

Russel lose plot in a dramatic last 10 mins

SPORTS REPORTER

Premier Bank Nine-man Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra gave away a two-goal lead in the last ten minutes as Brothers Union salvaged a vital point with a 2-2 draw from the last match of the first leg in the Premier Football League yesterday.

Last year's runners-up looked like runaway victors when Tanvir and Majid put them 2-0 ahead against the defending champions at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but all hell broke loose as soon as Russel's in-form goalkeeper Biplab was sent off for handling the ball outside his area ten minutes from time.

Mashiur, who replaced midfielder Nayan to stand under the bar, showed his nerves during relentless Brothers raids and his gaffes allowed the rivals to avoid defeat with goals from Emily and Sujan inside four minutes.

Brothers will now start the second-leg -- due to start on July 21 -- three points behind leaders Mohammedan who have 23 points. Russel finished the first leg in a disappointing sixth place with 14 points.

Biplab was booked in the second minute of the match when he fouled Brothers' Russian forward Victor outside the penalty box but the

custodian's heroics kept Russel in the game. He pulled off fine saves to deny early efforts by Liton and Moroccan Hicham Inani before punching away a stinger from Pranotosh midway through the first half.

Russel reasserted with Majid threatening to score twice but the Moroccan striker's poor finishing failed to break the first half deadlock.

Russel came alive immediately after the break but their wily winger Tanvir, whose exploits on the left flank created big gaps in the Oranges' defence, shot over the bar one minute after the restart.

Tanvir, however, placed the ball neatly into the far post on the hour when he latched on to a right-side cross by Majid.

Aspirited Russel mounted heavy pressure and Nayan picked up Majid unmarked near the goalmouth with a low cross in the 71st minute but the Moroccan failed to connect the ball, wasting an absolute blinder.

Majid, who scored a brace on his Dhaka debut but failed to score a single goal in the next four matches, made amends for his earlier mistakes with a brilliant solo effort in the 77th minute. The lanky striker, taking a ball from Tanvir, raced past Sujan near the middle of the pitch and completed a 40-yard run unchallenged before making it 2-0.

Three minutes later, things

reversed as Russel were reduced to ten men. Biplab was shown the red card by referee Monsoor Azad while trying to stop a backheader by their Moroccan recruit Rachid outside of

the 18-yard box and Brothers' pressure told when the new goalkeeper arrived.

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POINTS TABLE

| Teams | M | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Mohammedan | 9 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 20 | 5 | 23 |
| Brothers | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 19 | 7 | 20 |
| Muktijoddha | 9 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 14 | 10 | 16 |
| Abahani | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 16 | 11 | 15 |
| Farashganj | 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 14 |
| Russel | 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 17 | 7 | 12 |
| Arambagh | 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 11 | 13 | 10 |
| Youngmen's | 9 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 11 | 28 | 7 |
| Wanderers | 9 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 21 | 4 |
| Dipali | 9 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 12 | 24 | 2 |

SCORERS

Hattricks: Yusuf (Russel v Youngmen's), Liton (Brothers v Wanderers), Manju (MSC v Wanderers)
5 goals: Liton (Brothers), Paul (Muktijoddha), Farhad (Abahani), Robin (Youngmen's), Manju, Alfaz (Mohammedan)
4 goals: Edward (Brothers), Ibrahim (Abahani), Yusuf (Russel), Felix (FSC)
3 goals: Emily (Brothers), Jeremiah (Muktijoddha), Dominic (Arambagh), Idris (Dipali), Bulbul, Majid (Russel), Rubel (Dipali)
2 goals: Khokon, Parvez Babu (Brothers), Faisal Mahmud, Rony (MSC), Ujjal, Tipu (Abahani), Bulbul, Egr, Rachid, Majid (Russel), Kanchan (Muktijoddha), Balen, Chanchal (Youngmen's), Ritu (Arambagh), Jalaluddin, Milton (Wanderers), Jalal, Farid (Dipali), Morshed, Ghansah (Arambagh)
1 goal: Tapu, Pranotosh, Sujan (Brothers), Nakib, Donald, Arman Aziz, Peter, Asad, Zahid (MSC), Kabir, Adafa, Amirul (Farashganj), Joy, Zahid, Ndem (Abahani), Nayan (Russel), Amin Rana, Iqbal, Arman (Muktijoddha), Patrick (Arambagh), Aminul, Henry (Wanderers), Tajul, Abdullah (Dipali), Ismail Hossain, Rajan (Youngmen's).
Own goal: Kamal (MSC v Arambagh)



Sheikh Russel midfielder Nayan falls over the ball after a challenge by Brothers full-back Siraji during their Premier Bank Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: S K ENAMUL HAQ

BRTC relegated from Div I

SPORTS REPORTER

Agrani Bank avoided relegation to the Second Division when they edged BRTC 2-1 in a crucial First Division Football League match at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Ohid put Agrani ahead in the first half while Swapan netted the match-winner a minute from time after Pikul had equalised for BRTC.

With this defeat, BRTC confirmed relegation from the division besides Dhanmondi Club.

After the penultimate 13th round, Agrani remained third from bottom with 14 points. BRTC and Victoria are on 10 and five points respectively.



Did U Know?

Greg Chappell scored a hundred on his Test debut as well as in his last Test match.



Geoffrey Boycott

(Popular TV commentator)
 "I think England will win a Test. My concern is Australia will probably win two."
 Revealing his deepest fears.



ESPN
 Sportscentre
 Live at 8.30 pm
 Twenty20 Cup 2005
 Lancashire v Derbyshire
 Quarterfinal
 Live at 10.30 pm



Australia's Glenn McGrath signs autographs as he leaves the ground during the tour match against Leicestershire on Saturday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

English confidence major factor in series: McGrath

Cricket

AFP, Leicester

Australia's top strike bowler Glenn McGrath said England's belief in themselves will be a major factor in deciding the outcome of the Ashes series, which starts at Lord's on Thursday.

McGrath concedes England appear more assured this summer although he cautions that may have taken a dent in the last week's defeat in the third and final one-day international at The Oval.

"Their self-belief has definitely advanced. They are a lot more confident and are playing better as a team," he said. "They have had a lot more success over last 18 months.

Whether they truly really believe they can beat us we will have to wait and see."

It will be an intriguing series of the two best teams in the world. Australia are the top-ranked Test nation, having lost only twice (both to India) in their last 20 Tests, while England are second having also lost just two of their last 20 Tests and winners of their last five Test series.

But more tellingly, England have lost the last eight Ashes series and are hoping to stop the Aussies from notching up nine victories in a row.

McGrath, rested for the tour match against Leicestershire which finishes on Saturday, has already sensed the erosion of some of the swagger with which England started the summer.

McGrath is warning that every member of the England team will

have to be at his very best if Michael Vaughan's team are to stand a chance of competing with Australia.

He still doubts whether the hosts truly believe they can beat the world champions for the first time since 1987.

McGrath, who will need just one more wicket when the first Test starts at Lord's on Thursday to become only the fourth man in cricket history to take 500, notices a changed England atmosphere under Vaughan to the one which prevailed when his predecessor Nasser Hussain was captain -- but he does not expect a different outcome to the Ashes.

Singling out his opposite number Stephen Harmison as key to England's

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Biggies divided over mid-season transfer

BDNEWS, Dhaka



The mid-season inter-club transfer of the Premier Football League begins today with very few clubs interested to take part in the three-day proceedings.

Although the Premiership will witness such an event for the first time, the First Division League has already gone through the process without a single player switching teams.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) introduced the

mid-season transfer in a bid to give promising players a chance to spread their wings and providing clubs an opportunity to strengthen their squads.

Meanwhile, managers and coaches of the Premier League clubs have expressed mixed reactions about the second round of transfer.

League leaders Mohammedan Sporting Club are thinking to rope in a striker and a midfielder to overcome their weakness while last year's runners-up Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra are also considering to recruit midfielders and release a few.

"We need a striker and a midfielder

and we have already began talks, but we don't know how successful we will be," Mohammedan manager Imtiaz Sultan Johnny said.

The former national booter, however, is not thinking about releasing any player from the Black and White tent.

Johnny added that the new system would encourage the clubs who generally produce the promising booters.

"I have a few choices to recruit players in the midfield and I have already informed the club's management," told Russel coach Abu Yusuf.

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SRI LANKA TOUR Selectors to pick team today

SPORTS REPORTER

When the national cricket selectors meet today to pick the team for September's tour of Sri Lanka, the International Cricket Council's (ICC) new additions to one-day rules will be on the back of their minds.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that he and his two colleagues would have extensive discussion on the matter as the Tigers are going to experience the changes in the three-match ODI series against Sri Lanka. "Even the world's two top teams (Australia and England) could not take advantage of the supposed benefits of the new rules when they tried it for the first time in the NatWest Challenge series. But we have to think about it seriously," said Faruque on Sunday.

"I believe the new regulations will bring more excitement to the shorter version of the game but some time is needed for teams to get accustomed to it, especially for teams like Bangladesh," said the former Bangladesh captain who is also one of members of the ICC's playing committee which recommends new laws.

The chief selector hinted that major changes were unlikely in the squad.

"There could be one or two changes from the squad that toured England because we have to consider the difference in conditions. It could be a long meeting tomorrow as we will discuss about the team's preparation as well."

Dalmiya honoured

CRICINFO, Kolkata

Jagmohan Dalmiya, the former president of the ICC and the Indian cricket board, has been presented with the International Journal of the History of Sports Achievement award for administrative excellence in global sport.

Dalmiya is currently the president of the Cricket Association of Bengal.

"I am overwhelmed to receive the IJHS award," Dalmiya was quoted as saying in The Hindu on Saturday.

Aussie batters hit fine form

AFP, Leicester

Damien Martyn, Justin Langer and skipper Ricky Ponting all smashed centuries as Australia fine-tuned their Ashes build-up with a run glut against Leicestershire on Saturday.

Langer (115) was first to three figures on the second day of the three day match at Grace Road, the only first class match the tourists are playing before they face England in the only opening Ashes Test at Lord's on Thursday.

Ponting made 119 but Martyn was the top-scorer with an unbeaten 154 in a total of 582 for seven in reply to the hosts' 217 all out.

FATE OF TIGERS' TOUR OF INDIA BCCI to let BCB know in a week

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will know in a week's time whether the Tigers' tour of India this year was still on.

Last week the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) sent a letter to the BCB saying that they were unable to host Bangladesh in October as the schedule clashed with the ICC Super Series and two religious festivals. It was the second time that the BCCI had postponed a visit by Bangladesh and the news sparked sharp criticism on both sides of the border.

India is the only Test nation Bangladesh haven't toured yet.

But BCB chief Ali Asghar said on Sunday that there was still hope that the series could be held at a later time.

"The Indian officials told me that they have a busy international schedule but we have requested them to find a suitable time to accommodate the series. BCCI secretary SK Nair promised me that they will clear their position within a week," said Asghar after returning from India where he attended a function in honour of former ICC president Jagmohan Dalmiya in Kolkata.

The BCB boss said that he had emphasised on the importance of

the tour for Bangladesh as that would help the Tigers complete the cycle of touring all the Test nations.

"I told them to split the one-day series and the Test series if needed like they had done for Sri Lanka who will play seven ODIs in India in October before returning again for the Tests. We are ready to tour twice if required," he added.

Asghar also informed that during his short visit to India he also attended an Afro-Asian Cricket Council meeting to discuss about the three-match ODI series in August in South Africa between an Asian XI and an African XI.

"The meeting decided to form a four-member selection committee to pick the Asian side."

Pakistan have already named Majid Khan as their representative in the panel and Ravi Shastri will perform the role for India. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are yet to name their selectors.

"The selector must be a person who is not part of a board's selection panel and he must be a former Test player. I have requested them to bend the criteria a little as we do not have too many experienced options to choose from among ex-Test cricketers. We will discuss about our candidate tomorrow (Monday)," said Asghar.

A team's first match in England today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh A team will open their England tour today with a one-day game against British Universities at the Parks in Oxford.

The 15-member second string Bangladesh side led by young left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees Ahmed left Dhaka on Friday night to play five three-day and four limited-over games against different English county sides.

The senior team had also started their maiden Test tour in England against the same opponents in May.

ICC SUPER SERIES PCB's no to logo of alcohol brand

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) authorities have told the International Cricket Council (ICC) their players will not wear or display logos of a whisky brand sponsor in the Super Series matches in October.

Five Pakistani players have been picked for provisional ICC World XI Test and one-day squads that will play against Australia. "We have informed the ICC that our players will in no manner promote the logos or other promotional material if they are picked in the final World XI squads," a PCB official told this news agency on Sunday on condition of anonymity.

He said that since the ban for alcohol for Muslims was considered a very sensitive matter, the PCB had pre-empted problems and acted accordingly.

Dravid for captain?

Cricket

AGENCIES, Bangalore

"Ideally, the selectors should name the captain for a full series, rather than go series by series. They should do this in the interest

been named captain for this series. And when the ban is lifted, Ganguly will return to the helm," said the source.

"It does not take courage, but conviction to do so."

It's obvious that the Board is playing ding-dong with the selectors.

"More and others should not be swayed by either Jagmohan Dalmiya or Ranbir Singh Mahendra," added the source.

"The selectors' job is to select the best team available and state what their strategy is for the entire season. They have to be clear in their minds. Rather than sit on the fence they have to make a firm decision."

When Greg Chappell took over, he said that the selectors should follow the Aussie system and pick the best players and then choose the captain from amongst them.

"Ganguly's return is uncertain," said the source.

"If More truly wants to play along with Chappell and improve Indian cricket, he has to take a firm decision."



RAHUL DRAVID

of Indian cricket," sources close to the team said.

It becomes obvious that the selectors Kiran More and the others need to be a little more upfront and take a firm decision.

"All they need to do is make a statement that since Ganguly is serving the ICC ban, Dravid has