

Arambagh ride on late rally

SPORTS REPORTER

Late goals by foreign recruits Thomas Biketi and Iddi Badambuze helped Arambagh see off Khulna Abahani with a 2-0 win in yesterday's B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The visitors, who had lost the first-leg battle in Khulna 3-1, fought neck and neck for 85 minutes before conceding a penalty.

Kenyan defender Biketi effortlessly scored from the spot to separate the two sides while Ugandan forward Iddi sealed the victory in the 90th minute.

Both Biketi and Iddi now have three goals in the league.

Arambagh ascended two places up the table to reach sixth with 19 points from 15 games while Khulna Abahani stuck to third from bottom with 11 points after 14 outings.

Joint league leaders Sheikh Russel will face Brothers Union in today's crucial match, which will be telecast live by ATN Bangla.



Khulna goalkeeper Nahid makes a save against Arambagh during yesterday's B. League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Bright start for Abahani eves

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani crushed Bangladesh Chemical and Perfumery Society 3-0 in their opening match of the AB Bank Women's Table Tennis League yesterday.

Jayati blanked Chemical's Snigdha 3-0 while Rumi and Soma both came back from a set down to beat Synthi and Ripa respectively by identical 3-1 margins at the Woodendoor Gymnasium.

Title aspirants Biman won their second consecutive match when the national airliner downed Moler TTC 3-0. In another match, Lalbagh TTA defeated Bangladesh Youngs Club 3-1.

Meanwhile, the men's super league will begin today at the same venue with five teams -- Biman, Sheikh Russel, Ajax, Armanitola and Wari -- competing in the championship leg.

SA too strong for Irish

Cricket

AFP, Belfast

Vernon Philander celebrated his 22nd birthday and one-day international debut with four wickets for 12 runs as South Africa beat Ireland by 42 runs in a one-day international at Stormont here Sunday.

Ireland, set 174 to win in a match reduced by rain to 31 overs per side, were going well at 45 without loss before losing three wickets for two runs in nine balls.

Philander's figures were the second best by a South African on one-day international debut. Fast bowler great Allan Donald took five for 29 against India at Calcutta in 1991-92.

And afterwards South Africa captain Jacques Kallis said Cape Cobras ace Philander was being groomed to succeed veteran all-rounder Shaun Pollock.

"He's done well back home in domestic cricket and that's the reason he got a call-up here," said Kallis.

"He's a good all-rounder, someone we are going to try to mould along the lines of Shaun Pollock.

"They are big boots to fill, but he started well today (Sunday)," added Kallis, captaining South Africa in Ireland while regular skipper Graeme Smith recovers from knee surgery back home.

The opener -- batting in Smith's place -- was appearing in only his second one-day international, four years after his debut against England at Lord's.

"He showed the selectors what he can do and it's fantastic he's taken the opportunity," said Kallis of van Wyk.

Fast bowler Andre Nel, all-rounder Andrew Hall and seamer Charl Langeveldt, all of whom have appeared in English county cricket this season, didn't play Sunday but are in Ireland as members of a 14-man squad.

"We will have some new faces out against India," said Kallis.

"Being rusty will be against us. India have played a lot of cricket and we aren't as well prepared as we want to be."

"But I think conditions might play into our hands with the ball seaming around a bit. Having said that they have world-class players who can produce big innings."

Philander bowled at a lively pace on Sunday. But a rain-freshened pitch

Morne van Wyk's maiden one-day international fifty was the centrepiece of South Africa's total. The opener was appearing in only his second match at this level, four years after making his debut against England at Lord's.

South Africa, after being sent in by Johnston, saw van Wyk (52) and AB de Villiers (40) put on 75 for the first wicket while Kallis made 46.

Openers William Porterfield and Kenny Carroll kept Ireland up with the run-rate.

But Carroll started the slump, unluckily slipping onto his stumps to be out wicket off the bowling of Dale Steyn for 21.

"The guys were positive and we had a bit of luck" said Johnston. "But unfortunately it turned against us with Kenny slipping over and then we lost three quick wickets."

South Africa-born Thinus Fourie, surprisingly promoted up the order, fell next when edging Steyn to first slip Justin Kemp.

Lively seamer Philander struck when Porterfield was caught behind and he then clean bowled wicket-keeper Niall O'Brien, who made 52 in Ireland's nine-wicket defeat against India here Saturday, for four.

Ireland had now collapsed to 56 for four and the game was getting beyond their grasp on a cold and damp day.

Earlier Ireland debutant Alex Cusack took three in 15 for four overs as South Africa were held to 173 for four and then finished on 36 not out.

The 26-year-old all-rounder, originally from Brisbane but whose father holds an Irish passport, restricted the Proteas.

They had been on course for a score in excess of 200 in their first match since losing April's World Cup semifinal against eventual champions Australia.

"We knew he could make the step up," said Ireland captain Trent Johnston. "He came out there in tough conditions, against quality batsmen with short boundaries and he hit the top of off-stump. That's all I want."

"He got the rewards with three wickets and then went out and showed us how well he could bat. He's going to be in these Irish colours for a long time and he deserves that," added Johnston, himself Australian-born.

Pollock had been rested from the trip to Ireland while batsman Ashwell Prince had been dropped.

The experienced trio of Andrew Hall, Andre Nel and Charl Langeveldt, all in Ireland, were left out.

South Africa are due to play India in three one-day internationals at

Stormont on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday of next week.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the lone one-day international between Ireland and South Africa at Stormont on Sunday:

SOUTHAFRICA

Van Wyk c Johnston b Cusack	52
De Villiers c Cusack b Whelan	40
Kallis c K O'Brien b Cusack	46
Gibbs c N O'Brien b Cusack	2
Kemp not out	18
Boucher not out	2
Extras: (lb-4, w-9)	13
Total: (For 4 wkt in 31 overs)	173
Fall of wickets: 1-75, 2-136, 3-147, 4-162	

Did not bat: Duminy, Philander, Ntini, Tshabalala, Steyn

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Whelan	7	0	43	1
Fourie	6	0	30	0
K O'Brien	2	0	15	0
McCallan	6	0	31	0
Johnston	4	0	17	0
White	2	0	18	0
Cusack	4	0	15	3

IRELAND

Porterfield c Boucher b Philander	17
Carroll hit wkt b Steyn	21
Fourie c Kemp b Steyn	1
Joyce c Boucher b Kallis	11
N O'Brien c Philander	4
Cusack not out	36
K O'Brien c van Wyk b Tshabalala	6
White c Ntini b Duminy	3
Johnston c Duminy b Ntini	9
McCallan c Boucher b Philander	10
Whelan b Philander	0
Extras: (lb-7, w-6)	13
Total: (All out in 30.5 overs)	131
Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-47, 3-47, 4-56, 5-66, 6-77, 7-83, 8-96, 9-129	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Ntini	6	0	23	1
Steyn	7	0	30	2
Philander	5.5	1	12	4
Kallis	6	0	21	1
Tshabalala	3	0	22	1
Duminy	3	0	16	1

Result: South Africa won by 42 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Alex Cusack.

Toss: Ireland.

Umpires: Billy Bowden and Aleem Dar.

Pollock of tomorrow!

Cricket

AFP, Belfast

he got a call-up here," said Kallis, himself one of the world's leading all-rounders.

"He's a good all-rounder, someone we are going to try to mould along the lines of Shaun Pollock.

"They are big boots to fill, but he started well today (Sunday)," added Kallis, captaining South Africa in Ireland while regular skipper Graeme Smith recovers from knee surgery back home.

The opener -- batting in Smith's place -- was appearing in only his second one-day international, four years after his debut against England at Lord's.

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Inzy wants to play Tests

CRICINFO, undated

Inzamamul Haq, former Pakistan captain, wants to play Test matches for some more time before retiring "in an honourable manner".

Inzamam retired from ODIs after a disastrous World Cup and resigned from the Test captaincy. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is expected to leave out Inzamam from its list of centrally-contracted players, on the basis that he is no longer an ODI player. Further, sounds coming out of the board and selection committee suggest that it may be difficult for Inzamam to find a way back into the team.

"I am not going to play for long but I do want to play a few more Tests as I think I can still contribute to Pakistan cricket," Inzamam said at a function where he was feted for his contribution to the game.

"I don't understand why they (selectors) keep on saying things about my form and fitness. Obviously if I am not fit or not in form I myself will not make myself available for selection," Inzamam said.

"But the selectors should not make such a big issue of these things. I want to play Test matches but honourably and I also want to finally retire in an honourable manner," he added.

Tauqir Zia, the former board chairman, at the same function reminded Inzamam that every player had to go someday, mindful perhaps that few Pakistani players have ever left the game graciously.

"What I would advise Inzamam is to accept whatever the board and selectors decide for him. What they decide, will be in the national interest and their decision must be accepted sportingly by him," Tauqir said.

Inzamam, who has played 119 Tests and 378 one-day internationals for Pakistan, ruled out reversing his retirement from ODIs and said once a player retired, he should stay retired.

"It is never easy for a professional cricketer, who has represented his country for 17 years, to forget the past and adopt a new lifestyle. But I have taken my decision on one-dayers," Johnston said.

"If we were together like we were in the West Indies, we would have been competitive in those two games over the weekend. That's the way it goes and we are just going to have to train harder."

Meanwhile South Africa captain Jacques Kallis said Ireland had given his side a "good run".

He added: "I know they had a few injuries and were missing a few guys but they are competing at international level and are no walk-overs."

Newcastle receive

FROM PAGE 20

The case has been watched closely by all in football as a test case in the ongoing club versus country row.

The ruling could have a dramatic impact on international football, in terms of clubs releasing their players and for national associations being able to afford payouts similar to the Owen case.

"For me, the presence of Henry here does not worry me. I am not a child any more and I know what I can do," said the Argentine.

Messi told *El Mundo Deportivo* he did not fear for his place.

"For me, the presence of Henry here does not worry me. I am not a child any more and I know what I can do," said the Argentine.

Currently sidelined with a leg injury, Henry said that he hoped to resume full training in two weeks and be ready for Barcelona's start to their preparations for the new season on July 20.

He also said he hoped to continue to play a full part in France's campaign to reach the Euro 2008 finals in Austria and Switzerland.

Henry has played 92 times for his country and scored 39 goals.

Barcelona tried to snare Henry last year but he opted to sign a new four-year contract with Arsenal that would have seen him stay at the club through 2010.

But the departure from the London club of vice-chairman David Dein and the doubts swirling around the future of coach and fellow Frenchman Arsene Wenger led the player to consider moving to Spain.

"Arsene has been part of my life for as long as I can remember," he wrote in an open letter to fans published in British daily *The Sun* on Saturday.

"I cannot take the chance to be there without Arsene Wenger and David Dein," he added.

Derbyshire defeat lacklustre Windies

Cricket

AFP, London

Derbyshire beat West Indies by 51 runs in a tour match on Sunday and Windies coach David Moore blamed a failure to apply "basic cricket knowledge" by his batsmen.

Derbyshire, who won the