

Abahani Orange crushed

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani suffered their worst defeat in domestic football in 30 years when they were humbled 4-0 by Brothers Union in the Independence Day Gold Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Brothers cruised on foreign inspiration as Russian striker Victor Edwards slammed a hatrick and Moroccan midfielder Hicham Inani added the other. It was also Brothers' biggest victory margin ever against Abahani. They now jointly lead Group A with Farashganj Sporting Club who edged Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool 3-2 earlier in the day. Both sides are level on four points after two matches.

Abahani, who beat Youngmen's 3-0 in their first game, must win against Farashganj when they meet in the last fixture of the group tomorrow if they wish to avoid the ignominy of getting knocked out before making the semis.

Abahani's last big loss was also by a 4-0 margin, against archrivals Mohammedan in a league match in 1975.

Brothers, who had struggled in a

2-2 draw against Farashganj only two days earlier, survived a close call in the 16th minute when inspired defending by former Abahani favourite Masud Rana denied Ujjal a shot at goal inside the six-yard box.

But from then on it was one-way traffic as the men in orange went ahead in the 24th minute. An Edward side volley found the net after Jewel Rana headed down a corner by fullback Siraji.

Three minutes later, Edward leapt high above the flatfooted Abahani defence to meet a long-range freekick from skipper Sujan to power a header into the far corner of the post.

Abahani goalkeeper Nizam pulled off two fine saves but had no answers for the third goal. Intercepting a wrong pass from Abahani winger Parvez in the middle, Edward set Inani on a free run and the Moroccan neatly placed the ball past the keeper just before the breather.

Brothers looked more interested to hold on to their three-goal cushion after the break, allowing their rivals to press forward. But with Chilean defender Felix and Argentine medio Inesio looking nothing more than mere bystanders and the forwards not up to the job,

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PHOTO: STAR

HATRICK HERO: Brothers Union's Russian forward Victor Edward executing a bicycle kick during their Independence Day football tournament Group A encounter against Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Host teams pile on

ISPAHANI
MIRZAPORE TEA
6th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Runs rained on the second day of the Ispahani Sixth National Cricket League at different venues across the country yesterday.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium Mohammad Ashraful hit a blazing 114, his second successive century, as leaders Dhaka took firm control of their match against Rajshahi.

Sylhet was more productive for the batsmen as Golam Mabud (114 not out) and Rezaul Haq Nayeem (107) shared 204 runs for the seventh wicket in the hosts' massive first innings total of 478-7 declared against Barisal.

On a day where home sides ruled supreme, Khulna took their overnight total of 330-6 to 406 with wicketkeeper Sahagir Hossain hitting a solid 80 against an injury-plagued Chittagong.

DHAKA-RAJSHAH

Ashraful capped a fine all-round display when the dashing right-hander stroked his second first-class century this season with 15 fours and a six, a day after he took five wickets with his leg-breaks.

With Ashraful on song, Dhaka finished their first innings at 311, a lead of 94.

There was more good news for Dhaka as Rajshahi, who were bowled out for 217 in the first essay, had limped to 35-4 by stumps.

Right-arm paceman Talha Jubair, who took four wickets in the first innings, accounted for two of the four Rajshahi wickets to fall in the second innings.

There was more misery for the visitors when top-order batsman Moniruzzaman, standing at silly mid-on was struck above the eye by a full-blooded pull shot from Ashraful. He left the field for medical treatment and doctors later said that the cut above the left eye required

five stitches.

SYLHET-BARISAL

Sylhet buried Barisal under an avalanche of runs after Mabud and Nayeem started from where Moniruzzaman had left off.

Overnight centurion Moniruzzaman, a guest player, gave Sylhet a rollicking start with a superb 123. The runs kept flowing from the blades of Mabud, who scored 114 off 235 balls. The maiden century by Mabud, the eldest of the three Golam brothers in the Sylhet team, featured seven fours and two sixes.

Rezaul, younger brother of Rajin

Saleh, also joined the party with a 177-ball 107 that contained six fours and two sixes.

Bottom-of-the-table Barisal, in their chase of 478, were 20 for no loss in 12 overs.

KHULNA-CHITTAGONG

Although Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe-Bin-Mortuza was rested for the four-day match as per Board instruction, there was not stopping the amount of runs scored by Khulna.

Resuming the day on 330-6, the home side added 76 runs with

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka's Mohammad Ashraful pulls on way to scoring a stroky 114 against Rajshahi on the second day of their National Cricket League fixture yesterday.



Did U Know?

India posted their first win in six Tests against Pakistan at Eden Gardens. Overall, this was India's eighth win in 34 Tests at this venue.



Rahul Dravid

(Indian star batsman)

"I've always wanted to score twin hundreds in a match, with (Steve) Waugh's feat at Manchester in England at the back of my mind."

After completing two centuries in the second Test against Pakistan at Eden Gardens.

What to WATCH

ESPN

Football Focus

Live at 6:30 pm

Sportscentre

Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports

English Premier Football League

Middlesbrough vs Southampton

Taped Version at 12:30 pm

Sportsline

Live at 8:00 pm

Primera Liga

Real Madrid vs Malaga

Repeat at 8:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

Ispahani Sixth Nat'l Cricket League
(Four-Dayer, Day Three)
Dhaka vs Rajshahi
Venue: FCS
Sylhet vs Barisal
Venue: Sylhet Stadium
Khulna vs Chittagong
Venue: KDVS

Independence Day Gold Cup
Sheikh Russel vs Arambagh (3:00 pm)
Mohammedan vs Muktiyoddha (5:00 pm)
Venue: BNS

Bob predicts comeback

AFP, Bangalore



Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer yesterday praised India for winning the second Test, but vowed his team will come back strongly in the final match to salvage the series.

"I suppose India fared better than us for most of the Test. They deserved to win and it's now our turn to stage a comeback and we can do that in the final Test," Woolmer told AFP.

India registered a convincing 195-run victory at Kolkata's Eden Gardens on Sunday to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

The third Test begins at the Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Thursday.

Woolmer, who played 19 Tests for England and then coached South Africa between 1994-1999, admitted Pakistan were not able to

contain the Indians as planned.

"We are not carrying out what's been discussed in meetings," he said. "We played smart cricket but it was not good enough to win."

"We lost the match on the third day. From a good position we failed to get a 100 or 150-run lead which was our specific plan."

Pakistan were set to gain a handsome lead after they resumed at 273-2 on the third morning in reply to India's 407 with Yousuf Youhana and Younis Khan batting with unbeaten centuries.

But the tourists lost their last eight wickets for 112 runs in a dramatic collapse.

"A Test match can change with the fall of one wicket. We lost Youhana, Inzamamul Haq and Asim Kamal before lunch," Woolmer said.

"That really hurt our plans to take the lead."

"I will not say the boys were complacent but we must not allow such opportunities to go waste,"

said Woolmer, adding the fifth-day pitch at Eden Gardens was more difficult to bat on than the one at Mohali where Pakistan drew the first Test.

"The pitch at Mohali was dead while the one at Eden Gardens had uneven bounce and turn. This was the ideal wicket, one Anil Kumble relishes."

Wily leg-spinner Kumble fashioned India's win with a first-ball dismissal of Younis on the final day and finished with 7-63 in the second innings.

Pakistan, chasing a world record target of 422 runs, were shot out for 226.

"We must work out a strategy on how to negate Kumble," said Woolmer, under whom Pakistan have lost five of seven Tests.

But he did not agree that going in without off-spinner Arshad Khan was a mistake.

"India's Harbhajan Singh took

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Dravid top Test bat

BBC ONLINE, undated

India batsman Rahul Dravid has climbed to the top of the Test rankings after scoring two centuries in the victory over Pakistan in Kolkata on Sunday.

Dravid's efforts at Eden Gardens moved him ahead of South African star Jacques Kallis and gave him a points total of 892 -- the highest of his career.

Another Indian, leg-spinner Anil Kumble, is up to fourth in the bowling rankings after a superb performance.

Kumble took 10 wickets in the match, including 7-63 in the second innings.

India's Sachin Tendulkar, who became the fifth batsman in Test history to pass 10,000 runs during the game, remains seventh in the batting list.

The rankings do not take into account the ongoing second Test between New Zealand and Australia in Wellington.

Batsman Points
Rahul Dravid 892
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Congratulations Muralitharans!

CRICINFO, undated

Muttiah Muralitharan, Sri Lanka's spin wizard and previously one of the island's most eligible bachelors, married his Chennai-based bride, Madhi Ramamurthy, during a colourful traditional South Indian wedding ceremony on Monday morning.

Muralitharan, his entire family and close friends decamped to Chennai early last week to organise four days of celebrations that started with an informal party on Saturday night thrown by his brother Shashi and will end with a grand reception on Tuesday night for a 1000 relatives and friends.

But the formal and traditional marriage to 24-year-old Madhi, a business administration postgraduate and the director of a leading private heart hospital founded by her late father, was the centrepiece attraction, a glittering five-hour celebration of the couple's wedlock that started at 8 in the morning and was still going strong when guests were invited for lunch.

Sanath Jayasuriya and Chaminda Vaas were the only current cricketers to attend -- the others could only arrive in time for the reception -- and were joined by a string of ex-internationals, including A r j u n a

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Kiwis pray for more rain

Cricket

REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand were praying for more rain to save them from defeat in the second Test against Australia after a batting collapse at the Basin Reserve on Monday.

The Kiwis were in deep trouble when bad weather intervened and forced play to be abandoned before the final session of the fourth day, leaving them needing to survive the final day to force a draw.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting had already enforced the follow-on after New Zealand were dismissed for 244 at tea -- 326 runs short of Australia's massive total of 570 for eight declared.

However, play was called off before the Kiwis had begun their second innings when the heavens opened and the covers were placed

on the pitch.

"Hopefully it's still raining tomorrow," New Zealand batsman Lou Vincent told reporters.

"We're going to go out tonight and do some rain dancing."

Monday's first session had also been washed out but the Australians still managed to bowl New Zealand out when the sky briefly cleared between lunch and tea.

New Zealand had resumed at 122-4 in their first innings but lost their last six wickets for 78 runs to give Ponting the chance to push for victory.

Vincent top-scored with a patient 63 off 164 balls after starting the day on 38, while Daniel Vettori smashed eight boundaries in making a brisk 45 off 63 deliveries.

Kasprowicz and leg-spinner Shane Warne captured three wickets each for Australia while Glenn McGrath got two and Jason Gillespie and Michael Clarke one apiece.

Vincent and night watchman James Franklin made a bright start, adding 58 for the sixth wicket before Franklin got a thick edge to Kasprowicz on 26 and wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist took a simple catch.

Vincent had reached his half century off 115 balls but his resistance finally gave out when he also nicked Kasprowicz to Gilchrist, giving the Queensland bowler his 99th Test wicket.

Warne, the world record holder for Test wickets, mopped up three of the last four wickets while Gillespie bowled Iain O'Brien with a yorker.

Warne got rid of wicketkeeper Brendon McCullum when he spooned a catch to Michael Clarke at cover then bowled Craig McMillan for 20.

Vettori frustrated the Australians for over an hour with a lusty display before he was caught on the boundary off Warne.

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PHOTO: AFP

New Zealand's Daniel Vettori is hit on the helmet during his breezy 45 on the fourth day of the second Test against Australia in Wellington yesterday.