

Cheats to be dealt with

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday ruled that those footballers who took payment from other clubs before even signing for a particular club would be banned from the upcoming Federation Cup until they refund the money to the respective clubs.

The players' status committee reviewed the complaints and heard the players' reply at the meeting and found four cases where players admitted that they took advance payment from a particular club but joined another one.

Meanwhile, defender Amit Khan Shuvo and goalkeeper Tareq received advance money from Chittagong Mohammedan, but joined Muktijoddha Sangsad and the committee asked both of them to return their money to Ctg Mohammedan or face the suspension from the upcoming Federation Cup.

The committee also gave go-ahead to Chittagong Mohammedan's striking duo Shakhawat Ronny and Mithun Chowdhury, who last year sang for the Black and Whites for three seasons.

The committee also found two of the three Arambagh KS players guilty and asked them to return the amount that they had received.

Ad-hoc committee for chess

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Sports Council (NSC) is going to dissolve the executive committee of the Bangladesh Chess Federation in a couple of days as the NSC has reportedly sent a proposal for 26-member ad-hoc committee to the sports ministry for the final approval.

The existing committee led by general secretary Jamiluddin expired on September 5 and the government is all set to disband the committee under section 20 of the NSC 1974 act instead of holding election, said a source inside the NSC.

There was whisper in the sports arena that Mokaddes Hossain, father of national chess player Farzana Hossain Annie and junior champion Abdullah Al Saif, is set to become the general secretary of the ad-hoc committee.

Earlier, some 26 chess players including three GMs requested the ministry to hold a free and fair election in the greater interest of chess development after a section of players including Grandmaster Niaz Morshed urged the authority to form an ad-hoc committee for a change.

Henry didn't

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has enjoyed distant relations with Domenech having criticised him - told RTL radio station in an interview recorded on Sunday but only broadcast on Monday.

"I deduced from that that I was in either the starting line-up or the substitutes bench, that is how I came to learn of it."

"I was surprised, I thought at the very least I would feature at some stage."

"However, it is important to support ones friends, even from the stands, one has to get over one's disappointment."

"One is powerless to do anything sitting in the stands, one has fleas in ones pants, but that is how it is, it is the choice of the coach."

"It is a delicate matter to discuss, and is not an agreeable experience to live through, but it is important not to think about it too much, even if it is disappointing."

Beckham

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Tottenham and Arsenal possibly among them.

"I have my options. Obviously I have got options," Beckham said. "Milan have made me aware that they want me to go back there, play there and train there, and I'm more than happy with that. But I have got other options."

"Once I have that time to decide, I will. Three or four clubs (from England) have made offers already."



After getting rid of Czech Republic's Radek Stepanek with relative ease, Serbia's world number two Novak Djokovic (L) indulges in a fun match with former champion John McEnroe to the fans' delight at the late hours of Monday in Flushing Meadows, New York.

Entertainers they remain

AFP, New York



Novak Djokovic and John McEnroe, bad boy clown prince from two different tennis eras, traded comic impressions of each other and even played a few points in an impromptu US Open moment Monday night.

To borrow 50-year-old McEnroe's famous 1980s catch phrase from his angry younger days, "You Cannot Be Serious" when two attention-grabbing entertainers played it for laughs on the Flushing Meadows hardcourts.

"Everyone has a different personality," Djokovic said. "I like to entertain the crowd and that makes me happy in a way as well."

"What I've done in 2007 with those impersonations and tonight playing with Johnny Mac, I think that's what the crowd wants, especially in these hours. I think these night matches are very special."

The comedic spectacle at Arthur Ashe

Stadium came moments after Serbian fourth seed Djokovic defeated Czech Radek Stepanek 6-1, 6-3, 6-3 to book a place in the quarterfinals of the year's final Grand Slam.

Djokovic made famous his impersonations of such stars as Rafael Nadal and Maria Sharapova in 2007 and followed up by calling down McEnroe from a television commentary booth to come onto the court and play a few points.

"Johnny Mac made it all happen," Djokovic said. "It wasn't easy coming down in jeans and a shirt but he made it all fun."

Djokovic managed to mimic the mannerisms and serving style of McEnroe on the spur of the moment, pacing the baseline and hurling the ball high into the air before smacking it into the net.

He hurled his racket to the concrete and screamed at an imaginary umpire, channelling McEnroe's infamous rants to the delight of those who remained in the stands to the late-night finish.

"I didn't work at it at all. It just comes if the moment is right," Djokovic said. "It comes spontaneously and the moment

was right now. It was quite funny and the crowd loved it and that was the most important thing."

Once McEnroe arrived, having grabbed a well-used racket along the way, he unbuttoned his white shirt, rolled up his sleeves and began an imitation of the 2008 Australian Open champion.

McEnroe bounced the ball repeatedly low to the court, a good-natured dig back at Djokovic's pre-serve habits.

McEnroe managed to serve a few balls over the net, making a memorable forehand volley winner past Djokovic. A few comedic swings later, they met at the net and exchanged pats on the back as the crowd roared in delight.

McEnroe won three Wimbledon titles and four US Opens, including his last Grand Slam crown in 1984.

Djokovic will next face Spanish 10th seed Fernando Verdasco for a semifinal berth, possibly against five-time defending champion and world number one Roger Federer.

"If I play the way I did tonight, I feel like I can win against anybody," Djokovic said.

SAFF Congress brought ahead

SPORTS REPORTER

The meeting of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) in Dhaka has been brought forward to the first week of October instead of third week because of non-availability of the SAFF president Ganesh Thapa, informed the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

BFF general secretary Kazi Salahuddin is considered to be the successor of Thapa, also the president of All Nepal Football Association, as most of the SAFF members want to see a change in the regional football body.

AFC president Mohamed Bin Hammam was supposed to attend the SAFF Congress on October 20 in Dhaka, but after the new schedule his presence has not been confirmed yet.

BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi informed Manilal Fernando, the AFC vice-president and FIFA development officer for Asia, sent them a letter on Monday about the new schedule of the SAFF Congress and said that the agenda would be fixed later.

Thilan lifts

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links with the ICL, finished with 1-35 off nine overs in his first one-day in more than two years.

Left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori played a key role in drying up runs in middle overs, finishing with 1-31 off eight overs.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the Sri Lanka innings in the tri-series match against New Zealand in Colombo on Tuesday:

Table with columns for batsmen and their scores: Dilshan b Tuffey 4, Jayasuriya c Butler b Bond 7, Jayawardene c Taylor b Bond 0, Sangakkara c Oram b Butler 18, Mathews b Taylor b Vettori 15, Kulasekara not out 6, Thushara not out 6, Extras: (lb-3, w-2) 5. Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs) 216. Did not bat: Malinga, Mendis. Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-5, 3-22, 4-38, 5-69, 6-196, 7-204.

'Rossi too good for F1'

INTERNET, undated

Sir Stirling Moss has warned MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi against switching to four wheels, saying he is "too good for F1".

Eight-times motorcycling world champion Rossi recently revealed there had been discussions regarding a debut in the top class of car racing at the Italian Grand Prix at Monza this weekend with Italian marque Ferrari.

But 79-year-old British racer Moss does not feel the Italian should take the plunge.

"I'm certain Rossi could succeed in F1 if he wanted," the 16-times grand prix winner said. "If you are good at one motorsport you will be good at the other."

Ashes not the last thing

Cricket

AFP, London

Paul Collingwood insisted England faced an uphill battle in convincing their supporters that one-day cricket was important following this season's Ashes success.

"It seems to me that the public of England are just interested in the Ashes and everything else doesn't matter too much," 33-year-old Collingwood said on Monday.

England gave birth to modern professional-limited overs cricket back in the 1960s and pioneered Twenty20, the sport's shortest top-flight format.

Even so one-day matches have tended to be tolerated as a financial necessity by many within the English game, be they administrators, players, spectators and the media, with priority given to Test cricket, still the 'real thing'.

England are currently 2-0 down in their seven match one-day international (ODI) series against Australia ahead of today's Rose Bowl day-nighter.

But, with home fans still rejoicing in the team's 2-1 Test series win over Australia, wrapped up last month at the Oval, it seems many England supporters couldn't care less about a series widely regarded as an Ashes afterthought.

"To us, as players, this is an important stepping stone, we want to continue improving our one-day cricket," said Collingwood.

England have never won a major ODI event and made the last of their three losing World Cup final appearances back in 1992.

Just days after their current series against Australia ends at Collingwood's Durham home ground in Chester-le-Street, they head to South Africa for the Champions Trophy one-day tournament.

Collingwood, who has been involved in all of England's international matches since the start of the tour of the Caribbean in January, said: "Let's be honest, we wanted to peak for the Ashes because we'd been building up to it for a period of time."

Fred going for rehab

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Andrew Flintoff is to spend the next three months in Dubai to aid his recovery from the latest operation to his right knee and make a return to England's one-day team as their star all-rounder.

"It's always easier doing rehabilitation in warm weather and that's the main reason why we've decided to go to Dubai," Flintoff told his website. "Three years ago when I was recovering from my ankle, we all went to Florida as a family and it worked really well and I see this being a similar situation."

"I can't drive for at least another six weeks, so it will be difficult getting from A to B and doing my rehabilitation without relying on someone else to drive if I stayed in England. Where we are staying in Dubai, all I have to do is press the right button in the lift to get from our apartment to the gym and everything I need is on the doorstep."

Flintoff, 31, retired from Test cricket at the end of England's Ashes-winning summer, and 24 hours after helping them regain the urn he underwent arthroscopy to his injured right knee. He admitted in a newspaper interview last week that

"We played well, we won the Ashes, this period now could be a time when you start relaxing again or you have gone over the peak."

"But when you play against Australia, you can't give them a sniff, it's as simple as that," Collingwood, England's captain in the Twenty20 game, added.

And he insisted a taxing schedule, with the one-day games following hot on the heels of the Ashes, could not be blamed for England's batting collapses in the first two ODIs against Australia.

"Whether you are mentally tired or not, you have to go out and put in the performances. And we haven't been doing that."

Collingwood's 56 in the 39-run loss at Lord's on Sunday was his first fifty since England's second Ashes Test win at the 'home of cricket' in July.

But lulls in form are nothing new for Collingwood.

"Of course I go through periods when I'm feeling tired, mentally more than anything else."

"But you kind of get used to the treadmill of international cricket and I'm not going to make that an excuse for the performances. I've been doing it for eight years now."

"It is relentless but I'm not going to turn round as a player and say too much about the schedule."

"We can't complain too much -- we're well-paid international cricketers."

"When you are doing something you love, you get on with it for as long as your body can withstand it."

"There are worse jobs in the world. I thoroughly enjoy what I do."

Collingwood, looking ahead to today's match, said England found themselves facing a familiar plight.

"How many times have we been in this position? We're always saying we're good at bouncing back and we tend to be for some strange reason."

"We often manage to pull ourselves out of a bit of a hole."

"Thankfully, it is a seven-match series so there is time to come back. We were always going to have to win four games so that's still the case."

Black Monday

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"I wanted to go further, but I just got outplayed today. It was a good tournament and I can build on this for the rest of the year."

Verdasco, a semifinalist at the Australian Open in January, was apologetic for ending American interest in the tournament at such an early stage.

"Sorry to beat the last one (American)," Verdasco told the crowd on the Louis Armstrong Stadium court. "You can support me now if you want."

Federer edged a tight first set against Robredo and turned on the turbo to race away for a comprehensive win in 1 hour 48 minutes.

The Spaniard, losing for a ninth straight time to the world No.1 in seven years, admitted he had been helpless to halt the assault.

"When he saw that he was a set up, he started hitting it harder. Then the match goes easy for him," he said. "Maybe it's too easy for him, the tennis, so he can even laugh."

Football fans

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only channel which will bring live coverage of La Liga in the sub-continent.

But with the free-to-air channel on the wrong end of a government ban in Bangladesh, most viewers will have to deal with the blackout unless some late intervention is made swiftly.

ESS also holds the media rights for the English Premier League, which is due for renewal next year. According to sources, ESS had acquired three-year rights to the EPL for \$13.5 million.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 25 mins and a small grid for the solution.

Cryptogram grid with letters and numbers for solving.

CRYPTOQUIP
V R M D X Q K D C T J Y M Y
M S Y B M J D F D R Y K Y M Q K Y P P
B P Y T Q E D S Y X D Z S C V C M Y T
F J Y F M Y B V F A J Q E B V A F Z E Q
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IN WHICH ASIAN COUNTRY IS IT DECREED THAT FOLKS MUST ALWAYS DON FORMAL NECKWEAR? TIE-LAND.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals T