



CAPTAIN TO CAPTAIN: Enamul Haq Moni of Biman is all eyes while facing this delivery from MSC skipper Minhazul Abedin Nannu in yesterday's Group Y encounter of the 14th Damal Summer Cricket Championship at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Mohammedans won by eight wickets to reserve a berth in the semis. — Star photo

Sher-e-Bangla Cup finals from today

Sports Reporter

Rajshahi District Sports Association take on Netrakona DSA in the inaugural match of the final round of the 17th national soccer championship for the Sher-e-Bangla Cup today at 2:30 pm at the Mymensingh Stadium.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman will declare the finals open as chief guest.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka and president of the Bangladesh Football Federation Siddiqur Rahman will be present as special guests.

Twelve teams in two groups are participating in the final round. They are defending champions Bangladesh Army, Chandpur, Rajshahi, Netrakona, Khulna and Narayanganj in Group A and the 16th national soccer runners-up Dhaka University, Nilphamari, Bangladesh Customs, Bandarban, Jessore and Mymensingh in Group B.

The top two finishers from each group will play in the semifinals to be held on November 13 and 14. The final is scheduled for November 16.

Apart from Army and hosts Mymensingh the ten other teams qualified for the finals by emerging champions in their respective zonal qualifiers held from October 18 to 28 at ten different venues across the country.

A record number of 72 teams including 63 DSAs participated in the qualifying round.

Chandpur and Bandarban made the final round berths by emerging as Sunamganj and Bandarban zonal champions respectively.

Hosts Khulna clinched the zonal championship while hosts Jessore finished as champions in Jessore.

Rajshahi finished top in the Joypurhat zonal qualifiers while hosts Nilphamari won the zonal championship.

Narayanganj emerged as the Madaripur zonal champions while hosts Netrakona topped the zonal qualifying round for moving into the finals.

Bangladesh Customs became the champions in the Services Zone while Dhaka University finished top in the University Zone.

Although 12 teams will be competing in the knock-out finals, three or four teams are likely to dominate the show. They are defending champions Army, title aspirants Dhaka University, Narayanganj and Customs.

Army, although less known in the country's soccer circuit, have some tough and talented players in their ranks who will try their level best to lift the prestigious trophy a second time around. The fact that they beat star-studded Dhaka University in the last nationals final should boost their morale.

Dhaka University, who have a galaxy of the country's soccer stars like Rumman bin-Wali Shabbir, Imtiaz Ahmed Naqib, Jewel Rana and Mahbubur Rahman Roxy, are always the favourites in the national championship. They will be looking forward to avenging last year's defeat and claim the title this year.

With footballers like Md Monem Munna, Zakir Hossain, Rakib, Chandan and Reaz in the squad, Narayanganj should pose threat to any team. They too, have a fair chance of winning the Sher-e-Bangla Cup.

Customs, who beat Bangladesh Navy 4-2 in the tumbler of the Services zonal final, have the veteran striker Shaikh Md Aslam in the side. The Customs defence is also strong, a factor which proved vital in that match.

Hosts Mymensingh, who will enjoy local crowd support, could also emerge as serious contenders for the title.

Dhaka to host Asian kabaddi Feb-Mar '93

Sports Reporter

The third Asian kabaddi championship will be held from February 27 March 1 at the Dhaka Hockey Stadium under the aegis of the Bangladesh Amateur Kabaddi Federation (BAKF).

This was decided at a meeting of the tournament organising committee at the conference room of the Information Ministry with Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, who is also the chairman of the committee, in the chair.

Defending champions India, Pakistan and Japan have already confirmed their participation in the meet.

Nepal, Malaysia and China may also take part in the tournament.

Hosts Bangladesh, who won the silver medal in the 1990 Beijing Asianad, will field their national squad.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to inaugurate the meet while Bangladesh Television may telecast the meet live.

The first and second Asian kabaddi championships were held in India in 1980 and 1988 respectively.

While three countries — India, Nepal and Bangladesh — took part in the inaugural tournament, two more nations — Malaysia and Japan — participated in the second competition, raising the number to five.

A revised budget of Taka ten lakh and thirty thousand has been drawn up for the meet. The National Sports Council (NSC) is likely to come up with a grant of five lakh taka.

A 77-member organising committee was formed earlier to conduct the first international kabaddi tournament in Bangladesh.

State Minister for Youth and Sports and Chairman of National Sports Council (NSC) Sadek Hossain Khoka, president of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) Gias Kamal Chowdhury and BAKF president M Azizul Hoque were made vice presidents of the committee while BAKF secretary Monir Hossain is to be the organising secretary.

In yesterday's meeting, nine sub-committees were formed for smooth running of the tournament.

The budget of the tournament is expected to be approved in the next meeting of the organising committee on November 20 at the NSC conference room.

Japan, UAE in Asian Cup semis

HIROSHIMA, Nov 3: Japan and the United Arab Emirates advanced Tuesday to the semifinals of the 10th Asian Cup soccer tournament as Japan upset Iran 1-0 and the Emirates edged North Korea 2-1, reports AP.

Saudi Arabia, seeking their third straight Asian Cup, and China already had qualified for Friday's semifinals from Group B preliminary play.

A drawing was scheduled Wednesday to break the first-place tie in Group A. Japan and the Emirates finished preliminary play with one victory and two draws each, identical scores for and against, and a scoreless tie against each other.

The winner of the drawing plays Group B runner-up China and the loser meets Group B winner Saudi Arabia.

Playing before 37,000 spectators at the Hiroshima Park Main Stadium in western Japan, the Emirates and North Korea, runner-up in the 1990 Asian Games, played a score-

less first half.

In the second half's 24th minute, Kim Gwang-Min put North Korea ahead 1-0.

But the Emirates scored twice in the last nine minutes. Khamis Sa'ad Mubarak scored the equaliser and, four minutes later, Zuhair Bakhit Bilal scored the winner after a pass from Bakhit Sa'ad Mubarak.

North Korea outshot the Emirates 12-10.

Japan's only goal came on a shot by Kazuyoshi Miura after a pass from Masami Ihara with five minutes left to play.

The winners of Friday's semifinals meet in the final on Sunday.

The Japanese gained an advantage over the Iranians as they were reduced to 10 after Jamshid Shah Mohammadi was sent off in the 53rd minute, and they fought on the Iranian field for most of the second half.

With star striker Ruy Ramos coming on in the 68th minute, the Japanese side seemed to increase its strength.

The Japanese missed several shots at goal, but Miura finally struck home in the 85th minute converting a Masami Ihara pass to the excitement of the 37,000 spectators at the stadium.

Earlier, Kim Gwang-Min broke a 0-0 deadlock when he cracked the ball home in the 69th minute, delighting Korean residents in Japan but the North Koreans' glee was short-lived.

Khamis Sa'ad Mubarak pounded in the equaliser in the 81st minute, and then Zuhair Bakhit Bilal made it 2-1 only four minutes later.

"We were surprised when the Korean team scored the goal first, but still we fought to win the match," said the Emirates coach Valeri Lobanovskii of Russia.

FIRST ROUND:

Group	A	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Japan	3	1	2	0	2	1	4	
UAE Emirates	3	1	2	0	2	1	4	
Iran	3	1	1	1	2	1	3	
North Korea	3	0	1	2	2	5	1	

Group	B	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Saudi Arabia	3	1	2	0	6	2	4	
China	3	1	2	0	3	2	4	
Qatar	3	0	2	1	3	4	2	
Thailand	3	0	2	1	1	5	2	

30-40 nations may find door to Olympic Games shut

IOC may impose qualification standards

ACAPULCO, Mexico, Nov 3: European Olympic leaders on Monday handed a lifeline to weaker sports countries which face being squeezed out of future Games by tough new qualifying rules, reports Reuter.

With the size of the Games threatening to get out of control, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has imposed a limit of 10,000 athletes and said that all competitors will be obliged to qualify for the Games in future.

At present only 14 of the 25 sports on the summer Olympic programme have pre-Games qualification rules.

IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch has said that from the 1996 Atlanta Olympics athletes will be forced to qualify for all events.

This move threatened to eliminate between 30 and 40 nations whose athletes could not be expected to meet the new qualifying standards.

However, the Association of European National Olympic Committees (NOCs) on Monday proposed a system of wild card entries which would enable these countries to participate in the Games in selected sports.

Association president Jacques Rogge of Belgium said he expected the proposal to win support from the IOC Executive Board during a week of discussions in Acapulco, although a final decision would not be taken until next year.

"We consider that weaker NOCs will not be able to qualify any athletes under the new circumstances. So we have proposed a system of wild card entries which would mean that each of these NOCs would still be able to send a couple of athletes to compete in the Games," Rogge told Reuters.

"We want to show solidarity with other countries because we believe in the universality of the Games," he added.

Rogge said the wild card system would operate within the limit of 10,000 athletes, although details of the plan have not yet been drawn up.

It is intended that the selected non-qualified athletes will receive special funding to provide coaching and training facilities aimed at raising their standards of performance as soon as possible.

Rogge said the non-qualified athletes would be allowed to take part in events in which their lower standards would not materially affect the competition.

"For example, the athlete who runs 10,000 metres in 32 minutes would be all alone on the track for the last three laps and this would not be acceptable.

"But if the same man runs 100 metres in 13 seconds he would finish three seconds behind the winner, which would not cause any problems."

Rogge, himself an IOC member, said he was confident the proposal would be accepted by the full IOC which is scheduled to meet in Lausanne next June and in Monte Carlo in September.

He said the same principles could also be applied to the Winter Games if necessary, although the level of entries for the Winter Olympics is not a problem at present.



J A SAMARANCH

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BID TO INCLUDE GOLF
AP adds: Acapulco is hosting a series of Olympic meetings this week, the first major gathering of the Olympic movement since the Barcelona Games. The IOC Executive Board, which convenes Wednesday, will discuss — among other matters — a proposal by Atlanta Olympic officials to include golf as a medal sport in 1996.

Augusta National Golf Club, home of the Masters, would host separate 72-hole tournaments for men and women. Golf hasn't been an Olympic sport since 1904.

At least one IOC official, vice president Kevan Gosper of Australia, has said he opposes adding golf.

Several hundred delegates from around the world are attending the Olympic meetings at a luxury resort complex. The event is hosted by Mario Vazquez Rana, the Mexican media magnate who is an IOC member and president of the Association of National Olympic Committees.

Among those attending are representatives of the eight cities bidding to stage the 2000 Summer Games: Sydney, Australia; Beijing, Manchester, England; Berlin, Milan, Italy; Istanbul, Turkey; Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and Brasilia, Brazil. The IOC will select the host city in September 1993.

Barcelona bank on a reformed Stoichkov

PARIS, Nov 3: Reformed football hot-head Hristo Stoichkov will be the key to European champions Barcelona's hopes in a tricky match against CSKA Moscow on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The Spanish league's leading scorer — nine goals from three games — has been controlling his notorious temper in recent weeks. Likewise Barcelona will need more control on their game to beat the Russians who held them 1-1 in the first leg of the European Champions Cup second round tie.

The Bulgarian was involved in almost weekly rows and in 1990-91 was suspended for two months for stamping on a referee's foot. But that is all over.

In recent games, Stoichkov has made a point of shaking the hand of referees after the final whistle. He has also been avoiding, as much as possible, the multiple taunts he receives from opposing players and fans.

"Stoichkov in the team and playing in a full Nou Camp Stadium gives me confidence," said Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff.

Leeds United will be counting on the French flair of Eric Cantona to help reverse their 1-2 deficit against Glasgow Rangers in what is the second leg of an unofficial British Championship.

Howard Wilkinson's side came up against a stubborn Coventry side in the English Premier Division on Saturday who held them 2-2 by battering down the hatches after taking a surprise lead.

Rangers could try the same tactics to preserve their lead and Wilkinson said: "I hope they do. I wouldn't mind that amount of possession on Wednesday. After all, we don't have to win 7-0.

Cantona only came on as a substitute against Coventry, but his experience in Europe should ensure his place.

England midfielder David Batty left the field injured which could also mean a European challenge for David Rocastle in only his second start since his two million pound signing from Arsenal.

"I am sure we might find one or two players who would be pleased to come in for David Batty," said Wilkinson. "David Rocastle did very well and on another day he would have scored."

AC Milan dropped their first points of the Italian season at the weekend, but with a 1-0 advantage from two weeks ago, they should not be worried about their game against Czechoslovak champions Slovan Bratislava. With all clubs seeking one of eight places in the semifinal series, Olympique Marseille's tycoon president Bernard Tapie, like his counterparts, is already looking forward to the rich pickings.

He reckoned that being knocked out of the Cup in the first round last year cost around 80 million francs (5.5 million dollars). Changes in the way money is shared out means the club, if they beat Dynamo Bucharest, now only stand to gain a handout of between 22 and 30 million francs from the six semifinal games.

Marseille are confident though. After drawing 0-0 in Bucharest, they have home advantage this time. Dutch Champions PSV Eindhoven must pull back one goal at home to AEK Athens though if they are to hit the Europe jackpot.

CUP WINNERS' CUP

Fellow Dutch stars Feyenoord must do the same against Luzern of Switzerland to move into the next round of the European Cup Winners Cup. Henk Fraser will be missing because he must start a three match suspension for a sending off in the first leg 'originally given to John de Wolf in a case of mistaken identity.

But Liverpool face the toughest task in this competition. They were beaten 4-2 in home having been beaten 3-2 by Danish giantkillers Aarhus. But the competition's other fancied team, Atletico Madrid, have a two-goal cushion over Trabzonspor of Turkey.

UEFA CUP

In the UEFA Cup, Sheffield Wednesday of England have as tough a task as Liverpool as they attempt to come back from a 3-1 first leg defeat at German side Kaiserslautern.

The Germans won 3-1 on Saturday at the Buerfelde stadium to boost their already high confidence.

Napoli of Italy still believe in their chances of overturning their 2-0 home defeat to Paris St Germain even though they were beaten again on Sunday, 3-1 by Atlanta.

Napoli, coach Claudio Ranieri, knows his future is threatened. But he said, "The players fought hard and showed excellent spirit. I am sure we will put this episode behind us."

Paris were beaten 3-2 at the weekend. "We weren't concentrating," said coach Artur Jorge who hopes to field the same side that beat Napoli in the first leg, when George Weah scored both goals.

Anderlecht hope to have back Zambian international midfielder Charles Musonda at Dynamo Kiev who the Belgians beat 4-2 in the first leg. There is no sign yet though of Ghanaian striker Nii Lamptey who has just returned to training.

Of the big names in the UEFA Cup, Ajax Amsterdam defend a 3-0 lead at home to Vitoria Guimaraes of Portugal. Real Madrid face a more difficult game at Torpedo Moscow even though they beat the Russians 5-2 in the first leg. Moscow were responsible for sinking Manchester United in the last round.



H STOICHKOV

Russia by Spartak Moscow after goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar was sent off.

The veteran Zimbabwe goalke has been replaced again by David James but could still get a game after Liverpool's 2-0 defeat to Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League on Saturday. Manager Graeme Souness blamed the defeat on his side thinking about Europe too soon.

Jürgen Klinsmann carried out light training on Monday and could play for Monaco, despite a foot injury, as the French Cup winners attempt to fightback from 1-0 first leg home defeat to Olympiakos.

Steau Bucharest are at

Controversy forces Magic Johnson to retire once again

INGLEWOOD, California, Nov 3: Magic Johnson, who returned to the National Basketball Association last month after a year in retirement, said Monday he would retire for good because of the controversy over his comeback, reports AFP.

His decision, four days before the start of the season, was apparently prompted by comments by some NBA players who said they were worried about playing against him.

"After much thought and talking it over with Cookie (his wife) and my family, I decided I will retire — for good — from the Lakers," he said in a statement issued by the Los Angeles Lakers.

"It has become obvious that the various controversies surrounding my return are taking away from both basketball as a sport and the larger issue of living with HIV for me and the many people affected."

His doctor, Michael Mellman, confirmed the move had nothing to do with Johnson's health, which "has not changed from the moment he returned to basketball."

"This is not based on his doctor's advice. It is his lifestyle decision," Mellman said.

Teammates and many others publicly welcomed Johnson's return, but a few have been voicing concern about playing with him.

Karl Malone, who played with Johnson on the US "Dream Team" at the Barcelona Olympics, was one of the players who expressed concern about contracting the HIV virus on the court.

"Look at the cuts and scratches I get now," Malone said.

"All of a sudden, the last second of the game and here comes Magic to the basket. It is a physical game and you do get scratched. I do have concerns, just like anybody would have. It is not a thing of kicking a man when he is down."

On Friday, Johnson played in the Lakers' last pre-season exhibition game and pronounced himself fit and eager to start the season. He had planned to play 50-60 games in the 82-game season, avoiding back-to-back games and long road trips.

However, on Sunday the New York Times ran a story outlining the possible dangers of playing basketball with Johnson.

One source close to Johnson confirmed it was that type of article, not his health, that prompted Johnson to reconsider.

When Johnson, grinning from ear to ear, announced his comeback on September 29, he said he missed the thrill of competition, the camaraderie and the physical nature of the game.

"I love to work out and sweat," he said then. "You kind of miss that, not being in there every day, hitting somebody."

But in his statement, he said the demands of an NBA season would not leave him enough time for his AIDS education projects.

"I've come to realise that it simply is not possible to return to playing in the NBA and still continue to be involved in all the things I want to do," he said.

"Although my family has given me their support to return to the Lakers, I feel that it is more important to spend my time with them as well as continuing with HIV and AIDS education projects than in the competitive and time consuming world of the NBA."

Shortly after his retirement last November, Johnson was appointed to President George Bush's advisory panel on AIDS.

He resigned that post in September, saying Bush had failed to need the panel's advice. But he has continued to be involved in AIDS education projects.

Johnson has since endorsed presidential candidate Bill Clinton.

He played in five of the Lakers' eight pre-season games, averaging 10.4 points and nearly 12 assists per game.

On Friday, he scored eight points with five assists in 28 minutes on court. He sat out a few minutes in the first quarter when he got a scratch on his right arm, later covered with a sweat band.

Johnson was an undisputed star of the NBA, the league's all-time leader in assists with 9,921 with a scoring average for the Lakers of 19.7 in 12 seasons. He led the club to five NBA titles.

Despite his retirement, fans voted him into the 1991 all-star game last February, where he scored 25 points and made three straight three-point shots in the final five minutes.

NBA commissioner David Stern said: "We know this is a difficult and complex decision, but only Magic could make



Earwin Magic Johnson (No 32) in action for Los Angeles Lakers against the Portland Trail Blazers on October 16 in a NBA pre-season exhibition match. The super star eager finally decided to bid farewell to the court on Monday. Last September he came out of retirement, announced in November of 1991, following an HIV positive diagnosis. — Star file photo

Mixed reaction

INGLEWOOD, California, Nov 3: Magic Johnson's second sudden retirement from the National Basketball Association on Monday sparked surprise and sympathy among his colleagues and friends, reports AFP.

The basketball star announced his return to pro ball on September 29, nearly a year after he retired because he was carrying the AIDS virus.

But he cancelled his comeback plans apparently in deference to the feelings of other players.

"I really think when you come right down to it, the controversy and talk coming from within the league and his growing concern for the concerns and fears of his peers led to this decision," said Pat Riley, the New York Knicks coach who coached Johnson for nine years with the Los Angeles Lakers.

Johnson played in an exhibition game on Friday and said he was looking forward to the new season, which starts on November 6.

Three days later, he was announcing his retirement — this time, he says, for good.

Though he did not say so in his statement, Johnson was apparently influenced by comments from NBA players such as Karl Malone, who expressed fears about playing with him.

The New York Times on Sunday ran an article questioning the safety of playing with an HIV infected rival in a game where bumps and grazes are common.