

From Plate to Cup

Junior Tigers beat Pakistan by four wickets

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

The junior Tigers overcame their first challenge of making it to the Super League of the ICC Under-19 World Cup after four abortive attempts when they handed defending champions Pakistan a four-wicket defeat at the Nondescript Cricket Club ground in Colombo yesterday.

Captain Mushfiqur Rahim, with a Test cap at Lord's behind him, led the successful chase with a masterly match-winning knock of 46 after Sakib Al Hasan's four-wicket haul for 34 runs restricted Pakistan to a modest 170.

The victory on Wednesday meant the high-flying Bangladesh youths, who beat New Zealand by three wickets in the opening match, advanced into the quarterfinals for the first time after being eliminated from the group stages in the previous four Youth World Cups.

Mushfiqur Rahim's boys will now face lowly Uganda today at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground, and a victory will land them as Group A winners.

England also sneaked into the Super League with a nail biting four-run win over Ireland and their win places them into the quarterfinals from Group D, along with Zimbabwe, and their meeting on Friday will decide which of them meet Bangladesh in the last eight.

The Bangladesh-Pakistan match however was a study of striking contrast. While Pakistan collapsed after a fairly sound start, Bangladesh produced a class apart in Mushfiq after a horrible start that saw the junior Tigers at one stage wobbling at 88-4.

Sent into bat, Pakistan raced to 66 without loss before a four-pronged left-arm spin attack led by man-of-the-match Sakib effectively dashed stroke-happy Pakistan's hopes of a big score. Sakib started the carnage by removing Nasir Jamshed (37), who was caught at point by Nabil

Samad, and then picked up three more wickets as Pakistan slipped to 107-4 from where they had never recovered.

Number five batsman Ali Asad,



MUSHFIQUR RAHIM...46

who top scored with 70-ball 38, tried to turn the tide but Sohrawardi Shuvo and first-match hero Mehrab Hossain Jr shared four wickets besides Nabil's one to bowl Pakistan out in 43.1 overs.

Bangladesh, in their chase, tumbled like they did in the first game against New Zealand with the vaunted top-order perishing one after another.

Left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal (18), Raqibul Hasan (27) and Sakib (25) departed playing ambitious shots before Mushfiqur strode in to show how to play and score on a non-responsive wicket for a batsman.

The right-hander's composed 55-ball 46 contained seven fours. He also tied the scores with a majestic six when he flicked the ball off his pads. But he was out next ball while trying to go over the mid-wicket fielder. However, Bangladesh reached the target 171-6 in only 34.5 overs.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who is now in Sri Lanka with the future stars, highly praised Mushfiqur's innings although he was not satisfied with the top-order batting in two matches.

"Mushfiq played a real captain's knock. It was also a composed and class knock which guided the team

GrameenPhone title sponsors in SL-BD series

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed GrameenPhone as title sponsors for the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka will play three one-day Internationals and two Tests against the Tigers during their 22-day stay.

"More or less we have confirmed GrameenPhone as title sponsors for the series. There were some other companies who showed their interest but we have decided to deal with our regular partner," said Aziz Al Kaiser Tito, chairman of the Marketing Committee yesterday.

It was learnt that the leading cellular phone operator of the country has agreed to give around Tk50 lakh as sponsorship money.

Inzy criticises Indian appeal

PTI, Islamabad

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq has slammed the Indian team for appealing against him for obstructing the field in the first one-day International at Peshawar and termed it as "against the spirit of cricket".

Inzamam was ruled out obstructing the field after he stopped a fielder's throw with the bat while attempting to get back to his crease in the series opener on Monday.

The home captain, who became only the third person to be given out in this rare manner in ODIs, said he never imagined that the Indian squad led by Rahul Dravid would resort to "such a thing" and warned that the appeal made in "an unsportsmanlike manner" can lead to bad blood between the two teams.

Inzamam also made a veiled reference to Indian coach Greg Chappell instructing his younger brother Trevor to bowl underarm in a one-day international to prevent New Zealand from scoring a boundary off the last ball for victory in the early 1980s.

"In my role as the Pakistan captain I would say that the appeal from the Indian fielders was against the spirit of cricket. Certainly, there are several modes in which a batsman can be declared out, but many of them are not in the spirit of the game," Inzamam wrote in his column in 'The News'.

Pathan among top five ODI all-rounders

PTI, Dubai

India's famed bowler Irfan Pathan's impressive batting display in the first one-day cricket match against Pakistan at Peshawar has lifted him to be among the top five ODI all-rounders in the latest ICC rankings.

Irfan, who has been giving consistent performances with the bat, scored 65 to be the third best scorer for the side after Sachin Tendulkar (100) and Mahendra Singh Dhoni (68) on Monday.

Meanwhile, Australian speedster Brett Lee and wicketkeeper batsman Adam Gilchrist stole the top ODI positions from their compatriots Glenn McGrath and Ricky Ponting in bowling and batting departments respectively.

Lee climbed to first position in the bowling rankings with the highest rating of his career owing to his success in the VB Series. He is the leading wicket-taker with 15 wickets at the average of 19.40.

He also stood the challenge of Shaun Pollock, who was the most economical bowler in the tri-series and has climbed to second position.

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India and Dravid fined for slow over rates

REUTERS, Islamabad

India have been docked 10 per cent of their match fees and captain Rahul Dravid 20 per cent for slow over rates during the first one-day international against Pakistan in Peshawar on Monday.

Match referee Chris Broad imposed the fines after India were two overs slower than the required rate in the 50-over match.

Pakistan won the first one-day by seven runs under the Duckworth Lewis scoring system after replying with 311 for seven off 47 overs, to India's 328, when the umpires stopped play due to worsening light. The second game in the five-match series is in Rawalpindi on Saturday.



Dhaka paceman Mohammad Sharif appeals against a Khulna batsman during their Ispahani National Cricket League encounter at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday.

Dhaka, Rajshahi stay atop

ISPAHANI MIRZAPORE TEA 7th National Cricket League

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka and Rajshahi maintained joint lead in the one-day table of the Ispahani Tea Seventh National Cricket League with maximum eight points while Barisal tasted their first victory as the competition resumed yesterday after a two-month break.

Al Shahrar's magnificent form helped Dhaka cruise to a six-wicket win over visiting Khulna with nearly 17 overs to spare while Rajshahi snatched a 15-run home win against a stubborn Chittagong to maintain their winning streak with four out of four wins.

Bottom-table Barisal, meanwhile, pressed Sylhet under tons of runs in a massive 109-run win at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

The four-day matches will start today.

DHAKA-KHULNA

What turned out to be a one-sided affair at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, was highlighted by two sparkling batting displays by two national cricketers of the past and present.

Playing his first National League game of the season, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza topscored 42 off 60 balls to help Khulna reach a face-saving 177 before being booked in 44 overs. Mashrafe came to the wicket with his side in the midst of a collapse which saw the tourists lose five wickets in the space of 32 runs.

However, the national pace spearhead cracked half a dozen boundaries during a 60-run stand with Jamaluddin Babu. His efforts went down the drains as Khulna lost the last four wickets adding just

seven runs after Mashrafe hoisting a delivery by rival paceman Mohammad Sharif to Uttam Sarkar at deep cover.

Earlier, young opener Aslam Ali made 39 to give Khulna a good start, adding 60 runs for the second wicket with Monirul Islam. Sharif, who captured 4-17 from nine overs, was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Mashrafe took the new ball but stuck to medium pace in his five-over first spell, conceding 20 runs as opening pair Uttam (52 off 64 balls) and Rasheedul Haque took the score to 45 by the ninth over. Ziaur Rahman removed Rasheedul, caught by Tushar Imran on 18 at short midwicket but the latter dropped a sitter when Uttam drove Al Amin to mid-off on 34.

Uttam, a prolific scorer in the recently concluded Premier League, went on to complete his fifty with ten fours but it was skipper Al Shahrar who really dictated the terms during a fluent 38-ball 49 with 36 of those runs coming from boundaries. He batted straight; played exquisite lofted drives and raced the scoreboard as Dhaka reached 180-4 in only 32.5 overs.

Although he skied a catch at wide long-off just one run short of a deserved half-century, the flawless innings only reminded how skilful a batsman he is and how dangerous he can get on his day. Despite the form and time on his side why the selectors ignored him for a national recall for the home series against Sri Lanka remains still a mystery. Shahrar finished with highest aggregate of runs in the Premier League, scoring 562 with six 50s as an opener.

A local club official watching the match commented, "The selectors, especially our coach, should have watched Shahrar play like this. He would have been the perfect choice

to end the everlasting problem of the opening slot in the national team. A batsman in form as he is should be given the chance to play at home."

RAJSHAHI-CHITTAGONG
In a high-voltage drama at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium, Chittagong gave the hosts a run for their money but eventually failed. In reply to Rajshahi's commanding 273-3 built around half centuries by Jahurul Islam (52 off 60 balls) and Hasanuzzaman Rosel (62 off 72 balls), the visitors were all out for 258 in 49.3 overs.

Chittagong were in for early trouble when man-of-the-match Shafiq Al Jabir tore apart the top order taking 3-36. Left-handed Faisal Hossain (82 off 103 balls) and wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh (76 off 85 balls), who came together at a precarious 39-4, put on 154 runs for the fourth wicket to repair the damage but the tail could not give finishing touch to the job.

SYLHET-BARISAL

Half centuries by the top three set Barisal's way to 302 for five in allotted 50 overs after being put into bat. Imran Ahmed made 94 off 126 balls with help of nine fours, providing the launching pad of the huge total during two century partnerships with Hannan Sarker (53 off 81 balls) and Humayun Kabir (63 off 69 balls).

Sylhet never threatened to challenge their rivals but batted throughout their quota of 50 overs to end on 193-9, thanks to number four Golam Mawla's 66 not out.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA: 177 all out in 44 overs (Aslam 39, Monirul 23, Mashrafe 42, Jamaluddin 24, Ashraf 3-36, Sharif 4-17, Mosharraf 1-39, Arafat 1-36, Anwar Munir 1-37).

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Did U Know?

The 1,000th goal in the FIFA World Cup was scored by Renssenbrink, a Netherlander, in 1978.



Ricky Ponting

(Australia cricket captain)
"This Australian cricket team is still the best cricket team in the world. For me to be the captain of that side is a great honour and a great thrill."



7th Nat'l Cricket League Four-Day (Day One)
Dhaka vs Khulna
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Rajshahi vs Chittagong
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Barisal vs Sylhet
Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium

Pakistan have light practice as India rest

PTI, Islamabad

A few members of the Pakistan cricket team, including captain Inzamamul Haq, had on Wednesday an optional net practice at the Pindi Stadium in Rawalpindi, venue of the second one-day, while the tourists preferred to take rest.

The main objective of the home team's practice session was to ask the three pacers -- Mohammed Asif, Navedul Hasan and Umar Gul -- and all-rounder Yasir Arafat to bowl at two stumps on the wicket adjacent to the match pitch which lay under the covers.

Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer was standing near the bowling crease and asking the four men to keep attacking the off stump with leg-cutters.

The batsmen had an informal session at the other end of the ground without nets.

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'Don't write off Sachin'

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

Former Pakistan captain Imran Khan Wednesday dismissed speculation that Sachin Tendulkar is on the decline, saying the Indian batting master still has plenty to offer to the cricket world.

"You can't judge Tendulkar on one or two failures, he has enough cricket left in him and has the talent to bounce back any time," Imran told AFP.

Imran was speaking at a reception attended by Indian captain Rahul Dravid, coach Greg Chappell, Tendulkar, Zaheer Khan, Virender Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh, Mohammad Kaif and Yuvraj Singh.

India's much vaunted batting line-up came under severe criticism after they flopped twice in the crucial third and final Test against Pakistan in Karachi last week, suffering their second worst defeat of 341 runs at the hands of their traditional rivals.

Pakistan won the Test series 1-0 and currently lead the five-match one-day series 1-0 after a dramatic seven-run win on the Duckworth-Lewis method, that sets a revised target for the second batting team, after bad light at Peshawar on Monday.

Tendulkar hit his 39th one-day hundred to lift India to 328 and in reply Pakistan notched 311-7 when bad light stopped play.

The second limited-overs international match is scheduled for Rawalpindi on February 11.

Imran believes India have no replacement on the horizon for Tendulkar.

"He is still the linchpin of Indian batting and would continue to supplement them until they find a suitable replacement, which I don't see coming in the near future," said Imran, who played 82 Tests for Pakistan.

Imran also passed useful tips to Dravid on how to be a successful captain.

"Dravid is a good student of the game and I think India will progress under him. India can tame England

because they have quality spinners in Harbhajan and Anil Kumble," he said.

India play England in a three-match Test series after their tour of Pakistan early next month.

Imran also advised left-arm paceman Zaheer.

"I have noticed flaws in Irfan Pathan's grip and in Zaheer's technique in bowling so I advised him how to use the non-bowling arm to get the maximum speed while bowling," said Imran, who was a leading paceman.

Imran praised Pakistan's progress as a team.

"Pakistan's batting is more stable now and they have the bowling resources to become the best team in the world," said Imran, who led Pakistan to their only World Cup win in Australia in 1992.

"Pakistan should eye the best team's spot in Tests because teams are judged on their performances in Test cricket and not in one-day cricket. This Pakistan team has all the abilities to challenge Australia as the top team."

Mido's fall from grace

AFP, Cairo

Egypt striker Mido was on Wednesday banned for six months from the national team after his extraordinary on-field confrontation with manager Hassan Shehata in Tuesday's African Nations Cup semifinal against Senegal.

"I am going to be the big man," so said former Egyptian golden boy Mido before the African Nations Cup -- Tuesday's semifinal with Senegal saw his boast reduced to ridicule.

The 22-year-old striker may have dyed golden locks but that was the only thing shining about him following his extraordinary behaviour when he was substituted with 11 minutes remaining of the match with Senegal and the

game delicately poised at 1-1. "What me guy?" was his initial reaction to coach Hassan Shehata's brave decision to pull him off after a listless and ineffective performance by the Spurs forward.

However astonishment turned to anger as he ambled off the pitch in surely one of the most bizarre and eye-catching moments in the history of major football tournaments.

Mido then had to be separated from Shehata by 39-year-old veteran Hossam Hassan and the 74,000 crowd voicing their displeasure at his antics with cries of 'out out!'

Then followed a conversation or rather diatribe between Shehata, a distinguished former Egyptian international and the first player from his country to be named Asian Footballer of the Year, and his deranged player.

"Why are you taking me off?" asked a furious Mido.

"Because I am the coach," replied Shehata.

"You are nothing but a donkey!" stormed Mido.

"No it is you who is the donkey," replied Shehata.

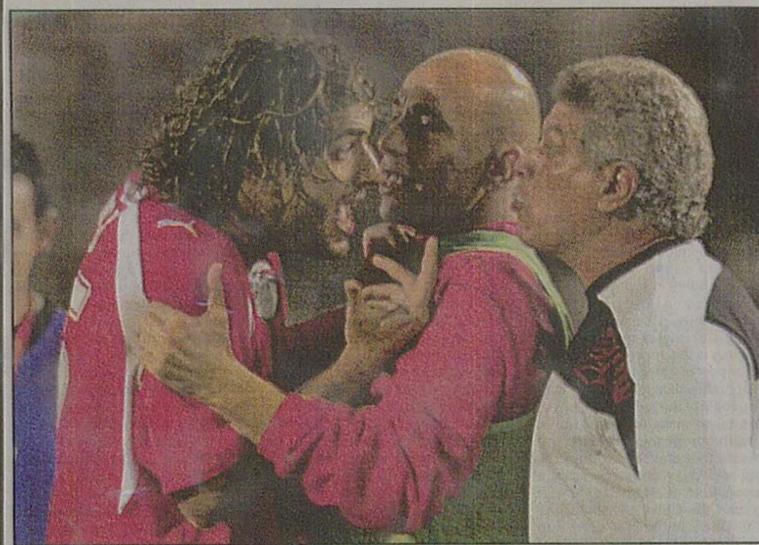
A minute later Shehata's moment of triumph came as Amr Zaki, the man who had replaced Mido, headed home the decisive goal.

African football has been ever thus, for whereas British football has plenty of bust-ups between players and coaches they are usually reduced to four letter expletives but in Africa insults usually are rather more olde worlde.

For Mido is not the first high profile striker to fall foul of the national team coach as Emmanuel Adebayor found out earlier in the tournament after the new Arsenal recruit had also to be separated from Togo boss Stephen Keshi.

"He's a crybaby," commented

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BIZARRE! Egypt striker Mido (L) is engaged in a heated exchange with coach Hassan Shehata (R) after he was taken off during their African Nations Cup semifinal against Senegal in Cairo on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

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