

Abahani to the fore

SPORTS REPORTER

ISPAHANI
Premier Division Cricket League

Abahani bounced back strongly and brightened their chances of regaining the Premier Cricket League title when they beat Old DOHS by 39 runs in the penultimate Super League match at BKSP yesterday.

Although the popular Dhanmondi side did their part by winning the match with apparent ease, they were done the most-needed favour by Cricket Coaching School (CCS) who all but dashed Gazi Tank's hopes.

Alok Kapali hit a brilliant 87 but still could not resist Gazi Tank's narrow one-run defeat in an exciting game at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Abahani, who lost their previous match to Gazi Tank, again took the solo lead with 24 points while Gazi stayed on 22 for second position.

The day's outcome made the equation only difficult for Gazi as they have to beat Biman in their last game on Saturday while Abahani must lose to archrivals Mohammedan. If these happen, Gazi will consider themselves lucky because, although on same points with Abahani, the title will be theirs' by virtue of head-to-head advantage in the Super League.

In the day's other match, defending champions Mohammedan rode on Pakistani batsman Shoaib Malik's back-to-back hundred to bounce back from their last round defeat as they posted a six-wicket victory against Biman at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi.

Mohammedan's other Pakistani recruit, Azhar Mahmood was fined Tk

20,000 for showing dissent during the match.

ABAHANI -DOHS

Abahani made a solid start through a 50-run opening partnership between Anamul Haque and Hannan Sarker but they lost some quick wickets to reach at 72 for five.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Sahagir Hossain (39) joined Indian Reshmi Ranjan (69) to repair the damages by associating 100 runs for the sixth wicket as they scored 216 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs.

Two opening bowlers Forhad Reza and Moshir Rahman caused the damages by sharing seven wickets. Forhad claimed three for 43 runs and Moshir picked up four for 33.

In reply, Old DOHS finished their 50-over quota on 177 for 9. Number eight batsman Tanvir Haider top scored with 42.

Saqlain Sajib was the most successful Abahani bowler with three for 29.

CCS -GAZI TANK

Kapali returned to the dressing room as the ninth batsman out, leaving his team to score 14 runs from last eight balls to chase down 278. The match reached an exciting position when Gazi required three runs from the last ball but Syed Rasel could manage only one by pushing the ball to mid-off and his attempt for a second run to tie the match went in vain as Robiul caught him short of his ground.

After Mohammad Mithun's 73, Kapali took the charge and smote five sixes and three boundaries during his 69-ball stay.

Earlier CCS put up a challenging total thanks to three half-centuries

from Shuvagoto Hom (89), Atiqur Rahman (62) and Nazmul Hossain, who put the bowlers to the sword during his hurricane knock of 50 off 20 balls that contained four boundaries and as many sixes.

MOHAMMEDAN -BIMAN

Indian Avishek Mitra slammed an unbeaten 110 with 10 fours and a six in a 143-ball knock as Biman made 222 for eight in 50 overs. The team's second highest 34 runs came as extras.

In reply, Mohammedan overhauled the target making 224 for four thanks to Malik who hit unbeaten 107 off 120 balls that saw 13 fours and a six.

Faisal Hossain was the other notable scorer with a 66-ball 51.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI: 216-9 in 50 overs (Hannan 24, Reshmi 69, Sahagir 39, extras 15; Forhad 3-43, Moshir 4-33)

DOHS: 177-9 in 50 overs (Aftab 36, Mehrab 29, Tanvir 42, extras 9; Tapash 2-17, Lee 2-22, Saqlain 3-29)

Result: Abahani won by 39 runs.

CCS: 278 all out in 50 overs (Hom 89, Atiqur 62, Nazmul 50, extras 9;Sabbir 3-56, Azmat 2-32)

GAZI TANK: 277 all out in 50 overs (Mithun 73, Nasir 35, Kapali 87, extras 15; Bishawnath 3-46, Tapash 3-36)

Result: CCS won by one run.

BIMAN: 222-8 in 50 overs (Avishek 110 not out, Mosharraf 24, extras 34; Tareq 3-34, Mukter 2-16)

MOHAMMEDAN: 224-4 in 41.1 overs (Nazimuddin 25, Malik 107 not out, Shamsur 26, Faisal 51, extras 4; Niaz 3-43)

Result: Mohammedan won by six wickets.

Clarke outdoes Trott

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia conjured up their biggest ever successful run chase to beat England by two wickets in a thrilling sixth one-day international at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

After a Jonathan Trott century helped England post their highest ever ODI score against Australia of 333-6, the home side battled their way into contention, needing six to win off the final over with two wickets in hand.

Tail-ender John Hastings edged a boundary off the second delivery from youngster Chris Woakes to hand Australia victory with four balls to spare, the home side making 334-8.

It was Australia's record run chase in an ODI and extended their lead over the tourists in the seven-match series to 5-1 with one game to play.

Captain Michael Clarke's late season return to form continued as he smashed 82 from 70 balls to lead the

unlikely chase, with late support from David Hussey, who made 38.

The match seemed to be England's to lose with Australia needing 70 off 48 balls, but the pair took 16 off James Anderson's eighth over -- the 44th of the innings.

They followed it up by notching 14 off Anderson's ninth as the England bowler went on to finish with a disastrous 91 runs from his 10 overs.

Shane Watson, with 51 off 34 balls, got the home side off to a flying start in reply to what had the look of a match-winning total by England, before falling to the spin of Michael Yardy.

Mitchell Johnson was promoted to number four and made 57 before being stumped from the bowling of Kevin Pietersen, while the recalled Callum Ferguson was run out for 46.

An Australian win seemed unlikely after Trott's second century of the series helped England post what was also their highest ODI score in Australia.

Trott continued his superb series by making 137, taking his haul for the series to 361 runs at 72.20, the English

number three the leading scorer for either side despite his team's indifferent form.

Before falling to the second-last ball of the innings Trott was offered good support by captain Andrew Strauss, who made 63 from just 69 balls, and Ian Bell, with 45 from 32 deliveries.

Trott, was earlier given out lbw on 82 to Shaun Tait but handed a reprieve after a review of the decision, reached triple figures for the fourth time in ODIs from exactly 100 balls, having hit seven boundaries.

In an outstanding game for the England man he took a brilliant catch to remove Brad Haddin (20), and bowled during the Australian innings.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 333 foe 6 (Strauss 63, Prior 18, Trott 137, Pietersen 29, Bell 45, Morgan 21; Tait 2-59)

AUSTRALIA: 334 for 8 (Watson 51, Haddin 20, Ferguson 46, Johnson 57, Clarke 82, White 20, Hussey 38; Finn 2-51)

Result: Australia won by two wickets and lead seven-match series 5-1.

Man-of-the-match: Jonathan Trott.

The Powerplay riddle

FROM PAGE 16
the batsmen are being given extra time to try big hits, it is clear that coach Siddons is short on options.

If the problem was tackled more than a year ago, Alok Kapali would have been used then and by now become a major force during the Powerplay. But neither happened as the all-rounder failed to make a comeback nor has the team management done anything about the five-over restriction.

It can't be expected that any of the bowlers will find overnight batting talent nor that Riyad and Naeem will be fully confident with the big hitting duties.

Options for Siddons therefore are very few and it will down to creativity and motivation. The Australian must inspire something out of Shuvo and Shafiqul to do well with the bat as both had shown some ability. Otherwise, Mohammad Ashraful could be used down the batting line-up to make full use of the Powerplay. Ashraful's fielding is good enough but if he is asked to bat after Mushfiqur, he will be required to fill in the overs as he would be replacing Riyad or Shuvo, but that might not be something the team management is confident about.

And it is here that Bangladesh might rue most the absence, through injury, of Mashrafe bin Mortaza.

While heralded for his bowling talents, Mashrafe is a more than useful lower-order bat who boasts a strike rate of 80 and above and can strike a few lusty blows when the need arises. But with Mashrafe out, the onus is now on the team management to think out-of-the-box and find a solution to this area.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 30, 2008

BATTED FIRST, WON GAME				
Powerplay#3	Opposition	Ground	Year	
43 for 3	West Indies	Roseau	Jul 2009	
62 for 2	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	Aug 2009	
38 for 1	England	Bristol	Jul 2010	
30 for 4	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010	
15 for 4	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010	
NOT USED	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010	
42 for 2	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Dec 2010	

BATTED SECOND, WON GAME			
Powerplay#3	Opposition	Ground	Year
32 for 0	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010
NOT USED	Sri Lanka	Dhaka	Jan 2009
NOT USED	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Jan 2009
NOT USED	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Jan 2009
42 for 3	West Indies	Roseau	Jul 2009
45 for 1	West Indies	Basseterre	Jul 2009
31 for 1	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	Aug 2009
27 for 1	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	Aug 2009
13 for 0*	Zimbabwe	Bulawayo	Aug 2009
38 for 0	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Oct 2009
12 for 3	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Oct 2009
NOT USED	Zimbabwe	Chittagong	Nov 2009
35 for 0	Zimbabwe	Chittagong	Nov 2009
NOT USED	Ireland	Belfast	Jul 2010
NOT USED	New Zealand	Dhaka	Oct 2010
NOT USED	Zimbabwe	Dhaka	Dec 2010
NOT USED	Zimbabwe	Chittagong	Dec 2010
(* denotes the match was won before the end of Powerplay)			

BATTING BY POSITION						
Pos	Player	Inns	NO	Runs	Ave	SR
5	Shakib Al Hasan	44	7	1365	36.9	86.9
6	Mushfiqur Rahim	32	6	652	25.1	71.7
7	Mahmudullah	28	8	626	31.3	72.8
8	Naeem Islam	21	9	400	33.3	66.0
9	Abdur Razzak	16	7	135	15.0	78.5
10	Dollar Mahmud	1	0	41	41.0	136.7
11	Syed Rasel	8	5	18	6.0	46.1



PHOTO: STAR

Players of Amigos, the Polar Street Cricket Champions, pose for a celebratory photo after their final victory over Cricket Kids at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground yesterday.

Amigos Street Cricket champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Amigos became champions of the Polar Street Cricket tournament yesterday at the Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club ground. They defeated Cricket Kids in the final by 10 runs.

Rubaiyat Haque was awarded the man of the match for picking up two wickets for the Amigos.

Former national skipper Shafiqul Haq handed over the trophy to the winners while the cheque of Tk 50,000 was given by Polar Ice-Cream CEO Taufiqur Rahman. The runners-up team received a cheque of Tk 25,000.

ASM Faruque, Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury and general secretary of CWAB (Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh) Debabrata Paul were also present on the occasion.

Tigers train

FROM PAGE 16

BCB also declared some restrictions for the audiences including jerseys or T-shirts with logos or advertisements that are not the global partners' of the ICC World Cup will not be permitted as everyone will be traced before entering the stadium.

No contraband items even cans, sticks, corks, fake arms and crackers will be permitted.

"No bag, video camera, food items will be permitted. The whole stadium area has been declared as a smoke-free zone," said Tutoy.

"Fifty-eight CCTV cameras will watch the whole stadium all time," he added.

BCB director and venue chairman Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin and member of media committee Ali Abbas were also present at the press conference.

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After a two-day break, Grameenphone Bangladesh League will resume when defending champions Abahani face current leaders Muktiyoddha Sangsad in what is expected to be a mouth watering clash at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium today.

Five rounds on, the defending champions are currently in second position with thirteen points, trailing leaders Muktiyoddha by two points.

The Reds will be boosted by the return of national striker Mithun Chowdhury, who served a one-match suspension due to consecutive yellow cards. The diminutive striker leads the scorer's chart with six goals, and will be most likely partnered by another lethal striker, James Moga of Sudan, who returned to action in the last match after returning from his homeland.

However, despite their impressive form, the Muktiyoddha coach Maruful Haque is not

fully satisfied with his team's performance:

"Even though we are winning, we have been far from convincing. Our players need to pull up their socks and make sure we win and win well. Abahani are big on paper, but if our players give their hundred percent, we will win."

Muktis have so far lost a solitary match, winning the rest while the Sky Blues have won four, lost one and drawn one.

Most importantly, the Dhanmondi club are on a three-match winning streak and the manager Satyajit Das Rupu believes they are in the right kind of form to take over the lead from Muktiyoddha:

"We are playing well of late. Good to see the players are showing fighting spirit. In absence of the top two keepers, the third choice keeper (Sohel) is coming to terms with the big league"

Veteran winger Mehedi Hasan Uzzal returns to the side while in attack Abahani have in-form Ghanaian Twum Frank to be partnered by Awudu Ibrahim and Shakhawt Hossain Rony.

MS likes India's rota

AFP, New Delhi



India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Wednesday said the schedule of the upcoming World Cup could prove to be a blessing in disguise for his injury-hit team.

The scheduling of the six-week tournament was recently slammed as "ridiculous" by top England batsman Kevin Pietersen who said the gaps between games were too long.

The Indians have been sweating over the fitness of batsmen Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir, and paceman Praveen Kumar in the build-up to the showpiece event, which starts in Dhaka on February 19.

India, co-hosts of the tournament along with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, are set to play six league matches in the space of 29 days and Dhoni said the gap would allow his players to recoup their energies.

"The schedule may work in our favour," Dhoni said at a promotional event in the Indian capital. "It will help our players relax and take care of niggles and injuries."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		DOWN	
1	Pinochle ploys	1	As a villain would
6	"Silence of the —"	2	Enter cautiously
11	Cash in	3	Journey segment
12	Harm	4	Computer brand
14	Seek a bargain	5	Daub
15	Tee-hee	6	— a feather
16	Compass dir.	7	Grenoble girlfriend
17	Wood-shop machine	8	Est. EPA hwy. —
19	Cake maker's shortcut	9	Illicit intermediary
20	Settled down	10	Quartz material
22	Same old same-old	11	Ostriches' kin
23	Chantilly, e.g.	13	Reed and Harrison
24	Church council		
26	Woody Allen movie		
28	Bush league?		
30	Fool		
31	Layer		
35	Confuse		
39	Dregs		
40	High-arc shot		
42	NYC transp. initials		

Solution time: 27 mins.

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ORDAIN	ARETHA	
MIGHT	NAIL	
HEMAN	ATA	CPA
ALAS	TREBEK	
PICKLED	BULGE	
PTA	AXE	OREOS
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CRYPTOQUIP

G D Q G Z K L Y Y L L Q L U L Y L
W G Q G V G Z K E D E Q P G R Z Q P R U
G Z C R W L Y U P E V U R X S C
C L S S E U L E Y G Z C L S E U E Y L ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: "A TALE OF TWO CITIES" IS SUCH AN ALARMING WORK TO READ. IT SCARED THE DICKENS OUT OF ME!
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals I