his compatriot Sergei Zhukov who again proved himself to be the powerhouse of the title aspirants.

Zhukov prowled all over the ground to torment the Bankers who did not show any overt inclination to negative football and led one or two sporadic raids. With a little bit of luck on their side the Bankers could have really made Abahani rue their poor finishing.

First blood was drawn by Abahani when Polynkov's

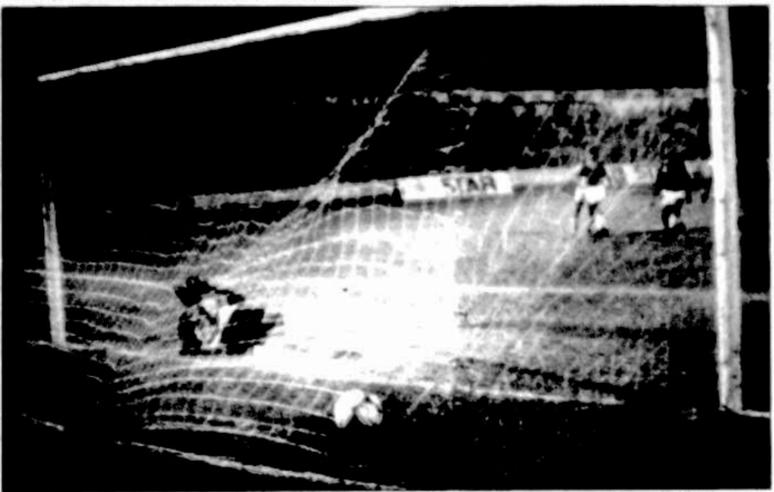
screaming shot was saved from the goal line by Agran defender Peter. Bakhtiar of Agran Bank tried to match the series of Abahani onslaughts with a fine shot at goal which national custodian Mohsin fluted away. Mamun Joarder of

watched between two Bank defenders and fell. Referee Nazir Hossain promptly obliged the vociferous crowd of the South Western gallery of the stadium with a spot kick in favour of Abahani. Rumi sent Curzon the wrong way to safely and suc-

cessfully convert the penalty (1-0).

For Agran Bank it was the second successive penalty against them in two matches; a penalty was given against them in the earlier match against Mohammedans.

Sattar of Bank spoiled a chance early in the second half



Rumi (not in picture) scores Abahani's winner against Agran Bank in yesterday's First Division football league at the Dhaka Stadium. — Star photo

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Pele supports indoor games for 1994 World Cup

NEW YORK, Apr 2: Legendary soccer star Pele gave his backing on Tuesday to the idea of playing World Cup soccer indoors, as is planned for some matches of the 1994 tournament in the United States, reports Reuter.

"I think the reason people are going to love to see the World Cup in the US is because it is a different show," Pele said at a World Cup promotional news conference.

The Pontiac (Michigan) Silverdome was one of nine venues announced 10 days ago for the first World Cup tournament to be hosted in the United States, from June 17-July 17, 1994.

"Only in America would you see that," Pele said of the 72,794-seat stadium on the outskirts of Detroit which is used primarily for American football.

"I think it is fantastic. It has 70,000 seats. It is air conditioned. I wish all the stadiums would be like that."

Pele believes indoor stadiums will be used for other World Cup tournaments if this experiment proves successful.

"You can cover all the stadiums in the future," Pele said. "You won't have to worry about sun, the weather, that is the philosophy."

Pele, 51, who made his World Cup debut in 1958 by leading Brazil to the first of three World Cup championships over 12 years, sees the Pontiac Silverdome as the World Cup's way of embracing progress.

"Life turns," he said. "Life improves. That is part of life."

Capriati crashes

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina, Apr 2: Jennifer Capriati, the fourth seed, suffered a stunning upset at the hands of unheralded German Veronika Martinek in a second-round match in the dollar 550,000 Family Circle Cup women's tennis tournament on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Capriati, ranked sixth in the world, was beaten by the 83rd-ranked Martinek 6-4, 1-6, 6-4.

In other second-round matches, top-seeded Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, the defending champion, was on the court just 53 minutes while demolishing unseeded American Halle Cioffi 6-0, 6-0.

Second seed Martina Navratilova gave up just two games en route to beating unseeded fellow American Donna Faber 6-0, 6-2.

Third-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain also advanced, defeating Germany's Sabine Hack 6-0, 6-2.

The day's other upset victim was eighth-seeded American Zina Garrison, who was beaten by American qualifier Caroline Kuhlman, ranked 170th 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Capriati, who had a first-round bye, was surprised by a little-known opponent she had never faced previously.

The tiny Martinek, just five foot three inches (1.60 metres) tall, hustled around the court, retrieving all Capriati's powerful groundstrokes and mixing up crosscourt angles with heavy topspin.

Martinek, who defected with her family from Czechoslovakia in 1980, broke early in the match and took a 3-1 lead.

Lineker's hat-trick for Spurs

LONDON, Apr 2: England captain Gary Lineker netted a hat-trick to ease Tottenham Hotspur's relegation worries in a 3-0 English league victory over West Ham on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Lineker's deadly finishing edged Spurs closer to First Division safety and pushed West Ham ever nearer to relegation.

The 18th hat-trick of Lineker's career exposed a West Ham side woefully lacking in class and enabled Spurs to record a vital second successive win. They beat Coventry on Saturday.

Both sides were desperate for points for the tense relegation tussle — Spurs had just one victory in their previous 16 games, while lowly West Ham had not won in nine games.

It took Spurs only 16 minutes to break through a brittle defence, as Paul Stewart fed Paul Allen and the predatory Lineker slotted home his cross.

Eight minutes after half-time, Nayim's cross was not cleared as Stewart challenged,

and Lineker pounced to crack home the loose ball from the edge of the box.

Six minutes later Gordon Durie was brought down in full

relegation worries in a 3-0 English league victory over West Ham on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

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Lenn Cokeerill secured three priceless points for Southampton against Lutchester Everton.

Southampton stretched their unbeaten League run to eight games and moved further from the relegation area.

The visitors took the lead after 24 minutes when Everton's Gary Ablett was caught in possession on the edge of his area and Linn Dowel drove the ball low across the box, beating keeper Neville Southall's dive.

Michael Giles floated the ball back from the left and Cockrill rose to head home.

Everton tried to raise the tempo after falling behind, but an Ablett free kick deflected behind off a defender and a John an Ebbrell shot that cleared the bar were all they could muster from a grim first half.

Two minutes after the break Peter Beagrie's left wing cross was knocked down by Ebberl for Peter Bardsley to shoot against the bar.

Bardsley had a glancing header well saved, while substitute Tony Cottee also hit the bar and Beagrie tested the keeper with a low drive.

Sampdoria eliminate Red Star

SOFIA, Apr 2: Sampdoria are back on course for a place in the European Cup final after a comprehensive 3-1 win over defending champions Red Star Belgrade here on Wednesday night, reports AFP.

The Italian champions are now a point clear of the Yugoslavs, forced to play their Group A "home" leg in Bulgaria due to the unrest at home, with only a home match against Greek champions Panathinaikos to come.

And while Sampdoria's task seems straight forward, as the Greeks have nothing but pride to play for, Red Star will visit Anderlecht in their last match

without their captain and inspiration Dejan Savicevic, who will be suspended after collecting one of the night's nine bookings.

But Red Star were more sinned against than sinning, picking up three of the yellow cards to Sampdoria's six.

Sampdoria's victory had a strongly Yugoslav flavour about it. Masterminded by coach Vujadin Boskov, two of their goals came from Yugoslav players.

After they went behind to a remarkable left-footed 20-yard free kick by Sinisa Mihajlovic in the 19th minute, the Italian took control.

Srecko Katanec, a Slovene who once played for Partizan Belgrade, equalised in the

34th minute, and then and own goal from Vasiljevic, under pressure from Gianni Vialli, gave them the advantage just before half time.

Fourteen minutes from the end, Sampdoria captain Roberto Mancini became the night's only non-Yugoslav scorer when he struck the winner, a solo effort from the edge of the area.

RED STAR BELGRADE: Milojevic, Radinovic (Ivic, 75), Nedeljkovic, Belodedic, Vasiljevic, Raticovic, Bolic, Jugovic, Mihajlovic, Pancev, Savicevic (Cula, 80).

SAMPDORIA: Pagliuca, D Bonetti, Part, Lanna, I Bonetti, Vierchowod, Lombardo, Cerezo (Invernizzi, 10), Katanec, Vialli, Mancini.

Sparta Prague shock Barcelona

PRAGUE, Apr 2: Sparta Prague inflicted a surprise 1-0 defeat on Group B leaders Barcelona in the European Cup semifinals on Wednesday, but the Spaniards remain favourites to reach the final, reports Reuter.

The defeat was Barcelona's first in five semifinal group games and left them just one point ahead of Sparta, but a draw at home against Benfica in the remaining match should be enough to win Group B.

Striker Horst Siegl kept alive Sparta's outside hopes of a final place with the winning goal in the 66th minute following a pass from Pavel Cerny during a spell of intense pressure from the Czechoslovaks.

They were content to play for a draw.

Their best chance came in the 12th minute when Julio Salinas ran through with just Petr Kouba to beat but the goalkeeper ran out to meet

him and managed to smother his shot.

Barcelona, who often slowed the game down in the midfield, produced a late rally, with Ronald Koeman attempting two long-rang shots.

Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff said: "We are still a point ahead and everything is in our hands."

Sparta coach Dusan Uhrin said his side's chances rested with Benfica. The chance to play in the final is still not lost, especially when you realise Benfica play a better game away from home.

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BFF selects 37 booters

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Football Federation has selected 37 players for the fifth Asian youth under-16 football tournament scheduled to begin in Rajshahi on May 1.

Following are the booters: Goalline: Nasruddin, Selim (BKSP), Milton and Mosadequr Rahman.

Defence: Emdadul, Masud, Biplob Marma, Rafiqul Islam, Shovon, Shibu, Sagar and Hafiz.

Midfield: Liton, Partosh, Yousof, Shamim, Joy Das, Najmuddin, Nayan and Arman.

Forward: Shitmul, Shobeb, Hero, Ramzan, Symon, Pavel, Monir, Iqbal, Alok, Paya Pro, Alauddin, Jahangir, Biplob, Chapal, Shamsuddaha, Fazlu and Ruhul.

Selected players have been asked to report to team manager SM Shaheb Ali at 4 pm on April 8 at the Dhaka Stadium.

Shuttlers leave for KL Apr 6

Sports Reporter

A eight-member Bangladesh badminton squad will leave Dhaka for Malaysia on April 6 to take part in the Asian badminton championship scheduled to begin the next day.

Players selected for the championship are Elena, Sarwar, Juthi and Hashem while the other four are officials.

Nirman cricket

Sports Reporter

Nilphamari Govt High School trounced Faridpur Lions High School by 67 runs in the Nilphamari zonal Nirman schools cricket championship at Nilphamari yesterday.

Nilphamari School batted first and scored 185 all out with Sobel making 36.

In reply, Lions School were dismissed for a poor 98.

The zonal championship got under way on Wednesday.

Qatar to host rich squash meet

Sports Reporter

CARDIFF, Apr 2: Qatar is to host the second richest tournament of this year's world squash circuit, the International Squash Player's Association (ISPA) said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The tournament will be staged in December and carries total prize money of dollar 1.35,000.

Only September's World Open in Johannesburg has more prize money at stake.

"The tournament is a significant addition to expanding ISPA world calendar and further illustrates the tremendous growth of squash in the Middle East," ISPA executive director Roger Eady said.

Beijing plans to spend \$ 1 b for 2000 Olympiad

Sports Reporter

BEIJING, Apr 2: China expects to spend dlr 1 billion on the 2000 Olympic Games if Beijing is selected a host for the event, senior sports officials said Thursday, reports AP.

Wan Siquan, secretary general of the Beijing Olympic Games bid committee and deputy mayor of Beijing, said the budget includes the cost of building a 100,000-seat stadium a sport center with a 10,000-seat stadium, swimming pool and bicycle velodrome, an equestrian park, and an aquatic center.

He said at a news conference that China would have no problems financing the games because the dlr 1 billion budget represents only 1.3 per cent of the government's expected revenues this year. He added that the costs would be spread over a seven-year period leading up to the 2000 Games.

He did not mention that China's 1992 budget includes a deficit of nearly dlr 4 billion, nor that the nation has had a deficit for 11 of the past 12 years.

Wan did not detail how China plans to finance the Games, but he and other officials from the bid committee said they were willing to accept donations.

They said about 2,000 people and businesses already have donated money, but did not say how much. A bid committee brochure said one woman donated 600 yuan (dls 110), and a child sent in 8 fen (less than 2 cents).

Wan said China expects to earn about dlr 100 million profit from staging the games, with income of dlr 400 million from the sale of television rights.

The six other contenders for the 2000 Games are Berlin; Sydney, Australia; Manchester, England; Brasilia, Brazil; Istanbul, Turkey; and Milan, Italy.

The International Olympic Committee is to make its choice in September 1993.

Nat's finals from Apr 10

Sports Reporter

Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj have moved into the final round of the Gold Leaf national cricket championship scheduled to start in Dhaka on April 10.

Dhaka beat Faridpur and Rajshahi outplayed Rangpur yesterday at Tangail and Pabna while Chapainawabganj trounced Bogra at Thakurgaon on Wednesday last.

Others who have made the finals are Chittagong, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Barisal, Dhaka University and Bangladesh Biman.

At Tangail, Dhaka recorded a massive nine-wicket victory over Faridpur.

Batting first, Faridpur were

all out for a paltry 77 in 27.2 overs.

Saikat took three wickets while Mamun and Sujon took two each for Dhaka.

In their turn, Dhaka made 78 for one wicket in 25.2 overs.

Javed Omar Golla, who hit a fine century against Sirajganj in the semifinal, was once again the peak of Dhaka batting with an unbeaten 49 while Mamun made 28.

Eflee took the only wicket for Faridpur.

At Rangpur, Rajshahi beat Rangpur by 76 runs, thanks to the all-round performances by David.

Electing to bat, Rajshahi scored 206 for nine wickets in 43 overs with David getting 46

and Dola 41 not out.

Shakil took four wickets for Rajshahi.

In reply, Rangpur were dismissed for a narrow 130 in 39.1 overs.

David and Litu claimed three wickets apiece for Rajshahi.

Chapainawabganj registered a massive eight-wicket victory over Bogra at Thakurgaon on Wednesday last.

Batting first, Bogra were all out for a poor 107. In their turn, Chapainawabganj made 108 for the loss of only two wickets.

Meanwhile, the result of the Barisal zonal final was not available till the filing of this report.

Another historic tour for S Africans

Sports Reporter

LONDON, Apr 2: South Africa's cricketers are expecting a lively reception in every sense when they fly into Jamaica on Saturday to begin their historic short tour of the West Indies, reports Reuter.

After 22 years of waiting, a South African team will finally re-enter the Test arena in Barbados between April 18-23, preceded by three one-day internationals, on a tour of huge significance in their homeland and beyond.

Apart from the handful to have represented England and Australia, no South African cricketer was welcome in the West Indies during the bleak years of apartheid.

President F W De Klerk's victory in South Africa's whites-only referendum last month, not to mention the tireless efforts of Ali Bacher, South Africa's last Test captain and now managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA), has paved the way for an emotional return.

But ever since the champagne bottles and bunting were swept away following the sides post-World Cup ticket-tape reception through Johannesburg, the sober reality of a fired-up West Indian pace attack has swiftly replaced the romance.

"A massive task lies ahead," admitted skipper Kepler Wessels. "Under normal circumstances there would be something of a let down after such an emotional and draining seven week (World Cup) tour, yet the challenge in the

West Indies scarcely gives us an opportunity to draw breath."

Coach Mike Proctor, the most successful bowler on South Africa's last day in Test cricket on March 10, 1970 when they completed a 4-0 victory over Bill Lawry's Australian side, was equally realistic.

"It will be difficult because of the different conditions. The West Indies are also very, very tough to beat at home and they'll be keen to beat us having missed out on the semifinals at the World Cup."

Proctor acknowledges that a constant diet of one-day cricket since South Africa's international rehabilitation began in India in November is not the best preparation for a five-day Test of character in the Caribbean.

"Our pace attack will do alright, but for the Test our batsmen must get their minds right to get the big runs, they've been playing one-day stuff for months."

Peter Kirsten and Wessels, the two experienced heads amongst South Africa's predominantly young team, know not to be fooled by the home side's apparent internal rumblings.

West Indies, who drew heavy criticism, at home after failing to advance beyond the round-robin stage of the World Cup, are in transition.

Malcolm Marshall, for the moment, has retired from Test cricket along with Viv Richards and Jeff Dujon, but there seem no shortages down at the West Indian fast bowling factory.

It is easy to forget that only

last September the West Indies Cricket Board announced it was still opposed to South Africa's inclusion in the World Cup following its annual meeting in Barbados.

Events have moved so swiftly they now also find themselves welcoming a South African under-19 team, comprising 11 non-whites in a 15-man squad, in addition to the senior party.

Bacher feels the black population will be inspired by watching the likes of Curtly Ambrose up against a South African side which now poses a new identity.

"Sport can unite a country," he said. "We have sorely lacked that. We have had only division."

Steve Camacho, West Indies Board secretary, agreed this week the tour had excited huge interest in the Caribbean.

"Everyone is really looking forward to it, particularly since the South Africans did so well in the World Cup," he said.

That particular odyssey ended for South Africa when much-dried rain rules required them to score 21 off one ball to beat England in the semifinal in Sydney.

Squad: Kepler Wessels (captain), Andrew Hudson, Peter Kirsten, Mark Swain, Alan Kulper, Jonty Rhodes, Omar Henry, David Richardson (wicket-keeper), Allan Donald, Tertius Bosch, Meyrick Pringle, Richard Snell, Corrie Van Zyl.

Itinerary: April 7 vs West Indies (Kingston) April 11 vs West Indies (Port of Spain) April 12 vs West Indies (Port of Spain) April 18-23 vs West Indies (five-day Test).

Size of contingent to Barcelona Olympics

SA to wait till May 15 deadline

Sports Reporter

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 2: South Africa is not likely to determine the size of its Olympic squad until the middle of May, a spokesman for National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA), Clive Grinaker, said Wednesday, reports AFP.

Although NOCSA had indicated the South African team would total 125 contestants, the figure was only an estimate and the final selection would only be made just prior to the May 15 deadline, Grinaker told AFP.

A high-powered international Olympic Committee (IOC) delegation which visited South Africa earlier this week

said the organisers in Barcelona had anticipated only 68 athletes from South Africa.

But on its departure on Tuesday, the delegation, headed by Judge Keba Mbaye of Senegal, said it was up to NOCSA alone to determine the size of the contingent.

Already 41 people have been named — two archers, 14 sailors, 12 swimmers, two divers, six tennis players, two table tennis players and three synchronised swimmers.

But the size of the athletics contingent is the unknown factor. So far, 31 athletes have already met the Olympic qualifying criteria but the real trials for the Olympic team have not yet begun.

"We have no idea whatsoever how many athletes will

qualify, though we are certain that we will not be able to contest every event," Athletics South Africa (ASA) secretary Gert Le Roux told AFP Wednesday.

He said because South Africa last competed in the Olympics in 1960 and because its athletes have for decades been barred from international competition, the depth of the country's talent was largely unknown.

"We'll have a better idea after the Unity meetings," Le Roux said, referring to the two-leg African Unity Games scheduled in Dakar, Senegal, on April 18 and in Germiston, South Africa, on April 24-25.

"But right now, I'd like to comment on what our final line-up may look like."

Number of athletes worries COOB

Sports Reporter

BARCELONA, Apr 2: Organisers of this Summer's Olympics in Barcelona complained on Wednesday

that far more athletes than expected had registered for the Games and said it was not an opportunity for a free holiday, reports Reuter.

Barcelona Olympic Organising Committee (COOB '92) chief executive Josep Miguel Abad said 12,371 athletes and 5,935 officials had registered for the Games by the end of March, while 17 countries still had to lodge their forms.

This is already far more than the 15,200 places available in the Olympic Village.

"The economic effort undertaken by COOB '92 to offer for the first time in the history of the Olympic Games free bed and board to sports people in the Olympic Village... cannot be turned into a chance of a free holiday for anyone," Abad said.

The facts are confirming our repeated warnings about the high number of applications to take part in Barcelona '92."

Olympic Village director Armand Calvo said some of the worst culprits for overbooking were South Africa, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, all new members of the Olympic family.

South Africa originally said

they would send 50 athletes but have now registered 286, while the Baltic states had lodged papers for more than twice the expected total number of 105 for the three ex-Soviet republics, Calvo said.

"At this rate we will end up with 20,000 registrations and

that is simply unacceptable," he said.

"The restaurants are equipped to serve 15,000 people and not 20,000. The same goes for the laundry service, the rooms and the transport."

The United States have registered the biggest team, of 648 athletes and 170 officials.

The Spanish hosts come next because of a vast contingent of 301 officials among its 786-strong delegation, while the Commonwealth of Independent States have 677 representatives.

Abad last week warned that the Olympic Village was "not made of rubber" and said COOB '92 would write to complain to committees which had exceeded their allocated number of places.

International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch has stressed that Barcelona cannot cope with any more than the stipulated 15,200 participants. He said in November he was confident the limit would not be breached.

The record number of 170 teams attending is 10 more than the last Summer Games in Seoul.

South Africa, Namibia, the Baltic republics and the break-away Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia are some of the new additions to the Olympic family.