

Shootout heartbreak for Daily Star

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star's march in the Meril Media Cup football tournament was brought to a grinding halt by New Nation who won the battle of the English dailies in penalty shootout at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

New Nation won the quarterfinal 4-1 in the tiebreaker after the regulation and extra-time ended 1-1.

Despite half the period was played under incessant rain on a muddy pitch where keeping balance was the order of the day, the two sides still produced exciting battle with forays and counter forays. Al-Amin's superb solo effort put The Daily Star ahead shortly after the break.

But the popular English daily unwittingly threw away the lead when an otherwise 'rock under the bar' Al Musabbir Sadi let loose an innocuous ball that Sharif Khan slotted home minutes before the final whistle. The rare mistake of Sadi brought back memories of German legendary goalkeeper Oliver Kahn's gaffe during the 2002 World Cup final against Brazil.

Daily Star came close to winning in extra-time, but Quamrul Hasan failed to beat the New Nation goalkeeper who was brilliant throughout and later adjudged man-of-the-match for his heroics in the shootout. New Nation will take on hot favourites UNB, who edged Sangbad 1-0, in today's second semifinal.

Bangla Vision, who blanked New Age 2-0, will meet Ajker Kagaj, who eliminated Ekushey Television 1-0, in the first semifinal.

Former national striker Sheikh Mohammed Aslam and ex Bangladesh Cricket Board general secretary Aminul Haque Moni were present as match adjudicators.

Germany

FROM PAGE 20 consistently threaten the likes of elite teams Brazil, Argentina and Italy.

"(German captain) Michael Ballack is world-class of course, so are (Arsenal goalkeeper) Jens Lehmann, (midfielder) Torsten Frings, (striker) Miroslav Klose, (Bayern Munich defender) Philipp Lahm," said Loew, who says the five are perfect role models to aspiring youngsters in Germany.

Germany's recent wins, including the 2-1 victory in Prague against the Czech Republic last March, have had a knock-on effect in the Bundesliga, according to Loew.

"Many teams have increased their coaching staff, they are coaching specifics of the game and the quality of play is lifting. "Players are becoming more aggressive in their attack and becoming more self-confident.

The fact some German clubs, especially Bayern Munich, have spent large amounts of money recruiting foreign stars does not especially worry Loew.

"The money was invested wisely, in top-class players and they will only add to the Bundesliga, they will push standards up and give other players a yardstick to compare themselves to."

Bangladesh eye

FROM PAGE 17 are trying to improve on that."

Mahub added that they will play in an attacking 4-3-3 format against Sri Lanka and Thailand and will adopt a defensive 4-4-2 system against the local giants.

Pakistan, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore comprise Group A.

Bangladesh are also trying to arrange warm-up matches against Pakistan and Japan in a bid to have match practice.

Arsenal accused

FROM PAGE 20 "That's the kind of result that changes a team and a season.

"You can get momentum from these games, and especially belief. Nobody could ever measure it in terms of psychology, but it is important. Once your team believe, really, that they can do it in a season it helps.

"To have lost the game today would have been a big blow for the team because everyone would have said it was because Thierry Henry has left. So this is a very positive start."

The only dark clouds on Wenger's horizon was the news that Emmanuel Adebayor will definitely miss Wednesday's Champions League qualifier with Sparta Prague, although he rates new signing Eduardo da Silva as 'fifty-fifty'.

Defeat was harsh on Fulham, and in particular Tony Warner, who excelled in goal after being drafted into the starting line-up following a warm-up injury to Anti Niemi.

"Tony's a decent keeper and put in a good performance," Sanchez said. "It's a very hard position, reserve goalkeeper, and you've got to be a decent character. To be finally beaten by a penalty was cruel on him. He was one of the mainstays of our team."



Novak Djokovic of Serbia pumps his fists in jubilation after his win over Roger Federer of Switzerland in the final of the Coupe Rogers at Stade Uniprix in Montreal on Sunday.

Djokovic fells Federer

Tennis

AFP, Montreal

Novak Djokovic elbowed his way into the tennis elite on Sunday with a 7-6, 2-6, 7-6 defeat of world number one Roger Federer in the final of the Montreal Masters.

The 20-year-old Serb thwarted a fight back from Swiss powerhouse Federer, who was aiming to lift the 50th trophy of his career. But Djokovic, who had beaten Federer's hot Spanish rival Rafael Nadal less than 24 hours earlier in the semifinals, calmly ripped through a final set tiebreaker to win a second Masters shield this season after Miami five months ago.

"I can't describe the feeling I have right now," Djokovic said. "It's like a dream come true, especially against Federer in the finals, to win those tiebreakers was just incredible.

"I managed to win these tie breaks against a player who probably has the best score in tiebreakers, who is the strongest player mentally in the world right now."

Federer has now lost six times this season, one more than in all of 2006. He stands level on four season titles with Djokovic, that pair standing two behind Nadal.

But Federer plays with a sense of history after 11 grand slam titles and near total domination game for the past three seasons.

Despite failing to close out a victory and keep his 16-match win streak in Canada alive, the 26-year-old was far from concerned, calling the loss "insignificant."

"The goal this season was to win Wimbledon -- done that," he said. "Try to stay No. 1 in the world -- it would have helped to win today.

"But you can't have it all. I'm looking at the US Open, looking down the road as well, the (November) Masters Cup. There's still a long way to go. "I can't start being disappointed about just one match. He played well. I couldn't get the job done."

For Djokovic, however, the victory was a watershed. "This is the best day of my career," said the overjoyed Djokovic, mistakenly introduced as Croatian during the trophy ceremony. "I won a major in Miami, but to beat the first and second of the world is unbelievable.

"I couldn't have asked for more, I played some impressive tennis this week."

Now Djokovic, who beat Federer for the first time in five tries, is headed back up the rankings.

"For me it was very important on the start of the year to perform well on the most important tournaments, the major ones, which I did.

"I showed it again. I show my quality. I deserve to be here right now," he said.

The youngster held his nerve in

the deciding third set, beginning with a break and staying steady despite a Federer break-back in the eighth game.

The third seed ran away with the tiebreaker, with the Swiss saving one match point before going down as he chased a lob with an unsuccessful between-the-legs return.

Federer gave Djokovic due but refused to be over-awed by the next generation player who beat him. "He's an up-and-coming youngster who is improving almost by the day. They learn a lot with all the matches they play, with the travelling.

"He definitely played great tournament. He's been able to back it up now since basically a year now. "If he keeps this up he's going to create some chances also at the grand slams because, he's been to two semi-finals already (Roland Garros and Wimbledon this season).

"This obviously might be a breakthrough tournament for him," Federer said.

Federer, Nadal and Djokovic move on to Monday's start of the Cincinnati Masters, where a Federer-Djokovic re-play could be a semifinal offering.

Diouf's future in doubt

INTERNET, undated

El-Hadji Diouf is set for talks with manager Sammy Lee after warning he may have to leave Bolton if he is not given a regular first-team place.

The 26-year-old striker was a substitute for the Trotters' opening game of the Premier League season on Saturday, coming on in the second half as they went down to a 3-1 defeat by Newcastle.

Now the Senegal forward wants Lee to outline what the future holds for Diouf at the Reebok.

He said: "I just want to get everything clear in my head.

"I want to talk with the chairman and the manager because I want everything to be clear.

"If the manager tells me he has confidence in me, I do well. If I don't see that, I don't think I can stay."

WI coach hunt

FROM PAGE 17 been a success.

The closing date for applications is August 31 and the quality of applicants may depend on how quickly Julian Hunte, the new board president, can mend the broken relationship between the WICB and the players which has overshadowed almost everything in recent months.

Moore will remain in charge for the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa next month.

Negatively

FROM PAGE 17 Yet the move sent out a negative message. David had been positive right through the series, and even said he'd do everything in his capacity to win this Test. England were bleeding and there was no better time to twist the knife. Rain was forecast for tomorrow, another reason to hasten the end. Leave on a high, trample over the opposition, especially when you're in their backyard.

The macroscopic view is instructive. Only once in this decade have India not enforced the follow-on, the Sydney Test of 2004. Then, like here, an Indian captain was at the threshold of a moment so revealing that he chose safety over adventure. An away-series win is such a rarity that Indian captains on the brink are bound to get edgy. Despite all their differences, David behaved just the way Ganguly did at Sydney. First he thought of avoiding defeat, only then did he think of a win.

Like a left-arm spinner bowling over the wicket, it was a negative strategy intended to produce a positive result. It covered all bases -- seal the series, yet give yourself a chance to win the match. He first concentrated on winning the war, only then did he think of the final battle. Fifty years from now Rahul Dravid will not be remembered as a captain who didn't enforce the follow-on in a game India could afford to draw. Dravid arrived in England with a job, he will achieve the bottomline. One-nil or 2-0 is purely academic.

FROM PAGE 20 They even finished the Reading match with Portugal winger Ronaldo and Republic of Ireland defender-cum-midfielder John O'Shea up front.

Rooney, 21, is no stranger to foot injuries. He almost missed last year's World Cup with a broken metatarsal in his right foot and his involvement in Euro 2004 was ended after a metatarsal injury to his left foot.

Rooney out

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Akhtar to fight the fine

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar said Monday he had appealed against a 300,000 rupees (5,000 dollars) fine imposed by the Pakistan Cricket Board after he walked out of a training camp.

"I have appealed against the fine because I think I was not given the chance to give my version" of events, Akhtar told AFP.

The cricketer was fined 100,000 rupees for leaving a training camp in Karachi earlier this month, and 200,000 rupees for snubbing a subsequent disciplinary hearing.

But Akhtar said he had not been given advance notice of the hearing, having only been told last Friday. "The punishment was given two

days before that," said Akhtar, who is back in Pakistan's squad after missing the World Cup in the Caribbean due to injury.

Despite his disciplinary problems, the controversial fast bowler insists he fit and ready for action at the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa next month, after playing only one day's cricket this year.

"I am fully fit and gearing up to play my part in the Twenty20 World Cup. All that went earlier this year is past me now," said Akhtar.

The injury prone paceman took four wickets against South Africa in the Port Elizabeth Test in February before breaking down once again.

He played just one Test and four one-day internationals last year, having undergone twin knee operations.

The player was embroiled in a doping scandal last year along with

pace partner Mohammad Asif.

The new-ball partners tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone in Pakistan before the 2006 ICC Champions Trophy, and were subsequently withdrawn from the tournament.

A PCB doping tribunal banned Akhtar for two years and Asif for one year, but the bans were controversially overturned on appeal.

Pakistan get their Twenty20 campaign off the ground against Scotland at Durban on September 12 and arch-rivals India at the same venue two days later.

The team will wrap up its preparation for the event with a training camp starting in Lahore next week. Their new coach Geoff Lawson is expected to join them on August 21.

The former Australian paceman replaced Bob Woolmer who died in Jamaica during the World Cup in March.

Biggies look forward

Tennis

AFP, Cincinnati

After Novak Djokovic's stunning triumph at the Montreal Masters, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal will try to get their US Open preparations back on track in Cincinnati this week.

Djokovic posted victories over both of the top two players in the world within 24 hours in Montreal, denying Swiss world number one Federer a 50th career win with his triumph in Sunday's final.

Federer and Nadal will try to restore order at the Cincinnati Masters.

The event staged at a stadium amid a golf course within sight of a crowd-pulling amusement park may have all the ambience of a Middle American county fair, but the tennis remains serious business with just a fortnight remaining before the final

grand slam of the year starts in New York.

In all-American style, main draw players are handed the keys to flash Mercedes cars to drive themselves the 10 kilometres between a motorway hotel and the isolated site.

Fender-benders are not unknown, but the top seed Federer and number two Nadal are planning to limit their clashes strictly to the court as they fine-tune for the US Open starting August 27.

The steamy heat of Cincinnati will make fitness an important element, with Federer saying in temperate Canada that he is ready for a week of three-set, three-hour matches if necessary.

The top eight seeds begin with byes, with Federer due to open in the second round against either Russian Dmitry Tursunov or a qualifier.

The Swiss could have a chance at revenge for one of the five defeats he suffered in 2006 if recovering

Briton Andy Murray reaches the third round.

But the youngster who returned in Montreal after three months out with a wrist injury must first face former Australian Open finalist Marcos Baghdatis.

He would then possibly play mentor Tim Henman, the 2000 finalist now ranked 85th and entered on a wild card.

Defending champion Andy Roddick takes the third seeding, hoping to recover poise after losing to Djokovic in the Montreal quarters.

Djokovic stands fourth in the seedings, ahead of Russian Nikolay Davydenko and sixth seed Fernando Gonzalez, struggling after a pair of cement losses this summer.

Spain's Tommy Robredo is seeded seventh with Richard Gasquet the first Frenchman at number eight.

A Serbian day

Tennis

AFP, Los Angeles

Serbian third seed Ana Ivanovic defeated fourth-seeded Russian Nadia Petrova 7-5, 6-4 here Sunday to win the 600,000-dollar WTA hard court tournament.

Ivanovic, who said she was inspired by compatriot Novak Djokovic's Montreal Masters triumph over world number one Roger Federer earlier in the day, fired 23 forehand winners past Petrova as she claimed her second title of the year.

The 19-year-old served for the first set at 5-4 but couldn't finish it off, having to come back and serve again to take the opener.

There were no hiccups, however, as she served for the match at 5-4 in the second, as Ivanovic held her serve to love and finished Petrova off with her fourth ace of the match.

"I was really pleased with my performance today, she's a tough opponent," Ivanovic said. "I knew I had to take chances. I'm very excited -- this is great preparation for the US Open."

Ivanovic said she knew before her match that Djokovic had pulled off the upset of Federer in Montreal.

"It's amazing -- I saw a little bit of his match," she said. "He played amazing tennis so I was motivated to do the same thing."

Ivanovic had to battle for her finals berth against another compatriot, second-seeded Jelena Jankovic.

She rallied from 1-4 down in the third set on Saturday to beat Jankovic 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Petrova, in contrast, advanced to the final in a walkover when top-seeded Russian Maria Sharapova pulled out before their scheduled semi-final with a left lower leg strain.

Ivanovic, the runner-up at the French Open, was playing her first tournament since a semi-final loss to eventual champion Venus Williams at Wimbledon.

Now, projected to rise one spot to a career high No. 4 in the world rankings on Monday, she heads to Toronto to defend the Rogers Cup title she won last year when the tournament was held in Montreal.

Delight

FROM PAGE 20 home Lahm's cross.

Last season's third place finishers Werder Bremen charged into a 2-0 lead against VfB Bochum with Brazilian midfielder Diego and summer signing Bouabacar Sanogo netting, before Bochum fought back in a 2-2 draw.

Hamburg started the season with a 1-0 win over Hanover, while Eintracht Frankfurt enjoyed a 1-0 win over Hertha Berlin after Greek striker Ioannis Amanatidis struck with a header on 31 minutes.

Bayer Leverkusen and Energie Cottbus played out a 0-0 draw, while Arminia Bielefeld enjoyed a 3-1 win at VfL Wolfsburg with goals from Polish striker Artur Wichniarek, fellow forward Christian Eigler and defender Oliver Kirch.

And on Friday, last season's runners-up Schalke 04 came away from defending champions VfB Stuttgart with a precious point after a 2-2 draw.

Pretenders fire

FROM PAGE 20 of Swedish midfielder Kim Kallstrom after just 34 minutes for stupidly spitting in the direction of the fourth official.

Until then Lyon had been the dominant force and there was nothing to suggest they will not center to another French title again this season.

Lyon were left disappointed at coming so close to holding out for the point, but ultimately coming up short.

"It's tough when you play 10 against 11 for the whole match and you concede a goal at the end - it's really disappointing," said midfielder Mathieu Bodmer.

"Toulouse put a lot of physical pressure on us. We did what we could, we tried to earn a point but we didn't manage it."

Marseille remain winless and goalless despite the return of Samir Nasri after a second straight 0-0 draw, this time at home to Rennes.

Bordeaux - under new coach and former Manchester United, Barcelona, Marseille and Inter Milan centre-back Laurent Blanc - are the early high-flyers with six points from their two games having won 2-0 at Auxerre, although they had two Toifilou Maoulida penalty misses to thank for that win.

Nancy, who beat Caen 1-0, and Le Mans, who won 3-1 at Sochaux, also have a perfect six points from six.

St Etienne and Lorient follow in fourth and fifth places after victories over Valenciennes (3-1) and Monaco (2-1) respectively.

Nice secured their first points of the season as a late Vincent Hognon goal sunk 10-man Strasbourg.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes solution time: 24 mins.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers for deciphering.

CRYPTOQUIP

SNKV ZEAK JYKGEQKVP FFYC V IKAFXK NHVLYD, DCII XEL NP GHJJCGK NEG MFZCYEPK MCCQ SFG F IHYY-EPC. Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN PEOPLE HAVE TO TRIM DOWN A FEW ENVELOPES, COULD THEY USE A PAIR OF MAIL CLIPPERS? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals A