

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 Mamma 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, Narayanan and Jessore are other contenders in the Super Fours.

Abahani

FROM PAGE 17 said Abahani manager Sattyajit Das Rupu.

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

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

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

Abahani's six national players; goalkeeper Piblob 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

FROM PAGE 20 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

FROM PAGE 20 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 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 finals 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, playing in his first event since a five-set Wimbledon final loss to Roger Federer, fired only nine aces to 20 for Isner but hit 69 per cent of his first serves and made only two third-set unforced errors.

"I like being on the giving end of the big serve," Roddick said. "John made me play my best tennis. Anything less than that wasn't going to get it done."

It took five break-point chances in the third set before Roddick finally broke compatriot Isner in the penultimate game, then held serve to win after two hours and 31 minutes.

"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.

Sixth-ranked Del Potro 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.

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 Pakistan 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 goosy 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, Ronny 74, Farhad 39, Hom 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 Agathagelou 22, Rossouw 47, Zondo 56, Adair 72, Maharaj 40; Robiul Islam 3/72, Farhad Hossain 2/15, Subhasis Roy 1/50 and Safiul Islam 1/43).

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)	

Aus regain momentum

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia are set to seize a series-winning momentum heading into next week's final Ashes Test after condemning England to a heavy defeat in the fourth Test, Australia's media said on Sunday.

The Australians are on the verge of levelling the series at 1-1 after inflicting a dramatic England collapse for the second time in the Headingley Test.

At stumps on Saturday's second day, England were 82 for five, still needing a further 261 runs to make Australia bat again after Marcus North's 110 had been the centrepiece of the visitors' 445 all out.

The Sunday Telegraph said England had no chance of escaping from the Test with Australia poised to level the series.

"Only needing a drawn series to hang onto the Ashes, Australia is set to grab a major advantage by heading to the final Test at The Oval with the series deadlocked," the newspaper said.

The Sun Herald said Australia were poised to finish off the England tail and post an emphatic Headingley victory.

"Five late wickets by Australia took away any chance of England surviving this game, and Ricky Ponting's side will no doubt finish them off," it said.

Former Test batsman Damien Martyn said Ponting's team was finally getting its act together after being outplayed at Lord's and Edgbaston.

"I've been waiting three Test matches for Australia to click into gear across all aspects of the game," Martyn said on SBS TV.

Ravi feels the pressure

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Ravi Bopara has admitted that he is fighting to save his Test place after his poor form continued with a miserable match at Headingley. He bagged scores of 1 and 0 in the fourth Test and his series tally is a meagre 105 at an average of 15 as he struggles to adapt to the No.3 berth.

"There is no disguising the pressure I am under," he wrote in the Mail on Sunday. "There is nowhere to hide because, in such a massively high-profile series as this and against opponents of the quality of

Australia, you have to front up every single day."

Bopara made a promising start to his time at first drop with consecutive centuries against West Indies earlier in the summer, but combating the likes of Ben Hilfenhaus and Mitchell Johnson has proved a far harder task. The Australians have probed his weakness outside off stump where his technique is loose and, as Justin Langer wrote in his hard-hitting dossier about the England players, have prayed on Bopara's ego.

However, Bopara is determined to remain positive despite his difficulties having experienced a similar situation in Sri Lanka during his

debut series when he collected three ducks on the bounce.

"It is up to me. No one else can do the batting for me," he said. "Just as important for me now is my thinking and my approach. When you are searching for a bit of form, the main danger for a player like me, who likes to go for his shots, is that I might start slipping into survival mode."

"I've been guilty of doing that in the past, both in county cricket and when I had that terrible time on my first England tour in Sri Lanka, and it just doesn't work. If I am given the opportunity at The Oval to respond to my scores of one and a first-ball duck here at Leeds, whatever else I do to break out of this trot, I must remain positive and look to score at every opportunity."

To compound Bopara's misery replays showed he got an inside edge when given out first ball against Hilfenhaus on the second day at Headingley, but he refused to make any excuses. "I wouldn't say I've been blessed with good fortune over a couple of umpiring decisions, but I've no complaints. Stuff happens when things aren't going your way. I have to admit I'm finding it pretty difficult to see the positives at the moment. But I'll try to keep smiling and keep enjoying my first taste of the Ashes."

Pakistan

FROM PAGE 17
Mendis 10 0 45 1
Mathews 6 0 30 1
Bandara 6 0 39 0
Jayasuriya 9 0 57 1

Toss: Pakistan
Umpires: Steve Davis (AUS) and Gamin Silva (SRI)
Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan captain Younis Khan (L) plays a shot through the on side as Sri Lankan keeper Kumar Sangakkara (R) looks on during the fifth and final ODI at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Sunday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	33 She wrote "Give me your tired, your poor, ..."	52 Wager	16 Looney Tunes animator Freleng
1 BLT enhancer	5 Miss neighbor	8 "Ali"	35 Under a spell
12 Vaccine type	13 Dog's doc	14 Some-where out there	15 Game birds
17 Advanced math	18 Scot's refusal	19 Disen-cumber	20 Snapshot
21 Auction action	22 Lustrous black	23 Liechtenstein's capital	26 Per-suaded
30 Sailor's greeting	31 Heathcliff, e.g.	32 — Only Just Begun"	
DOWN	1 Cut, as a lawn	2 Soprano's solo	3 Harvard rival
4 On in years	5 Dodge	6 Lecherous	7 Pac, counter-part
8 Terry-cloth item	9 Roundish hairstyle	10 Lure	11 Jason's ship
27 Irritate	28 Previous night	29 Scarlet	31 Recipe measure
34 Edge	35 Lofty	37 Snug	38 Walking stick
39 In due time	40 Start over	41 Sagacious	42 Skin opening
43 Booty	44 Troubles	46 Apprehend	47 Three-man vessel?

Solution time: 21 mins.

BBC	REX	TREE
ALIT	ATE	AULD
RATE	GAB	MEMO
THYME	LEAP	
GAZE	CLASPS	
THEATRE	AWAKE	LOKI
NITRO	EMPOWER	
SNAIL	LISTS	
SHOW	LIB	DAHL
PAWN	VEE	ASEA
ANNA	ODD	HOW

CRYPTOQUIP

CY ZT VYZ EWT CWM FUVZK

RT WM ODZMRKZTV UQ VYZ

QDXRV QWDE, YZ AWFZ XM W

ADZWV WJJZOVWTJZ OZWJY

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WILL THIS BROKEN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE HANDLE YOUR CASH PROPERLY? I WOULDN'T BANK ON IT!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals H