

MSC back on track

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Title aspirants Mohammedan Sporting Club got back on track with a hard fought solitary goal victory over Dhanmondi Club in their 'Super Five' opener of the National Bank Premier Division Football League at the floodlit Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan's Nigerian midfielder Salisu Osalio struck the all-important goal in the 45th minute of the see-saw match where Dhanmondi put up a brave fight against their superior Motijheel opponents.

It was a lucky escape for an under-strength Mohammedan after their 1-2 heart-break defeat against their bitter rivals Abahani in the Dhaka derby on Saturday.

The popular Motijheel outfit missed their injured central defender Jewel Rana in yesterday's match. Midfield workhorse Monwar Hossain and their leading marksman Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib also missed out on the match.

Salisu separated the two teams on the day with a powerful right-footer after the ball came by his way following a series of shots and deflections at the Dhanmondi goal mouth.

Salisu drove the ball so hard that it ripped through the net, much to the delight of a few thousand Mohammedan supporters.

Apart from the goal, it was Dhanmondi who dominated the first session with their leading scorer Topu came close to scoring twice within a space of two minutes.

Topu, who notched seven goals in the first phase, had Mohammedan custodian at his mercy in the 21st minute after being fed by Palash. But he shot the ball wide off the mark.

Two minutes later, Topu once again shot the ball out, much to the relief of the black and whites.

Mohammedan intensified their attack after the break with the intro-

duction of Farhad in place of Kanchan. The balding attacker tested Dhanmondi keeper Biplab with a left-footer and a header midway through second session.

Although Mohammedan lacked the bite in their attack, their worry in the back seemed to have lessened with their new Iraqi recruit Riad playing confidently as a central defender. It was his second match after his Dhaka league debut against Abahani where he played as a left back.

With that win, Mohammedan stayed right behind leaders and defending champions Abahani in the race having raised their tally to 25 points from ten matches.

On the other hand, Dhanmondi remained glued to their previous collection of 14 points.

Yellow card: Parvez (Dhanmondi).

TEAMS
MOHAMMEDAN SC: Nizam, Riad, Mahmudul Hasan, Masud Rana,

Abdullah, Tito, Tushar (Rashed), Salisu, Sentu (Anwar), Faisal and Kanchan (Farhad).

DHANMONDI CLUB: Biplab, Dulal, Shahidul, Parimal, Narayan, Hanif, Palash, Nurul Islam, Monju, Topu and Parvez.

Referee: Golam Mustafa.

VICTORIA BEAT RAHMATGANJ

Earlier, Victoria Sporting Club beat Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society in tiebreaker in a relegation league engagement after the scheduled 90 minutes ended in a goalless draw.

Al-Amin, Polo, Abul and Sohag scored for the winners in the shoot-out.

For Rahmatganj, Ritu, Taju and Shamim found the net while Apu and Zaman missed.

Both teams have equal 10 points from as many matches after yesterday's match.



Mohammedan's Nigerian recruit Salisu (L) under pressure from Dhanmondi defender Dulal Chandra Shaha during their National Bank Premier Division League Super Five match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



Did U Know?

England had a wonderful defence record in the 1966 World Cup football finals. They conceded their first goal in the semifinal.



TALK TURKEY



Serena Williams

(American tennis star)
"I always want to see Venus do well. I never want to see Venus lose."



What to WATCH

ESPN

Cricket Programming
Super Selector
Repeat at 7:30 pm
Sportscentre Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
English Premier Football League
Arsenal vs Manchester City
Repeat at 9:30 pm
English Premier Football League
Newcastle United vs Leeds United
Live at 12:55 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports

Asia Sport Show
Int'l Sports News
Repeat at 1:30 pm
Football Asia
Repeat at 7:00 pm
Gillette World Sports Special
Int'l Sports News
Repeat at 7:30 pm
Sportline Tonight
Sport News
Live at 8:00 pm
Cricket Programming
Super Selector
Repeat at 10:00 pm



Tick the correct answers, post to
The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
Sept 13, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who won the Cote Premier Division handball title?
BDR Mariner Ajax
- Who became man-of-the-match in the 3rd Test between England and India?
D r a v i d
Tendulkar Kumble
- Who won New Haven Open tennis title?
Venus Hingis Serena
- Who are the current English Premier League champions?
Arsenal Man Utd Liverpool
- Who is the new French national soccer coach?
Santini Metsu Hiddink

Name
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Class Roll No.
School Address



DAY'S EVENT

National Bank Premier Division Football League Super Five
Muktijoddha Sangsad v Arambagh KS (6 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Nat'l booters off to Thailand Sept 23

UNB, Dhaka

Before taking part Busan Asian Games football competition, the national team will play one practice match in Thailand on September 23.

"The team will leave on September 20 for Thailand en route to Korea. But the opponent is yet to be known," said acting general secretary of the Bangladesh Football Federation Sirajul Islam Bachchu yesterday.

However, Bachchu declined to comment on the little or no practice by the national side.

The selected players are currently involved in the National Bank Premier Division League. It is expected to be completed by September 19.

National coach George Kottan has already expressed his disappointment over the matter.

Bangladesh skipper Alfaz Ahmed said he was yet to be informed of his appointment.

"I only learned of the news through the papers."

However, Bachchu stated that the team list with Alfaz as captain, had already been sent to the Games organisers.

Alfaz the experienced striker thought it would be extremely difficult to perform with such insufficient preparation.

"We needed at least a month to get ready."

"India our first opponents have played in South Africa, Jamaica and recently took part in a tournament in Vietnam where they emerged champions," he said.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group C along with India, China and Turkmenistan. They play India on September 27, meet China on September 30. Their last group match is against Turkmenistan on October 3.

Aussies mean business

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY SRI LANKA 2002

REUTERS, Colombo

World champions Australia, twice surprised by India in the early stages of the ICC Champions Trophy one-day tournament, remain the side to beat in the 2002 edition starting on Thursday.

Coach John Buchanan has warned the other sides in the prelude to next year's World Cup in South Africa that the Australians were still getting better as they prepared to meet defending champions New Zealand on Sunday.

"My role is to make the side concentrate, in the next six months, on the fundamentals, to make them play Test and one-dayers better than

they currently do," he said. The travel-weary Australian squad were determined not to look beyond their opening clash against Trans-Tasman rivals and trophy holders New Zealand on Sunday.

"We are all focussed on the first round, all work will be around the first match," skipper Ricky Ponting told reporters.

Ponting's side has been in ominous form, having dominated a one-day tri-series in Nairobi last week before rain washed out the final with Australia in a winning position against Pakistan.

"Rain probably cost us what we thought we were probably going to win," Ponting said.

Australia were favoured to win the two previous editions of the tournament, dubbed the 'mini World Cup', but lost both times to India, in

the quarterfinals in Dhaka in 1998 and in the first round in Nairobi two years ago.

"If we beat New Zealand and Bangladesh in the next game, we will be in the semifinals," Ponting said.

The Australian skipper was pleased with the fluent form of opening batsman Matthew Hayden, who has carried his superb test run into the shorter version of the game. Ponting also felt express paceman Brett Lee was gradually developing into a key one-day bowler.

Ponting saw New Zealand, South Africa and England among the sides with a good chance to win the second-most prestigious one-day tournament after the World Cup.

"Lot of these sides are well-matched," he said.

But Buchanan said: "We have a game plan (this time). There were certain challenges which we didn't necessarily respond to then but it'll be a lot better this time."

The Australians had to endure a 19-hour journey out of Nairobi after their final against Pakistan on Saturday, changing flights in Dubai and Madras.

"We have played four games in the last six days and then had a nightmarish flight. We will see how we cope with it," he said.

Hosts Sri Lanka, India and the unpredictable Pakistan side — all past world champions — will be boosted by their familiarity with traditionally slow Asian pitches.

Off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan could prove the key if Sri Lanka are to push their home advantage and assuage the pain of an abysmal showing in the 1999 World Cup after winning the tournament three years earlier.

"I don't know about the first two

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FIXTURES

Sept 12:	SL v Pak, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 13:	SA v WI, SSC (D)
Sept 14:	Ind v Zim, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 15:	Aus v NZ, SSC (D)
Sept 16:	SL v Hol, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 17:	WI v Ken, SSC (D)
Sept 18:	Eng v Zim, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 19:	Aus v Ban, SSC (D)
Sept 20:	SA v Ken, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 21:	Pak v Hol, SSC (D)
Sept 22:	Eng v Ind, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 23:	NZ v Ban, SSC (D)
Sept 24:	Rest Day
Sept 25:	Semifinal 1, Premadasa (D/N) Winner Pool 2 v Winner Pool 3
Sept 26:	Reserve Day
Sept 27:	Semifinal 2, Premadasa (D/N) Winner Pool 1 v Winner Pool 4
Sept 28:	Reserve Day
Sept 29:	Final, Premadasa (D/N)
Sept 30:	Reserve Day

Note: D/N: Day/Night match starts at 14.30 pm. Otherwise all games begin at 10 am.

Wasim's wish

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY SRI LANKA 2002

REUTERS, Colombo

Pakistan fast bowler Wasim Akram is hoping to go out on a high when he retires from the international game after next year's World Cup in South Africa.

"Pakistan winning the World Cup will be a dream come true," said Wasim, regarded as one of the game's fastest bowling greats.

"I can't ask for anything more. That would be an ideal way to end my career," he told reporters on Tuesday.

Wasim captained the Pakistan side that lost to Australia in the final of the 1999 World Cup.

The 36-year-old left-arm is the only player to claim more than 400 test and one-day wickets and feels it would be the right time to call it a day.

"But the last 17 years, it has been a roller-coaster ride. I really had a ball," he said on Tuesday.

Wasim is within striking distance of becoming the first bowler to claim 500 one-day scalps, having taken a record 478 from 342 games. His haul from 104 Tests stands at 414.

But the master swing bowler admitted his form in recent one-day tournaments was poor, although he was not unduly worried.

"The World Cup, that will be it. It will be difficult after that. There is a time for everything."

He added: "I am going through a lean patch. But after 17 years, it's

nothing much if I don't get it in one tournament."

Wasim has stamped his authority against many top batsmen since making his debut in 1984-85 and despite his recent drop in form, he still expects to do well in the Colombo one-day event.

"It was very difficult to bowl with control on seaming tracks in Nairobi. But the Sri Lankan wickets suit us."

"Form is temporary, class is permanent," declared Wasim, who won man-of-the-match award in the final of Pakistan's 1992 World Cup victory, and who will be bidding for his fifth appearance.

Referring to criticism that Pakistan sides have been far too inconsistent despite the wealth of talent, Wasim argued that constant play took the edge off the side.

"If you play every day, you are going to lose some. If we play two games a year, we will win both."

Wasim rated New Zealand's Martin Crowe, Brian Lara of West Indies and India's Sachin Tendulkar along with Australia's Steve Waugh and Matthew Hayden as the 'gems' among the batsmen he has bowled against.

But he had only choice for his favourite bowler, the former West Indian paceman Malcolm Marshall.

"He was the cleverest. He knew the weaknesses of the batsmen even before he came in to bat."

The former Lancashire star also regrets the current security problems in Pakistan that almost rule out any chance of ending his playing career in front of his home fans.

But Wasim has no plans to take up coaching after retirement.

"I am not a coaching sort. One has to be very organised. It can also be frustrating sometimes because you can't do it yourself," the former skipper said.

Still got the jitters

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY SRI LANKA 2002

REUTERS, Colombo

Leading West Indies batsman Brian Lara says he is still struggling to shake off the effects of a serious elbow injury suffered in Sri Lanka last year.

"I am not 100 per cent. It had a lot of psychological effect on me," the left-hander said as his side prepared for the ICC Champions Trophy.

"I am unable to try things out (while batting) and I don't feel comfortable," he said.

Lara broke and dislocated his elbow during a one-day game against Sri Lanka after a collision with fielder Marvan Atapattu in December and was sidelined for four months.

He had been in the form of his life, having made 178, 221 and 130 in the preceding Tests although Sri Lanka swept the series 3-0.

The Trinidadian, who holds the records for the best scores in Tests (375) and in first-class cricket (501), has struggled since.

"This is the worst injury I ever had in my life. I now see why sportsmen go through a lean period for so long after such injuries," he said.

"Hopefully my game is going to get back to its best."
West Indies have been in decline since dominating the sport in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The former skipper said: "I have

been part of the decline. I was there when we were on top. There is no one person to lay the blame on. We are all working together now."

Lara said the presence of talented batsmen like Ramnaresh Sarwan and Shivnarine Chandepaul would help turn things around, but added: "We are not going to be as invincible as we were but we are going to be a force to reckon with again."

He pointed out Australia also



BRIAN LARA

went through cycles, struggling in the early 1980s after losing key players to retirement and the rival Kerry Packer series.

Sheltech tennis

UNB, Dhaka

Hira Lal, Dilip Pashia, Amol Roy and Laxman Lal reached the men's singles semifinals of the Sheltech National Tennis Circuit first leg and junior competition yesterday.

Hira defeated Collins 6-4, 6-0, Dilip beat Shafiq 6-4, 7-5. Amol won against Dipu 6-3, 6-3 and Laxman prevailed over Alamgir 6-1, 5-7, 6-2 at the National Tennis Complex.

Hira takes on Dilip while Amol faces Laxman in the semifinals today.

In the men's doubles, Amol and Alamgir reached the last four with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Tofazzal and Laxman.

In the girls' singles (under-14), Mushfiqa Shams won in straight sets against Bhabna to book her place in the final.

Sheetal h'ball

UNB, Dhaka

Armbagh KS and Dikusha SC won their respective matches in the Sheetal Women's Handball League at the ground next to Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Armbagh KS crushed Manikganj Shaturia Team 40-2 goals after leading the first half 15-0. Dikusha SC defeated Usha KC by 20-9 after dominating the first half 13-3.

Today's matches: Jatrabari KC vs Manikganj Shaturia Team and Dikusha SC vs Jatrabari KC.

Chappell on attack

AFP, New Delhi

Cricket administrators came under scathing attack Tuesday for their "ineptitude and arrogance" after India's top players won a decisive battle to protect their commercial rights.

Former Australian captain Ian Chappell said the International Cricket Council (ICC) had to take the blame for allowing the month-long row to simmer which at one stage threatened to derail this week's Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka.

"The conflict is yet another example of how administrative stuff-ups always lead to trouble for the players," the outspoken Chappell wrote in the Hindustan Times.

"At the very least questions should be asked and some heads should roll. It's either a case of ineptitude or arrogance."

"Whatever failing the administrators were guilty of, the same sort of performance from a player on the field would lead to his sacking."

The acrimonious row was resolved on Monday when the ICC climbed down and agreed to sign special, watered down contracts with the Indians, paving the way for a full-strength side to be sent to the 12-nation event.

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Shoaib redefined

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY SRI LANKA 2002

REUTERS, Colombo

Pakistan tearaway paceman Shoaib Akhtar says he has had enough of chasing speed records and now wants to get down to doing his main job of taking wickets consistently.

"Basically, I am no longer interested in bowling faster," the player dubbed the "Rawalpindi Express" said.

The 27-year-old and Australia's Brett Lee are currently regarded the fastest bowlers in the world and will aim to make their impact on the ICC Champions Trophy.

Pakistan meet hosts Sri Lanka in the tournament's opening game on Thursday.

Shoaib said: "It is more important to win matches. I am just here to play the game, not to prove how fast I am. Now I need to focus on how well to manage myself."

The comments mark a huge change in attitude for the well-built fast bowler, who has strained every bit to bowl deliveries over 100 mph (160 kph).

"I have already crossed 100 miles, whether it is accepted or not,"



SHOAIB AKHTAR

he said. "Everybody knows how fast I am."

The bowler was clocked at 161 kph (100.4 mph), during a one-

dayer against New Zealand in Lahore in April but as such feats are not officially monitored, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has said they must remain unofficial.

Shoaib had been competing with Lee to reach the 100 mph landmark. Lee was clocked at 99.4 mph in South Africa this year, just under the second fastest delivery of 99.8 clocked by Australia's Jeff Thomson in 1976.

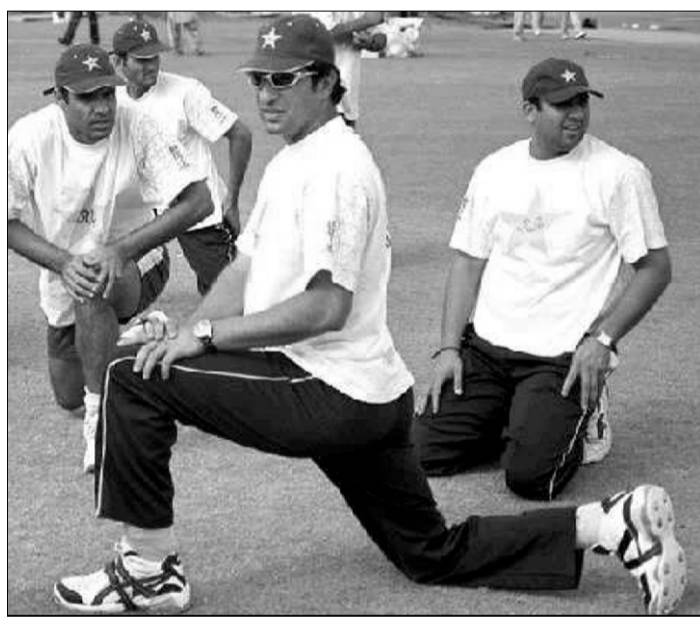
A good-class pace bowler would be looking to average around the 85 mph mark.

Shoaib said he was determined to re-focus his career after several interruptions due to injuries and questions about his bowling action.

The paceman is joint third with Australia's Dennis Lillee and Shane Warne on 60 games in a list of the fastest to take 100 one-day wickets. That list is headed by his compatriots Saqlain Mushtaq (53 games) and skipper Waqar Younis (59).

Besides his 114 scalps from 68 one-day games, he has also claimed 69 wickets from 21 Tests.

But Shoaib still indicated his passion for pace will never die. "I can bowl faster than I have," he said.



Pakistan stalwarts Wasim Akram (C), Waqar Younis (L) and Inzamam-ul-Haq do some stretching during a practice session in Colombo yesterday.

Waqar expects better

ICC CHAMPIONS TROPHY SRI LANKA 2002

REUTERS/AFP, Colombo

Pakistan aim to reverse their recent inconsistent performances and go all the way in the ICC Champions Trophy tournament starting on Thursday.

"We have had our bad patch and hopefully we will get out of it here," skipper Waqar Younis told reporters.

Pakistan have arrived for the prestigious 12-nation event in Colombo after struggling in two tri-series events in Africa.

They failed to reach the final of the first tournament in Morocco where Sri Lanka beat South Africa by the title.

Last week in Nairobi, they barely nudged ahead of lowly Kenya and only emerged joint winners after rain forced the final to be abandoned with Australia calling the shots.

Waqar admitted his side would

have to vastly improve its batting and fast bowlers led by him needed to strike a better rhythm ahead of their tournament opener against the hosts.