

Exciting win for Dhanmondi

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhanmondi Club snatched a thrilling win by virtue of losing lesser wickets after their First Division Cricket League match against Lalmatia Club ended as a tie on Monday.

Having bowled Lalmatia out for 198 in 49 overs, Dhanmondi reached 198-9 in the stipulated 50 overs at the Jagannath Hall ground.

In a match dominated by bowlers, Hasu bagged 5-47 and Prince 3-48 for Lalmatia while Mamun was the pick of Dhanmondi with 4-42.

In other matches, Rasel's 76 steered Eskaton Sabuj Sangha (236) to a 14-run win over Dhaka Mariner Youngs (222) at the City Club ground while Partex (186-3) recorded their eighth victory when they cruised to a 7-wicket win over Prantick (185) at the Dhaka University ground.

Amir, Majed share lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Amir Hossain and Abdul Majed were sharing the lead in the Metropolis Chess Tournament at the end of the fifth round at the BCF Hall-room on Monday.

Amir beat Shahjahan and Majed defeated Zaker in the fifth round to extend their collections to five points.

Nasir, Shahin and Nahid were at second place with 4.5 points.



PHOTO: STAR

Brothers' Cameroonian midfielder (orange jersey) Gilsun threatens the Mohammedan post during their Super Six match of the Nitol-Tata Fifth National Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Monday.

Draw suits both fine!

Brothers 0 Mohammedan 0

SPORTS REPORTER

NITOL-TATA NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Brothers Union and Mohammedan Sporting Club produced a dull draw in the opening Super Six match of the Nitol-Tata Fifth National Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The clash of the two Dhaka giants might be a spectator's delight, but the goalless draw served both sides' purpose in a bid to secure places in the semifinals.

Defending champions Brothers, who launched the final phase with a four-point cushion that they carried from the previous round, stayed atop the six-team table with five points.

Mohammedan on the other hand, also returned happy after securing the vital point from their lone toughest fixture in the final phase.

The Black and Whites, who began bottom-of-the-table with one point, face two rank-outsiders Bangladesh Army and Samabesh Club of Munshiganj in their remaining matches.

Although the first big match of the Super Six drew a few thousand fans at the big bowl, it turned into a boring experience for them as both sides without their key players, who are now on national duty, adopted ultra defensive approach throughout the 90 minutes.

Still, Mohammedan looked the likeliest team to score with their Nigerian recruits Francis and Peter Odaf creating a number of openings in both halves. Francis tested Brothers custodian Ali with a sudden cross in the 13th minute that the diminutive man under the bar tipped over the bar for a corner.

The best chance of the day also fell to Francis halfway through the first half but he blasted his shot wide of the mark after being picked unmarked inside the six-yard box by a long-throw from compatriot Odaf.

While Mohammedan goalkeeper Shakil was not required to make a single save in the first half, his counterpart Ali was under constant threat and fisted away a dipping volley by overlapping defender Hassan in the 42nd minute. The pressure continued and Odaf was unlucky to see his header on a corner by Rony bounced off the sidebar just before the short whistle.

Midfielder Divine also wasted the rebound as his effort missed the mark narrowly.

Both sides substituted their cap-

tains at half-time and Brothers looked more organised with Liton replacing Monwar. But Paul Nwakwuchi lost possession in the Mohammedan penalty area after Felix set him up in the 57th minute.

Manju, who came for Mohammedan skipper Nakib, earned a free-kick five yards out of the Brothers box but Odaf's powerful drive flew inches wide of the target.

Despite being on the defensive, Brothers came close to seal three points in the 67th minute when Paul received a square-pass from Felix on the top of the 18-yard box but his angled drive ran harmlessly across the face of the goal.

Yellow cards: Shuvra (Brothers)

TEAMS

BROTHERS: Ali, Siraji, Pranotosh, Shuvra (Montu), Masud Rana, Aurup, Monwar (Liton), Hicham, Gilsun, Paul and Felix.

Mohammedan: Shakil, Rony (Kamal), Hassan, Odaf, Biplob, Mintu, Divine, Asad, Emeka, Nakib (Manju) and Francis.

Referee: Tayab Hassan.

TEAMS

BROTHERS: Ali, Siraji, Pranotosh, Shuvra (Montu), Masud Rana, Aurup, Monwar (Liton), Hicham, Gilsun, Paul and Felix.

Mohammedan: Shakil, Rony (Kamal), Hassan, Odaf, Biplob, Mintu, Divine, Asad, Emeka, Nakib (Manju) and Francis.

Referee: Tayab Hassan.

The Black and Whites, who began bottom-of-the-table with one point, face two rank-outsiders Bangladesh Army and Samabesh Club of Munshiganj in their remaining matches.

Both sides substituted their cap-

DOHS await another easy day

SPORTS REPORTER

Old DOHS look set to retain the solo lead in the Aktel Premier Cricket League when the defending champions take on lowly Agrani Bank in a sixth round clash at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium today.

While DOHS, the only unbeaten team in the fray, face a rather easy task, it would be hard times for fallen giants like Abahani, Brothers and newcomers Sonargaon Cricketers.

Level on six points, Abahani and Brothers face off at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra. Both have lost two matches each and can ill afford another defeat in their pursuit to remain in the top half and qualify for the Super League.

Big-spending Sonargaon with two wins against three defeats would be under more pressure to win at Fatullah Stadium against runners-up City Club who have six points.

Second-placed Mohammedan Sporting Club, on eight points, would be looking forward to stay hot on DOHS's heels when they travel to BKSP to play second-from-bottom Indira Road KC.

Also at BKSP, Bangladesh Biman, fresh after their exciting two-run victory against Sonargaon on Sunday, meet pointless Orient Sporting Club while Victoria Sporting Club, smarting from their maiden defeat in the previous round after four wins, take on Kalabagan Krira Chakra at Comilla.

UK Sonali Otit in the city

SPORTS REPORTER

Sonali Otit Club of the UK arrived in Dhaka on Monday to play two warm-up matches here before taking part in the Goodwill Football Tournament in Kolkata from January 2-6.

The visitors will play Dhaka Sonali Otit and veteran footballers of Moulvibazar in Sylhet before departing for Kolkata on December 30.

The Dhaka Sonali Otit will also play in the Kolkata meet. Kolkata Veterans' Sports Club are the other participants of the football festival featuring the stars of yesteryears.

Sourav back in the nets

PTI, Kolkata

Two days after his selection in the Test squad for the upcoming tour of Pakistan, star cricketer Sourav Ganguly on Monday resumed practice.

Ganguly spent one-and-a-half hours at the Eden Gardens and the adjoining Pankaj Gupta Indoor Training Centre for a rigorous workout in the gym.

He also had a session in the nets at the PGTC.

Hordes of print and electronic mediapersons were left disappointed as Ganguly refused to speak.

Ponting rides his luck before Nel hits back

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Australian skipper Ricky Ponting cashed in on an early 'lifeline' to amass 1,500 runs in a Test calendar year — a feat achieved by only two others — before Australia collapsed against South Africa in the second Test.

Ponting thrived a festive 71,910 Boxing Day crowd at the Melbourne Cricket Ground with his sixth hundred of the year, his 26th career Test century and his third at the ground.

But combative paceman Andre Nel exposed an uncertain Australian middle-order with a spell of 4-11 in 25 balls to have the home side a

mid-wicket off the bowling of Jacques Kallis when the Aussie ace was on 17 inside the first hour of play.

"I was a bit disappointed and thought I had let the side down badly, but I thought the best way to get back from my dropped catch was to keep on bowling my heart out for my country," Nel said.

"I thought as a bowling unit and a team we fought back nicely after what happened ... I was so disappointed with myself at lunch that I wanted to end myself."

Nel triggered the Aussie slide when he had Ponting caught by Herschelle Gibbs in the gully 15 overs from stumps to give the South Africans a crack at the exposed brittle Australian middle-order.

Nel removed under-siege all-rounder Andrew Symonds with his next ball, snapped up by wicketkeeper Mark Boucher and out-of-form wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist saw off the hat-trick attempt before departing for two, caught by Gibbs.

was

proud of the way I played today," Ponting said.

"I had a little bit of luck early on when I was dropped in a pretty easy chance. It was difficult batting, I had chosen to bat and it was very satisfying to stay out there that long and bat in difficult conditions."

The Aussie skipper profited from the let-off, joining in a 152-run second-wicket stand with Matthew Hayden after debutant opening batsman Phil Jaques went cheaply.

Ponting has struck a rich scoring vein this southern summer with his 149 and 104 not out against the West Indies in the first Brisbane Test, 56 in the third Adelaide Test and 71 and 53 in the first Perth Test against South Africa last week.

Ponting was out 15 overs from stumps when he was caught by Herschelle Gibbs in the gully off Nel for 117 in 298 minutes with 13 boundaries. He has scored 1,533 runs, with one more innings likely here before year's end.

Ponting's exit triggered a collapse with all-rounder Andrew Symonds out to Nel's next ball, snapped up by wicketkeeper Mark Boucher. The dismissal puts Symonds' fitful Test career in peril.

Out-of-form wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist lasted seven balls before he steered Nel to Gibbs in the gully for two.

Shane Warne smashed nine before he flashed at Nel and gave Nicky Boje a running catch to plunge Australia to 227 for seven with seven overs to go to stumps.

Hayden had gone just before the ball, caught by Graeme Smith at first slip for 65 off Shaun Pollock. Hayden now has 1,243 runs for 2005 and is the only player to score 1,000 runs in five consecutive years.

Debutant Jaques' first Test innings lasted just 12 balls before the rookie left-hander was tightened up by Pollock to be caught at short leg by Jacques Rudolph for two.

Shane Warne smashed nine before he flashed at Nel and gave Nicky Boje a running catch to plunge Australia to 227 for seven with seven overs to go to stumps.

Nel, playing in his 17th Test match before almost 72,000 roaring Australians, said he thrived playing in hostile foreign environments.

"That's just my character. I like it when people abuse me and put me down. I like to prove them wrong, it's just my character and nature," Nel told reporters.

"I was fired up and I wanted to do well after that dropped catch."

"The crowds are always going to come after me because I am always aggressive and talk to people on the field."

"I play for my country and play with my heart, so I am always going to get abused. I am expecting it, so I might as well turn that into a positive energy to get myself going."

'I wanted to end myself'

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Feisty South African paceman Andre Nel said he felt like ending it all after giving Ricky Ponting a massive let-off on the way to the Australian captain's 26th Test century here on Monday.

Nel, who admits to enjoying having the crowd on his back, dropped a clanger when Ponting was on 17 before he went on to make 117 on the grandest day of the Australian cricket calendar.

The 28-year-old firebrand hit back the best way he knew, with a searing spell of 4-11 in 25 balls to scatter the Australians to 239 for eight at stumps on the opening day of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

South Africa paid dearly for the dropped Ponting catch, with Nel spilling the straightforward chance at

mid-wicket off the bowling of Jacques Kallis when the Aussie ace was on 17 inside the first hour of play.

"I was a bit disappointed and thought I had let the side down badly, but I thought the best way to get back from my dropped catch was to keep on bowling my heart out for my country," Nel said.

"I thought as a bowling unit and a team we fought back nicely after what happened ... I was so disappointed with myself at lunch that I wanted to end myself."

Nel triggered the Aussie slide when he had Ponting caught by Herschelle Gibbs in the gully 15 overs from stumps to give the South Africans a crack at the exposed brittle Australian middle-order.

Nel removed under-siege all-rounder Andrew Symonds with his next ball, snapped up by wicketkeeper Mark Boucher and out-of-form wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist saw off the hat-trick attempt before departing for two, caught by Gibbs.

Shane Warne smashed nine before he flashed at Nel and gave Nicky Boje a running catch to plunge Australia to 227 for seven with seven overs to go to stumps.

Nel, playing in his 17th Test match before almost 72,000 roaring Australians, said he thrived playing in hostile foreign environments.

"That's just my character. I like it when people abuse me and put me down. I like to prove them wrong, it's just my character and nature," Nel told reporters.

"I was fired up and I wanted to do well after that dropped catch."

"The crowds are always going to come after me because I am always aggressive and talk to people on the field."

"I play for my country and play with my heart, so I am always going to get abused. I am expecting it, so I might as well turn that into a positive energy to get myself going."

Ganguly goes AWOL

Cricket

AFP/PTI, undated

India who tour from January 6 to February 18 are scheduled to play their first two Tests at the same venues in the central province of Punjab.

"The weather we know is a big problem at this time of the year for us. But we have to deal with it because this is the only time we can hold our international home season," a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) official said on Monday.

Pakistan have proposed early starts to the Tests and one-day internationals against India to help deal with the winter weather and short days.

Pakistan's Tests against England in the recent series at Faisalabad and Lahore were badly hit by bad light and fog forcing early closures to the playing days.

Some 70 overs were lost in the second Test in Faisalabad and a similar number in the final Test in Lahore despite use of floodlights.

The teams are Prantik, Pragati Sangha, Sadharan Bima, Jatrabari KC, Basabha Tarun Sangha, BG Press, East End Club, Bangladesh Boys Club, Little Friends, T & T Club, Police AC, Juran Janata, PWD SC, Kadamtala Sangsad, Sunrise Sporting Club and Uttar Baridhara Club.

Top two teams of the league will be promoted to the First Division League and two bottom teams will be relegated to the Third Division League.

Malcolm Speed (ICC chief executive) "Cricket is an international game which is played by a diverse range of cultures and communities... racism comments have no place in cricket."

India's chief cricket selector Kiran More on Monday denounced former captain Sourav Ganguly for skipping