

Gazi, CCS in Premier

SPORTS REPORTER

Cricket Coaching School and Gazi Tank earned promotion to next season's Premier League after they beat the latter by seven wickets in the Super League of First Division Cricket League at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

With the win, CCS moved to 24 points, two ahead of Orient Sporting Club, who are on 22 points after their nine-wicket win over Indira Road at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

With all eyes on the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, CCS took only 44.3 overs to notch up the target set by Gazi Tank, who were crowned champions with 28 points in the kitty.

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM), organisers of all Dhaka leagues, posted four cameras at the ground to make sure nothing went wrong in the match. But according to officials, the match passed off without any suspicious incidents.

Back to the match and CCS opener Amit Mazumder cracked 88 off 98 balls with the help of nine boundaries and after he departed, wicketkeeper-batsman Ashikul Islam took up the baton and stroked to a fine unbeaten 87 off 115 balls. He struck four boundaries and two sixes. For Gazi Tank, Habib James took two wickets while left-arm spinner Apurbo Roy took one wicket.

Earlier, Gazi Tank reached 218-6 in 50 overs with Jahangir Alam scoring 90 off 126 balls. Seamer Arman Badshah took three for 34.

Orient knocked off Indira's paltry 112 in only 15.1 overs with Ahmed Newaz slamming 61 off 44 balls. Earlier, Raihanuddin Arfat took two for 13.

In the other matches of the day, Azad Sporting Club (244-9) beat Brothers Union (198 all out) by 46 runs while Bangladesh Boys (188 all out) defeated Rupali Bank (167 all out) by 21 runs.



Did U Know?

The oldest player to win the FIFA World Cup was Dino Zoff of Italy. The goalkeeper was 40 when Italy became the world champions in 1982.



Lionel Messi

(Barcelona's Argentine striker) "At Barca, we want everyone to remain at the club. If he goes, I will be sad. He has helped me a lot to integrate into the team. Any team would like to have him. I still hope that he will stay." On Ronaldinho.



BTV & TEN Sports

Pakistan v Bangladesh Twenty20 Int'l

Live from 7:00pm

ESPN

English Premiership Newcastle United v Sunderland

Live from 6:25pm

Man City v Portsmouth

Live from 8:55pm

Primera Liga Bilbao v Valencia

Live from 1:00am (Monday)

STAR Sports

English Premiership Aston Villa v Birmingham City

Live from 4:55pm

SET Max

Indian Premier League Kolkata Knight Riders v Deccan Chargers

Live from 3:30pm

Mumbai Indians v Royal Challengers

Live from 7:30pm



PHOTO: AFP

BANGLADESH'S BOGEYMAN: Pakistan's left-handed opener Salman Butt (L), who has been in terrific form in the five-match one-day series against Bangladesh, plays one to the on-side for his second century of the series during the fifth ODI at the National Cricket Stadium in Karachi yesterday. Butt scored a staggering 451 runs in five games including a fine 136 on Saturday.

Rules bent in a month

PTI, Mumbai

Less than a month after announcing a final list of players for the DLF Indian Premier League (IPL) that kicked off on Friday at Bangalore, the organisers of the Twenty20 tournament seem to have forgotten it by allowing some franchise teams to include additional players.

The Bangalore Royal Challengers, led by Rahul Dravid and owned by liquor baron Vijay Mallya, did not have Australian pace bowler Ashley Noffke in the final list of names, but he surprisingly made an appearance and played in the opener at the Chinnaswamy Stadium on Friday.

Even the official website of the tournament, www.iplt20.com, in the second list of players representing all the eight franchise teams, did not have his name even a day after he had turned out for the Bangalore team.

News has now come from the West Indies that all rounder

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Abahani, Usha enter semis

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

As expected Abahani and Usha Krira Chakra moved to the semifinal of the Brac Bank Club Cup hockey tournament as the two powerhouse registered their third successive wins at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The giants will meet tomorrow at the same venue to decide about who will finish top in the Group B table.

Usha had an easy 6-1 sail over Bangladesh Sporting Club while the popular Dhanmondi-based club managed a 2-0 victory against Ajax Sporting Club in the day's second game.

Moududur Rahman Shuvo struck both the goals in each half as he was aided by veteran Musa Miah

to score from a deflection to put his side ahead in the 28th minute and again found the target in the 57th minute when he successfully connected Jimmy's pass.

Mazharul Islam got a chance to improve the tally in the second half but he failed to connect his stick on a brilliant pass from Musa.

It was however Abahani's defense which made sure that there would be no danger from Rahat Sarwar who terrorised his illustrious opponents' fort but was deprived by Shahidullah Khokon and Mamunur Rahman Chayan several occasions.

In the second game, veteran striker Rafiqul Islam and Imran Ahmed struck twice to give Usha another comfortable victory.

The winners led the first half 3-0 as Kamal put his side ahead in the very first minute and then doubled the margin after eight minutes

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Yousuf ignored for Twenty20

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan on Friday dropped experienced batsman Mohammad Yousuf for their first ever home Twenty20 international, against Bangladesh.

The prolific Yousuf, 33, was also left out for Pakistan's Twenty20 World Cup campaign when they finished runners-up to India.

Pakistan have already secured the five-match one-day series 4-0 with the final fixture being played here on Saturday. The Twenty20 match is on Sunday.

SQUAD

Shoaib Malik (captain), Salman Butt, Younis Khan, Nasir Jamshed, Misbahul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Mohammad Asif, Umar Gul, Sohail Tanveer, Rao Iftikhar, Wahab Riaz, Fawwad Alam, Shoaib Khan, Mansoor Amjad.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Titas Club beat Sonali Bank 3-0 in the Premier Division Volleyball League at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

In the day's other matches, Water Development Board defeated Fire Services Sports Club, also by 3-0 sets, and Power Development Board outplayed Wari Club in 3-1 sets.

In today's matches, Bangladesh Police face East End Boys Club at the same venue.

DIV II CRICKET

East End Club earned a 70-run victory over North Bengal Cricket Academy in the Second Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

Opting to bat first, the Gandaria-based club scored 198-9 in 50 overs, with Al Amin top-scoring with 49 off 75 balls. In reply, Bikram's three-wicket haul helped skittle out North Bengal for 128 runs in 30.4 overs.

In another match, Nabin Sangha thumped Young Cricketers by 103 runs at the Dhaka University ground.

Imran (69) and Sagar (66) posted half-centuries as Nabin Sangha scored 247-8 in 50 overs after opting to bat first.

Mahfuz and Hafiz took two wickets each, both conceding 32 runs. In reply, Young Cricketers were dismissed for 144 in 34.4 overs after Motiur and Kaisar claimed three wickets each for.

Shahidul top-scored with 34 for the Mirpur-based side.

DIV III CRICKET

Four first round matches of the Third Division Cricket League will be held today at separate venues in the city.

Matuail Cricket Academy face Hillol Jubo Sangha at the Gulshan Youth Ground, Talent Hunt Cricket Academy take on Impel Group Cricket at the Dhanmondi Club ground, Azad Boys Club are up against Mirpur Boys Cricket Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium and GMCC and Tongi Cricket Academy play each other at the Uttara Friends Club ground.

Mehrab leads from front

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Grameenphone Academy Cup Mehra b Hossain led from the front with a well-composed 89 as GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) thrashed South Africa Academy by 119 runs to confirm their final berth in the tri-nation one-day series at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The left-hander timely returned among the runs after poor showing in the first two games to help his side bounce back from their disappointing loss in the previous match against Pakistan Academy side who already confirmed their place for the April 23 final to be held in Mirpur.

Man-of-the-match Mehra b got brilliant support from Under-19 batsman Nasir Hossain during their unbeaten 124-run fifth wicket stand as the home side put up a fighting total of 246-4 in their stipulated 50 overs after deciding to bat first.

The total was however was too good for South Africa

Academy as the visitors were bundled out for 127 runs in 44.1 overs.

Mehra b's brilliant 89 was a mixture of caution and aggression and the out-of-favour Tigers batsman struck eight boundaries while Nasir, who had two vital innings of 52 and 36 against South Africa and Pakistan, continued his good form with unbeaten 54 off 66 deliveries that featured five boundaries.

Their efforts were complemented by national wicket-keeper Mushfiqur Rahim (35 off 45 balls) and Rajshahi batsman Farhad Hossain (21) but the only centurion so far in the tri-nation competition Imrul Kayes, who scored 113 against South Africa and missed the game against Pakistan due to injury, couldn't deliver anything, being out for only 19.

The South Africans bowlers could extract little from the wicket. Although CJ De Villiers took two wickets he was not at all economical yesterday, giving away too many (63 in 10 overs) runs.

In reply, neither the batting of South Africa nor their body language showed any purpose on the field while they were chasing a big total. Only Mathew Arnold (25 off 63 balls) and Abdul Aziz Temoor (21 off 28 balls) came up with little substance to help push the score beyond three digits.

South Africa Academy play their last match against Pakistan Academy side at the same venue today.

SCORES IN BRIEF

GP-BCB NCA: 246 for 4 in 50 overs (Sadat 5, Kayes 19, Farhad 21, Mushfiqur 35, Mehra b 89 not out, Nasir 54 not out, extras 23; CJ De Villiers 2-63, Mondli Makhombe 1-35)

SOUTH AFRICA NCA: 127 all out in 44.1 overs (Sammy 0, Jappie 2, CJ De Villiers 15, Reeza 8, Schalkwyk 14, Arnold 25, Barnes 8, Neves 4, Makhombe 1, Shezi 14 not out, 21, extras 15; Delwar 2-15, Nasir 2-25, Shuvo 2-27, Farhad 1-2, Arfat 1-17, Nazmul 1-27).

Result: GP-BCB NCA won by 119 runs.

Asian Wushu from April 23

UNB, Dhaka

The 3rd Asian Wushu Championship will begin at the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium on April 23.

Holders India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Afghanistan and hosts Bangladesh will take part in the three-day meet, organised by Bangladesh Wushu Association and sponsored by Standard Bank Limited.

The championship will feature two events -- Thailu and Sansu -- both in men's and women's groups.

Private satellite channel ATN Bangla, media partner of the competition, will telecast the opening matches live from the match venue.

Organising committee secretary SM Shahidul Haque Bhuiyan disclosed the details at a press conference at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room yesterday.

Bangladesh Wushu Association president FR Siddiqui and general secretary Didar Hasan Dilu, Standard Bank deputy managing director SA Faruqui and ATN Bangla advisor Nawajesh Ali Khan also spoke on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Academy captain Mehra b Hossain (R) and Nasir Hossain walk back to the dressing room after putting on a superb 124 runs for the unbeaten fifth wicket against their South African counterpart at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Marauding McCullum



CRICINFO, undated

The opening ceremony was a spectacular affair, but what followed was even more breathtaking, as Brendon McCullum destroyed the home team in the inaugural match of the IPL. In what was a brutal one-man assault on the Bangalore Royal Challengers, McCullum blasted an unbeaten 158 from a mere 73 deliveries, the highest score in a Twenty20 match, to propel Kolkata Knight Riders to an imposing 222 for 3. The punch-drunk Bangalore team was in no condition to fight back after that battering, and collapsed limply to 82 to lose by an embarrassing

margin of 140 runs, the fourth-largest defeat in this sort of match.

Chris Gayle was expected to be the aggressive opener for Kolkata, but McCullum's stunning knock ensured Gayle's absence wasn't felt at all. In an innings which was reminiscent of Gayle's blistering knock in the World Twenty20 opener -- he had scored 117 from 57 -- McCullum gave the Bangalore bowlers no chance. Pace and spin were both treated with equal contempt, and the crowd was treated to an innings of rare explosiveness.

The start, though, was deceptive. Six balls into his innings, McCullum didn't have a single run as Praveen Kumar bowled an excellent first over. Four deliveries later, McCullum had blazed to 18, flicking and pulling Zaheer Khan for four, and then miscuing a flick which, quite incredibly, soared

over third man for the first six.

Zaheer was quickly pulled out of the attack, but his replacement, Ashley Noffke, fared even worse. His first ball was so wayward that neither McCullum nor Mark Boucher, the wicketkeeper, had a chance of getting to it. When the ball landed within McCullum's reach, the result was even more devastating: a pulled six over square leg and another over extra cover. Twenty-three in the over, and Noffke out of the attack as well.

McCullum allowed himself a breather after that, going 17 deliveries without a boundary, before the floodgates opened again. Sunil Joshi was slog-swept twice -- with the bottom hand coming off the bat once -- for sixes, before he turned his attention to Cameron White and Jacques Kallis. Line, length,

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High on entertainment

CRICINFO, undated

If you needed any proof that few of the spectators saw the Indian Premier League (IPL) as anything more than glitzy entertainment, it arrived after the seventh over of the Royal Challengers' comically inept innings. While Sourav Ganguly warmed up for a bowl, with the scoreboard showing a dismal 33 for 4, the boom box started playing a popular Kannada tune. The crowd roared with approval. Could you think of one serious sport where a home crowd of 55,000 would be cheering with their team being cut to pieces as though with a sushi

knife? Neither could we.

So forget all the hot air about the pinnacle of sport and focus instead on the real selling point of the league -- entertainment. The cheerleaders borrowed from the Washington Redskins had made their entrance earlier in the evening to bawdy acclaim and though they were a girl short, 11 instead of the customary 12, the fetching yellow costumes and the red pompoms were in evidence right to the bitter Bangalore end.

The opening ceremony snapped and crackled, and the organisers of the World Cup in three years time will have quite a task to even come close to matching it. The acrobats, four on either side of the stadium, were sensa-

tional, even if the Scottish music that accompanied them clambering up towards the roof did seem a little incongruous.

The laser show and a fireworks display that rivalled anything you might expect on Chinese New Year had the crowds baying for more, and the only discordant note was struck when Sharad Pawar, the BCCI president, was booed before he began his speech. Otherwise, the band kept their feet tapping and their placards waving as the decibel level inside the stadium approached that inside one of European football's great amphitheatres on a big night.

Brendon McCullum's batting afterwards more than matched the

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PHOTO: STAR

ABAHANI'S SHUVO DAY: Abahani forward Moududur Rahman Shuvo (R) scoops the ball into the net for his second goal against Ajax during their Brac Bank Club Cup hockey tournament clash at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.