

Premier soccer league from Oct 10

Sports Reporter

The Premier Division football league, will begin at the Mirpur Stadium from October 10. Abdur Rahim, president of Dhaka Mahanagar Football Club Committee (DMFLC) confirmed yesterday.

Ten teams will be featuring in the meet which will be held on double league basis with two matches scheduled for a day.

Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club will meet promoters Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society in the inaugural match.

According to Rahim, efforts are underway to hold both the matches in day time. If the decision is taken, the first match will kick off at 2 pm followed by the second at 4 pm.

Following ten teams will participate in the Premier League: Mohammedan SC, Abahani KC, Muktioddha Sangsad, Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool, Arambagh KS, Farashganj SC, Agrani Bank, Brothers Union, Victoria SC and Rahmatganj MFS.

Rain plays foul at Mirpur

Sports Reporter

Heavy afternoon shower washed out both of the Shamsuddin Spinning Mahanagar Cup football matches yesterday.

The day's first encounter between Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society and Farashganj Sporting Club was being played at the Mirpur Stadium till the half time when the rain started falling cats and dogs. The match was locked at 0-0 at the time. The second clash involving Abahani and Brothers Union was virtually called off as the downpour continued till late in the evening.

It could not be immediately confirmed when the matches will be rescheduled but according to a Dhaka Mahanagar football league committee official yesterday, the matches, which will confirm the last two semifinals of the tournament, are not likely to be held before September 27 because of Abahani KC's Asian Cup Winners' Cup engagement against Beijing Guoan at the Mirpur Stadium tomorrow at 8 pm.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday announced the rate of tickets for the Abahani-Beijing Guoan clash.

For general gallery, spectators have to pay Tk 20 per ticket while the rate will be Tk 50 for VIP viewers. The tickets will go on sale from 6:15 pm while the matches will be played at 8 pm.

A 24-member Beijing Guoan football team have already arrived in the city on Monday.

Abahani's Kenyan booter arrives

Sports Reporter

John Odhiambo a Kenyan national midfielder, arrived in the city yesterday to play for Federation Cup champions Abahani Krira Chakra.

24-year-old John, who played for his country in the World Cup qualifiers and African Nations Cup, plays for Gor Mahia Club in Nairobi which secured the third place in the 18-team Kenyan national league this year. He has played 11 times for his country.

John is the fourth foreigner so far arrived for the team. Two Uzbekistan booters — Anatoly and Rezaat — and a Sri Lankan national team forward Roshan Perera are already here and played in the Shamsuddin Spinning Mahanagar Cup.

Maggi noodles relaunched

World renowned Maggi noodles has been relaunched in Bangladesh on September 18.

A day-long grand motor and horse cart rally was organised in the city on Saturday by its distributor Nestle to mark the occasion. Around 200 school children participated in the rally, says a press release.

'I could do the dirty job for the captain'

He's the player you enjoy talking to most in the Indian team. He's jolly, accessible and talks sense. Though under a cloud due to match-fixing charges, the new Indian vice-captain Ajay Jadeja received news of his elevation with joy and took time out to talk to Aniruddha Bahal of Outlook magazine (India). We deem it as an interesting encounter to go through.

How does it feel?

J: Good. It's good in the sense that selectors feel I'm responsible enough. You can help in decisions and not as everybody thinks that I am just there to party. Of course, I do that as well. I could do the dirty work for the captain. Leave him to do the main job. At the nets he can't watch everybody. I could take 2-3 players to the field. We can't have Jonty Rhodes in India but whatever we have we can improve upon.

Also a room to yourself.

J: (Laughs) Yes, that's a big honour.

Why has the Indian team been performing so badly?

J: If we knew the reason we would have rectified them. In Sri Lanka, I think, we were just outplayed by Jayasuriya.

The Lankans have taken the game to a new level.

J: It's the same side that came here three years back and lost 3-0. The difference is that they have started believing in themselves. Everybody's with them — manager, country, media. They have played together a lot; set patterns of play. The bowler knows which over he's going to bowl before the captain calls him. They know who plays of spin or leg spin better. Last time Sidhu mauled Muralitharan here. Now they make sure Murali doesn't bowl when Sidhu's around or bowls the least.

The first 15 overs have suddenly become crucial in one-day cricket.

J: In the subcontinent and Sharjah, the game is decided in the first 15 overs. Between the 15th and the 50th over if you average the runs scored by all sides it would be between 150 and 180. If you have more runs in the first 15, you are set.

You have the best partnership average when opening with Sachin. Even better than Greenidge and Haynes. How did you get stuck

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at No. 6?

J: Nobody wants to change batting positions these days. I volunteered to go to six at the Sharjah fixture after the World Cup. But just for a phase, because no one was willing to bat there. In the last 50-odd games I have opened just twice.

You would like to bat up?

J: It's added more pressure on the guys named. Especially if they don't get runs. What people don't realise is that the wicket could have been funny, the ball swinging etc. There's so much pressure that sometimes you leave it till the end and the run rate climbs; you get out. Six months back if you got out no one would have said anything. Now everybody casts aspersions. Your articles haven't helped Indian cricket at all.

You have felt the pressure?

J: Everyday I go out to play I think about you. People call and abuse us in the hotel. The family says things. So in a crunch you have a tendency sometimes not to fight it out. You are worried about what people will say if you get out. Performances don't count any more. You would probably say Waqar was paid to get hit during the Bangalore match. If India wins people have paid the other side; if India loses people have paid Indian players. Australia couldn't chase 120-odd runs in the last Ashes test. Nobody says anything. Maybe Sergei Bubka was paid money not to go for the gold in the last two Olympics.

Social pressure too?

J: Not at all. I still go out as I used to. Of course, now you get to hear a few more things than before. Now you go to a disco after losing, people say these guys were paid, now they are partying.

Courtesy: Outlook

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I come in. That is the time of maximum pressure. You wish the earlier players had gone on. Either I come in for two overs and my job is only to hit. I might miss. I might hit. Fair enough. But in the 37th over I can't hit and I can't miss. You have to get set all. It's not like you are coming at No. 3 and have all the time in the world.

About match-fixing charges that Outlook's brought about

J: It's added more pressure on the guys named. Especially if they don't get runs. What people don't realise is that the wicket could have been funny, the ball swinging etc. There's so much pressure that sometimes you leave it till the end and the run rate climbs; you get out. Six months back if you got out no one would have said anything. Now everybody casts aspersions. Your articles haven't helped Indian cricket at all.

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