

MSC bag charity series

Beat Abahani again on penalties

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Guest goalkeeper Aminul Haque saved two penalties as Mohammedan Sporting Club produced another tiebreaker win against Abahani yesterday to lift the Teletalk Best of Three charity series 2-1.

In a repeat of the opening match, Mohammedan outplayed their archrivals 4-2 in the penalty shootout after a scoreless 90 minutes in the third and final match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Mohammedan won 5-4 on penalties in the first match before Abahani restored parity in the series with a 2-1 victory.

After an aggregate 14,000 turnout on the first two days, around 15,000 fans enjoyed the series finale, which meant the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is likely to raise a fund near Tk 10 lakh -- inclusive of Teletalk's Tk three lakh sponsorship -- for victims of Cyclone Sidr.

The BFF's initial target was to see a houseful crowd on each of the three days but it failed to even sell a total of 33,000 tickets -- the official capacity of the venue.

The result in the end, would give the black and whites some solace to end the season after finishing runners-up to winners Abahani in this year's lone competition -- the B. League.

It were the sky-blues who began brightly with Emily and Robin showing great skill up front. Still, Abahani missed the experience of guest striker Mori, who was absent due to a hamstring injury that saw him limp off the ground early in the previous game.

The Abahani duo, however, failed to put Aminul to the test due to lack of finishing. Emily though, found the net in the 16th minute, but the goal was disallowed for a foul picked up by the referee's assistant.

Abahani won numerous corners without any avail against a tight five-man backline while Waly Faisal failed to keep his freekick from 25 yards under the bar as their opposition gained momentum

after the halfhour.

Farhad, however, blasted their only first-half chance over the bar inside from the penalty area.

Mohammedan regained defensive solidity after Hassan Al Mamun's return from a one-match suspension but for Abahani, Arif Khan Joy's comeback was not much comfortable as he became a target of the Mohammedan midfielders. The Abahani captain, who was also banned for the second match, was fouled whenever he touched the ball.

Neither side had a grip over the game in the second half but the match came alive in the last quarter with Farhad creating two superb chances. The diminutive forward first picked up Riton 15 yards out of goal but the fullback's first-time volley sailed over before Charles Figo headed another Farhad centre wide from three yards.

Abahani had their chances in the last seven minutes but Pranotosh, who met a chip by Abul inside the six-yard box, nodded the ball wide.

Player of the series Aminul then

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PHOTO: STAR

Mohammedan footballers celebrate their victory over Abahani in the charity football series after Riton Khan (not in picture) scored the decisive goal in the tiebreaker at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Khulna's big chance

SPORTS REPORTER

 ISPANIAN MIRAPORT LEAGUE
in National Cricket League

Even if Rajshahi completes the formality of an easy win over

Barisal today, Khulna have a great opportunity to keep their top position intact as they fought back against Chittagong on the third day of their National Cricket League match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Having conceded a 77-run deficit after being bowled out for 282 in the first innings by Chittagong, Khulna fought back through their bowlers. The hosts were 134-7 in their second innings, leading by 211 runs.

In Bogra, Rajshahi dominated Barisal to be on the verge of their fourth victory in the first-class competition as they were 49 runs short of Barisal's second innings target of 148 runs. Barisal failed to cross the 200-mark once again as they were routed for 169.

Dhaka, with 273 in their first innings, fought back to be near Sylhet's total but the visitors at the Fatullah Stadium now have a big

lead after they ended the day at 142-2.

CHITTAGONG-KHULNA

The visitors added 66 runs to their overnight 216-6 but were bowled out for 282, thanks to some effective off-spin bowling from Yasin Arafa, who took four wickets.

Fariduddin Masud kept the Khulna innings together for much of the 33.1 overs they batted on the day, with a priceless 53-run ninth wicket stand with Ziaur Rahman who made 10. Masud scored 38 off 92 balls, with the help of six boundaries.

Then, Khulna's second string pace attack of Ziaur Rahman and Robiul Islam chipped away at the Chittagong batsmen, taking two wickets each.

Left-arm spin duo of Murad Khan and Nahidul Haq took two and one wicket each as the hosts slipped to 134-7, having taken a 77-run first innings lead. Only Nazimuddin batted with conviction, adding 48 off 130 balls.

BARISAL-RAJSHAHI

Saqib Sajib ripped through the Barisal batting line-up, taking four wickets for only 29 runs while three from Mohammad Shahjada made

sure Rajshahi had only 148 to chase in the second innings.

For Barisal, captain Shahriar Nafees struck 65 but apart from him, Hannan Sarkar and Raisul Islam reached double figure as the rest crumbled.

When it was Rajshahi's turn to bat 33 overs, opener Jafarul Islam hurried to 65 off 94 balls, striking a six and ten boundaries. Had it not been for Farhad's painstaking 19 off 78 balls, the match would have been done and dusted.

DHAKA-SYLET

The match is all set to end in a dull draw after Dhaka's Mosharraf Hossain made sure Sylhet did not bat in their second innings with a huge lead.

Overnight on 148-5, Dhaka lost both Nadir Chowdhury and Shamsur Rahman but Mosharraf struck nine boundaries and one six in his 104-ball 67. He shared a 54-run stand with Mohammad Sharif for the eighth wicket and then 30 runs more with Mohammad Rafique for the ninth as Dhaka reached 273.

Sylhet played it safe, running to 142-2 with Imtiaz Hossain reaching

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U-19s seal spectacular triumph

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19s completed a remarkable achievement in Pakistan when they won the one-day series with an exciting two-wicket victory against their Pakistan counterparts in the fifth and final match at the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) ground in Karachi yesterday.

The junior Tigers had staged a splendid comeback in the series against world champions Pakistan Under-19s, who outplayed England Under-19s and Australia Under-19s by identical 4-1 margins this year, winning three games in a row after badly losing their first two games.

Captain Sohrabandi Shuvu was the hero for the second consecutive match as the left-arm spinner first claimed three wickets for 40 runs and scored second highest 36 after Nasir Hossain's 40 to secure the series by a 3-2 margin.

Shuvu was adjudged man of the match for his all-round show.

In the series-deciding match, the bowlers laid the platform after wrapping up the home team for 187 runs in 47.3 overs.

The visitors overhauled the target with 191 runs for eight wickets in 45.4 overs.

Dollar Mahmud also had a notable all-round contribution as he remained not out on 31 after taking two wickets for 29 runs while Mintu made 31 and Rony Talukdar chipped in with 25 runs.

On the other hand Rubel Hossain captured two wickets for 32 runs, Shuvashish took one for 30 and Nasir one for 31 runs.

The Bangladesh Under-19s, which drew the only four-day game in Pakistan, will take on Sri Lanka Under-19s, who are scheduled to

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All eyes on the pitch

Final Indo-Pak Test starts today

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Eden Gardens pitch was severely criticised during the second Test between India and Pakistan. Only 23 wickets fell on a slow and low track, yet the batsmen were unable to score with ease. However, if the pitch for the third Test at the Chinnaswamy Stadium plays according to how the curator, Narayana Raju, said it would, we can expect an extremely different Test match that starts today.

"It (the pitch) will be totally different," Raju said. "There is a lot of grass and (it has) good clay content. It's hard on the surface with good moisture underneath."

India and Australia recently played a one-day international here in September on a flat track. Australia scored 307 for 7 before rain washed out the game. Raju, however, said the wicket wouldn't

be similar to that one.

"It's a new pitch. The clay is from Mandya (a town 100 km from Bangalore) and we've tested the soil; it's a good cricket soil so we have used it."

If the pitch lives up to expectation, it will have something for everyone. Raju said it would aid fast bowling on the first couple of days, and it would spin as the match progressed. In short, expect runs and wickets.

The surface used for the Afro-Asia match in June offered plenty of bounce and seam movement to Morne Morkel and Mohammad Asif. In preparation for that match and the one-day against Australia, the Karnataka State Cricket Association had called in two experts; Mark Hooker from the New Zealand Turf institute, and Chris Lewis who works at the Jade Stadium in Christchurch.

Both of them have been in Bangalore for a week to help prepare the pitch for the Test match.

The weather in the city has been overcast over the last couple of days and it drizzled on Thursday evening, which according to Hooker, could affect how the pitch plays. However, the director of the meteorology department, GS Vijayraghavan, said that the weather was likely to improve from tomorrow.

"I don't know how this wicket is going to play," Hooker said. "It depends on what happens with the weather. If we keep getting rain like this, it might be a bit of a green pitch. If we get a bit of sunlight tomorrow, I'm hoping it will get a bit harder so that we can get a bit of pace and bounce."

If the pitch does favour the fast bowlers, it could work to Pakistan's advantage for they have a potent pace attack led by a fully-fit Shoaib Akhtar. India fast-bowling resources are depleted, with Zaheer Khan, Rudra Pratap Singh and Munaf Patel ruled out of the

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Tendulkar, Dhoni scare

Cricket

AFP, Bangalore

India's hopes of winning the first series against Pakistan at home in more than two decades suffered a setback due to injuries to key batsmen ahead of Saturday's third and final Test.

Sachin Tendulkar has yet to recover from a knee injury, while wicketkeeper-batsman Mahendra Singh Dhoni is doubtful due to an ankle injury sustained during a one-day series against the tourists.

India, who last won the Test series against Pakistan at home in 1980, currently lead 1-0 following their six-wicket win in the opening Test in New Delhi. The second match ended in a draw in Kolkata.

"Sachin aggravated his injury during the second Test. He continues to improve, but we need to assess his condition tomorrow morning," India captain Anil Kumble told reporters on Friday.

Opening batsman Gautam Gambhir has been included as cover for Tendulkar.

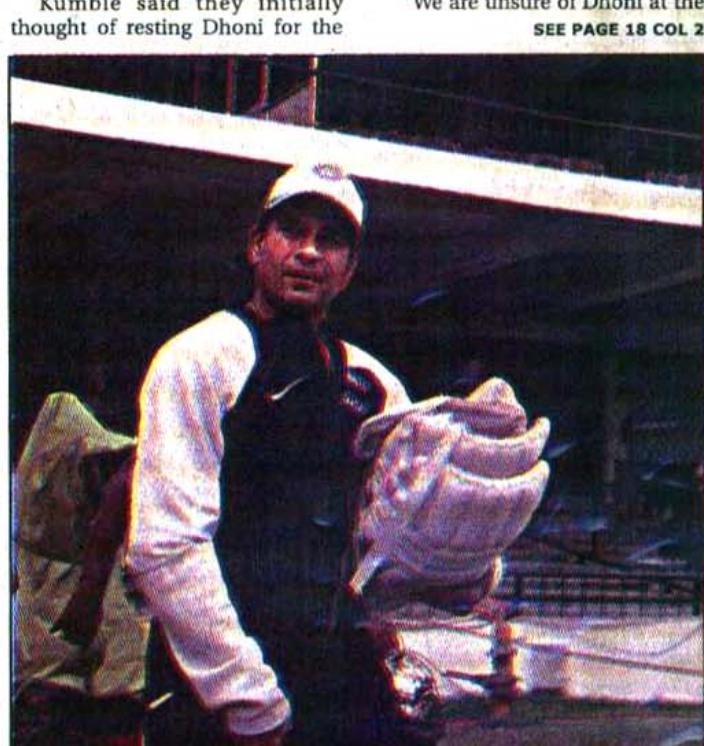
The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said Gambhir would be on the stand-by.

"Selection committee has decided to send Gautam Gambhir as stand by if Sachin cannot take part in the match," BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah said in a press release issued here yesterday.

"If Sachin will be fit to play for

the match then Gambhir will be relieved for Ranji Trophy starting from December 9," he said.

Kumble said they initially thought of resting Dhoni at the



match, but would now have to wait till the last moment following Tendulkar's fitness problem.

"We are unsure of Dhoni at the

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Chittagong batsman Nafis Iqbal (L) trudges off after being dismissed by Khulna seamer Ziaur Rahman (hands aloft) on the third day of their National Cricket League match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

WI take winning lead

Cricket

REUTERS, Harare

Half-centuries by Runako Morton and Marlon Samuels guided West Indies to a one-day series win over Zimbabwe at Bulawayo on Friday.

West Indies won the fourth match by five wickets to take an unbeatable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

Zimbabwe scored 232-9 after being put in to bat, and West Indies replied with 234-5 to win with three overs to spare.

Morton scored 79 while Samuels made 62, and they shared 105 runs for the third wicket.

Fast bowler Jerome Taylor profited handsomely from Zimbabwe's inept batting by taking 5-48.

West Indies slipped to 62-2 in the 14th over of their reply, but Morton and Samuels steadied the innings with their century stand.

Bravo hastened the end of the match by scoring an unbeaten 41 off as many balls.

The last match of the series will be played in Bulawayo on Sunday.

West Indies had an opportunity to end the partnership at 15 in the seventh over when Sibanda, on eight, was dropped by Dwayne Bravo at first slip off fast bowler

and the West Indies at the Queens Sports Club on Friday:

ZIMBABWE

Sibanda run out (Bravo) 96

Masakadza st Ramdin b Lewis 80

Chigumbura c Deonarine b Taylor 4

Taibu c Deonarine b Taylor 0

Taylor not out 26

Matsikenyeri b Taylor 4