

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.



PHOTO: STAR

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

Pollock of tomorrow!



AFP, Belfast

Jacques Kallis believes Vernon Philander has the ability to replace Shaun Pollock after seeing the pace-bowling all-rounder take four wickets on his one-day international debut during South Africa's 42-run win against Ireland here at Stormont.

Philander marked his 22nd birthday with four wickets for 12 runs in under six overs as Ireland were dismissed for 131 in a match reduced by rain to 31 overs per side.

His figures were the second best by a South African on one-day international debut after fast bowling great Allan Donald's five for 29 against India at Calcutta in 1991/92.

This was South Africa's first fixture since their seven-wicket World Cup semi-final defeat against eventual champions Australia in April and, looking to the future, they also gave a debut to off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala.

But it was Philander who caught the eye and, with a rested Pollock not selected, the Cape Cobras player will look to feature in South Africa's three-match one-day series against India starting at Stormont on Tuesday.

"He's done well back home in domestic cricket and that's the reason

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.

"He landed the ball in the right area, there was a little bit in the wicket and he exploited it expertly. I certainly hope he has a bright future ahead of him. He's had a good start."

Pollock, 33, has become one of the mainstays of the South Africa side since the team's re-admission to world cricket following the end of the apartheid era over a decade ago.

His accurate pace bowling has led to over 400 Test wickets and nearly that many in the one-day international arena although he hasn't scored the runs his batting ability would suggest.

However, Pollock's age appeared to be catching up with him at the World Cup where his declining pace was exploited by Australia opener Matthew Hayden in the semi-final after his accuracy against England had been vital in booking the Proteas' last four spot.

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

assisted the quicks and Philander is likely to face sterner challenges than bowling against what is still effectively an amateur side.

Morne van Wyk's 52, his maiden one-day international fifty, was the centrepiece of South Africa's total of 173 for four.

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."

75 years of pride

PTI, New Delhi

India on Monday completed 75 years of playing Test cricket, coming a long way from the confines of its elite class image to be the common man's game and attaining the status of a religion in the country.

India played its historic first Test from June 25 in 1932 against England at the hallowed turf of the Lord's, where Colonel CK Nayudu led a bunch of amateurs, not only marking a landmark day in Test history but also carrying the hopes of an undivided country.

The team comprising Mohammed Nissar, Amar Singh, Janardhan Navle, Naoomal Jaomal, Syed Wazir Ali, Sorabji Colah, Nazir Ali, Phiroze Palia, Lal Singh and Jahangir Khan lost the game but won many a hearts for their fighting spirits.

The team, without a coach, tried its best to shine in each of the three departments on the field.

Strangely, Nayudu was not officially entrusted the giant task of leading the team, and was the third choice for the job after first official captain Maharaja of Patiala pulled out due to health reasons and the captaincy went to Maharaja of Porbander.

But with the country's reputation at stake, Maharaja of Porbander, and vice-captain, Yuvraj of Limbdi, put the responsibility on the 37-year-old Colonel just on the eve of the Test.

Mymensingh group champs

UNB, Dhaka

Mymensingh emerged group champions with an all-win record to reach the five-team super league of the 27th National Hockey Championship eliminating Bangladesh Air Force 2-0 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Earlier, BKSP booked a super league berth also with all-win run.

In yesterday's another match, Patuakhali tasted their first victory in their third and last group match beating all-losers Bangladesh Police 5-1.

Aaquib in city

UNB, Dhaka

Pakistan National Cricket Academy coach and former Pakistan speedster Aaquib Javed arrived in Dhaka yesterday to impart specialised coaching to selected pace bowlers at the GrameenPhone Pacer Hunt Camp (phase-3).

Aaquib will closely work with 16 selected pacers at BKSP on technical and non-technical aspects of fast bowling from June 25-28.

Change imminent

FROM PAGE 17

"I'll make no comment because I have heard nothing. If the government takes this decision, every one will have to go by it," said the BCB general secretary.

It is speculated that a new ad-hoc committee will replace the elected body next month.

A disappointing

FROM PAGE 17

Many had hoped for former captain Habibul Bashar's return among runs after his half century in the lead-up game to the Test but the most successful batsman of the country was trapped leg before by Dilhara Fernando, who made the initial damage by taking three wickets while opener Shahriar Nafees added more ows to his out-of-form wounds by making only 15.

It was all about the sad story of the Bangladesh innings.

Sri Lanka also missed a few good chances, especially rookie wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene let down his bowlers on two occasions. However, Bangladesh failed to capitalise on those mistakes as only the brave can ride the luck.

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 Woodenfloor 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.

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 Pakistan players have ever left the game gracefully.

"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," he said.

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.

Henry set

FROM PAGE 20

"Henry is a great player and for that reason he is coming to Barca," he told reporters.

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.

SA too strong for Irish



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 bowling 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 line of Shaun Pollock. They are big boots to fill, but he started well today (Sunday)," added Kallis, himself one of the world's leading all-rounders.

Earlier Ireland debutant Alex Cusack took three for 15 in 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 Johnson, himself Australian-born.

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 hit 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 dank day.

South Africa's other debutant, off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala, got in on the act with Kevin O'Brien holding out to van Wyk at deep mid-wicket.

Philander ended the match by bowling last man Roger Whelan for nought with a ball to spare.

Earlier, medium-pace Cusack removed van Wyk, had Herschelle Gibbs caught behind for just two and dismissed Kallis for 46.

South Africa had six survivors from the side that beat Ireland by seven wickets in a World Cup Super Eights match in Georgetown, Guyana in April.

For this match they were captained by Kallis with Graeme Smith recovering from knee surgery in South Africa.

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:

SOUTH AFRICA

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 wkts 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 b Philander	4
Cusack not out	36
K O'Brien c van Wyk b Tshabalala	3
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.



PHOTO: AFP

Romanian most famous player Gheorghe Hagi (L) gestures toward Steaua Bucharest chief Gigi Becali during a press conference where he was presented as the new trainer of his former club in Bucharest on Monday.

Derbyshire defeat lacklustre Windies



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 toss and decided to bat, made 135-6 off their 20 overs before the tourists were bowled out for 84 after just 15.4 overs.

It was not the kind of preparation Moore and his players were looking for ahead of the two Twenty20 internationals with England at The Oval on Thursday and Friday against a county who had won only one of their previous 11 games.

They have only one more game -- against the PCA Masters at Arundel on Tuesday evening -- to try to find some form in a format of the competition in which they have played only one international against New Zealand 16 months ago.

Moore said: "We haven't played enough of this type of cricket, particularly at international level. This is only our second Twenty20 game so they are still coming to grips with it."

"But there is also such a thing as basic cricket knowledge and understanding and they should have applied that this afternoon. We have another game on Tuesday and an

opportunity to remedy some of the situations we put ourselves in this afternoon.

"It is not about learning new skills. It is about applying your knowledge. We missed a lot of opportunities for singles. There were too many attempted big hits rather than working the ball around."

"We were trying to make too many things happen off reasonable deliveries and played too many poor shots."

Moore, however, insisted that morale had not taken a battering despite this latest woeful showing following on from the mauling in the Test series against England.

He said: "They are going okay. We beat England Lions quite soundly the other day in a one-day game and we batted quite well in that game."

"But consistency is the thing I have been talking about since the start of the tour a couple of months ago and it is that which lets us down. There are a few things that need to happen but consistency is one of those."

"The damage is not irreparable. We have got opportunities and we know what we've got to do. It was pretty straightforward. There were just not enough scoring shots per over in that whole innings. We need to apply ourselves more to the task."

Solanki & mates disappointed

BBC ONLINE, undated

Worcestershire captain Vikram Solanki says he and some of his teammates are disappointed to have missed out on selection for England's one-day squad.

The opening batsman had been widely tipped for a recall but was left out along with Gareth Batty and Kabir Ali.

"There were perhaps a number of players who could have been picked. I'm sure people are disappointed."

"You want people selected for England, but if they're not they can play for Worcestershire," he told BBC Sport.

The 31-year-old has been a fringe selection for England in one-day cricket for several years.

He has hit two centuries and five fifties but an average of 26.75 suggests he has not made the most of his opportunities.

His hopes of another chance were boosted were he was named captain of England's second string, but the match was reduced by rain and the Lions ended up losing to West Indies by seven wickets.

Batty and Ali also played in that match but did not do enough to earn selection and now the three of them can concentrate on helping to improve Worcestershire's fortunes.

The club, after scraping the last promotion spot from Division Two in 2006, are propping up the top tier this season with no wins in the Championship.