

Russel stay on top



SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj snatched a valuable point from B. League leaders Sheikh Russel who managed to stay on top of the table despite yesterday's dull goalless draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Dhaka riversiders fielded five defenders and two more defensive midfielders to pack their fort to frustrate Russel, who came to the game after a comfortable 3-0 win in Chittagong against the local Abahani.

The Russel attack lacked the cutting edge in absence of injured Moroccan striker Touati Younes and lone striker Bulbul failed to make any impact against a watertight backline in the first half when both

the goalkeepers were virtually jobless.

Having failed to test the opposition goalie in the first 45 minutes, Russel began to take the edge midway through the second half and their first attempt on the rival goal found the net. However, Moroccan medio Saad Abdel Fatah's stunning goal from a 25-yard freekick was disallowed for a premature movement in the Farashganj wall.

Desperate to score, Russel had their first real chance in the 72nd minute when substitute Rikta sent a nice low cross from the right but Bulbul's sidevolley was saved by Mamun at the Farashganj goal.

The arrival of winger Tanvir from the bench inspired Russel to create two more opportunities in the injury time but Mamun brilliantly kept Bulbul at bay under pressure.

With 11 points, Russel have opened up a one-point lead over Muktiyoddha at the end of the fifth week while Farashganj - who will have to pay a fine of Tk 10,000 for receiving four bookings - remained

in the mid-table with five points from four outings.

Yellow cards: Khaled, Riad, Arup, Mamun (Farashganj).

TEAMS

RUSSEL: Zia, Pradip, Hassan, Bourdif, Yousuf, Kaiser (Tanvir), Ighir, Saad, Nayan (Mishu), Pappu (Rikta) and Bulbul.

FARASHGANJ: Mamun, Khaled, Jamal (Mamun Mia), Faisal, Riad, Liton (Kutub), Arup, Kabir, Rony, Khokon and Robin.

Referee: Tayeb Hasan.

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Russel	5	3	2	0	8	2	11
Muktiyoddha	5	3	1	1	9	2	10
Abahani	4	2	2	0	2	0	8
Brothers	4	2	1	1	8	5	7
Arambagh	5	2	1	2	5	4	7
Khulna Abahani	4	2	0	2	6	5	6
Cig Mohammedan	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
Mohammedan	5	1	2	2	2	3	5
Farashganj	4	1	2	1	1	2	5
Cig Abahani	5	1	0	4	2	12	3
Rahmatganj	5	0	1	4	1	9	1

Cops put aside poison theory

PTI, Kingston

Rejecting the aconite-poisoning theory in Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer's murder for now, Jamaica police have said that their investigation will continue to focus on the manual strangulation angle until forensic evidence comes out suggesting anything else.

"Thus far we have to work with what is at hand. At hand is the pathologist report that he (Woolmer) died from asphyxiation as a result of manual strangulation," Director of Communications for the Jamaica Constabulary Force Karl Angell was quoted as saying by 'Jamaica Gleaner'.

"As far as talks of poisoning (are concerned), we await the toxicology report from the forensic lab," he added.

Earlier, a British tabloid, quoting an unnamed Pakistani, had claimed that Woolmer was poisoned with aconite, which causes asphyxiation within 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, ex-President of the Jamaica Association of Clinical Pathologists, Dr Garfield Blake said though he had never heard of aconite but if it worked like cyanide, as is being reported, than it would be extremely difficult to detect in toxicology tests.

"Unless you are going to tell them of the drugs that you suspect then they will look along those lines," he said.

"In Trinidad, for example, the first drug a toxicologist would look for is Paraquat - a toxic pesticide, as it is prevalent in that country," he added.

Batsmen's form pleases Smith

AFP, Georgetown

South Africa skipper Graeme Smith was happy to see his frontline batsmen hitting form in a comfortable seven-wicket win over Ireland in the World Cup Super Eights here on Tuesday.

In a match twice interrupted by rain and which was reduced to 35 overs each, the Proteas collected another two points to move into fourth place in the table.

"Our top four have had some good batting in the tournament so far," said Smith.

"It was good to see Ashwell Prince get some runs (47 not out) and find his feet. He just needed time in the middle.

"It's another two points. Considering the rain interruptions, we won convincingly and we adapted well to the stoppages."

Jacques Kallis was named man of the match for his unbeaten 66 and he hopes his time spent in the middle will stand him in good stead as the tournament progresses.

"It was nice to get some runs and to get through the new ball," said Kallis who came to the wicket after just three balls of the South Africa innings following AB de Villiers dismissal.

It was de Villiers' third nought of the competition. "Ireland did the basics well and put us under pressure. We wanted to finish the game properly but the wicket was slow after the rain and it was one of those grinding days.

"We have a few important weeks ahead. The guys are playing some good cricket and if we keep doing what we have been doing, you never know what will happen."

Ireland skipper Trent Johnston paid tribute to his team's fighting qualities.

"The toss was crucial. They bowled really well at the start and pinned us back. Then they have the quality of Langeveldt and Hall to call upon," said Johnston.



South Africa batsman Jacques Kallis (R) plays a delicate cut down to third man as Ireland wicketkeeper Niall O'Brien looks on during their Super Eights match at the Guyana National Stadium in Georgetown on Tuesday.

Solid South Africa

AFP, Georgetown



South Africa defied rain and a fighting Ireland to cruise to a seven-wicket win in a World Cup Super Eights match at the Guyana National Stadium here on Tuesday.

Jacques Kallis hit an unbeaten 66 and added 80 runs for an unbroken fourth wicket stand with Ashwell Prince (47 not out) to guide the Proteas to their second win in as many Super Eight matches.

South Africa, who restricted Ireland to 158-8, were set a revised target of 160 after two rain interruptions of nearly three hours and a 15-minute delayed start, reduced the match to 35 overs per side.

Graeme Smith's side, who achieved a narrow nerve-tangling one-wicket win over Sri Lanka here last week, now meet Bangladesh on

Saturday before their crucial matches against the West Indies, New Zealand and England.

Ireland, who gave another good account of themselves, could have made a match out of it had they not

dropped Kallis twice.

Kallis, when on 40, was dropped by paceman Boyd Rankin off his own bowling, while Trent Johnson grassed a paddle sweep off Kyle McCallan five runs later - chances

which allowed Kallis to supplement the run-chase in fading light.

Kallis put on 70 runs for the second wicket with Smith (41) after South Africa had a shaky start which saw them losing AB de Villiers off Rankin's third delivery of the innings for nought.

Smith hit six boundaries during his 45-ball knock before his counterpart Johnston had him smartly caught off his own bowling.

Smith, when 26, also completed his 4,000 one-day runs in his 109th match.

Herschelle Gibbs (six) was scrappy before he pulled straight to square-leg off Rankin who finished with 2-26.

Kallis hit eight boundaries but it was Prince who hit the winning six with 21 balls to spare.

Earlier, Charl Langeveldt grabbed 3-41, two off successive deliveries to derail Ireland's progress for whom none of the batsmen could play a long innings.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

TH AFRICA V IRELAND SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between South Africa and Ireland at Providence Stadium in Guyana on Tuesday:

Ireland	R	B	4s	6s
Bray lbw b Pollock	0	9	0	0
Porterfield c Kallis b Pollock	14	33	1	0
Morgan c Prince b Hall	28	50	4	0
O'Brien c Gibbs b Langeveldt	25	37	3	0
White c Gibbs b Smith	30	30	5	0
Botha c De Villiers b Hall	14	20	0	0

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Kallis's reply to critics

AFP, Georgetown



South Africa batsman Jacques Kallis silenced his critics with a second successive World Cup Super

Eights half-century.

Kallis came under fire after his 63-ball 48 against defending champions Australia in a group match his team lost while chasing a massive 378-run target in St Kitts last month. That was his only below-50 score in five matches.

The top-order batsman scored an unbeaten 66 in his team's seven-

wicket victory over debutants Ireland in a rain-hit second-round game here on Tuesday. He had already made a solid 86 in the previous match against Sri Lanka.

"I've never minded the criticism.

There are some lines you don't cross, and some did when it came to that issue. I know who they are, and I'll remember that in future," said Kallis, who was named man of the match.

"I'm not going to change my game because some people are unhappy with it. I have a role to play within the team. No-one's position in the team can be taken for granted, and people are entitled to their opinions."

Kallis, 31, began the tournament

on an impressive note when he hammered an unbeaten 128 against the Netherlands, and his two consecutive half-centuries here proved that nothing was wrong with his form.

"We have an important few weeks ahead of us and hopefully I can play a big role in helping South Africa move forward," said Kallis, who has so far scored 8,848 runs in 252 one-day internationals.

South Africa will meet Bangladesh here on Saturday before taking on New Zealand, England, the West Indies. They have four points from three matches.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

'WI can learn from Ireland'

AFP, Georgetown

Former West Indies all-rounder Phil Simmons, who takes over as Ireland coach after the World Cup, says the hosts can learn a lot from the Irish part-timers.

"There's more zip and enthusiasm from Ireland, who have nothing to lose than from West Indies, who have a lot to lose," Simmons told the BBC.

"If you play in the World Cup in your home country, I don't see more motivation than that."

Simmons has a close interest in the form of the West Indies team.

Not only is he a former Test and one-day international player, he is also the uncle of Lendl Simmons

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Arthur credits hard work

AFP, Georgetown



Coach Mickey Arthur believes that a different mind-set and hard work are the keys to top-ranked South Africa's successes in one-day internationals over the past 12 months.

"I think our minds have changed and we are a lot more positive now," said Arthur, whose side recently topped the International Cricket Council one-day rankings for the first time by pushing Australia into the second place.

"When I came in, I came with a plan. We came in with a plan to get us to number one. We were fifth in the world at that point of time and we worked very hard at it."

"We worked very hard on our players and we worked very hard on our opposition. After 18 months, it's quite nice to be number one. To come from fifth to number one is something we are extremely proud of."

Arthur, who became the coach in 2005, said South Africa had quality players to execute the plans and put pressure on the opposition with their positive approach in the shorter version of the game.

"We have changed our game plans. (Captain) Graeme Smith and I came out with a more positive game plan. I think we have pioneered the one-day cricket to a degree in terms of targetting the oppositions' strength," he said.

"Our fielding has gone to a new level. We are attacking the middle overs a lot more now. We look to strike when we bowl instead of defending. Our attack is an attack, not defence."

South Africa enjoyed a superb run in one-day internationals in the past 12 months which saw them win 15 of their 21 matches ahead of the World Cup. They have also won three of the four games in the ongoing tournament.

Arthur said his team had been aggressive in their approach in recent months.

"It's not about going through 50 overs and then trying to chase whatever the opposition get. We are

looking to strike. We are looking to do something with the new ball, so I think the one-day cricket has gone that way," he said.

"We have slips and a gully for a longer period of time. It's great to be number one in the world and it's a testimony to all the hard work the players have put in over the past 18 months."

South Africa have lost just one match in the ongoing World Cup, against defending champions Australia in the first round, but it failed to dislodge them from the top spot.

Their tense one-wicket win over Sri Lanka in a Super Eights game here last week helped them gain a slender lead over Australia.

"I'm delighted that we are top of the one-day rankings and I think it is a just reward for all the hard work and dedication the guys have shown over the past 18 months or so," said Smith.

"Although this is very pleasing for us, it will not detract us from the immediate job at hand. We are completely focused on the World Cup and we want to do the very best we can while we are here in the Caribbean."

Pulsating draw at San Siro

Late Van Buyten brace

AFP, Milan



Daniel Van Buyten's goal in the third minute of stoppage time secured a precious 2-2 draw for Bayern

Munich in the first leg of their Champions League quarterfinal against AC Milan on Tuesday.

AC Milan had appeared to be on their way to a controversial win when Kaka had tucked away a highly dubious penalty in the 84th minute, awarded after he had gone down in the box after a sliding tackle from Lucio.

Replays clearly showed Lucio making contact with the ball rather than Kaka, his Brazil international teammate, but Russian referee Yuri Baskakov pointed straight to the spot.

However justice was served when Belgian defender Van Buyten popped up right at the death to score his second goal of the night and Bayern left the San Siro with two vital away goals.

Milan only had a rare headed goal from Andrea Pirlo to show for a first half of intense pressure that should have yielded more for the six-time European champions.

Bayern made the hosts pay for their profligacy by equalising in the 78th minute, Van Buyten prodding home from close range.

Bayern host the second leg in Munich on April 11, and the winner will play either Roma or Manchester United in the semi-finals.

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti, who will be without striker Alberto Gilardino for the second leg after he picked up a yellow card, insisted his side were capable of winning in Munich.

"We certainly could have done better tonight and we conceded two soft goals," he said.

"But overall I thought we deserved to win. The tie is not over, we have to go there and win and that's not beyond us."

AC Milan came within inches of taking the lead in only the second minute.

Marek Jankulovski sent over a

teasing cross from the left and found Clarence Seedorf unmarked, but the Dutchman - the only player to have won the Champions League with three different clubs - just failed to make contact.

Michael Rensing, deputising for suspended Bayern captain Oliver Kahn, pulled off a fine reflex save to keep out Massimo Ambrosini's downward header as Milan maintained the early pressure.

The visitors, who were also deprived of tenacious midfielder Mark Van Bommel due to a one-match ban, slowly started to open up, and Nelson Dida had to be sharp to tip Andreas Ottl's 25-yard drive over the bar.

Rensing pulled out off a jaw-dropping save in the 36th minute that Kahn would have been proud.

Alessandro Nesta, whose season has been heavily disrupted due to surgery on his injured shoulder, released Oddo down the right and he crossed for the prowling Gilardino.

The 24-year-old, often criticised for his inconsistency, flung himself forward but his point-blank diving

header was superbly repelled by Rensing's left hand.

Bayern finally gave in five minutes before half time.

The Bayern defence stepped up as Oddo sent over a high cross, and Pirlo's header looped over Rensing for his first goal in the competition this season.

Jankulovski drove wide just before the interval after robbing Daniel Van Buyten of possession.

Gilardino had a perfectly good goal ruled out soon after the break, the linesman wrongly flagging for offside after the much-maligned Milan striker had clipped the ball over Rensing after running onto Kaka's pass.

Van Buyten levelled against the run of play when the Milan defence had failed to clear Hasan Salihamidzic's cross.

Kaka restored Milan's lead, slotting home from the penalty spot after Lucio had been harshly penalised.

But Van Buyten had the last laugh, capitalising on some poor Milan defending to equalise with the last touch of the game.



Bayern Munich's two-goal hero Daniel van Buyten (R) claps high fives with fellow defender Philip Lahm after scoring a late equaliser in their Champions League first-leg quarterfinal against AC Milan at the San Siro on Tuesday.