

Abahani oust Muktis

SPORTS REPORTER

Citycell Federation Cup '09
An energetic second-half performance powered title contenders Abahani to an easy 3-0 win over Muktiyoddha Sangsad to finish top of Group C in the Citycell Super Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Pranotosh Kumar, Enamul Haq and Ghanaian recruit Sheriff Deen Mohammad struck a goal apiece to dash Muktiyoddha's hopes of playing in the quarterfinals as Chittagong Abahani advanced into the knockout phase on better goal difference as Group C runner-up after their 2-1 win over Bangladesh Police in the day's first match.

Shakawat Hossain Rony and Mashud Alam struck for Chittagong Abahani while Biswaser Barua reduced the margin for Police, who lost all of their three matches.

Chittagong Abahani will now face newcomers Beanibazar SC on October 8 while Abahani take on Sheikh Russel KC the next day.

After the outcome of the day's match, Muktiyoddha Sangsad just needed a draw against giants Abahani. Even a 1-0 loss could have brought them into the last eight on better goal difference, but a hungry Abahani put up an energetic performance in the second half after the first half ended in a goalless draw on the mud-packed pitch.

It was not possible for both sides to play the natural game on such a pitch, but Amalesh Sen's Abahani comparatively shared better ball possession as the coach sent Ghanaian Sheriff Deen Mohammad and youngest Shahedul Islam in place of Motiur Munna and Arif Khan Joy that helped them to take control of the midfield.

Sheriff, playing his first match for the Dhanmondi-based outfit, went close to opening the account when he headed an Ujjal cross wide of the near post just five minutes after the whistle. The Ghanaian was again presented

with a free header by his compatriot Awudu Ibrahim, but he narrowly missed the target in the 20th minute before Ujjal dragged a grounder straight to goalkeeper Atikul Islam Tareq on the half-hour mark.

Muktiyoddha could hardly test Abahani goalkeeper Biplob, who almost spent an idle first-half time under the post though the Abahani goalkeeper foiled a sitter from Jalaluddin.

After the break, Amalesh sent Zahed Parvez Chowdhury on the right in place of Ujjal and the change brought extra pace in the Abahani attack as Zahed was brought down just outside the Muktiyoddha box and Pranotosh opened Abahani account with a header off Awudu Ibrahim's free kick four minutes into the second half.

After going down, Golam Sarwar Tipu's Muktiyoddha steeped up the attack though their attempts were not fruitful without suspended striker Saifur Rahman Moni. However, defender Arup Kumar Baidya drove a dipping shot from long that narrowly went over the Abahani crossbar and Abahani brought striker Enamul Haq, who replaced Ibrahim.

Enamul, who was sidelined against Chittagong Abahani after his shaky performance in the first match, doubled the margin with a 69th-minute header off a Pranotosh cross.

Four minutes later, striker Robin was brought down inside the box by goalkeeper Himel and referee Abdul Hannan did not hesitate to award a spot kick and Sheriff converted the penalty to celebrate his debut for Sky Blue outfit.

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplob, Samad Yousuf, Ibnul Siraji, Ujjal (Zahed), Pranotosh (Sujan), Shahedul, Awudu (Enamul), Sheriff and Robin.

MUKTIYODDHA: Tareq, Kanchan, Tipu (Tajul), Shuvro, Mahmudul Hasan, Kamara, Biddiut, Jalal, Rasel, Amin Rana (Manwar Hossain) and Arup.
Yellow cards: Kanchan, Biddiut (Muktiyoddha)
Referee: Abdul Hannan Miron

Hockey transfers start today

SPORTS REPORTER

The inter-club players' transfers for the Premier Hockey League gets underway today though most clubs including giants Abahani and Mohammedan are seemingly unwilling to take part in the transfer citing the shortage of quality players.

The League Committee, however, decided to extend the three-day transfer window to October 15 after the Working Committee of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation met yesterday.

"Seven to eight clubs have made a request to us to extend the length of the transfers and we have decided to prolong it upto October 15 at the meeting," said League committee secretary Anvir Adel.

Both Abahani and Mohammedan officials blamed the league committee for not calling a meeting before declaring date for the transfers as the decision was taken in August.

"The decision on the 6-8 October transfer was taken at the meeting in attendance of all the clubs and the league committee will sit with them again after the transfer in a bid to finalise dates of the Club

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EARLY INROADS: Australia fast bowler Peter Siddle (C) celebrates with Mike Hussey after taking the wicket of New Zealand's Brendon McCullum during the ICC Champions Trophy final at SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'IPL teams not at a disadvantage'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Gautam Gambhir, Delhi Daredevils' newly appointed captain, has disagreed with the view that IPL sides are at a disadvantage in the Champions League Twenty20 because, unlike other teams who play as a group throughout the year, their players get together only for franchise tournaments.

Ray Jennings, the Royal Challengers Bangalore coach, had predicted a tough road for the three IPL teams and stressed about the quality of the opposition, which he felt would be different. While it was a challenge to work on team strategies in such a short period, Gambhir was confident because many of his senior players had been playing international cricket.

"Most of our international players have been playing one-day cricket and are in very good nick and that can be used to our advantage," he said. Despite the absence of AB de Villiers, who withdrew due to a back injury, and concerns over the availability of Paul Collingwood, who suffered a buttock strain in the ICC Champions Trophy, Delhi still have a formidable top order in Virender Sehwag, Tillakaratne Dilshan and Gambhir.

David Saker, Delhi's coach, was confident about his side's prospects. "Losing AB is a big loss but we probably have got the best two or three batters in any form of the game -- Viru (Sehwag), GG (Gambhir) and Dilshan," Saker said. He said the fielding was the only department where Delhi would miss the agility of de Villiers.

Delhi open their campaign against Victoria on October 9 and it could be an interesting duel between the two coaches: Greg Shipperd is Delhi's head coach in the IPL and Saker, Victoria's bowling coach, is his deputy. But Shipperd will guide Victoria's fortunes in the Champions League while Saker temporarily fills in his Delhi role. Asked if Shipperd might pass on some valuable inputs to Victoria, Gambhir said the possibility did not bother him. "It is going to be even as we've got David Saker, who will pass on some information about Victoria players. So it is going to be good contest when you have two coaches who know each and every thing about every player."

Saker said the injury concerns to some of the international players had only opened doors for the Indian domestic players to rise to the challenge and get noticed. "Mithun Manhas and Rajat Bhatia have been waiting for an opportunity and now with these injuries there is a chance that they will come in and play a major role," Saker said.

Kiwis 90 for 4 after 25 overs

AFP, Centurion

Skipper Brendon McCullum was out for a duck and New Zealand found runs hard to come by as they struggled to 90-4 after 25 overs of the Champions Trophy final against Australia on Monday.

Leading the 'Black Caps' after a hamstring strain ruled out Daniel Vettori, McCullum faced 14 balls before nicking a Peter Siddle delivery and wicketkeeper Tim Paine took a simple catch.

Aaron Redmond, a mid-tournament replacement for injured opener Jesse Ryder, added 61 with opener Martin Guptill for the second wicket before paying the penalty for a wild swing off Nathan Hauritz as Paine made a stumping.

The Australian bowlers were performing superbly on a wicket considered run-friendly and Hauritz and ICC Cricketer-of-the-Year Mitchell Johnson claimed a wicket each within six balls to see off Guptill and Ross Taylor.

SCORES BRIEF
NEW ZEALAND: 90-4 after 25 overs (Guptill 40, Redmond 26; Hauritz 2-12)

Anlene tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

Second round matches in the Men's singles group and first round matches of the Women's singles group in the Anlene National Tennis Tournament 2009 were held at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. Among the matches of the Men's group, top-seed Amol Roy of Engineers' Club disposed off Arif Hossain of NTC in 6-1, 6-0 sets to qualify for the pre-quarters. Among the Women's group matches, Jhilik Chakma of BKSP blanked her opponent Sabiha of NTC as she rolled past her 6-0, 6-0 to advance to the second round. The pre-quarterfinal matches will be held today.



A Muktiyoddha defender (L) tries to hold back Abahani's Ghanaian striker Awudu during their Citycell Federation Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



'Tough to replace Graeme'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

JP Duminy has said that Graeme Smith's absence would be felt during the Cape Cobras' Champions League Twenty20 campaign, but it would also give others a chance to display their skills. Like his captain Andrew Puttick, Duminy believed the team's sense of self-belief was a strength, and if they get their basics right, they can overcome their inexperience in Indian conditions.

"It will be tough to replace a guy like Graeme, but I feel we have enough depth in our ranks to seriously challenge our opponents," Duminy said. "I think we have a very good skipper in Andrew Puttick who has good experience in the intricacies of the Twenty20 format. We just need to focus on our strengths and a good start will go a long way in boosting our chances in the Champions League."

Duminy said that facing different teams and conditions would hurry the Cobras' learning. "It will be a new experience for me in terms of playing in India where we will be playing in front of a different sort of crowd," he said. "While playing for the Mumbai Indians (in the IPL) I had a chance to interact with players from different parts of the world. But here I will be playing with the guys I have known for years. Whether it is for South Africa or Mumbai or for Cobras my aim is to help the team winning."

"It is a big tournament for me, especially considering that the third edition of the IPL is going to be held in India. I hope to build a sound platform for the IPL by getting to know the subcontinental conditions through the Champions League."

In Smith's absence, Duminy is a key player for the Cobras in all three departments. But Duminy felt that was no added pressure on him and that he wasn't worried about expectations. "Here I have to adapt quickly to the subcontinental conditions as they differ from what we get in South Africa. I really feel confident about the tournament and our chances in the Champions League."

The Cobras will play their first game against the Royal Challengers Bangalore at the Chinnaswamy Stadium on October 8, after two warm-ups in the city. "They (Bangalore) are a good side and that they had finished runners-up in the IPL shows their strength," Duminy said. "They also have some very good players in their ranks like (Rahul) Dravid, (Anil) Kumble etc, but the Cobras are right up to the challenge."



Younus Khan

(Pakistan cricket captain)
"People talk about the Ashes rivalry and some people have said that India and Australia series has replaced Indo-Pak contests. I disagree. I think the response our match with India in this ICC Champions Trophy evoked is proof that Indo-Pak rivalry is still the biggest in world cricket."



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MCA-BD A match drawn

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A were spared a very likely embarrassing defeat in their 4-day match against Maharashtra Cricket Association as rain put paid to any chances play for a second consecutive day at the Poona Club Limited ground in Pune yesterday. The match was heavily tilted towards the hosts as they lead Bangladesh A by 303 runs with nine second-innings wickets remaining after first two days' play. The second days' play was also curtailed due to rain and bad light. Bangladesh A were all out for 81 runs in their first innings. But two days of torrential rain meant there was no play possible on the scheduled third and fourth day and the game ended in a draw.

Nadir to umpire Zim v Kenya matches

SPORTS REPORTER

Nadir Shah, International Panel Umpire from Bangladesh, has been nominated by the ICC to officiate in three ODI matches between Zimbabwe and Kenya, and a 4-day match between Zimbabwe XI and Kenya, said a press release from Bangladesh Cricket Board on Monday.

The four-day fixture will be held at the Kwekwe Sports Club from 8 to 11 October 2009. The one-day internationals will be played on 14, 16 and 18 October at the Harare Sports Club. The respected umpire was scheduled to leave for Zimbabwe last night.

Surfing starts tomorrow in Cox's Bazar

SPORTS REPORTER

A two-day international surfing competition will be held on October 6 and 7 in the Bay of Bengal near the Kolatoli beach in Cox's Bazar.

'Surfing the Nation', a Hawaii-based sports body, are organising this competition with the assistance of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), 'Surfing Bangladesh' and 'Green World Communication', a press release from BPC said.

As many as 59 Bangladeshi surfers and 15 surfers from all over the world will participate in the competition.

This event is organised as part of expansion of sports tourism, beach volleyball has been already introduced in the country and beach cricket will be launched very soon.

Members of the Surfing Club of Cox's Bazar, meanwhile, have participated in surfing competitions in Indonesia and Hawaii earlier this year.

AFP, London

England star cricketer Andrew Flintoff and football legend Gary Lineker dove for cover when Taliban insurgents attacked a British military base in Afghanistan, they were quoted as saying Monday.

The sports stars were at Kandahar air base to hand out Pride of Britain awards for the Daily Mirror when they got a taste of incoming rocket fire at Kandahar air base, they told the London tabloid.

"I thought it was a wind-up but then I saw everyone dive to the floor. It was scary," said Flintoff, 31.

On crutches following knee surgery, the Lancashire all-rounder had to join service

U-16 FOOTBALL Japan decimate Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

After a creditable draw against Indonesia in the first match, Bangladesh lost by a massive 6-0 margin to Japan in their second match in the AFC U-16 qualifiers at the Panned Stadium in Philippines yesterday.

Bangladesh were 1-0 down against the mighty Japan, but they conceded another five goals in the second half despite a heroic performance by goalkeeper Rafi Rahman.

Bangladesh will take on hosts Philippines on October 9.

personnel in scrambling for cover under the dining room tables.

"I've seen things over the past few days that will live with me forever," the former England captain said.

"It's been humbling and has put my life into perspective. I play cricket for my country -- but then you come here and meet people of 18 fighting for their country."

After the rocket attack alarm was sounded, the all clear was given 30 seconds later.

Former Everton, Barcelona and Tottenham striker Lineker had a second scare when a military plane he was travelling in lost one of its four engines and had to return to base.

"I expected it to be tough but I didn't expect the environment I've discovered," said the 48-year-old former England captain.

Britain has more than 9,150 troops in Afghanistan, largely battling Taliban insurgents in southern Helmand province.



Mohammad Ashraf practises running between the wickets during the national cricket team's training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR