

Women's football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar got off to a flying start in the Super Fours of the National Women's Football Championship when they crushed Bangladesh VDP 5-0 at Rajbari Stadium yesterday.

Ansar's girls dominated the first half 4-0 before adding the last one in the next 30-minute half in front of approximately 17 thousand spectators in Rajbari.

Amroching opened the floodgate in the very fourth minute while Marma struck twice in the ninth and 13th minute before Mainu Pru made the margin 4-0 in the 20th minute.

Rawshan Ara sealed the match in the 47th minute.

Sirajul Islam Bachchu, chairman of the BFF women's football committee, said that they decided to suspend remaining matches of the Super Fours till next month as the national women's football camp for the upcoming SA Games would resume in a few days.

Meanwhile, Narayanganj and Jessor are other contenders in the Super Fours.

Abahani

FROM PAGE 17
said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

The national football camp is scheduled to end on August 15.

In a bid to achieve the hattrick title, the Sky Blues all but completed their players' registration formalities having signed up 17 players including star defender Rajani Kanta Barman, veteran playmaker Matiur Munna and striking duo Hedayetul Islam Robin and Enamul Haq.

The former national footballer, Rupu, informed that head coach Amolesh Sen along with Alvaro would conduct the camp at the Abahani ground for the first week before heading for a two-week camp at BKSP.

Abahani's six national players; goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharya, Rajani, Atiqur Rahman Mishu, Zahed Parvez Chowdhury, Mohammad Shahed and Enamul would join the camp two days later after the end of the national camp, said Rupu.

Aquilani

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Merseyside for a medical and contract talks.

The now former Roma man is expected to be at Anfield on Saturday to witness his new teammates take on Atletico Madrid in the club's final pre-season friendly before next weekend's big kick-off.

The crooked midfielder is believed to be earning around £80,000 a week.

Marseille

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went down 2-0 at home to Nice. Auxerre also lost on home soil to Sochaux by the only goal and northerners Nancy won on their travels, 3-1 at Valenciennes.

Monaco thanked a first-half strike from Nene to see off Toulouse 1-0 in the principality while Rennes swamped promoted Boulogne 3-0.

Bring on

FROM PAGE 20
and a privilege to race against him. The whole world will be watching his return to the cockpit. I haven't spoken to Michael - but I look forward to seeing him on the track."

Hamilton and Schumacher have never raced against each other as the Briton made his F1 debut at McLaren-Mercedes in 2007, the year after Ferrari's Schumacher retired with seven world titles.

Now, pending medical examinations, Schumacher is set to return at the European Grand Prix on August 23 to take the place of Felipe Massa, who is recovering from head injuries sustained in qualifying for the Hungarian Grand Prix.



Did U Know?

The first basketball game was held on January 20 in 1892. The court was half the size of courts used at the NBA League nowadays and only one point was scored in the whole match. In that game, there were nine players in each team.

Pennetta-Stosur final

Tennis

AFP, Los Angeles

Italy's Flavia Pennetta brushed aside a shaky serve to book her spot in the Los Angeles Women's Tennis Championship final by rallying to beat Russian Maria Sharapova on Saturday.

Pennetta, who had lost in her two previous meetings against Sharapova, posted a 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 semifinal victory at the Home Depot Center.

"I didn't put a lot of my first serves in so I just tried to get my second serve in and play the point. She was making a lot of mistakes," Pennetta said.

Pennetta will face Australian Samantha Stosur in Sunday's final at the hardcourt facility in south central Los Angeles.

Stosur swept past Romania's Sorana Cirstea 6-3, 6-2 in just 62 minutes.

Sharapova, who is recovering from shoulder surgery, was ahead three games to one in the final set before she unravelled. The three-time Grand Slam winner Sharapova committed 61 unforced errors and made 16 double faults.

Pennetta clinched the win on the second match point as Sharapova sent a forehand wide. Just moments earlier Sharapova had survived the first match on her serve but then double faulted on the next point.

"I am very happy," Pennetta said. "It was a difficult match for me because I started well and won the first set 6-2 then I felt a little pressure in the second set because she is a great champion and not easy to beat. At 3-1 down I thought it was over but I fought until the end."

It will be the first career meeting between WTA veterans Stosur, 25, and Pennetta, 27.

"I've never played against her," Pennetta said of Stosur. "But she is a great server and I will have to serve much better than I did today."

Stosur, who is seeking her first career singles title, hammered seven aces and converted three of seven break point chances Saturday as she beat Cirstea for the second time this year. They met for the first time in the French Open quarters.

Stosur has enjoyed a brilliant run of success over the past few months, improving her world ranking to 18.

The 13th seeded Stosur is known more for her success in doubles but was knocked out of that draw on Thursday.

It's Roddick v Del Potro

Tennis

AFP, Washington

Andy Roddick and Juan Martin Del Potro struggled into the final of the ATP Washington Classic on Saturday. Del Potro sagging in sweltering heat and Roddick tested by big-serving John Isner.

US top seed Roddick outlasted Isner 6-7, 6-2, 7-5 and second-seeded defending champion Del Potro of Argentina beat Chilean fourth seed Fernando Gonzalez 7-6, 6-3 at the 1.4 million-dollar hardcourt event.

Fifth-ranked Roddick fired 10 aces in hot and humid conditions on his way to beating Gonzalez for the first time in four meetings between South America's top players, who each reached this year's French Open semifinals.

"It was tough for both of us. The court was so hot," Del Potro said. "After the first set Fernando was so tired. Me too. It was very difficult for both of us. We were very tired and the

sun was very strong."

Gonzalez was so exhausted that when he fell early in the second set he stayed on his back until Del Potro climbed over the net to help him up.

"I wasn't converting but it's not because I wasn't putting the ball on the court. He was coming up with the goods," Roddick said. "All you can do is put yourself in position and hope you get that point."

Roddick credits his improved shotmaking to faster speed from better fitness.

"It's a lot easier to hit a passing shot when you can get to it," Roddick said.

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Del Potro won his only prior match with Roddick in last year's Los Angeles final and will try to become the first back-to-back Washington champion since Andre Agassi in 1999.

Roddick, 26, seeks his 28th career crown and fourth in Washington after taking the title in 2001, 2005 and 2007, when he beat Isner, 24, in the final. It would be his second ATP title of the year after a February win at Memphis.

Del Potro, 20, seeks his sixth career title and second of the season after winning at Auckland in January.

Isner, who will climb to 44th from 80th in the rankings, saved two break points in the opening game of the third set and one each in the ninth and 11th games before Roddick closed him out.

Kiwis turn to Saqlain to beat SL

AFP, Colombo

New Zealand have brought in former Pakistani off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq to help plot Sri Lanka's downfall in the two-Test series starting later this month.

Saqlain will work with the Black Caps spinners and advise the batsmen on how to play the turning ball on dry wickets in the subcontinent.

"New Zealand Cricket has an agreement with Saqlain Mushtaq who will work with the Black Caps over the next 12 months," NZC spokesperson Stephen Hill told reporters.

"He will be working with both our bowlers and batsmen, usually for a few days at a time during the team's international series over that period."

Saqlain, 32, widely regarded as the inventor of the "doosra" - the off-spinner's googly that turns left after pitching -- last played for Pakistan in 2004.

He claimed 208 wickets in 49 Tests at an average of 29.83 and 288 wickets in 169 one-day internationals.

Saqlain played English county cricket for 11 years for Surrey and Sussex before being forced to quit after signing up with the unauthorised Indian Cricket League.

"Spinners would play a prominent role in Sri Lanka, they would have a say in nearly 80 per cent of the game," Saqlain told the Cricinfo website.

"My role would also be to speak about how to attack the batsmen in different situations. We have to be careful as to what needs to be learned and taught," he added.

NCA keep

FROM PAGE 17

Adair struck an unbeaten 72 facing 176 balls while Maharaj was 40 not out when the bails were drawn for the second day.

Pacer Robiul Islam claimed three for 72 while off-spinner Farhad Hossain returned two for 15.

BRIEF SCORES

GP-BCB NCA: First innings 267 all out in 85 overs (Nadimuddin 19, Rony 74, Farhad 39, Horn 42, Mithun 24, Nasir 28; Andrew Brich 3-54, Richard Cameron 4-109)

SBNA: First innings (overnight 19-0) 280-7 at stumps in 93 overs (Andrea Agathelou 22, Rossouw 47, Zondo 56, Adair 22*, Maharanj 40*; Robiul Islam 3-72, Farhad Hossain 2-15, Imran Farhat also took part.

He is apparently referring to the first edition of the ICL, a league in which his son-in-law Enamul.

Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-167.

Bowler O M R W

Chigumbura 7 0 33 1

Utseya 6 0 31 0

Clijsters returns today

AFP, Cincinnati

Belgian star Kim Clijsters makes a long-awaited return when she serves it up at the WTA Tour's Cincinnati event on Monday.

The unseeded wild card Clijsters won't have it easy as her first match is against 12th seeded Frenchwoman Marion Bartoli.

Bartoli is fresh off an impressive win over Venus Williams in the final of the Stanford Bank of the West Classic.

"I see it as a second career," Clijsters told The New York Times on Saturday. "Honestly, the first word that comes up is, oh, it's a comeback. But so many things have changed and so many things have happened."

Indeed the former world number one racked up 34 singles titles when she retired in May 2007 at age 23, citing injuries and the upcoming marriage. Two months later she married basketball player Brian Lynch and then there was the birth of daughter Jada Ellie. During that time of her life her father, Leo, succumbed to lung cancer.

"In tennis, it's very important that you're very stable there, the hips and the core," she said. "With the pregnancy, that's something that was totally gone."

Clijsters is in the same half of the draw as top seeded Dinara Safina and sixth seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova and could face either or both if she should go on a run.

No room

FROM PAGE 20

been regarded as Capello's first-choice goalkeeper and was expected to return after missing the World Cup wins against Kazakhstan and Andorra after undergoing shoulder surgery.

Although James was part of the Portsmouth side that faced Rangers in a friendly on Saturday, he is missing from Capello's squad as the Italian looks at Ben Foster, Robert Green and Paul Robinson.

David Beckham will make the flight back from Los Angeles in order to take part, while Aston Villa winger James Milner gets a place in the squad.

England squad for friendly international against Holland in Amsterdam on August 12.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Ben Foster (Man Utd), Robert Green (West Ham), Paul Robinson (Blackburn)

Defenders: Wayne Bridge (Man City), Ashley Cole (Chelsea), Rio Ferdinand (Man Utd), Glen Johnson (Liverpool), Joleon Lescott (Everton), John Terry (Chelsea), Matthew Upson (West Ham)

Midfielders: Gareth Barry (Man City), David Beckham (Los Angeles Galaxy/USA), Michael Carrick (Man Utd), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), James Milner (Aston Villa), Theo Walcott (Arsenal), Shaun Wright-Phillips (Man City), Ashley Young (Aston Villa)

Strikers: Carlton Cole (West Ham), Emile Heskey (Aston Villa), Wayne Rooney (Man Utd), Jermain Defoe (Tottenham)

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"Spinners would play a prominent role in Sri Lanka, they would have a say in nearly 80 per cent of the game," Saqlain told the Cricinfo website.

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Aus regain momentum