

Abahani's red-letter day

Mohammedan thrashed 5-1

SPORTS REPORTER



The season's first onslaught of the nor'wester almost had the match postponed but when the traditional clash of the titans finally took off, it was Mohammedan Sporting Club who were on the receiving end of another monsoon storm in the form of Abahani that tore them to smithereens.

For the record Mohammedan were annihilated 5-1 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, the biggest losing margin in matches between the arch rivals. Abahani, who had scored just five goals in their last six matches this season, went on to become Group-B champions.

It was a long cherished revenge for the Sky Blues, who had suffered a 4-0 defeat to Mohammedan exactly 30 years ago in a league match at the same venue.

There was only academic interest left in the game following Dhaka Wanderers' defeat to Arambagh Kria Sangha in the day's first match. That result confirmed Abahani's passage into the semifinals alongside Mohammedan even before the start of the prestige match. But as soon as the two sides prepared for kick-off before a 10,000-strong crowd, a severe rainstorm stopped all proceedings.

So powerful was the wrath of the wind that a window in the hospitality box – the temporary press box on the top tier of the stadium was shattered and a number of TV journalists received cuts and bruises.

But after the skies calmed down, the game got off following an 80-minute delay with about a half of the expectant crowd still present.

Zahid Parvez opened the account for Abahani in the very second minute when the national under-17 midfielder's 50-yard shot took a wicked deflection off Mohammedan defender Nazrul and gave no chance to goalkeeper Biplob.

Striker Mehdi Hassan Ujjal then

doubled the margin after a superb move in the 27th minute. The young striker exchanged passes with his senior partner Farhad and finally, dribbled past last defender Hassan to make it 2-0 with a neat placing shot from inside the box.

Mohammedan's Liberian forward Dolley, on loan from Farashganj, pulled one back ten minutes from the short whistle. Manju backheaded a long ball from their own half to set up Dolley who rocketed in a right-footed volley.

The second half was all Abahani.

Even after Ghanaian striker Ibrahim, Farhad and Ujjal missed sitters, they managed to score thrice in the last nine minutes.

Substitute striker Tipu, who replaced Farhad in the second half, fired in from an acute angle in the 76th minute while Cameroonian medio Ndem Kiyek received a freekick by Parvez inside the danger zone before drilling the ball home six minutes later.

Ujjal's second goal of the match completed the humiliation six minutes from time when he finished a brilliant solo run with a low angled shot.

In the day's first match, second half goals by Imrul and Ridon helped Arambagh record a consolation 2-0 victory over Dhaka Wanderers.

Yellow cards: Joy, Ndem (Abahani) and hassan, Scylla, Zahid (Mohammedan).

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Nizam, Obaidur (Parvez), Pradeep, Shiron, Lajuk, Zahid, Ndem, Ujjal, Ibrahim and Farhad (Tipu).

MUHAMMEDAN: Biplob, Hassan, Nazrul, Scylla, Munna, Arman Aziz, Zahid (Santu), Manju, Mintu (Kaiser), Alfaz and Dolley.

Referee: Mansoor Azad.

GROUP-B TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Abahani	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
MSC	3	2	0	1	4	6	6
Arambagh	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Wanderers	3	0	1	2	1	4	1



PHOTO: STAR
THE GOALGATE OPENS: Abahani's Farhad (R) celebrates his team's first of five strikes against archrivals Mohammedan during their Tibet 20th Federation Cup football tournament clash at the BNS on Monday.

What to WATCH

ESPN

Football Focus
Live at 6:30 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm
UEFA Champions League
Ac Milan vs Psv Eindhoven
Semifinal-1, Leg-1
Live at 12:30 am (Wednesday)

STAR Sports

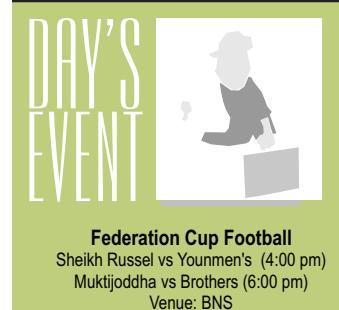
Sportsline
Live at 8:00 pm
English Premier Football League
West Bromwich vs Blackburn Rovers
Live at 12:30 am (Wednesday)



Kapil Dev

(Indian cricket legend)
"My dad is 70, my mother is 60. The chances of another Kapil are close to zero."

On being asked when India will see another Kapil Dev.



Federation Cup Football
Sheikh Russel vs Younus's (4:00 pm)
Muktijoddha vs Brothers (6:00 pm)
Venue: BNS

Wright points at wrongs

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

John Wright, who coached India for four-and-a-half years and learnt the intricacies of the board and the team, has criticised the national selection panel for their "appalling procedures".

During his tenure with captain Sourav Ganguly, Indian team selections were more consistent than before, but Wright believed that rules needed to be put in place to ensure even further consistency in the process.

Speaking to the Asian Age, Wright revealed how difficult it was with a constant chopping and changing within the Board of Control for cricket in India (BCCI).

"The selection committee is poor

needs to be streamlined. I have been with the team for the last four years, and every year (when) the selection committee gets changed, new people come in with new sets of ideas, which makes things difficult. There should be a standard set of rules governing the selection procedure."

Previously, at his last press

was taken away.

But here he told the Asian Age, "The coach too does not have much say in selection. I don't understand why a player like Mohammad Kaif

is taken away.

Wright was asked whether he believed the coach should have a greater role in selection. His reply then suggested it could be a double-edged thing, when he cited the example of John Buchanan, the Australian coach, who was a part of the selection panel to start with, but that responsibility

gets dropped. He is the best, as solid as wood, he should be included

everytime."

Another sticking point for Wright was the belief that he was soft on the players.

"That is baseless. You can't be a coach if you are not tough enough. Tell them to ask Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble or Virender Sehwag and the other senior players in the team and they will tell you how tough I was."

He opined that the next coach ought to be as tough as he was.

Wright said that he had not turned his back on coaching in the future. He had already been approached by the South African board as a replacement for Ray Jennings but the arrangement did not work out. It would not stop him from helping New Zealand if he was approached. He acknowledged that a need to be close to family had also influenced his judgement. "I have been away from my family and kids for four years. That is a lot of time."

Apart from being with the family, Wright said he would write a book. "It may be in the form of a memoir of my stay in India. I just love this place. Cricket is a passion here, unlike

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