



34 DAYS TO GO

Much wrong at MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

The departure of Mohammedan's coach Maruf Haque has raised many questions amongst the players of the famous Motijheel club.

Most of the playing staff expressed their frustration over the way the shrewd tactician left and pointed fingers towards the poor management of Mohammedan as well as the critical attitude of their former footballers towards the current bunch.

Giants Mohammedan formed a strong side this season roping in a number of national players in a bid to win their first Bangladesh League title. However their hopes of clinching the league championship was all but eliminated following a shock 2-2 draw against Farashganj that left them six points off the pace with four games in hand.

Maruf, who helped Mohammedan to win the Federation Cup and Super Cup last season, had a promising start to the season as he retained

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Action from yesterday's Robi Asian Games hockey qualifiers match between Sri Lanka and Taipei at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles outclassed East End by straight sets in the National Bank Limited Volleyball Premier League at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

They won 25-20, 25-20, 25-13 in the day's first match.

Later, Power Development Board beat Bangladesh Water Development Board 25-22, 21-25, 25-20, 25-22.

MANIKGANJ CRICKET

Our Correspondent adds: Bandhu Ekadash got a three-wicket victory over Kulfa Goshthi in the Col (red) Malek Smriti First Division Cricket League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Chasing 154 to win, Bandhu Ekadash rode on Jamil's patient 34 off 60 balls and runs from Manik (30) and Shahin (28) to reach the target in 36.3 overs, losing seven wickets. Samao picked up four wickets while Rabbit took two.

Earlier Kulfa Goshthi were all out for 153 runs in 34.2 overs. Rabbi scored 66 from 88 balls while Sama made 31.

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Aussies outclass India

AFP, Bridgetown

David Warner smashed a rapid 72 as Australia thrashed India by 49 runs in the teams' opening Super Eights match in the World Twenty20 at the Kensington Oval here on Friday.

Left-handed opener Warner's innings was the top score in an Australia total of 184 for five built around his first wicket stand of 104 in 11 overs with Shane Watson (54).

In reply, India collapsed to 23 for four inside five overs as several batsmen miscued big shots in a bid to keep up with the run-rate.

India were eventually bowled out for 135, with Rohit Sharma (79 not out) and tailender Harbhajan Singh (13) the only batsmen to reach double figures.

Australia's victory maintained their perfect record in this World Twenty20 as India suffered their first defeat.

Australia left-arm quick Dirk Nannes then consolidated his position as the tournament's leading bowler with three wickets for 25 runs to take his tally for the competition to 10 wickets.

Fellow fast bowler Shaun Tait took three for 21.

Sharma went to his fifty in 33 balls with four sixes and two fours after Suresh Raina, who struck 101 against South Africa last time out, falling to fast bowler Shaun Tait for five.

Warner faced just 41 balls and struck seven of the innings' 16 sixes.

Given such a start, India did well to restrict Australia to under 200.

Australia's openers were especially severe on left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja, whose two overs went for 38.

Jadeja conceded six consecutive sixes, split across those two overs, with both Watson and Warner striking three in a row.

Watson, as in his 81 against Pakistan this tournament, was given an early reprieve when dropped on seven, a difficult chance, by a diving Jadeja at square leg following a miscued sweep against off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

Watson, normally content to play second fiddle to Warner early on, inflicted the early damage.

He clouted Jadeja's fourth ball for six, pulled the fifth high over midwicket and sent the sixth soaring over deep backward square.

Jadeja returned for the tenth over and saw Warner flat-bat his first ball back for six over long-on.

Jadeja's miserable day continued with the bat when he was run out for four.

But he was not alone in suffering with the ball, with recalled left-arm quick Zaheer Khan's four overs costing 45 runs.

Watson went to his fifty with a six off a Yusuf Pathan long-hop before he was bowled next ball to end a 32-ball innings featuring six sixes and a solitary four.

Off-spinner Harbhajan bowled a maiden in the first over of the match, a remarkable achievement in view of what followed, and conceded just 15 runs.

Both teams continue their bid for a semifinal spot here on Sunday when India face West Indies and Australia play Sri Lanka.

BRIEF SCORES

AUSTRALIA: 184-5 in 20 overs (D Warner 72, S Watson 54)

INDIA: 135 all out in 17.4 overs (R Sharma 79 no; S Tait 3-21, D Nannes 3-25)

Result: Australia won by 49 runs

Man of the match: D Warner

Fielding worries Younis

AFP, Bridgetown

Pakistan coach Waqar Younis made no attempt to hide his frustration after the defending World Twenty20 champions poor fielding played a major role in their six-wicket loss to England.

For all their undeniable brilliance with bat and ball, Pakistan in recent times have been almost comically inept in the field.

But even by their own standards, Pakistan's display against England at the Kensington Oval here on Thursday was something else.

They dropped five catches, with off-spinner Saeed Ajmal putting down three by himself including a routine chance at mid-on from Craig Kieswetter when the England opener had yet to score.

"It can be very frustrating, the way we dropped the catches and the way we fielded," said fast bowling great Waqar, who might not have reacted with total equanimity to Ajmal's fielding had

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S'pore thrash Thailand

All square in other matches



SPORTS REPORTER

Singapore proved their mantle as the team to beat when they thrashed their East Asian neighbours Thailand 5-2 in the Robi Asian Games Qualifying Hockey Championship at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Singapore took a two-goal lead early in the first half and scored three more in the second half. Thailand, to their credit, did get on the scoresheet twice towards the end of the second half to bring some respectability to the final scoreline.

Apart from the number of goals, the game was a disappointment in terms of quality and intensity of play. Singapore got to a 10th minute lead from a penalty corner through Sabir Yuhari after the initial push came from Ian Vanderput. Four minutes later, the provider turned scorer as Vanderput found the back of the net on the second attempt after seeing his initial shot parried by the Thai keeper. Singapore controlled the game for the rest of the half but could not add to the scoreline while Thailand found two chances to score just before the break but their hapless strikers spurned those chances.

Singapore made it 3-0 eight minutes into the second half when Prashan Anbalagan fired home from inside the box. The fourth goal was a replay of the first as Yuhari converted Vanderput's push from the penalty corner.

Being four down, Thailand showed some intensity to get back in the game with two field goals six minutes apart. On the other

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Azzurri double

But then the Brazilian management made one of the craziest decisions in World Cup history when, having played those gruelling two matches with the Czechs, they decided to rest Leonidas and fellow striker Tim to keep them fresh for the final. Such over-confidence was their downfall as the Italians, with Giuseppe Meazza still starring, beat them easily. A late goal from Romeo was Brazil's only consolation.

Leonidas, known as 'The Black Diamond', returned for the third-place match with Sweden and, sure enough, he scored a brace as Brazil recorded their highest finish yet in the championships with Leonidas as top scorer. Without the farcical 'resting' decision, it could have been so much more.

In the final, the Italians faced Hungary, a surprise package, playing a similar brand of flowing football to that of the Wunderteam. With the Italians having defeated France, home fans were well and truly behind the Magyars and hoped they could spring a surprise. But with centre-forward Silvio Piola in superb form, Italy were even better than they had been four years earlier. Piola and Gino Colaussi scored two each as the Hungarians were swept away by the superior tactical nous of Italian coach Vittorio Pozzo.

Having taken the lead, they defended in numbers but, when Hungary got back into the game with Gyorgy Sarosi to make it 3-2, Piola scored the decisive goal.

Pozzo had moulded two largely different teams and won the championship twice. Though in later years he would be criticised as being the puppet of Mussolini's Fascist Italy, he would eventually be remembered as Italy's greatest ever coach. Sadly, it was to be the last championship for 12 years as war broke out around the world. When football resumed, the map of world football had changed considerably.

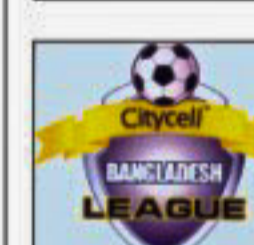


PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

The Italy team pose with the crew of the Godfather film after they defeated Hungary 4-2 in the 1938 World Cup final at the Stade Olympique de Colombes in Paris in front of an estimated 60,000-crowd.

Russel firmly in third

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC returned to winning ways with a 2-0 win over visitors Beanibazar SC in their Citycell Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Moroccan striker Samir Omari gave Sheikh Russel a first-half lead before Mohammad Rony ensured the win in the second half and lifted Sheikh Russel to 47 points from 20 outings, still well behind second-placed Mohammedan SC's 52.

Smarting from a 2-2 draw against hosts Chittagong Mohammedan SC in the previous match, Sheikh Russel made a brilliant start against the bottom-ranked Beanibazar and had to wait just five minutes to open the account following a fumble from a defender.

Rony having snatched the ball from Ujjal advanced into the danger zone to cut it back to unmarked Omari, who tapped the ball in from handshaking distance to raise his goal tally to 15, still two behind top scorer Abahani's Enamul Haque.

Sheikh Russel kept on creating chances through the wings, but striking duo Rony and Omari squandered at least three easy chances from close range against a side who they thrashed 3-0 in their away game in Sylhet.

Newcomers Beanibazar, who have been struggling to avert an elimination from the prestigious league with 13 points from 20 games, had virtually no bite in the game. The visitors appeared suffering from a lack of combination in all three departments though they split Sheikh Russel's backline on a few occasions but their strikers' drives on target were too weak to trouble the opponent goalkeeper Mamun Khan, who however, once made a good save having thwarted an effort from Benjamin Cooper in the first half.

After the resumption, the visitors made three changes but it had hardly any impact on the game and Sheikh Russel doubled

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PHOTO: AFP

Australia opener David Warner lofts one of his seven sixes as India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni looks on during their World Twenty20 tussle at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown yesterday.

Yadav's rapid rise

INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Until Thursday afternoon, Umesh Yadav was a 22-year-old son of a coalmine worker from Khaparkheda village near Nagpur who had impressed with his pace for the Delhi Daredevils in the Indian Premier League.

On Friday, the man who wasn't even on the list of India's 30 probabilities for the World T20, will be on a flight to the Caribbean the latest recruit in the squad.

An unexpected vacancy in the pace department arose after an abdominal muscle injury ruled Praveen Kumar out of the tournament. When it came to deciding on a replacement, opener Gautam Gambhir suggested Yadav to skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. Gambhir was backed by



UMESH YADAV

Eric Simmons, the bowling coach of both India and the Daredevils, and senior paceman Ashish Nehra, also from the Daredevils.

Four years ago, when Yadav hitched a truck ride to Nagpur from his village to play a game of tennis ball cricket, he wouldn't have dreamt

where the 25-km journey might take him. Packing his bags in a mad rush on Thursday, Yadav was in a daze. But those who know him were saying they always felt his raw, natural pace would fast-track him to international cricket.

"I have just collected my tickets from the Vidarbha cricket office, it still hasn't sunk in. My parents are very excited but nervous as well. They are village people and have very little idea of the world outside. All my father asked was 'When will you return home?'" Yadav told The Indian Express after getting the most important call of his short cricketing career.

Had it not been for a chance sighting by former Vidarbha player Pritam Gandhe, Yadav would likely still have been a star on the local tennis-ball circuit, and not someone answering Team India's SOS from the West Indies.

"It was 2008. I was passing by a *maidan*, when a young boy bowling at terrific speed caught my eye. The first thing that caught my eye was his pace. His action was fine but he had to change his run-up. I invited him to the Ranji Trophy nets and he was soon playing first class cricket," said Gandhe.

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SA prepare for England

AFP, Bridgetown



South Africa captain Graeme Smith was in a bullish mood ahead of his side's World Twenty20 Super Eights clash against England here on Saturday.

Both teams will return to the Kensington Oval this weekend on the back of convincing wins on the first day's play in the second round here on Thursday, with South Africa beating New Zealand by 13 runs and England defeating defending champions Pakistan by six wickets.

It was just over a week ago that England beat South Africa by five wickets in a warm-up match in Barbados but Smith believes his Proteas are now starting to come into full bloom.

"Every game in this competition is now crucial," Smith said.

"They (England) will have confidence but we faced them in a warm-up game so we have a pretty good idea how we'd like to play against them.

"If we can improve five or ten percent, then we will push England hard."

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DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League
Muktijoddha v Arambagh
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Tri-Nation Tournament
Bangladesh A v West Indies A
One-Day Match
Time: 9:15am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur

GP-BCB Academy v South Africa
Academy
Third One-Day Match
Time: 9:30am
Venue: BKSP



PHOTO: COURTESY

Barcelona youth coach Xavi (3rd from left) talks to youngsters during a training programme at the BUET ground yesterday.

What to WATCH

BTV, Star Cricket & SuperSport2
ICC World Twenty20 SUPER EIGHTS
Pakistan v New Zealand
Live from 7:30pm
England v South Africa
Live from 11:30pm

SuperSport3
Bundesliga
Hertha Berlin v Bayern Munich
Live from 7:30pm
Primera Liga
Sevilla v Barcelona
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

SuperSport3
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Athletic
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)