



Mohammedan forward Zahid Bin Talib races past Mariners defenders Hanif (on the ground) and Rajib (R) during their Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Mohammedan keep the pressure

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Sabbir inspired Mohammedan Sporting Club to come from a goal down and beat Mariner Youngs Club 3-1 in yesterday's Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League.

The Pakistani scored the equaliser to cancel Mariners' lead after Ranjan Banik's early strike and later set chances for Issa Mia and Golam Mostafa as the black and whites picked up their fifth victory in six matches.

Mariners, who suffered their third loss also in six outings, went ahead when Ranjan broke the 12-minute deadlock at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Sabbir, who made an impressive Dhaka debut, levelled the scores one minute from the short hooper with a powerful reverse hit after his colleagues had wasted three penalty corners.

Mohammedan did not take long to establish their domination as national defender Issa fired in a penalty corner after taking the ball from Sabbir in the 51st minute. Golam Mostafa finally sealed the victory four minutes later when he completed a move by Sabbir.

Mohammedan should have scored more but they showed lack of accuracy in short corners, squandering four chances.

Mohammedan reached within two points of archrivals and holders Abahani, who are on maximum 18 points while Mariners stuck to their previous collection of seven.

In the day's other match, bottom-table Wari Club climbed up two positions with their maiden victory, a 2-0 win over Sadharan Bima.

Faisal and Tapu scored either side of the break for the winners who moved to three points. Bima now shared the bottom place with Bangladesh Sporting on one point.

Raw deal

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the rights with an offer of 95,000 dollars, which was far below from the floor price of 25,000 dollars.

Sajjadul also informed that Marca won the Terrestrial TV rights with an offer of Tk 40 lakh.

But the board has yet to finalise the title sponsor for the mega tournament.

After evaluation of the offers the board had decided to go for re-bid for title sponsorship rights and instadia advertising rights packages as the floor price was not met in those categories initially.

3 cheers for

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better to send a left-hander (Faisal Hossain) earlier to face their two left-arm spinners," explained the former national skipper.

On the other hand Abahani coach Aminul Islam said that his side played according to their plan to secure the massive victory.

"I am slightly surprised by the approach of our opposing batsmen. We always say that our national players like to play shots and I think it was a perfect surface for them to do that," contemplated Aminul.

SCORES IN BRIEF

MOHAMMEDAN: 133 all out in 47.2 overs (Anwar 34, Zunaed 2, Aqeel 13, Rokibul 0, Ashraf 24, Faisal 2, Aftab 26, Shuvo 3, Tapash 13, Dollar 3 not out, Tareq 2, extras 11; Zia 2-17, Talha 2-31, Rafique 2-15, Nazmul 1-23, Tushar 1-18, Sunny 1-28).

ABAHANI: 134 for 1 in 21.2 overs (Sahid 67 not out, Mahabubul 2, Nafees 62 not out, extras 3; Tapash 1-17).

Result: Abahani won by nine wickets.

Waugh's kind words

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Former Australia captain Steve Waugh believes England have the talent to challenge the Aussies in next year's Ashes series.

But Waugh insists England need to rediscover their stability and have a fully fit Andrew Flintoff available if they want to wrest the urn back.

Waugh told BBC Sport: "Flintoff seems to lift the whole team."

"England have blown hot and cold the last couple of years. They've the talent but need to raise their game."

"I like Alastair Cook and Paul Collingwood adds steel to the middle order and I've been amazed at how Ryan Sidebottom has improved and re-defined himself,"

he added.

Although still a year away, the England and Australia line-ups will both look radically different to England's triumph in 2005 and Australia's 18-months later.

Australia on the other hand have waved goodbye to Justin Langer, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath.

Waugh said: "It's been a smooth transition for Australia. The players have had a lot of experience and are at a level so they are not intimidated by moving up to the next level."

It is more than four years since record-breaking captain Waugh played in his 168th and last Test.

He played in two Lord's Tests for Australia, making 152 not out in 1989 and then suffering a first-ball duck in 1997, but there is no doubt the home of cricket still holds a special place in his heart.

The 42-year-old has been in

London at a meeting of the MCC's world cricket committee, a role which he takes very seriously, but will also catch the first Test between England and New Zealand.

He said: "There's definitely something about Lord's. It's a special place which has the X-factor."

"I have good and bad memories of my performances here but it certainly is a unique place."

Waugh has brought his family over and his eight-year-old son Austin will get his first taste of cricket at Lord's.

But Austin has his eye on a bigger sporting occasion -- Saturday's FA Cup between Portsmouth and Cardiff City.

"He's mad on soccer," sighed Waugh. "So I'm desperately trying to get tickets for the final so he can watch a live match."

few weeks back.

The bowlers deserve an honourable mention. It was a slew of medium-pacers who propelled Mumbai to an upset win over the Rajasthan Royals in the previous game and they utilised bowler-friendly conditions here too. The ball swung around through the innings and six medium-pacers shaped the ball either way to make life difficult for the batsmen.

Pollock turned in a typically miserly spell, including a maiden to finish off against a relatively new Dhoni. Dhoni, who said he would have fielded first had he won the toss, watched his side slump to 46 for 4 with the top order struggling against the accurate medium-pacers.

Pollock should have had Stephen Fleming in the first ball of the second over -- when an edge fell just short of first slip -- or even in the third -- when Jayasuriya muffed a skier at point -- but he had to settle for S-Vidya's wicket two balls later when Rohan Raje clung on to another skier at mid-off. Suresh Raina fell poking to an away-swinger from Dwayne Bravo before Kapugedera, the right-hander, did the same to Dhawal Kulkarni's nippyaway-cutter, Dhoni said.

For batsmen like Jayasuriya, the hunger to succeed comes from the occasion. Mumbai needed to keep their momentum going into a crucial match against Kolkata on Friday, a game that is vital to their semi-final aspirations. Pollock was the inspiration behind their hat-trick of wins, and today it was Jayasuriya's turn. Even Tendulkar acknowledged that "It was nice to watch him."

Sizzling Sanath

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Tendulkar had decided to bat first, allowing Jayasuriya a full 20 overs.

The manner in which he treated his fellow Sri Lankan bowlers was interesting -- he attempted a couple of audacious reverse-paddles against Muttiah Muralidaran, before blustering Chamara Kapugedera for 26 runs in five balls.

His best day

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both over point and square leg, and scored majority of his runs behind square: 33 on the leg-side and 31 on the off. He struck as many as 11 sixes and won his duels with every bowler.

Even Muttiah Muralidaran, Sri Lankan teammate and long-time friend, caused no problems for Jayasuriya. When Dhoni, desperate for a wicket, placed two slips for Murali who was spinning the ball across the left-hander, Jayasuriya chose to hit the ball towards the gaps on the leg-side. He even attempted to reverse-sweep Murali, twice.

Murali's introduction into the attack, though, was well after the game was up. When Chennai's inexperienced new-ball pair of Manpreet Gony and Albie Morkel were bleeding runs, Dhoni seemed reluctant to take them off. He would have done well to remember that Tendulkar had made frequent bowling changes to unsettle the

batsmen. Only Shaun Pollock was given three consecutive overs while the rest were rotated constantly. Chennai's medium-pacers, on the other hand, allowed Jayasuriya to settle by feeding him in his favourite areas -- short and wide outside off, or full on his pads. Dhoni admitted that the inconsistent lines and lengths had proved extremely costly. "They either bowled too full or too wide and against a batsman like Sanath if you do that you will get badly hit", Dhoni said.

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Garros, where she has had so much success, and Wimbledon is later this summer, which she has never won.

"It's, of course, a shame she is out of the game."

Having won 41 titles in total on the WTA tour, including 493 wins and just 107 defeats since she made her debut in 1999, Henin is one of the game's great players added Federer.

"She is a special player, she can play on any surface, which is unusual in the women's game," said the Swiss number one.

"And it's remarkable that she has won so many tournaments because she is small and all the newcomers in the women's game are tall, which gives them an advantage."

"I couldn't imagine deciding

out of the blue to retire, especially if I was number one. She has had a couple of injuries and there is this history with her ex-husband, it might be all in all too much for her and she might not want to be on the tour anymore."

Henin, who will celebrate her 26th birthday on June 1, headed the official WTA rankings released Monday for the 117th consecutive week, but pulled out of the Rome Masters this week blaming tiredness.

Having crashed out of last week's German Open after her third round defeat to eventual tournament winner Dinara Safina, Henin admitted last week she was lacking confidence just two weeks prior to her French Open defence.

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LOCAL SNIPS

SPORTS REPORTER

Prantik Krira Chakra registered a 112-run win over Green Leaf in the Second Division Super League at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

Opting to bat first, Prantik were all out for 216 in 43.3 overs with Rakib contributing with 76 runs. Iqbal grabbed three wickets for 42. In reply, Green Leaf were skittled out for 104 in 34.4 overs with Naser claiming six wickets for 31 runs.

In the day's other matches, Prime Doleswar (159-6) beat Karkal Boys Club (156-9) by four wickets at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium while Dhamondi Pragati Sangha (162-7) outclassed Gopibagh (159 all out) by three wickets at the Dhaka University ground.

PIONEER FOOTBALL

Bangladesh Sporting Club crushed Titu Smriti Sangsad 5-0 in the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Dhupkhola Jagannath University ground.

Sunam struck twice, while Fazle, Zahed and Saddam netted one each for the winners.

In the day's other match at the same venue, Gandaria beat Adamjee 3-1 with Faisal, Raju and Babu scoring for Gandaria.

UNIVERSITY CRICKET

University of Liberal Arts crushed State University by 53 runs in the Fair Play Twenty20 tournament at the ULAB campus ground in Ramchandrapur.

Batting first, ULAB posted a competitive 129-8 in their 20 overs with Sujon top-scoring with 30. Martin took four wickets.

In reply, SUB were bowled out for only 76 runs in 17.1 overs.

DIV II KABADDI

Prisons Directorate and Institute of Kabaddi reached the semifinals of the Second Division Kabaddi League winning their respective quarterfinals at the Outer Stadium kabaddi court.

Earlier, on Wednesday, Arbabchon and Swarnali Club confirmed their semifinal berths too.

In the first quarterfinal, Prisons crushed Bangladesh Boys 59-12 while Institute of Kabaddi beat Captain Bazar 43-38.

Reefat at 2nd

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Among other Bangladeshi players, GM Ziaur Rahman was at third place with five points after beating local WGM Aarthee Ramaswamy. GM Abdullah Al Rakib, also on five points, suffered his first defeat when he lost to GM Safin Shukrat of Uzbekistan, who has maximum six points to take solo lead.

Clubs accept

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breaking former striker.

"We have referred this to the league committee," added Salam who is also the chief of the B. League committee.

One team will be relegated from this year's B. League and if the team are from Dhaka, they will go back to the Senior Division while if an outstation team are demoted, they will return to their respective league. Promotion would be vice versa until a second division is opened.

Meanwhile, the B. League committee has accepted Diganta Prasari's application to join the fray. If the Rajshahi league champions can fulfil the criteria set by the BFF, they would become the first professional team from north Bengal, making this year's competition a 12-team event.

The transfer fee (club to club) for a professional league debutant has been reduced to Tk 25,000 from Tk 50,000 following an appeal of the clubs. This year's clubs will also have to give Tk 10,000 as registration fee instead of Tk 25,000 which they had paid last year.

Still, the first day of the 35-day transfer expectedly ended without any activities.

Biman go

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Away in Savar, former national captain Habibul Bashar and Shamsur Rahman smashed half-centuries to take Surjo Torun to an easy five-wicket win over City Club. The Dhamondi-based club reached their target of 183 in only 43 overs, after City Club reached a moderate 182-8 in 50 overs.

The two right-handers added 93 for the third wicket as Shamsur (68) revelled once again in the opening role. Bashar, at the crease after Nizamuddin Ripon was removed in the 12th over after a rapid 33, slammed seven boundaries and a six in his knock of 60 off 105 balls.

Earlier, Mohammad Sharif and new Torun skipper Nayeem Islam took two wickets each.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 156 for 6 in 20 overs (Badrinath 53, Dhoni 43 not out, Fleming 26, Viduth 16; Kulkarni 3-33, Bravo 2-37, Pollock 1-9).

SCORES IN BRIEF

BIMAN: 246-8 in 50 overs (Nafis 63, Kapali 45; Anas 2-33).

BRSP: 177-8 in 50 overs (Mushfiqur 50, Mithun 34; Mosharraf 3-24).