

MSC win battle royale

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club roared back in the title race when they conquered their arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra by six wickets in the last first round match of the GrameenPhone Premier Cricket League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Mohammedan victory was fashioned by their captain Minhazul Abedin and Sanwar Hossain.

The two seasoned campaigners put on 109 runs for the undefeated fifth wicket as Mohammedan topped a fighting Abahani total of 254 for six with 19 balls to spare.

With this win Mohammedan finished the first phase with 16 points, four points adrift of league leaders Victoria Sporting Club and two points behind second-placed Bangladesh Biman. The defeat, Abahani's fourth from 11 games, almost dashed their hopes of regaining the title that they lost to Mohammedan last season.

Sanwar returned to form with a polished 70 and Minhaz struck 53, his second successive half century, to swing the pendulum in Mohammedan's way in an absorbing contest where Abahani just could not sustain the pressure of the last ten overs.

"This win puts us firmly back on track. I'm happy that our batting finally clicked. I always felt that 250 was not a defending total on this batting wicket," said an elated Mohammedan captain Minhaz after the match.

His counterpart Akram Khan quite understandably came up with full of complaints.

"The umpiring was not up to the standard. If the foreign umpires are not better than the locals then what's the point of hiring them," questioned Akram bitterly.

The big right-hander who left the field after 17 overs because of running high temperature also blamed his bowlers for letting Mohammedan off the hook.

Mohammedan needed 57 runs from the last 60 deliveries. But the pressure eased off after right-arm

seamer Anwar Hossain, returning in his second spell in the 42nd over, conceded 13 runs.

The match as a contest was over when Neeyamur Rashid, bowling his first over replacing Anwar, was clobbered for 12 runs.

Any contest of the two crowd-pulling sides hardly turns out to be purely an entertaining one because of the passion and tension involved in it. And yesterday's affair was also no exception. The game was stopped twice during the Mohammedan chase.

It all started when Minhaz asked for a runner straining his left hamstring after completing a sharp single in the 38th over. But Abahani's

stand-in captain Naimur Rahman refused to allow an apparently pretentious Minhaz to have a fresh pair of legs.

Naimur however resigned after fifteen minutes following a long argument with the Pakistani umpires, who were convinced that the wily right-hander needed a runner.

Opener Ehsanul Huq did another good job as a runner after scoring a solid 44.

The match stopped for the second time in the 45th over with Mohammedan only 24 runs away from victory. Some unsporting Abahani fans vented their frustra-

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PHOTO: STAR
Minhazul Abedin drives through covers during the GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League fixture against Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nitol-Tata Nat'l football Chaturanga in fine form

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE from Sylhet

Sylhet's Chaturanga Jubo Sangha continued with their impressive performance in the Nitol-Tata National Football League after outplaying Khulna Abahani Krira Chakra 4-2 in their second match at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

The home side led the first half 3-0.

Chaturanga, who held defending champions Dhaka Abahani Krira Chakra to a goalless draw in the inaugural match of the league at Chittagong's MA Aziz Stadium last week, took the lead in the ninth minute when striker Saiful Islam Khokon found the net.

Masud Khan Johnny doubled the margin in the 20th minute while Pranotosh sealed the first half with the third goal in the 43rd minute.

After the breather, the visitors made a brilliant come back and pulled two goals back in the span of four minutes. Monir scored the first in the 48th minute while Proshanto Dey made it 2-3 after seven minutes later.

But their good work went in vain when Khokon netted his second goal to take the match away from a penalty in the 68th minute.

Khokon was later adjudged the player-of-the-match.

TEAMS

CHATURANGA SANGHA: Mostafiz, Kingshuk, Amit Khan, Kamal Hossain, Riad Mahmud, Abdul Kaiyum, Pranotosh, Jane Alam, Masud Haider, Masud Khan Johnny and saiful Islam Khokon.

KHULNA ABAHANI: Iran Sheikh, Ashraf, Nasiruzzaman, Bappi, Mohsin, Aminul, Selim, Proshanto, Abul Hossain and Monir Hossain.

Yellow cards: Monir and Proshanto (Abahani KC)

Referee: Maruf Sikder.

Div I Cricket Gopibagh's narrow win

SPORTS REPORTER

Gopibagh Friends Association registered a nail-biting one-run win over Uttara Friends Club in a First Division Cricket League match at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In an absorbing encounter, Gopibagh were all out for 183 in 49 overs after electing to bat first. Extras contributed the highest 58 runs to the Gopibagh total 40 of which came from wides.

In reply, Uttara Friends Club were bowled out for 182 in 48.3 overs with opener Nayeem Islam making 53.

SCORES IN BRIEF
GOPIBAGH FA: 183 all out in 49 overs (Extras 58, saikat 34, Saiful 27, Montu 3-37)

UTTARA FC: 182 all out in 48.3 overs (Nayeem 53, Tanveer 41, Maruf 32, Bashar 28, Obayed 3-41)
Result: Gopibagh Friends Association won by one run.

Nat'l Youth Cricket

UNB, Dhaka

Comilla, Natore and Pabna won their respective matches in the 21st National Youth Cricket Championship at different venues across the country yesterday.

In Comilla, the hosts defeated Rangamati by five wickets.

In Pabna, Natore beat Kurigram by three wickets.

In Joypurhat, Pabna earned a huge nine-wicket victory over Chapainawabganj.

BRIEF SCORES
RANGAMATI: 96 all out in 36 overs (Nazim 26, extras 35, Wasim 4/13, Bikash 2/13 and Monirul 2/20).

COMILLA: 97 for 5 in 23 overs (Ujjal 40, Bulbul 25, extras 15; Sanjeet 3/24).

KURIGRAM: 98 all out in 31.3 overs (Zaman 24; Akash 3/12, Rajib 3/14).

NATORE: 99 for 7 in 19.4 overs (Moshiur 35, Rony 2/1, Shamsu 2/34).

CHAPAINAWABGANJ: 102 all out in 36.5 overs (Towfiq 15; Enamul 2/0, Biswas 2/24).

PABNA: 103 for one in 17.3 overs (Naimur 64).



PHOTO: STAR
THE THREE MUSKETEERS: (L-R) Mohammedan captain Minhazul Abedin, his runner Ehsanul Huq and Sanwar Hossain converge while play was held up due to crowd trouble during their match against Abahani yesterday.

BLAST FROM THE PAST



PHOTO: STAR FILE
Italy's Paolo Rossi has just scored the first goal against West Germany in the final of 1982 FIFA World Cup at Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. It was the Juventus striker's sixth goal and he became the competition's top marksman.

CUP CORNER



AFP, Warsaw

Poland's players were each promised a 150,000-dollar cash bonus should they win the World Cup, the country's football federation said in Wednesday's press reports.

Each player would earn 150,000 dollars a man in the unlikely event that the east European nation actually went all the way and won the May 31 to June 30 finals in Korea and Japan.

The federation, which has asked Poland's finance ministry for tax relief, will award 25,000 dollars for a second round spot, 50,000 dollars for a last four place and 100,000 dollars for a semi-final berth.

Poland are in first round Group D with South Korea, USA and Portugal.

ASIAN REFEREES GET LECTURE

Kuala Lumpur

Twelve Asian referees will participate in a four-day lecture from May 2 on how to apply the rules of the game to the 2002 World Cup finals, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said Wednesday.

"The AFC is leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to prepare the five Asian referees and seven assistant referees for the World Cup," Peter Velappan, AFC general secretary said in a statement.

"We are very confident that our Asian referees will put on an outstanding show at the World Cup."

Velappan said the seminar, conducted by AFC referees committee General Farouk Bouzo, would build confidence amongst the Asian referees and would focus on the theory and practical applications of the laws of the game.

Of the referees, Ali Bujsaim of the United Arab Emirates, is the most experienced hand, as this would be his third World Cup after officiating at the 1994 and 1998 World Cup, AFC said.

Prior to this, the Asian referees were part of the 72 World Cup referees who participated in a FIFA organised workshop in Seoul last month.

NO WORLD CUP FOR VALGAEREN

Brussels

Belgium international Joos Valgaeren, who plays for Scottish Premier League champions Celtic, is having a hernia operation and will not be going to the World Cup, the country's press reported on Wednesday.

The 26-year-old player, who has had groin problems for several months, had an operation in March with the hope of joining his international teammates for the May 31 to June 30 international showcase event.

The Belgian press however reported that he will have another operation in the next few days, meaning he will be out of the finals in Korea and Japan.

Valgaeren was a first-choice central defender for Belgium who meet Japan, Russia and Tunisia in first round Group H.

RONALDINHO SCARE

Paris

Paris Saint Germain's Brazilian international Ronaldinho has injured his right knee in training and is doubtful for his next French league match against Metz, the club said on Wednesday.

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Ispahani Cricket Batters let Ochi down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A superb bowling spell by pacer Seejan was not enough to fetch a much-needed victory for his team Ochi club against Bandar Krira Samity in CJKS Ispahani Cricket League at the MA Aziz stadium yesterday.

Agrabad Nawjowan Club, however, had no problem to crush Bengal club by wide margin in day's other match at the tiny ground of Chittagong Medical College.

Ochi club was badly in need of a win against Bandar club to move into the Super League. But their batsmen failed miserably to eventually concede a one-run defeat in a thrilling match.

Batting first, Bandar Samity were all out for 173 runs in 44.1 overs, which included a patient half-century (57 off 107 balls) and two moderate contributions from tail-enders Sabuj (26 off 27 balls) and Babu (21 off 46 balls).

Seejan sent down thunder at the Bandar batsmen and reduced them five for 34 at one stage.

In reply, Ochi club could only reach 172, two runs short of the victory mark, for 9 in the stipulated 45 overs. Fine fielding by Bandar's fielders as well as three run-outs did the damage to the opponents.

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Ganguly lauds his fast guns

AFP, Port-of-Spain

India skipper Sourav Ganguly on Tuesday praised his fast bowlers for a memorable 37-run victory over the West Indies in the second Test at the Queen's Park Oval here.

This was India's third win in 35 Tests in the West Indies, the previous two also coming at the same venue in 1971 and 1976.

"Our fast bowlers looked disciplined, especially (Ashish) Nehra and Zaheer (Khan). They stuck to the line," said Ganguly.

Left-arm fast bowler Nehra

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PHOTO: STAR

Thomas Odoyo arrived in the city yesterday to play for Victoria Sporting Club. The Kenyan all-rounder did not miss the opportunity to see his more illustrious compatriot Steve Tikolo in action during the big match between Mohammedan and Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Odoyo is likely to make his Dhaka League debut when League leaders Victoria played their first Super Six match against Young Pegasus on April 29.

Sachin, delectably different



REUTERS, London

Sachin Tendulkar, anecdotally at least, has always been something of a disappointment.

Cricket is rich with those tales that encapsulate men and their deeds in the pithiest of phrases.

The biggest names, so the unwritten rule goes, should command the biggest stories.

Matching Don Bradman's 29 centuries in Port of Spain last week is one thing. But anecdotally Tendulkar, as measured and composed in his private life as he is at the crease, remains reprehensibly deficient. Twenty-nine today, he owes us more than a few presents.

Few cricketers came bigger, or more dominant, than WG Grace.

Bowled early in one of his innings, he promptly turned round and rebuilt his stumps rather than walk off. He was neatly putting the balls back on when the flabbergasted bowler asked the great Gloucestershire doctor what on earth he thought he was doing.

WG calmly tossed the ball back to him, took his guard again and, words to this effect, said: "There's a big crowd here, lad, and they've come to watch me bat, not watch you bowl."

The smouldering, haughty Viv Richards also had the colour of character to match his genius. Few ever got the better of the great washbuckler.

England quick bowler Greg Thomas tried once, beating Richards time after time during a particularly washpish away-seaming over while playing for Welsh county Glamorgan against Somerset.

"You know what it looks like," he said. "You go and find it."

The flint-eyed Australian Steve Waugh, self-confessed expert in "mental disintegration" and legendary sledges, came close to the best cricket quip of all time.

Australia, the eventual champions, were on the brink of going out of the 1999 World Cup at Headingley when Waugh chipped a regulation catch to Herschelle Gibbs.

Gibbs, too eager to celebrate, lost control of the ball as he readied to throw it up in the air in triumph and spilled it.

Waugh, who went on to make a match-winning 120 and whose team later knocked out the same South Africans in the semifinals, was reported to have approached the crestfallen Gibbs and rubbed in his despair with the prophetic words: "You've just gone and dropped the World Cup, mate."

The truth was good, but not that good.

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2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

3 6

days to go



Did U Know?

In 1982, at just 17 years and 42 days, Northern Ireland forward Norman Whiteside made his World Cup debut in the match against Yugoslavia in Saragossa, and he remains the youngest ever player to take part in the finals.



What to WATCH

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Arsenal vs West Ham United
Same day delay at 4:00 pm
UEFA Champions League
Barcelona vs Real Madrid
Repeat at 6:30 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
World Cup Soccer Mix
Taped Version at 9:00 pm
UEFA Champions League
Man United vs Leverkusen
Repeat at 9:30 pm

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Bruce Arena

(US soccer coach)
"If you compare it to 1994 and 1998, it's a better team from top to bottom in experience. Hopefully it will position itself to move forward."
After announcing the World Cup squad.

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 169

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star

Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm April 26, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who clinched the Indian Wells Masters Series tennis title?
Hewitt Henman Agassi

2. Who won the Bangladesh Games hockey title?
Dhaka BDR BJMC

3. How many balls did Nathan Astle face to score Test cricket's fastest double century?
1532 0 212

4. Who lifted the Bangladesh Games football title?
Chittagong Dhaka Army

5. How many gold medals did Doly Akhter win in Bangladesh Games?
Nine Seven Ten

Name:
Class: Roll No.
School Address:
Phone: (If any)

Pakistan win ODI series

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan successfully chased a mammoth 277 to clinch the second one-day international against New Zealand by three wickets at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium last night.

The hosts are now leading the three-match series 2-0. All-rounder Abdul Razzaq smashed an 85-ball 86 as Pakistan overhauled the target in 47.1 overs and with three wickets in hand. Razzaq was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Earlier New Zealand rode on a sizzling hundred (105) from Craig McMillan.

SCORECARDS

Scoreboard of the New Zealand innings in their limited-overs match against Pakistan at Rawalpindi stadium Wednesday:

NEW ZEALAND
Nevin b Abdul Razzaq 23
Horne lbw b Wasim Akram 62
McMillan c sub (Malik) b Waqar Younis 105
Adams b Wasim Akram 45
Oram c sub (Malik) b Waqar Younis 8
Vincent not out 7
Styris not out 1
Extras: (b-8, lb-11, w-4, nb-3) 26
Total: (for 5 wkts) 277

Did not bat: S. Fleming, R. Hart, B. Walker and D. Tuffey
Fall of wickets: 1-44, 2-140, 3-232, 4-259, 5-272

BOWLER

	O	M	R	W
Wasim	10	0	58	2
Waqar	10	1	46	2
Razzaq	7	0	33	1
Shoaib	10	1	51	0
Saqain	8	0	47	0
Afridi	5	0	23	0

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (Wls) and Aleem Dar (Pak)
Match referee: Mike Procter (Rsa)

Astle's Pak tour over

AFP, Rawalpindi

New Zealand's casualty-hit cricket team was dealt another blow Wednesday with the announcement that high-scoring batsman Nathan Astle is heading home from Pakistan.

"Astle is going back Friday from Lahore because of a knee injury assessed Tuesday night. It's serious enough to demand further attention back in New Zealand," said team manager Ross Dykes.

Team physio Dayle Shackle said Astle had damaged a ligament in his left knee and also had problems in his right knee. Council one-day event in Sri Lanka in September.