

SPORT

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Pundits' girl talk ruled offside

A pair of British television football pundits were caught offside when they made "unacceptable remarks" off-air about a woman assistant referee officiating in a Premier League clash. Sky Sports said presenter Richard Keys and pundit Andy Gray, a former Scottish international striker, have apologised for their comments regarding Sian Massey. The pair commented on Massey's appointment for the game between Wolves and Liverpool at Molineux on Saturday, when they believed their microphones were switched off. The pair concurred that female officials "don't know the offside rule".



Mashrafe still in

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's World Cup chances are now a battle between logic and emotion. And the fans are maybe in for a last-moment drama about whether the pace spearhead represents his country in the World Cup at home or not. Right at this moment there has however been a ray of hope for the "Narail Express" according to Australian surgeon Dr. David Young, who gave him the words of hope. "Dr Young has confirmed that there is significant instability at the right knee, and tearing to the ACL graft [which had previously been reconstructed]. He also notes significant effusion, or swelling, at the knee joint," said a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) statement yesterday after Mashrafe's return from Colombo. "While the swelling and instability do not exclude him from playing in the short term, if Mortaza continues to play for an extended period with the knee as it is it can lead to higher rates of degeneration and further damage, and is not recommended," it's added. The observation came after Mashrafe saw orthopaedic surgeon Young in Colombo on Sunday for an opinion on the knee, which he injured whilst batting during a Premier Division Cricket League match on December 21 last year. "I'm now more confident after the consultation with Dr Young. He was happy with the improvement and progress I made so far and what he told me is that everything would depend on me. I'm now tension free and will try my best to regain the fitness and form before the World Cup," said a delighted Mashrafe while

talking to the reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. "My main objective would be to get myself ready so that I can grab the opportunity of playing the World Cup if it comes my way. As per Dr Young's opinion there is no problem in playing competitive matches with this condition but I must have my knee operated on if I want to lengthen my career," he added. Young has advised that as a World Cup standby player Mashrafe should continue his current rehabilitation programme, with a view to regaining his fitness and form. And following the World Cup tournament, it has been proposed that his right knee is operated on, in order to repair the ACL graft and return stability to the knee. "After the operation, Dr Young believes Mortaza could continue playing international cricket for another 5 years," the BCB statement said. "Let's see how long I can manage to play without the operation because you know already six operations have been performed on my knees. I have already started bowling with short run-up and am yet to decide when I will start with my full run-up. The next five-six days are very important for me," said Mashrafe. The braveheart cricketer also said that he would try to play at least one or two matches for Abahani in the Premier Division Super League. "I don't think lack of match practice will be an issue for me because I proved myself time and again. I will get the chance to bowl in nets against the national team players and I will try to play at least the last two games in the Super league of the Premier Division Cricket," hoped Mashrafe.



Mashrafe Mortaza walking out of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday after returning from Colombo, where he got encouraging news from Dr. David Young about his chances of playing in the World Cup. PHOTO: STAR

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

Knowing Sachin & Lara

Paceman Tapash Baisya was highly impressed with the 2003 World Cup, especially the opening ceremony. Here he shares his World Cup experiences with The Daily Star Sport.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2003 World Cup?
 Tapash Baisya (TB): I had a good series against the West Indies before the World Cup. I performed well in both Tests and ODIs, but frankly, I was really not sure whether I would be in the World Cup or not. When we had a camp at the BKSP, I heard others talking about the inclusion of senior players in the team since it was a big event and I was quite tensed about it. When the squad was announced I was very excited and relieved as well. When I was young I used to dream about playing along the big players for my country and it was certainly my dream come true. DSS: How different was the atmosphere?
 TB: Too good! It was brilliant atmosphere all around. We enjoyed the opening ceremony the most. But the team atmosphere wasn't that good as we were not performing well. DSS: Was there any frustrating part in the campaign?
 TB: Actually we did not have a good World Cup. There were lack of understanding among the players and I was very young that time. I made my debut in 2002 and was playing the World Cup in the second year of my cricketering career. We performed poorly and obviously were very frustrating for all of us. DSS: How did it feel to be with other teams?
 TB: When I was a child I always thought big players like Sachin [Tendulkar] and [Brian] Lara will have attitudes and normal people can't go near them. When I was around them I realised that they were just another human being and a cricket player like me. DSS: Recall your sweetest memory.
 TB: I would say the opening ceremony at Cape Town is the



TAPASH BAISYA

Shakib to return to New Road

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan will continue playing for English county side Worcestershire, it was announced yesterday. Shakib will join Worcestershire for a seven-week period during June and July this year, which will include the Friends Provident Twenty20 competition. The signing is subject to receiving a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Bangladesh Cricket Board and work permit approval. Shakib took 35 wickets in just eight matches, making him their third highest wicket-taker during last season. His bowling figures included an inspired 7-32 against Middlesex. "My first season with Worcestershire in county cricket has made me a better

Russel see All Red

SPORTS REPORTER

In-form hitman Mithun Chowdhury slammed a brace to power Muktijoddha Sangsad to an emphatic 3-0 win over Sheikh Russel KC in their Bangladesh League match at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalpur yesterday. The triumph not only took a rejuvenated Muktijoddha to the top of the 12-team table with 12 points from five matches but also handed Sheikh Russel KC their first defeat of the season after they were unbeaten for seven matches including the three games of the Federation Cup. The defeat in the fifth game means Sheikh Russel slip from the top place for the first time to stay in joint second place along with holders Abahani on 10 points each from five matches. Following a shocking 2-2 draw against Brothers Union in the previous game, Sheikh Russel started at great pace to keep Muktijoddha Sangsad under pressure although they could hardly split the backline of the opponents. However, the All Reds went ahead taking the lead against the run of play on 18 minutes. Mithun capitalised on a fumble by goalkeeper Mamun Khan, who was late to come out from the post to punch a long ball taken by opponent goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee and the former Chittagong

Abahani striker shrugged off defenders Abbas Inuusah and Uttam Kumar to head the ball over the advancing goalkeeper Mamun to give Muktijoddha an unexpected lead. On the half-hour mark, the freedom fighters' side doubled the lead as defender Rajani flicked in a header off a free-kick taken by Argentine right-back Ariel Theiler from the right flank. After the resumption, Sheikh Russel stepped up the attack sending on Moroccan fit-again striker Samir Omari and created a couple of good scoring chances but the luck was not with them as striker Mohammad Yousuf saw his header off a Babu corner drifting wide of the far post while his second effort was cleared by opponent defender Yeamin Munna from the goalline on 74 minutes. Sheikh Russel nearly pulled off a goal four minutes from time but goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee this time kept his position thwarting a side-volley taken by Samir, who returned to the game after missing two matches through injury. From a counter attack, Muktijoddha struck the third goal as Nigerian striker Alamu Bukola Olaleken ran down the right to cut the ball back to substitute midfielder Alamgir Rana, who fed the ball to an unmarked Mithun. The striker made no mistake to fire home from inside the box to take his tally to six goals in five games. He is now the top scorer in the league.



PHOTOS: STAR

Muktijoddha Sangsad striker and leading scorer of the ongoing Bangladesh League Mithun Chowdhury celebrates his brace against Sheikh Russel KC at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday. (Inset) Mithun is unstoppable as he speeds past two Russel defenders.

Super League starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

With a three-point advantage, Abahani will start their Premier Division Cricket Super League campaign when they take on Bangladesh Biman in one of the opening day matches at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra today. Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club face Cricket Coaching School (CCS) at BKSP and Old DOHS meet with Gazi Tank at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi in the day's other matches. The clubs will miss the services of the national players as the Tigers' training camp (under the supervision of coach Jamie



Speakers at a press conference at a city hotel give out the details of American Express Bangladesh Open Golf which will be held at the Kurmitola Golf Club from tomorrow. PHOTO: STAR

AmEx Bangladesh Open from tomorrow

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

American Express Bangladesh Open 2011, the first event of the Aircel PGTI (Professional Golf Tour of India) season, starts at the Kurmitola Golf Club tomorrow. This is the third time the PGTI event is being held in Bangladesh in association with Bangladesh Golf Federation (BGF) and is being sponsored by the City Bank, which is the local franchisee of the world famous brand American Express. A press conference in this connection was held at a city hotel yesterday where Bangladesh's first and leading professional

golfer Siddikur Rahman, Director of PGTI Uttam S Mundy, Managing Director and CEO of City Bank K Mahmood Sattar, Joint Secretary of BGF and CEO of Kurmitola Golf Club Colonel SM Shawkat Ali (Retd), and Managing Director of Riz Events Rizwan Bin Farouq were present among others. The main event will follow a Pro-Am round to be held today where local amateurs will take part along with the professional players. A total of 80 professional golfers, 30 from Bangladesh and the rest from India, will take part in the four-day event. The Bangladeshi challenge will be led by defending Champions Siddikur Rahman

Club Cup cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Barisal Abahani beat Barguna Warriors by a massive margin of 165 runs to move to the second round of the 2nd Inter-District Club Cup cricket tournament yesterday. In the day's other matches, Mukti Shingha of Rajshahi beat Rahamatganj Young Association by 8 wickets, Bir Bikram Yamin Krira Chakra of Sylhet easily beat Hobiganj's Modern Club by 7 wickets and Sohid Sufi Samaj Kallan Smiti beat Shariatpur Cricket