

Azlan Shah Cup ROK, Aussies split points

IPOH, Malaysia, May 6: Asian Games champions South Korea today fought back from a one-goal deficit against Australia to equalise 1-1 in the dying minutes of their match in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament, reports AFP.

Defender Shin Seok-Kyo scooped in the equaliser one minute from full time after tournament favourites Australia led 1-0 through Paul Lewis in the 56th minute.

The faster and fitter Koreans had the better share of the attacks but their attempts were foiled by an in-form Australian keeper Dreher Lachlan.

Korea had four penalty corners to show for their dominance while Australia had none.

Both teams started out on a fast pace. The Aussies had a chance to lead in the 10th minute but Lewis' point-blank shot from the top of the semi-circle was saved by keeper Koo Jin-Soo.

The Koreans, who beat defending champions India 2-0 Sunday, rallied and were awarded two penalty corners in the 16th and 17th minutes but they squandered both chances.

ACB to launch bigger show

MELBOURNE, May 6: An eight-a-side tournament to be played as an abridged form of the one-day game was launched by the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) today, reports Reuter.

Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India will join an Asian invitational side for the competition in Kuala Lumpur from July 12-14.

Matches are predicted to last about two hours, with each side bowling 14 overs. Hits over the boundary are worth eight runs instead of the normal six, and batsmen will have to retire once they score 50.

Australia will field two teams in the competition, drawn largely from the ranks of the country's six Sheffield Shield sides, the ACB said.

Former Australia captain Allan Border, who retired from first-class cricket in March, will play for the Asian invitational side.

ACB chief executive Graham Halish said: "By introducing a fast, participant version of our game, cricket is looking after its grassroots and strengthening the sport at international level at the one time."

The tournament in Malaysia will be followed by three similar events in Australia over the following three weekends featuring the country's six state sides, the ACB said.

Kamsky accepts

ELISTA, Russia, May 6: American grand Master Gata Kamsky has agreed to play the World Chess Federation's championship match in Russia, the federation's president said Sunday, reports AP.

Kamsky's father said last month that his son would refuse to play without guarantees of personal safety and prize money.

The young Kamsky will play Russia's Anatoly Karpov for the championship in Elista, capital of the region of Kalmykia on the Caspian Sea, said the federation's new president, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who also is president of Kalmykia.

The federation, known by its French acronym FIDE has scheduled the match to start June 1 in Elista.

Ilyumzhinov told reporters Sunday that Rustam Kamsky, the 22-year-old chess player's father and manager, would arrive in Elista on Tuesday, the ITAR-Tass news agency said. The report did not say when his son would arrive.

The report also did say whether Rustam Kamsky's concerns had been met.

Under FIDE rules, a national chess union is responsible for any FIDE event held on the territory of its country, including organization, prizes and fees as well as the players' safety and conduct.

ITAR-Tass said prize money for the tournament stood at two million dollars.

Workers Stadium yet to impress

Venables

BEIJING, May 6: England soccer coach Terry Venables inspected the pitch at Beijing's Workers' Stadium at the weekend but has yet to say if it is good enough for a match against China, officials said today, reports Reuter.

"It's not clear yet whether the pitch will be okay. It seems there are some problems," an official of the Chinese soccer association said.

English approval of the pitch was a condition for the friendly international on May 23, a vital outing in the run-up to next month's European Championships, Venables told Reuters on Sunday.

As coach of the host nation, Venables — who will resign after the European Championships — is under extra pressure to win England's first major trophy since its 1966 World Cup win.

Chinese experts and officials have hailed the Workers Stadium pitch as one of the finest in China, but five hours after inspecting it at half-time during a Chinese Division A match Venables said no decision had been made on whether the turf passed English muster.



David May (No 12) of Manchester United heads home the first of his team's three goals against Middlesbrough during a English Premier league match in Middlesbrough on May 5. United ensured their 10th league title with this win (3-0).

— AFP/UNB photo

Man United conquer Premier league



LONDON, May 6:

Manchester United crushed Middlesbrough 3-0 on Sunday to win the English league title after the English league title in style after their only rivals Newcastle United were held to a 1-1 home draw by Tottenham, report agencies.

David May headed his first goal of the season, Andy Cole scored against his former club with a spectacular overhead kick only 30 seconds after entering the game as a substitute and Ryan Giggs hammered the third from 25-yard left-footer to give the Reds the title for the third time in four years and the 10th time in their history after one of the closest and most thrilling championship races of recent times.

The result meant Alex Ferguson's team finished with 82 points from 38 games and Newcastle, who once had a 12-point lead, had 78.

It also kept alive their hopes of winning an unprecedented second English league and cup double as they face Liverpool in the FA Cup final next Saturday.

Newcastle had to beat Tottenham and hope that Ferguson's men lost at Middlesbrough, to win the title for the first time for 69 years.

It's the hardest league in the world to win," Ferguson said after his team had collected the trophy again. "It took a long time to win it but we had a tremendous run, winning 16 out of 17 games to put us back in the frame.

Disappointed Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan said:

"We are still trying to build a team as good as them. Our congratulations go to Manch-

ester United and their supporters who did well to catch us. Everyone talks about our collapse but they did tremendously well to catch us."

Roy Keane, voted man-of-the-match, said: "When we were 12 points behind, we thought it was all over really. But we knew Newcastle would slip up. We just kept plugging away."

"We always came to win the match and we knew if we won today we had the title no matter what happened in the other game."

Sir Bobby Charlton, a member of United's 1968 European cup-winning side and now a director at Old Trafford said: "It was a bit nerve-wracking. But it has been a great year for the younger players - and the older players. I'm really so pleased for everybody at the club. I shall enjoy it all summer."

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Peter Beardsley of Newcastle said: "All credit to Manchester United. They've done it in style and they probably deserved to win it overall."

While there was ecstasy for the Red half of Manchester there was nothing but gloom at Maine Road after Manchester City were relegated on goal difference, despite fighting back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Liverpool.

Liverpool took the lead when Steve Lomas put through his own net after only six minutes and went 2-0 ahead with a stunning shot from Ian Rush, scoring his 229th and last league goal for the club before leaving after 15 years at the end of the season.

City came back with a 71st minute penalty from German striker Uwe Rosler and a 78th minute equaliser from Kit Symons, but results elsewhere condemned them to drop out of the top division for the first time since 1989.

Sheffield Wednesday, Coventry and Southampton, who could all have been relegated, were saved by City's result. Wednesday finished on 40 points with Coventry, Southampton and Manchester City all on 38, meaning City went down on goal difference.

Coventry, never relegated since they went up to the old First Division in 1967, survived after a 0-0 draw at home against Leeds.

Southampton stayed up

after drawing 0-0 with Wimbledon and Sheffield Wednesday remain in the top flight after a 1-1 draw at West Ham.

City go down with already-relegated Queens Park Rangers and Bolton who ended the season with a 3-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest and a 2-1 loss at Arsenal respectively.

Arsenal's win - thanks to two goals in the last eight minutes from David Platt and Dennis Bergkamp - mean they pip Everton, Blackburn and Tottenham for a place in next season's UEFA cup.

Fourth place Aston Villa, which also is in the UEFA cup after winning the League Cup, tumbled 1-0 at Everton, whose scorer was Joe Parkinson. Everton moved up to sixth.

Last year's champions Blackburn scored a 3-2 victory at Chelsea to take seventh place. After Chelsea's Dennis Wise had given the home team the lead, Rovers came back with goals from Tim Sherwood, Billy McKinlay and Graham Fenton. John Spencer replied for the Blues, which slipped just below half way to 11th in Glenn Hoddle's last game as manager before he becomes England coach in July.

Sunderland and Derby, already sure of promotion to the Premier league, ended the season with defeats. Sunderland went down 2-0 at Tranmere and Derby slipped up 3-2 at West Bromwich Albion.

The four teams to contest the playoffs for the third promotion place are Crystal Palace, Stoke, Leicester and Charlton.

Atlanta, May 6:

The United States will play Argentina in Birmingham, Alabama, in the top contest on the opening day of the Olympic soccer tournament, a draw held on Sunday determined, reports Reuter.

Brazil, currently ranked first in FIFA's world rankings, is the top seed in the Group D pool, which includes Japan, Hungary and Nigeria. The Group D games will be played in Miami and Orlando, Florida.

Also playing in Orlando and Miami will be the Group B pool, headed by Spain and including Saudi Arabia and France.

The United States, currently ranked 14th in FIFA rankings, will meet the 8th ranked Argentines on July 20 in Birmingham. The Americans stunned Argentina 3-0 last July.

American defender Alexi Lalas, who scored one of the goals in that match, said Sunday, "from a fan's standpoint, obviously USA versus Argentina

Sampdoria stun Milan



ROME, May 6: Sampdoria striker Enrico Chiesa single-handedly brought newly-crowned champions Milan to their knees on the penultimate Sunday of the Italian season with two goals in a shock 3-0 win, report agencies.

The prolific Chiesa took less than 60 seconds to halt Milan's week-long celebrations of their 15th title, pouncing on Christian Karembeu's wayward shot to beat Sebastiano Rossi.

In the 35th minute the same player, linked with a move to Parma next season and expected to play a key role in Italy's European Championship squad this summer, unleashed a tremendous shot from 20 metres that flew into Rossi's top corner for his 22nd goal of the season.

Veteran playmaker Roberto Mancini completed Milan's third defeat of the season with a goal in the 39th minute.

At the San Siro, England's Paul Ince helped condemn Bari to Serie B with the opening goal in Inter's 3-0 win, but his side's hopes of a UEFA Cup place suffered a blow as rivals Roma thrashed Fiorentina 4-1 in Florence.

Roy Hodgson's Inter lie another point back, after Ince's 34th minute shot and efforts from Marco Branca and Maurizio Ganz dispelled Bari's last remaining hopes of staying up.

Bari join Padova Cremonese and Torino in next season's Serie B.

Although the championship has been decided in Italy and Ajax retained the Dutch crown, the title race goes on in Germany.

Bulgarian World Cup player Emil Kostadinov was the hero Saturday as Bayern Munich edged FC Cologne 3-2 to keep their Bundesliga title hopes alive.

Kostadinov, who rarely plays at Munich, fired two goals to help the Franz Beckenbauer-coached team stay points even with Borussia Dortmund in the end spurt of the race.

Barcelona saw their chance of a fifth Spanish league title in six years take a major blow Sunday, struggling to a 1-1 draw with Sevilla and falling

five points behind Atletico Madrid with three games to play.

Gabriel Moya silenced the crowd at Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium with his 23rd minute goal on a pass from Davor Suker to put Sevilla ahead 1-0. Jose Maria Bakero tied it on a 49th minute header, but it was not enough to halt Barcelona from falling behind a point behind Valencia into third.

Atletico stayed on course for their first league title since 1977, winning 3-1 at Compostela on Saturday. Valencia stayed four points behind, winning 1-0 at home over sporting Gijon on Saturday.

In the Dutch league, champions Ajax finished the season quietly with a 0-0 tie with Graafschap and now are looking forward to their Champions' Cup showdown with Juventus in Rome May 22. Ajax, titleists three years in row, finished with 83 points from 34 games, scoring 97 goals and conceding just 24.

Despite losing 2-1 to Auxerre in Saturday's French Cup final at Parch des Princes, Nimes, who are scrambling to avoid relegation to the Fourth Division, could be up against the soccer giants of Europe in the Cup Winners Cup next season.

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