

Junior, Dilkusha play out thriller

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Junior pipped an exciting 4-3 victory over Dilkusha in the Metropolitan Third Division Football League at the Outer Stadium yesterday.

Quamruzzaman struck twice and Obaidur and Narayan scored a goal each for the winners while Jahangir netted twice and Saju one.

In another match at the same venue, Jirabo played out a one-all draw with Tongi. Rustom scored for Jirabo while Kamal netted for Tongi. At the Bir Shrestha Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Stadium in Kamalapur, Printing Press beat Mirpur Chalanika 2-1. Bulbul and Dollar scored for the winners while Rana netted one for the Mirpur side.

Nat'l Youth Kabaddi from Sept 1

SPORTS REPORTER

The first phase of the Fresh IGP Cup National Youth Kabaddi Championship will begin on in seven zonal venues on September 1.

32 teams split into seven groups will compete in the preliminary round on the first two days at Jessore, Pirojpur, Faridpur, Pabna, Dinajpur, Mymensingh and Dhaka.

Seven zonal champions along with defending champions Dhaka will play in the eight-team final round to be held in Dhaka on September 5-7.

Monaco look

FROM PAGE 20

Nice at the Velodrome. But they will be without Djibril Cisse, who is recovering from a knock against Caen.

Nice, meanwhile, will have to put Saturday's 1-1 draw against Toulouse behind them and in particular the disappointment of a missed penalty that could have made the difference.

Paris Saint Germain continue their quest to break their duck at Le Mans, and give themselves a confidence-boost ahead of a clash against arch-rivals Marseille on Sunday.

Paul Le Guen's side are having yet another mini-crisis while Le Mans, despite losing their place as leaders after falling 3-1 at Monaco, are one of the in-form teams at present.

Second-placed Lorient host fellow high-flyers Valenciennes, who are sitting fifth, on Tuesday night.

A win would give the Bretons the league league, while Antoine Kombouare's Valenciennes will be looking to press home their superiority after a 3-1 win over Sochaux.

Elsewhere Wednesday Rennes travel to Auxerre, still reeling from their 4-1 thumping at Nancy. Metz host Bordeaux, and Strasbourg head south to Saint Etienne.

Gerrard out

FROM PAGE 20

pushed into action under similar circumstances but that seemingly will not happen now.

Benitez, who clearly believes his side can overcome Toulouse and Derby without Gerrard, will have to send him on England duty next week but both club and country will liaise over his fitness.

The Liverpool manager is hopeful Gerrard will have recovered enough to face the Rams at the weekend, but stopped short of showing any genuine confidence.

"I would hope Steven will be a possibility to play against Derby, but I am not sure, it is up to the doctors," he said.

"Then we will have to see about England. It is too soon yet, it will depend very much on what England's medical people feel and our own medical staff."

Benitez will have defender Sami Hyypia involved against Toulouse despite the Finn having sustained a broken nose at Sunderland, while Alvaro Arbeloa is also a possible central defensive stand-in.

Defender Gabriel Paletta was sold to Boca Juniors for around £2million this weekend, a deal completed before the injury problems arose, but Benitez refused to dwell on his apparent lack of cover at centre-back.

He said: "There is no point considering what I would have done had I known about the injuries but Paletta needed to be playing so it is best that he has gone to Boca."

"Sami will be okay; he has trained and is happy to play against Toulouse."



Synchronised swimming made its debut as an Olympic sport in the 1984 Los Angeles Games.



IM Enamul Hossain Rajib (R) makes a move against GN Gopal of India during their Asian Zonal Chess Championship engagement at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday.

Fielding worries Rahul

AFP, Birmingham

India captain Rahul Dravid said his side were being "out-fielded" by England and warned his team they would have to improve this aspect of their game if they were to win the ongoing seven-match one-day international series.

Dravid's men went 2-1 down after a 42-run defeat here at Edgbaston where slipshod fielding and poor running between the wickets, two of the problems that have dogged India on an otherwise successful tour of England, were again in evidence.

Rudra Pratap Singh, not for the first time, dropped a routine long-leg chance to give England opener Alastair Cook a reprieve.

Meanwhile wicket keeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni completed one stumping, which saw Kevin Pietersen dismissed, but fumbled an arguably easier second chance when Owais Shah was yards out of his ground.

Yuvraj Singh remained an admirable exception to much of the

slackness on show elsewhere, with India's general ground fielding and chasing to the boundary otherwise lacking the zip with which England went about their work.

"England are out-fielding us more than anything else at this stage," Dravid told reporters. "Your fielders can sometimes make your bowlers look better than they are and we are not doing that."

"We didn't field as well as we can, that was a disappointing part of our game, and they (England) fielded beautifully."

"It makes a big difference in a game you lose by 40 or 50 runs, you give away 20 and they save 20, that's the game. It's an area we need to improve."

England's total of 281 for eight on Monday was built around Ian Bell's 79, his best international score on his Warwickshire home ground.

India were well in the hunt while former captain Sourav Ganguly (72) and Dravid (56) were compiling a third-wicket stand of 104 in 115 balls but once the experienced pair fell in quick succession to fast bowler Chris Tremlett, the match slipped from their grasp.

"We knew one of us would have to go and try to make a big score," said Dravid. "The critical stage of the game was losing those two quick wickets which, when you've got in with six batsmen, we couldn't afford."

Dravid defended his somewhat surprising decision to send in Dinesh Karthik at No 3, a position filled by Yuvraj during India's nine-run victory in the second one-day international at Bristol on Friday.

He explained it was only that openers Ganguly and Sachin Tendulkar had shared a stand of 113 on that occasion which meant Karthik, out for nought on Tuesday, didn't bat at first-wicket down in that match.

Karthik impressed as an opener during the Test series and Dravid cited England's handling of Bell as the model India should follow with the 22-year-old.

"Look at Ian Bell, we are all talking about him but England have been patient with him and therein lies a lesson for everybody."

The series continues with Thursday's floodlit fixture at Old Trafford.

England go ahead again

FROM PAGE 17

Anderson, was caught by Paul Collingwood in his specialist position of backward point.

Then Dinesh Karthik, surprisingly promoted to No 3, went for nought when he pushed Stuart Broad to Alastair Cook at cover.

However, Karthik's exit brought in Dravid, man-of-the-match last time with a dashing 92 not out. Dravid square-cut fast bowler Broad and forced him off the backfoot for four.

Tremlett had proved expensive on Friday and his first two overs in this match cost 20 runs before he was replaced by spinner Monty Panesar, controversially omitted at Bristol but now in for the injured Andrew Flintoff.

Dravid hoisted medium-pace Collingwood high over long-on for the first six of the innings in the 25th over and next ball wristily turned him behind square for a four to the delight of the India fans in the 21,000 capacity crowd.

Despite giving Ganguly a 26-run head start, Dravid was the first of the pair to reach fifty, in 51 balls with a six and seven fours. Ganguly got there shortly afterwards, off 82 deliveries.

Dravid's sparkling innings ended when, trying to turn Tremlett legside, he played on. Then 140 for three

became 149 for four when Ganguly's steer was well caught by diving wicket-keeper Matt Prior.

That left Yuvraj Singh and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, India's last recognized batsmen, at the crease. Dhoni though could only manage 13 before he cut Anderson to Collingwood and India were 190 for five in the 39th over.

Tremlett took two for 37 in his six-over second spell before he was replaced by Panesar, whom Yuvraj slog-swept for a huge six.

But Yuvraj, who needed someone to stay with him, then saw Powar pull Collingwood to Bell at mid-wicket and four balls later the same combination accounted for left-hander Piyush Chawla.

Yuvraj was then run out for 45, sent back by Zaheer Khan, and at 214 for eight the game was up for India. Earlier, teenage leg-spinner Chawla enjoyed more success against Kevin Pietersen. The 18-year-old, who bowled England's star batsman second ball in Bristol, got him again when Pietersen, on nine, played all round a googly and was stumped by Dhoni.

The series continues at Old Trafford on Thursday.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the third one-day

international between England and India at Edgbaston on Monday:
ENGLAND: 281 for eight in 50 overs (Cook 40, Prior 34, Bell 79, Collingwood 44; RP Singh 3-55)
INDIA

Ganguly c Prior b Tremlett	72				
Tendulkar c Collingwood b Anderson	8				
Karthik c Cook b Broad	0				
Dravid b Tremlett	56				
Yuvraj Singh run out	45				
Dhoni c Collingwood b Anderson	13				
Powar c Bell b Collingwood	5				
RP Singh not out	12				
Patel b Anderson	1				
Extras: (lb-10, nb-2, w-3)	15				
Total: (All out in 48.1 overs)	239				
Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-36, 3-140, 4-149, 5-190, 6-210, 7-213, 8-214, 9-234, 10-239.					

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Broad	9	1	34	1
Anderson	9.1	3	32	3
Tremlett	8	0	57	2
Panesar	10	0	49	1
Collingwood	10	0	45	2
Bopara	2	0	12	0

Result: England won by 42 runs and lead seven-match series 2-1.
Man-of-the-match: Ian Bell.
Toss: India

Tigers

FROM PAGE 17
(Ken), Hiren Varaiya (Ken), Ryan Watson (Sco).

UMPIRE-OF-THE-YEAR
Mark Benson (Eng), Steve Bucknor (WI), Daryl Harper (Aus), Simon Taufel (Aus).

WOMEN'S-CRICKETER-OF-THE-YEAR
Caitriona Beggs (IRL), Holly Colvin (Eng), Rumeli Dhar (Ind), Maria Fahey (NZ), Hulian Goswami (Ind), Ashlyn Kilowan (SA), Johmari Logtenberg (SA), Urooj Mumtaz Khan (Pak), Shelley Nitschke (Aus), Rebecca Rolls (NZ), Sajida Shah (Pak), Lisa Shalekar (Aus), Claire Taylor (Eng).

Baghdatis was the top-ranked player to lose on day one, losing to Max Mirnyi of Belarus 6-3, 7-5, 3-6, 7-6. Spanish 21st seed Juan Carlos Ferrero lost to countryman Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Tuesday's programme features defending champion Maria Sharapova, Australia's Lleyton Hewitt, US seeds Andy Roddick and James Blake and India's Sania Mirza. Britain's Tim Henman will not play his potential Slam farewell until Wednesday.

Wenger confident

FROM PAGE 20
played very well and defended very well but the boss told us to be patient and we kept going which is the important thing.

"I think the team have proved that we can score at any moment, whatever part of the game. That is very good for the confidence."

Wenger expects Bacary Sagna and Philippe Senderos to be recovered from back and ankle injuries respectively. Captain William Gallas is set to miss out with a groin problem.

Sparta warmed up for the trip to London with a 4-1 win at Viktoria Zizkov. A repeat of that score would be enough to eliminate Arsenal, but the Czechs will have to produce the performance of a lifetime to go through.

BCB opens

FROM PAGE 17
solution," said BCB's media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby.

"They will give mid-term and long-term recommendations, but we are afraid that will not be able to follow their recommendation from this season," he added.

U-23 booters

FROM PAGE 17
Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) invited BFF to participate in the tournament.

The MFF also invited four other countries -- Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam -- to take part in the tournament.

In 2005, Bangladesh finished runners-up in the same tournament.

Gopal, Rohit on top

SPORTS REPORTER

International Masters GN Gopal and G Rohit are in joint lead at the end of the seventh round in the Asian Zonal Chess Championships at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Gopal drew with Bangladesh's IM Enamul Hossain Rajib while Rohit beat Nepalese Shrestha Keshav to reach 5.5 points.

In the women's section, International Women's Master Ranima Hamid beat Sharmin Sultana in a ninth round encounter.

Open TT from Sept 7

UNB, Dhaka

Sam Open Table Tennis Tournament will begin at the NSC Wooden Floor Gymnasium on September 6.

The three-day meet will include the men's singles, women's singles and the boys' singles (under-14).

Interested players from across the country will be eligible to take part in the competition where the top four players from each of the events will receive the prize money.

The organisers will provide only accommodation facilities for the participants at the National Sports Council (NSC) and there will be no TA and DA.

Interested players have been requested to send their entries by September 3 at the federation office situated at the second floor (Room No 28) of the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Noble gesture

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricketers handed over their two days salary to the Chief Adviser's relief fund yesterday.

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful, his predecessor Habibul Bashar and opener Javed Omar met Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed on Tuesday afternoon to handover the cheque.

All of the 23 contracted players donated more than Tk 74,000, as part of their salaries.

First defeat

FROM PAGE 17

most successful NCA bowler by taking three wickets for 26 runs while Mahbubul Alam picked up two wickets for 63 runs.

New South Wales rode on a Moises's 83-ball 90 to put up a challenging total for the tourists.

NCA will play their third limited-over match against Queensland Academy of Sport tomorrow.

Rafiq

FROM PAGE 17

team and what was encouraging for us was that we had resulted-oriented success rather than only an improvement," he observed.

"We might have won most of the matches against Zimbabwe but during our period we also won some good matches against Australia, Sri Lanka, India and South Africa. No doubt the success in the last World Cup was the sweetest memory in my time," said the former national skipper.

Solskjaer

FROM PAGE 20

substitute at Wembley. He has already spent time at United coaching young players as he looks forward to life after his playing career.

Solskjaer joined United from Norwegian side Molde for 1.5 million pounds in 1996 and helped United to seven titles in his time as well as the unprecedented treble in 1999.

He scored 11 goals as the Red Devils reclaimed their Premier League crown last season.

The former Norway international has made 366 appearances for United over the years, scoring 126 goals.

He was appointed a club ambassador last year - a role he is expected to continue and develop - and could well be given a long-term coaching position at the club he has served so loyally over the years.

The retirement of Solskjaer leaves Ferguson with only three recognised strikers - Wayne Rooney, Louis Saha and Carlos Tevez - the latter being the only one presently fully fit.

There is also Chinese import Dong Fangzhou who has played only one match since joining United more than three years ago and was on the bench on Sunday against Tottenham, although he was unused.

Argentina

FROM PAGE 20
world's best in action against our own Socceroos.

"The strength of their squad reflects how important the match is to them -- like the Socceroos, they are about to start the qualifying process for the 2010 World Cup and will be using this as vital preparation."

Australia will name its squad on Thursday.

Bell 'occupies' home turf

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The most impressive part of England's performance on Monday was that they overcame a home disadvantage. Edgbaston, a ground renowned for its partisan English supporters, transformed itself into little India with large sections of blue dominating the stands. Conches, bugles, flags, banners -- this was an away game for England in every sense.

Ian Bell, a Warwickshire local, might have felt out of place. Here he was, striking the dangerous legspin of Piyush Chawla for a sensational straight hit -- only to be greeted by lukewarm applause. Imagine his mortification when the Eric Hollies stand, a bastion of the Barny Army, was resonating with Chak de India. As if two Indian spinners causing problems wasn't enough, England were made to feel as if they were in Mohali.

Did it feel like a home away from home? "Possibly at times," said Bell in what must go down as the understatement of the series. "It was a great atmosphere to play cricket, in front of a packed house. Good Indian side and a full house it was really a nice feeling to get a Man of the Match at the home ground." Bell is a soft-spoken chap but that must roughly translate to: "I was shocked".

But it felt great to knock the stuffing out of them. And his 79, two catches and an run-out was a big factor.

England's captain Paul Collingwood couldn't have had it easy at the start. The medical staff had decided to "err on the side of caution" with respect to Andrew Flintoff and Dimitri Mascarenhas, the star of the show at Bristol, injured his thumb while warming up. Further, he lost the toss. But England have been inserted at Edgbaston before (remember the Ashes in 2005?) and responded in style. He ended the day comparing the performance to the one they had put in at the Rose Bowl, an effort which he termed "near perfect".

"The openers came in and gave us a good start and then the bowlers also delivered," he said. "It did get difficult against spinners with the ball stopping a bit, but to get 280 (sic) was in itself incredible. We've scored almost 300 every time, which proves that we are improving."

Chris Tremlett's comeback illustrated England's tenacious performance. After being pounded at Bristol (0 for 73) and carted around in his first spell here -- leaking 20 in his first two overs -- he returned to remove Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid, the two most important wickets of the day.

"You've seen today (Monday) that he's got the character to bounce back," said Collingwood. "We have a

lot of faith in him. He's quite relaxed to be honest. He is quite laid-back and he showed it in the Test matches. He's a huge guy bowling with a lot of aggression at times but got the important wickets."

Facing spin in the middle overs is a bugbear. Chawla arrived with his quiver of legbreaks, googlies and top-spinners and engineered the dismissal of the series, bamboozling Kevin Pietersen for the second match in a row. On a ground that has a stand named after Eric Hollies, and on a day when Donald Bradman was born, Chawla's googlies did a lot of talking.

Ramesh Powar must have broken a new barrier on Monday when one of his deliveries clocked 42mph. It's a surprise that India got through their overs in quick time, what Powar's lobbs taking an age to get to the other end, but he troubled them with variation.

So Bell is maturing with every match -- Dravid spoke about how England's decision to persevere with him at No. 3 was paying off -- Chawla is growing in confidence and Collingwood is growing as a leader. Powar is no doubt growing. England are talking about injecting fearlessness into their bloodstream and India are talking of positives. Someone should tell them that using words like "inject" and "positives" in a span of a few minutes is not advisable.

Politics beckon for Nadia

Gymnastics

AFP, Bucharest

It's been over 30 years since she captivated the world in Montreal, earning the first perfect 10 in Olympic gymnastics history.

But the name Nadia Comaneci continues to enchant those who remember the pony-tailed 14-year-old competing for Romania in 1976.

In demand all over the world for endorsements and charity work, Comaneci, who holds dual US and Romanian nationality, now faces a new balancing act as she is being targeted for a career in politics in her native country.

Romania's governing National Liberal Party (PNL) are looking to persuade Comaneci to go forward for them on their list of candidates for the country's first European Parliamentary elections on November 25.

The list of candidates must be lodged by September 26 at the latest. And the lure of the Comaneci name is one which all parties are keen to harness.

Comaneci's name is being cited to head the PNL list, in place of former Minister of Foreign Affairs Mihai Razvan Ungureanu.

The US-based former gymnastics star is set to meet Prime Minister Calin Popescu Tariceanu to discuss the offer.

"I would be delighted if she

(Comaneci) were to accept but at present there has been no discussions," PNL vice-president Norica Nicolaitold AFP.

"We'll know more (this week) ... when our delegation meets to discuss strategy, the list and campaign team," added Nicolai.

According to the Romania Libera newspaper, Comaneci had already



NADIA COMANECI

been courted by the Conservative Party (PC), but decided against running following poor showings by them in opinion polls.

Born in 1961 in the factory town of Onesti to a car mechanic named Gheorghe and his wife Stefania, Comaneci created Olympic history when she became the first gymnast to score a perfect 10 in a team competition at the 1976 Games.

By the time the Olympics ended,

Comaneci had earned seven perfect tens, three gold medals, one bronze and one silver, and a legion of fans.

She appeared on the covers of Time, Newsweek and Sports Illustrated, all in the same week, and returned home to Romania as a heroine.

Her achievement also forced the world gymnastics federation to redesign their scoreboards.

It was the first time in modern Olympic history that the score had ever been awarded, and scoreboards were not even equipped to display scores of 10.0.

She went on to win gold in the balance beam and floor and silver at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, before retiring the following year.

But despite her star status at home, in November 1989, a few weeks before the Revolution, she defected with a group of other young Romanians, travelling overland through Hungary and Austria, before flying to the United States.

Now married to US 1984 double Olympic gymnastics champion Bart Conner, Comaneci gave birth to her first child Dylan Paul Conner, on June 3, 2006.

Other former Romanian athletes have already dabbled in politics with former Olympics athletics champion Lia Manoliu, holding a seat in the Senate from 1990-1992, with ex-tennis star Ilie Nastase