

Sport

Argentina on a goal feast

RIYADH, Jan 9: Argentina's new three-man attack tore apart Japan to record a 5-1 win in the Intercontinental Cup on Sunday, reports Reuters.



Argentina striker Gabriel Batistuta rises above Japan's Natsuka Satoshi to head to the ball home. Batistuta scored twice as Argentina thrashed Japan 5-1 in an Intercontinental Cup match in Riyadh on Jan 8.

three minutes later from a Kazuyoshi Miura's freekick. Batistuta wrapped it up for Argentina with a penalty in the 86th minute after he had been fouled by defender Satoshi Tsunami.

Argentina need a draw in the final Group B match against Nigeria on Tuesday to qualify for Friday's final.

HOSTS OUT OF RACE Glasgow Rangers striker Brian Laudrup, captaining his country for the first time, inspired Denmark to a comfortable 2-0 win over Saudi Arabia.

The win put the Danes level on points with Mexico in Group A of the six-nation tournament of FIFA's continental champions and eliminated the Saudi hosts from the competition.

The silky skills of the 25-year-old Laudrup carved open the brittle Saudi defence on numerous occasions providing excellent opportunities for his teammates and a goal for himself.

His goal came just before halftime with Laudrup running from midway in the Saudi half and wide on the wing to accelerate through the Saudi defence, before shooting home from an acute angle.

Haynes keen to resume

DURBAN, Jan 9: Former West Indian opener Desmond Haynes could be in line to resume his international career after Western Province said on Monday he had been released from his contract in order to play for Barbados, reports Reuters.

The South African provincial club said they had agreed "reluctantly" to Haynes' request but under International Cricket Council (ICC) rules a player required by his country must be released from his contract.

Under West Indies rules, a player can be selected for international matches only if he plays in the domestic Red Stripe competition.

Western Province chief executive Arthur Turner said Haynes, who scored 18 centuries in 116 Tests, was keen to play in the home series against Australia in March and April.

He last played for West Indies against England early last year but missed the recent series in India.



DESMOND HAYNES We are not impressed at all, said Turner. "We were under the impression that Desmond had retired from Test cricket but it seems he has had a change of heart."

He added that Haynes, who will miss Western Province's last four games in the Castle Cup, would have to clarify his position for next season, the second year of his contract.

Atherton sticks to his guns

MELBOURNE, Jan 9: Mike Atherton today stood by his comments that English cricket should concentrate on promoting young players, but denied he had made any criticism of the current touring party, reports AFP.

The England skipper, commenting on the comments published in the London Mail on Sunday newspaper, rejected claims he believed he deserved a greater role in picking the side.

He said he is happy to be one of the five members of the selection committee.

"I'd like to say two things about the comments aired in England over the weekend: Firstly, I'd like to say I stand by them but I'd like to emphasise that at no stage have I ever said that I felt the captain should be responsible for picking the side," he said while preparing for Tuesday's one-day international with Australia.

"I'm perfectly happy to sit on the selection committee and I think the selection process — we have five selectors of which the captain is one — works fine."

Atherton repeated his comments that England should be going for youth but denied this meant the end of the careers of veterans Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting.



"I think the comments were common sense, they're years left in the game," the skipper said.

Atherton said he was pleased selectors had begun to pick younger players such as batsman Darren Gough and pacemen John Crawley and Graham Thorpe, but denied comments attributed to him that the tour party was not the one he wanted.

"I'm one of the selectors and I'm very happy to stand by the squad that was picked and claim by share of responsibility for that should we go down in the Test series," Atherton said.

He also stood by his comments that English selectors should be more in touch with the modern game, with more recently retired ex-players.

England team manager Mike Smith said his skipper's comments had not caused any friction. Smith said he was disappointed some of Atherton's comments were misrepresented.

"There is no problem whatsoever between management, the captain and the selectors," Smith said.

"We would have much preferred to have come down and practised, then gone away and relaxed and it's mischievous as far as that particular journalist is concerned."

Regency Club reach Mayor Cup qtrs

CHITTAGONG, Jan 9: Regency Club qualified for the quarter finals of the Mayor Gold Cup football tournament earning four points from their two Group A matches, reports BSS.

Regency beat Dhaka Farashganj Club by a solitary goal at the Chittagong Stadium here today.

The first half was scoreless. Munna scored the all-important goal.

Regency comprising six players of Dhaka Mohammedan played very well but failed to increase the margin due to the poor marksmanship up-front.

In the 46th minute Munna scored the winning goal from a spectacular volley.

Rafique's 2nd

Sports Reporter

Rafiqul Islam scored his second hat-trick in the Green Delta Insurance hockey league as Usha Kiria Chakra recorded their fifth win with a 6-0 thrashing over Sadharan Bima Kiria Sangstha at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The Usha skipper completed his treble with strikes in the 32nd 41st and 46th minutes respectively after his striking partner Irtiza Qader gave the winners a 26th minute lead.

Rafiq earlier scored his first hat-trick in Usha's league opener against Dhaka Wanderers, which they had won by a similar margin.

In a one sided affair, inside forward Mohammed Saadeq and Kismat added to Sadharan Bima misery scoring two more goals.

Usha, who had already confirmed a super league berth from Group B, now top the group with 16 points from six matches.

In the other match of the day, Azad Sporting Club and Bangladesh Sporting Club split points in a two all draw.

Javed and Shipu scored one goal apiece for Azad while Sabu and Rintu made it for Bangladesh Sporting.

Heat in chill

Sports Reporter

Goals were scarce but bowlers were plenty as yesterday's two Pragati Insurance Third Division football league matches ended in draws at the outer stadium adjacent to the Dhaka Stadium.

In day's first match Motijheel T&T and East End Boys shared points in a goal-less encounter.

The second match too failed to produce any victors. Babul put Little Friends ahead but Anwar of Kadamtala Sangsad restored parity.

One player from each side was sent off in a match spoiled by ugly confrontation among rival players.

England A in dire straits

MADRAS, Jan 9: England A were bemused by the turning ball as the Indian Board President's XI snatched the initiative in the four-day cricket match at the Chepauk here Monday, reports AFP.

Starting the second day's play at 255 for three, the home team banked on a spirited 78 from Rizwan Shamshad to reach 333 for six before skipper Vikram Rathore declared the first innings soon after lunch.

England A were a shaky 131 for four in reply when stumps were drawn, the result of a strange mix of ambitious stroke play and inability to negotiate the slow turn.

The tourists would have been in worse trouble but for a resolute unbeaten 36 by Lancashire's Jason Gallian and 17 not out by star allrounder Dominic Cork of Derbyshire. The pair have so far put on 25 runs for the fifth-wicket.

Left-arm spinner Utpal Chatterjee, expected to figure in the India A squad for the first of three five-day internationals starting at Bangalore on Saturday, ended the day with amazing figures of 11-8-3-1.

England A's hopes of matching the home team's score now rest on Gallian and Cork, the only batsmen who appeared comfortable against the spinners.

Madrid consolidate lead

MADRID, Jan 9: Real Madrid strengthened two points clear at the top of the Spanish league after closest pursuers Real Zaragoza went down to a 3-2 defeat at First Division newcomers Compostela on Sunday, reports Reuters.

Goals by Dane Bent Christensen after eight minutes and Nigerian Christopher Ohen on 13 and 43 minutes gave the modest but determined Galicians victory in a fast, tight game.

Miguel Pardeza scored Zaragoza's goals in the 32nd and 67th minutes. The visitors got the ball into the net for what would have been an injury time equaliser but the referee disallowed the goal, apparently because of handball.

Zaragoza, beaten for only the third time this season, played from the 52nd minute with 10 men after midfielder

Jesus Garcia Ganjuan was dismissed for a second yellow card.

Christensen's goal alone was worth the entrance money. He ran on to a brilliant pass from the centre circle from balding veteran Augustin Abadia and took the ball on three paces at full speed before blasting an unstoppable right foot shot past goalkeeper Andoni Cedrun from a tight angle.

Madrid had lifted their points total to 25 from 16 games with a spellbinding 5-0 demolition of champions Barcelona in front of 107,000 delirious fans in Bernabeu Stadium on Saturday.

It was sweet revenge for an equally humiliating 5-0 defeat inflicted on Madrid by the Catalans in Camp Nou Stadium almost a year ago to the day.

Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano, who scored a first half hat-trick, was jubilant: "If we go like this until the end of the season we will really give the fans something to celebrate," he said.

For Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff, desolation. "With a defeat like that there can be no excuses. I can't look some of my players in the eye."

Deportivo la Coruna slipped back to three points behind Madrid in third place when they were held to an uninspired 0-0 draw away at Real Betis.

The most encouraging thing for Deportivo was that Brazilian international midfielder Mauro Silva came through unscathed in his first game of the season after injury and will be fit to play when the Galicians host rampant Madrid in Riazor Stadium next weekend.

Barcelona, remain in fourth

Pele won't run for president

RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 9: Football legend Pele, Brazil's Special Sports Minister, said he has no plans to run for president in the 1998 elections and harbours no desire for a political career, reports AFP.

Pele told the Journal of Brazil it is not my ambition to go into politics even though he accepted a special ministerial post from President Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Healy fit

MELBOURNE, Jan 9: Australian wicketkeeper Ian Healy has recovered from a strained hamstring and will play against England in the World Series Cup one-day cricket match here Tuesday, reports AFP.

The injury kept Healy out of Sunday's 34-run victory over Australia A in Brisbane.

But Australia will be without off-spinner Tim May, who strained his right hamstring during Sunday's one-dayer.

Ian has passed a fitness test and will play Australian team manager Ian McDonald said today.

Phil Emery, who filled in for Healy on Sunday will now re-join Australia A for their final match of the series against England in Sydney on Thursday.

New South Wales off-spinner Robertson has been called up from Australia A to fill the vacancy left by May.

McDonald said May would travel with the Australian team so he can undergo regular treatment from team physiotherapist Errol Alcott.

Soul searching time for NZC



WELLINGTON, Jan 9: Heads may roll after New Zealand's dismal tour to South Africa, New Zealand Cricket chairman Peter McDermott said today, reports Reuters.

Most likely to be axed is coach Geoff Howarth whose contract is up for review when the cricket board meets next week.

That's one that will come under scrutiny and come under substantial scrutiny over the next week," McDermott said.

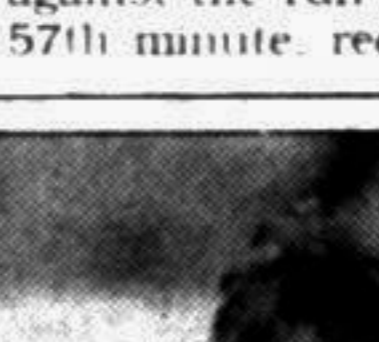
"I suspect there will be a very tough review and it is possible heads could roll, in any case, there will certainly be some recommitments and an improvement in performance required at all levels," he said in a radio interview.

Also under review will be the position of captain Ken Rutherford who not only had a poor series with the bat, averaging just 26 and getting out with reckless shots on several occasions, but was heavily fined in the third Test for umpire abuse.

"There are aspects of his performance that will need to be reviewed, particularly discipline," McDermott said.

"It's not acceptable for Ken to behave the way he did and he already knows that and he has been fined heavily as a result."

Juventus overtake Parma



ROME, Jan 9: Fabrizio Ravanelli scored two goals in four minutes to help Juventus knock Parma off the top of the First Division with a 3-1 victory in Serie A's clash of the giants in Italy on Sunday, reports Reuters.

The result put Juventus in a healthy position in the championship race with a two-point lead and game in hand over Parma, second on 31 points. Roma are third on 27.

Ex-Juventus player Dino Baggio gave Parma the lead against the run of play in the 57th minute, receiving a neat

through pass from Gianfranco Zola before scoring with an angled shot.

Within four minutes, Juventus claimed a fortunate equaliser when Parma goalkeeper Giovanni Galli, a first-half substitute for the injured Luca Bucci, totally misjudged a lofted cross from Paolo Sousa and watched helplessly as the ball sailed into the net for the Portuguese international's first league goal.

Ravanelli put Juventus in front in the 70th minute, diving spectacularly to head a low, first-time cross from Gianluca Vialli past the hapless Galli.

He added his second from the penalty spot to extend Juventus' unbeaten run to eight matches and bring Parma's series of seven successive home wins to an abrupt halt.

Argentine Abel Balbo's eighth goal of the season and a late effort from Francesco Totti lifted Roma into third spot with a 2-0 victory over Bari.

In a night match, Lazio

Compagnoni wins

HAUS IM ENNSTAL, Austria, Jan 9: Olympic giant slalom champion Deborah Compagnoni took her first race of the season by taking a women's World Cup giant slalom Sunday, reports AP.

Anita Wachter, who took Saturday's Super-G here, led after the first heat and appeared on her way to victory but fell in the middle of the second heat.

Compagnoni missed the first part of the season with kidney infection which sidelined her for eight consecutive World Cup races. She was timed in 2 minutes 35.39 seconds.

World Cup overall leader Heidi Zeller-Bachler of Switzerland was second, 2:35.63. Vreni Schneider of Switzerland, last year's overall champion, took third, 2:35.83.

The women's next race is a Super-G in Flachau, Austria on Tuesday where the men will also race a Super-G the same day.

Dortmund ride on Riedle

BONN, Jan 9: German international striker Karl-Heinz Riedle's first half injury time goal gave German league leaders Borussia Dortmund a 1-0 victory over bottom club Duisburg on Friday, reports Reuters.

Riedle's winner, slotted home from six metres, took his season's goal tally to five.

Dortmund richly deserved their win in a match in which Duisburg rarely mounted an attack.

The result gave Dortmund 26 points from 16 matches, three more than nearest rivals Werder Bremen, who travel to seventh-placed Karlsruhe today.

A further point behind Bremen, on 22 points from 17 matches, are Kaiserslautern, who could only manage a 1-1 draw at home to struggling 1860 Munich on Friday.



Danish captain Brian Laudrup (R) and Saudi defender Mohammed Al Khilawi are involved in a mid-pitch duel for the ball during their Intercontinental Cup football tournament match in Riyadh on Jan 8. European champions Denmark won 2-0. — AFP photo