



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani's Ghanaian midfielder Twum Frank (R) dodges past a Mohammedan defender during their Bangladesh League clash at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Abahani win battle of pride

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Abahani survived a scare to edge Mohammedan SC 1-0 in their last match of the first leg in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Ghanaian midfielder Twum Frank struck the decider in the 65th minute in front of some 2000 spectators. The win against Mohammedan means Abahani go top of the points table again with 26 points from 11 outings, one point more than Muktiyoddha Sangsad who have a game in hand.

On the other hand, after three successive defeats Mohammedan remain at seventh place with 13 points from 11 matches.

On paper and performance it was the Sky Blues who definitely were the overwhelming favourites for this match, but Mohammedan put up more than a fight against their archrivals and played argu-

ably their best football of the season.

Abahani launched the first attack in the seventh minute when Frank availing a throughpass from Awudu Ibrahim entered the box, but instead of taking a shot himself, cut it back for Shakawat Hossain Rony before Mohammedan defender Ramjan Ali cleared it for a corner.

Afterwards it was Mohammedan who enjoyed superior ball possession for most of the game with their crisp passing but failed to find the back of Abahani net.

In the 22nd minute, Mohammedan's Nigerian striker Emeka Christian put the ball for his strike partner Anwar Hossain, who saw his left-footer come off the Abahani goal-post while at the other end Frank saw his shot narrowly missing the target.

Against the run of the play, Abahani took the lead in the 65th minute with a superb finish from Frank, who availed a cut-back from Ibnul Siraji, hammered a powerful left-footer giving Mohammedan

goalkeeper Titu no chance to react.

However, Mohammedan should have levelled the margin few moments later, but Emeka being set up by Hasan Al Mamun, struck straight to goalkeeper Sohail as Abahani left the field with maximum points and restored their top position.

"It was a good match. Mohammedan defended well, but my boys played better. In the end Frank made all the difference," said Abahani's Iranian coach Ali Akbar.

Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik did not blame referee for yesterday's result rather blamed bad luck for the sixth defeat in the league. He also added: "Results don't show, but I am happy the way my team played today (Sunday)."

Away at Cox's Bazar Stadium, Chittagong Abahani held visitors Sheikh Russel KC to a 1-1 draw. Masud gave the home side the lead in the 57th minutes before Charles equalised six minutes from time.

Juventus snap losing streak

AFP, Rome

Juventus ended a three-match losing streak despite playing more than half the game with 10 men as they were held 2-2 at lowly Cesena on Saturday.

A brace from Alessandro Matri had given the Turin giants a two-goal lead but their hosts hit back through a Luis Jimenez penalty and Marco Parolo after Marco Motta was sent off.

After a slow opening the game sparked into life on 19 minutes as Alessandro Del Piero burst forward from halfway and slipped in Matri, who shot back across goalkeeper Francesco Antonioli and into the corner. Cesena were made to pay on 35 minutes after another astonishing miss as Del Piero somehow crashed a volley from eight yards against the post but Matri acrobatically headed home the rebound.

Buffon saved Juve 14 minutes from time as he changed direction quickly to keep out Dominique Malonga's deflected strike. But he could do nothing about Parolo's low effort three minutes later.

Records win

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in the next games he can carry on further. Another positive would be the 292 we got against England. [Ryan] ten Doeschate with a beautiful hundred, so we are looking for a lot more positives in the last two games," said Borren.

Star batsman, ten Doeschate, said that he was happy that the tough games were out of the way, though he rated Bangladesh quite well.

"Feeling very good you know that we had our four toughest games gone away. Obviously Bangladesh would be a different challenge tomorrow; they are a very good side but they are up and down at the moment so we think we have chance of winning tomorrow and we are focused to play here in Chittagong," said ten Doeschate.

The ICC's Associate Player-of-the-Year believes that he has more responsibility since he's one of the high-profile players in the parallel world of international cricket.

"I guess probably little bit more than anyone else. I know we need to compete and I asked some of the guys to play professionally."

"We have the responsibility to put up our performances but at the end of the day they are going to judge the quality of the boards and not just one or two players of the Associate Members of the ICC. So it needs to be joint effort to raise the standards and rightly deserve a place," said ten Doeschate.

MU send Gunners crashing

AFP, London



Manchester United got their spluttering season back on track with a 2-0 win against Arsenal in the FA Cup quarterfinals at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side had lost three of their last five Premier League matches, but goals from Fabio da Silva and Wayne Rooney restored the feel-good factor and booked a place in the Wembley semifinals.

While United's morale will have been lifted by victory against a major rival, Arsenal's campaign is in danger of imploding.

The Gunners now have only the Premier League title to aim for after a miserable two weeks which has seen them lose the League Cup final to Birmingham and crash out of the Champions League and FA Cup.

Ferguson sent out a slightly weakened team which included seven defenders as he rested players ahead of Tuesday's Champions League second leg against Marseille, while Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger played his strongest available eleven. It was Ferguson's selection gamble that paid off.

Fabio opened the scoring with a close-range finish in the 28th minute after Manuel Almunia could only push Javier Hernandez's header from a Rooney cross into the Brazilian's path.

Arsenal's Robin van Persie, controversially sent off for kicking the ball away against Barcelona in midweek, almost equalised before the break but the Dutch forward saw his low shot turned away by Van der Sar.

Laurent Koscielny was denied by van der Sar soon after half-time and United, who last won the Cup in 2004, took advantage of that escape to put tie beyond Arsenal's reach in the 49th minute.

Rafael da Silva's surging run and cross forced Johan Djourou into a block that looped the ball towards Rooney and the England striker headed past Almunia from a tight angle.

There was more bad news for injury-hit Arsenal, already without Cesc Fabregas, Alex Song and Wojciech Szczesny, when Swiss centre-back Djourou was stretched off with a shoulder injury in the closing stages.

In the day's other quarterfinal, Lee Chung-Yong fired Bolton into the FA Cup last four as the South Korean's late goal clinched a 3-2 win over Birmingham at St Andrew's.

Bowled at Last

SHAKIL KASEM

It is always sad to learn of the passing of someone you know quite well, sadder still is knowing he was an important part of a pastime that was dear to both of us. Saddest of all is knowing another cricketer of our generation has walked back to that Great Pavilion in the sky.

As a breed of yesteryear cricketers we are depleting. Riazuddin Ahmed, Mota Babloo as he was universally and so very fondly known, ended his long innings and battle against long drawn ailments on the 11th of March. With him ended a chapter of our cricket that meant so much to many, because he belonged to a very special generation of cricketers. Playing for Victoria in the sixties and seventies, Babloo formed the nucleus of a group that was considered the Golden Generation of young players. Mainul Haq, Yusuf Rahman, Eraj Bakht, Zahir, Nawab and Shaju along with Babloo made cricket look so easy and gave untold joy to the purists.

With Babloo gone, we mourn not just the passing of a man who was our friend, our compatriot but it signals the passing of an age; not just the age of Aquarius but an age when cricket was genteel. Babloo brought all the old fashioned values of the game with him every time he crossed the boundary rope. In spite of his impressive bulky physique Babloo was an immensely effective right arm medium pacer with a classical side-on action. As a batsman he was light footed against spinners and had a natural free flowing style that was so reflective of his personality. He was lively and fun loving, yet so knowledgeable and responsible.

To this day I am grateful for the one innings we batted together for Noakhali against Chittagong where the ball was turning square. Babloo literally taught me all about survival on such wickets, a lesson that stuck with me for eternity. Babloo had been struggling with his health for some time now, sadly the dogged fighter with the immaculate defence did not have an answer, as indeed no one of us do, against death: that one bowler who can always get one through to hit the stumps. And so it was with Babloo. All of us who had played with him applaud him unreservedly as he walks back for that one last time.

Kiwis crush

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Ryder c Osinde b Davison	38
Taylor c Hansra b Rao	74
McCullum c & b Rao	10
Williamson not out	34
Styris c Davison b Baidwan	35
Franklin not out	31
Extras: (b-2, lb-3, nb-2, w-11)	18
Total: (For 9 wks in 50 overs)	358
Did not bat: Oram, Mills, Southee	
Fall of wickets: 1-53, 2-149, 3-185, 4-254, 5-259, 6-318.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Chohan	7	0	40	0
Osinde	7	0	52	0
Baidwan	9	1	84	3
Cheema	4.5	0	64	0
Rao	10	0	62	2
Davison	10	1	30	1
Hansra	2	0	21	0

CANADA				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gunasekera c Taylor b Mills	2			
Patel c B McCullum b Oram	31			
Surkari c Taylor b Mills	1			
Bagai c B McCullum b N McCullum	84			
Hansra not out	70			
Cheema c B McCullum b Oram	2			
Davison run out	15			
Rao c N McCullum b Oram	9			
Baidwan c Franklin b Southee	8			
Chohan c Taylor b Ryder	22			
Osinde not out	0			
Extras: (b-5, lb-2, w-9, nb-1)	17			
Total: (For 9 wks in 50 overs)	261			
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-4, 3-50, 4-175, 5-179, 6-205, 7-213, 8-222, 9-261.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mills	2.4	1	2	2
Southee	10	0	36	1
Ryder	1.2	0	15	1
Oram	10	1	47	3
Franklin	4	0	31	0
N McCullum	8	0	56	1
Styris	10	0	41	0
Williamson	4	0	26	0

Result: New Zealand won by 97 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Brendon McCullum.

Benzema brace keeps Real in race

AFP, Paris

Frenchman Karim Benzema scored in his third consecutive game as Real Madrid beat Hercules 2-0 and move within four points of leaders Barcelona on Saturday.

Benzema slotted home an Alvaro Arbeloa pass mid-way through the first half and then struck again after the break.

Earlier struggling Almeria snatched a point against Atletico Madrid with substitute Henok Goitom heading home to equalise in a 2-2 draw on Saturday.

Sergio Aguero put Atletico ahead after latching onto a ball over the defence but Albert Crusat drew Almeria level.

Robben hattrick salvages Bayern

AFP, Berlin

Dutch winger Arjen Robben netted a hattrick as Bayern Munich broke their losing streak with a 6-0 rout of Hamburg on Saturday, while leaders Borussia Dortmund were beaten 1-0 at Hoffenheim.

Robben netted his first goal after 40 minutes, curled in a direct free-kick on 47 minutes and completed his hattrick eight minutes later after French winger Franck Ribery tore through the Hamburg defence and squared to the Dutchman, who rifled home.

Ribery scored chipped home on 64 minutes, Thomas Mueller scored the fifth before Ribery finished off in the 85th minute.

Nafees, Shuvo expected in

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try to win and each win is important. So there is no complacency. The game (against England) is forgotten now, we move on. A whole new set of players, a whole new set of plans, and possibly a whole new team," assured Bangladesh head coach Jamie Siddons in a pre-match press conference.

But even if Siddons was exaggerating about the whole team scenario, Bangladesh is all set to tinker with the winning combination as left-hander Shahriar Nafees is set to replace Rokibul Hasan in the team, while left-arm spinner Sohrwardi Shuvo may also come into the side in place of off-spinning all-rounder Naeem Islam. The second decision is likely to be taken on the basis that the Dutch are a side loaded with right-handers and thus might face trouble with Shuvo. But it is set to be a tricky decision considering the fact that Naeem Islam has put in a more than adequate showing with the ball so far.

"We are looking at bringing Shuvo in to add another left-arm spinner, they have got a lot of right-handers in their team. It will make it very difficult for them if we put another left-arter in. We are thinking of shifting Naeem and Shuvo, but we haven't really confirmed that. It will be difficult to drop Naeem, rather it is a case of leaving him out, not really dropping him," Siddons informed.

Siddons might be happy with his batters' performance in the tournament but still the Bangladesh middle-order has been found vulnerable and that's the reason Nafees is all set to play his first World Cup match at num-

ber four, the position where Mushfiqur Rahim and then Rokibul have both failed to deliver.

"I beg to differ. One game we didn't do well... only one game. The other two games, we made more runs than the opposition, that's all you need to do. England only made 225, we made one more than them," defended the Tigers coach when asked whether he was satisfied with his team's batting performance in the tournament.

"We played one really bad game. Not sure what happened there. Apart from that, we have been reasonably consistent. Reasonably consistent putting scores on the board. I think we will step up again tomorrow and play good cricket that should be enough to win the game," he said adding that there has been a lot of difference between the wickets of Bangladesh and India.

The Bangladesh coach also played down their chance of reaching the quarterfinal stage.

"If England win against West Indies, it is a long way away. If West Indies win, we have got to win both our games. But first we have to win tomorrow, and then if England lose, we have a chance. Otherwise it's very difficult."

"Mathematically if England win their next game, we can't get in, unless we win against South Africa, which is a very difficult task. I am not going to guarantee that we will win against South Africa," he continued.

Above everything it's a must win match for the Tigers and many believe Shakib's men can walk on their opponents if they just play their normal game.

In the spirit of 1997

FROM PAGE 16

Bangladesh today.

"It was quite an emotionally-loaded game and there was a lot going on. Obviously Bangladesh were desperate to win that game and we were desperate to win as well."

"Unfortunately the weather interfered that day as well. Unfortunately we didn't win that day and Bangladesh went on to win the trophy," added the man who had earlier become one of the youngest players in World Cup history in the 1996 tournament.

Khaled Mashud, the former national captain who was one of the architects of that successful ICC Trophy campaign, remembers vividly that he accompanied Akram in the end, though he didn't face a ball.

"Akram bhai played one of the best innings of all time in that game. I think it was a turning point in our cricket and I remember that I was there in the end."

"Saiful (Islam) too played a good hand, I think he made 20-odd. It was a game that if we hadn't won, we wouldn't have it to the semifinals," said Mashud.

As if on cue from that result, both sides have gone into divergent paths, and if the ICC decides a few months from now, it would be hard for the Dutch to make it into the big leagues.

Zuiderent, one of the important voices of the Dutch cricketing fraternity, said it was just a shame that the ICC are mulling the 10-team World Cup.

"It's a shame, we'd love to play in the WC, all countries want that. Bangladesh were in a position one day where they were fighting for a position in the World Cup. It's very disappointing if the ICC doesn't give countries like Ireland, Holland, Scotland, Afghanistan more opportunities to give against bigger teams."

"You are going to get disappointing results in the World Cup because we just don't get the exposure to play world class teams all throughout the year. The last game we played against a full member nation was the one against Bangladesh and before that, two years ago maybe," said Zuiderent, the Rotterdam resident.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Shoe bottom
- A billion years
- Apothecary measure
- Barber's concern
- Biz deg.
- Latvia's capital
- Stretches (out)
- Energized
- TV oldie
- Relaxes
- Your, biblically
- Jewel
- Astound
- Camping item for two
- D.C. VIP
- Purchase
- Fish eggs
- Movie snack
- Swear-word
- Actress Longoria
- Fellow
- All-wise one

DOWN

- Lean-to
- Reminiscent of wood, as some wines
- Home security system?
- Bad call?
- Devoid of content
- Do as you're told
- Siesta
- Saw things in the dark?
- Disencumbers
- Chills and fever
- Navigator's stack
- Chick's call
- That woman
- Bloke
- iPhone download
- Cattle call?
- Matter-horn, e.g.
- Play on words
- Mess up
- Ph. bk. data
- Ball prop
- Lingerie item
- Solidify
- "Meta-morphoses" poet
- Upper limit
- Evil
- Three-card scam
- Dalmatian's name, often
- Use a towel
- Pinnacle
- Vacillate
- Pelvic bones
- Opposite of 31-Across
- Carry
- Eventual aves

Solution time: 21 mins.

A	M	I	R	R	A	P	L	A	V	E
S	A	R	I	E	G	O	A	C	I	D
P	L	O	P	E	G	O	L	D	C	A
S	E	N	S	E	T	L	O	U	D	E
	A	T	T	U	E	N	E			
S	H	O	W	C	A	S	E	A	M	M
P	A	D	S	L	E	D	S	I	A	N
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T	E	S	T	C	A	S	E	A	V	O
I	S	L	E	M	A	R	D	E	L	E
S	O	Y	S	E	D	S	A	N	T	S

Yesterday's answer 1-11

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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CRYPTOQUIP

MQDLKFQ R NQQA YOQEDYYNRVJ
GB PLEJQ-PQLOQW MQQSF, R
LPCLBF FQQG SY CRVW KA
CRSX DXLEEQW DXLEW.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHENEVER OBAMA'S VICE PRESIDENT WAITS FOR THE PERFECT MOMENT TO ACT, IS HE BIDEN HIS TIME?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals P