

INDEPENDENCE CUP FOOTBALL

Sheikh Jamal, Abahani make winning start

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Abahani made winning start in the opening day of the Independence Cup football tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Sheikh Jamal came from behind to beat Farashganj SC 4-2 while Abahani edged Chittagong Mohammedan 2-1 to secure full points.

The tournament's opening match between Sheikh Jamal and Farashganj was inaugurated by Tanvir Mazharul Islam Tanna, manager of the Swadhin Bangla Football. The match marked the return of domestic football to the new-look BNS after 10 months following the ICC World Cup. However, the minimal presence of crowd doused the festive atmosphere somewhat.

The opening match was expected to be a one-way traffic between star-studded Sheikh Jamal and minnows Farashganj SC, who had earlier lost to Sheikh Jamal in the Bangladesh League this time it was a more even contest.

The Dhanmondi-based outfit, boosted with a new set of foreign players, found it hard at the start of the game as Sri Lankan coach Packer Ali sent on new signing Cameroonain Stephan Loga Bouga and Emmanuel Ayuk upfront instead of local striking duo Zahid Hasan Emily and Enamul Haq, who together scored only four goals in the Bangladesh League so far.

Sheikh Jamal were stunned in the seventh minute when Sohel Rana put Farashganj ahead with a nice lob over advancing goalkeeper Aminul Haq. The Dhanmondi powerhouse though bounced back in the 33rd minute when Ayuk headed in a well-judged cross from Atiqur Rahman Mishu.

Five minutes later, defender Sujan converted a spotkick to put Sheikh Jamal ahead after Nigerian recruit Femi Orunnimi was fouled by Vasani while Farashganj defender Mostafizur headed a Ayuk cross into his own net in the stoppage time of the first half as Sheikh Jamal went for the breather with

a comfortable 3-1 lead.

Sheikh Jamal survived a scare when defender Mishu made a goalline save three minutes into the second half. Eight minutes later, Khokon Das reduced the margin for Farashganj from a spotkick.

However, the minnows' hopes of upsetting the giants was vanquished two minutes later when Shakil Ahmed struck the fourth goal and made sure of a winning start for Sheikh Jamal.

In the latter match, Abahani were given in the on the half-hour mark with their hanaian striker Yusuf Aminu placing a Pranotosh Kumar backheel into the back of the net.

Chittagong Mohammedan bit back in the second half when striker Shahedul Alam poked the ball in from close range on the 76th minute.

But Abahani made sure of all three points right at the 90th minute when Ghanaian midfielder Twum Frank's shot deflected into the Mohammedan net giving them a close win.

INDEPENDENCE CUP
Hard job for journos

SPORTS REPORTER

The new press box at the Bangabandhu National Stadium has been turned into a VIP box leaving the sports journalists without proper arrangements to cover the Independence Cup football tournament that started at the Big Bowl yesterday.

The tables and chairs at the 200-capacity press box, which was set up during the ICC World Cup, have been removed and journalists had to make do with the old box, which has been decked up with rented tables by Bangladesh Football Federation.

To host the opening ceremony of the ICC World Cup, the BNS was renovated at the cost of Tk 35 crore and the old press box at the second floor was shifted up to the third floor, which was once used as a VIP box for football. The renovation also saw a 600-capacity two-storied VIP stand built adjacent to the VVIP box.

"Tables and chairs at the new press box were set up with the financial assistance from the Bangladesh Cricket Board and they removed those logistics after the completion of the opening ceremony of ICC World Cup," said NSC director (planning and development) Abdur Rahman yesterday.

He, however, said they would set up a new press box immediately to mitigate the sufferings of the journalists.

Sylhet survive

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discarded national keeper slammed ten boundaries in his 123-ball 80.

Apart from Sohag's four-wicket haul, Touhidul Islam, Arafat Salahuddin and Fazle Rabbi took a wicket each.

SYLHET-DHAKA

Table-toppers Dhaka would have to twist every single wicket from Sylhet after the latter survived an early scare and rode along to 188 for four.

Paceman Talha Jubair and Mohammad Sharif took early wickets to reduce Sylhet to 12 for three before Rajin wrested back control with an innings that showed immense patience. His unbeaten 101 came off 236 balls (14 boundaries) and spanned more than five hours. He added 132 for the unbroken fifth wicket partnership with Tasamul Haque, the right-handed batsman hitting an unbeaten 53 off 159 balls with the help of seven boundaries.

Talha bowled a fine opening spell but was cut short when his right toe split and began hurting.

BRIEFScores

RAJSHAHI: 253-7 in 90 overs (Dhiman 80 not out, Jahurul 46, Sohag 4-62).

SYLHET: 188-4 in 90 overs (Rajin 101 not out, Tasamul 53 not out; Talha 2-11).

Big win for Mumbai

AFP, New Delhi



Lasith Malinga grabbed five wickets in a superb exhibition of fast bowling to set up Mumbai Indians' eight-wicket win over Delhi Daredevils in an Indian Premier League match on Sunday.

The Sri Lankan, known for bowling accurate yorkers, finished with 5-13 off 3.4 overs as Sachin Tendulkar's Mumbai Indians dismissed Virender Sehwag's Delhi Daredevils for 95 in the Twenty20 tournament.

Naman Ojha (29) and Venugopal Rao (26) were the main contributors for Delhi, who could not even bat their full quota of 20 overs. Five batsmen failed to open their accounts in a dismal batting performance.

Mumbai did not face any difficulty in achieving a modest target, winning their opening match with more than three overs to spare at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground in New Delhi.

Tendulkar (46 not out), who added 68 for the unfinished third-wicket stand with Rohit Sharma (27 not out), ended the match when

he drove seamer Irfan Pathan through the covers for a four.

Malinga jolted Delhi with two wickets in three balls when he bowled Australian David Warner and local boy Unmukt Chand in his opening over to reduce the hosts to 11-2.

Delhi suffered a big setback when captain Sehwag was run out for 19 following Tendulkar's direct-hit at the striker's end.

Malinga then returned for his second spell to get two more wickets in one over, again in the space of three deliveries, when he bowled Rao and South African Morne Morkel.

The fast bowler ended the innings when he had last-man Ashok Dinda caught by New Zealander James Franklin at mid-off. India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who opened the attack, finished with 2-14 off three overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DELHI DAREDEVILS: 95 in 17.4 overs (Ojha 29, Rao 26; Malinga 5-13, Harbhajan 2-14)
MUMBAI INDIANS: 99-2 in 16.5 overs (Tendulkar 46 not out, Sharma 27 not out).

Result: Mumbai Indians won by eight wickets.



PHOTO: AFP

Mumbai Indians fast bowler Lasith Malinga (L) is ecstatic after claiming the scalp of Delhi Daredevils batsman David Warner during their IPL match at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

Smith and Shuvo's

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holed out in the deep in different interludes.

"I felt very good after Saturday's game," said Shuvo. "I continued to bowl tightly and I found the belief that I can be a good back-up for (Abdur) Razzak and Shakib (Al Hasan)."

"I am confident that if those two have a bad day, I can step up. I was also happy that I won the coach's praise. It is always important for the player that the coach believes in him," he said. Siddons, earlier yesterday, mentioned how impressed he was with the left-arm spinner.

"He has never let me down in the dozen games that he has played. When there is a right-hand batsman at the other end, he's dangerous," said Siddons.

The left-arm spinner also took the wicket of Smith, considered dangerous towards the end, for just one in the 46th over.

Smith went on to bowl seven overs of leg-spin and though slightly expensive given the state of the wicket, he did pick up the crucial wicket of Shakib in the 42nd over.

"I was quite happy with the way the ball was coming out of my hand yesterday, seven overs at least. Hopefully, I will get the results in the next couple of games," he said. Both have a pretty long way to go and given limited opportunities, they would need to play to their full potential to make a space for themselves.

Shuvo can take a leaf out of Shakib's book in playing the perfect understudy (Shakib played with Mohammad Rafique at the start of his career) and then take the lead.

Smith has the motivation to become something that Australia hasn't had since Richie Benaud and Bob Simpson - a genuine spinning all-rounder.

Delving into

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short which probably is a bit disappointing with only five wickets gone, no doubt," he said.

Another point of contention was the selection of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who admitted before the game of being not fit enough. Siddons said that the lack of pace clearly showed how he was faring, fitness-wise.

"When Mash is fit he bowls around 135 so that should tell it all," he said. "I think Mash survived yesterday on his skills, experience and big heart. So something's missing and I've talked to Mash about it yesterday and we need to have a selection meeting today. But Mash I thought besides the last two overs was very good," said Siddons, adding that he would be retained if he's still fit.



PHOTO: AFP

Red Bull-Renault driver Sebastian Vettel of Germany celebrates on the podium after his victory in the Malaysian Grand Prix in Sepang yesterday.

Kochi's debut made sour

AFP, Kochi

AB de Villiers smashed a quickfire 54 as the Royal Challengers Bangalore spoil the Indian Premier League debut of Kochi Tuskers Kerala with a six-wicket win on Saturday.

Chasing a stiff 162, Bangalore overhauled the target with eight balls to spare in the high-scoring thriller at the Nehru Stadium, hosting its first IPL match, with de Villiers 40-ball unbeaten half-century the pick of the batting.

Bangalore looked in trouble at 137-4 in the 18th over but de Villiers held his nerve and Asad Pathan hit three fours in a row to pull off a fine win for the team, which is owned by multi-millionaire liquor baron Vijay Mallya.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KOCHI TUSKERS KERALA: 161-5 in 20 overs (B McCullum 45, Laxman 36, Hodge 27)

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE: 162-4 in 18.4 overs (AB de Villiers 54 not out, Agarwal 33)

Result: Royal Challengers won by six-wicket.

Cult of the

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does it lie in the recesses of the mind of the one Aussie we have in our ranks? The paying public be damned, the rest of the cricket world was faced with the meta-physical question. With T20 with all its blatant vulgarity mesmerising cricket sensibilities just across the border, has Bangladesh done its bit to stab 50 over cricket in the back? The manner of cricket on display in the gloom of that Saturday afternoon was sadly the slow, slow twist of that knife.

Today, we need to turn around and stop being the prisoners of our own shadows. We need to play this game in the manner it should be played.

Malaysian GP Vettel's

AFP, Sepang



World champion Sebastian Vettel dominated the Malaysian Grand Prix on Sunday

with a brilliant drive which maintained his perfect start to the season.

The 23-year-old German steered his Red Bull car from pole position to the chequered flag to win ahead of McLaren's Jensen Button, the 2009 champion, and Nick Heidfeld who finished third for Renault.

"In the heat, we kept our heads cool," the jubilant Vettel told the Red Bull crew on his victory lap.

Vettel's second start-to-finish win in two outings this year came despite further problems with Red Bull's faulty Kinetic Energy Regeneration System (KERS) which gave his team-mate Mark Webber a nightmare start.

The Australian dropped from third to 10th before storming back to finish fourth ahead of the Ferrari of Brazilian Felipe Massa and two-time champion Fernando Alonso.

Alonso suffered damage to his car in a late charge for the podium when he collided with the rear of Briton Lewis Hamilton's

Wozniacki in final



AFP, Charleston

World number one Caroline Wozniacki reached the final of the WTA clay court tournament here Saturday with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Jelena Jankovic.

Top-seeded Wozniacki outlasted Jankovic in a match marked by grinding rallies and, in the first set, numerous breaks of serve.

Finally, Jankovic said, Wozniacki's ability to extend the rallies was just too much.

"She always makes you play an extra ball," the third-seeded Serbian said.

Wozniacki booked a clash with Russian Elena Vesnina, who defeated China's Peng Shuai 7-6, 6-3.

Wozniacki reached the Charleston final for the second time in three appearances.

She was runner-up here to Sabine Lisicki in 2009, but last year was forced out in the semifinals with an ankle injury.

"I'm just happy to be in the finals again," she said. "It's been a great week for me."

Wozniacki's progress hasn't all been smooth, however.

She needed two tiebreaks to subdue Barbora Zahlavova Strycova on Thursday

McLaren, suffering a broken front wing that required a pit stop.

Hamilton, the 2008 champion, looked set for a podium spot but finished seventh after a slow pit stop and a struggle with worn tyres in the closing stages.

"It was tough, one of those days for me," said the downcast Briton. "But I have to take it on the chin and get on with it."

Vettel has now won the season's first two races in Australia and Malaysia -- and five of the last six -- to take charge of the 19-stop championship and establish himself as the outstanding driver of the moment.

Sunday's victory was hard-won in the soaring heat and humidity of Sepang International Circuit, and after Vettel lost the KERS overdrive system mid-way through the 56-lap race.

"It was a lot closer this time than it was in the first race, but we are still just in front," Vettel said. "So we know we have to a lot of work now to stay there."

He said the loss of KERS after 29 laps was "not according to plan" but was relieved his equipment had worked at the start. "It would have been a completely different race otherwise," Vettel admitted.

and overcame a 4-2 deficit in the third set to beat Belgian Yanina Wickmayer in the quarterfinals.

The 20-year-old Dane said she knew she couldn't afford to give Jankovic any early advantage.

"I had to be aggressive and hit it deep because [Jankovic] is such a good fighter," she said.

On a windy stadium court, the first three games all went to deuce. Jankovic had built a 4-3 lead when Wozniacki won three straight games -- breaking twice -- to pocket the set.

Wozniacki stayed steady in the second and capitalized on Jankovic's errors.

"Some other players, you think it will be a winner," Jankovic said. "With her, it somehow comes back."

Vesnina had thought last month about skipping Charleston because of a nagging wrist injury.

Her father and coach, Sergey Vesnin, suggested a change in technique that alleviated the pain.

Her tenacity was rewarded as Vesnina, who hadn't been past the quarter-finals in five prior appearances, beat four seeded players on her way to her first singles final of the season.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Mates of ahs
- Civil War soldier
- Suitcases
- Voting coalition
- Right angle
- Modern-day coin
- Smell
- Highly rated
- Igloo dweller
- Bury
- One of Henry VIII's Catherines
- Pick a target
- Unfaithful one
- Exceptional
- Water (Fr.)
- Pastoral tribe of Kenya
- 2,000 pounds
- Bohemian
- Bicycle type

DOWN

- Reed instrument
- Bygone car maker
- Fisherman's item
- Scenario
- Alter a disc, maybe
- "Xanadu"
- Green minus yellow
- Rouse to action
- Mechanize
- Metric measure
- Take up like a sponge

17 Genetic abbr.

- Cripple
- View anew
- Afternoon affair
- Armed conflict
- Was cleverer than
- Cattle farm worker
- Shad product
- Conclusion
- Analogy phrase
- "Wheel!"
- Soap ingredient
- Dead heat
- Addict
- Conical tent (Var.)
- In due time
- Mysterious letter
- Elevator man
- Connect the —
- Poolroom stick

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CRYPTOQUIP

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W Q L G I R G J W L E F B C H N S
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Saturday's Cryptoquip: UNIVERSITY DEGREE
FOR STUDENTS BECOMING SPECIALISTS IN
CLIMBING PLANTS: MASTER OF VINE ARTS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals B