


Sk Russel top Group B

Mukti-Arambagh replay today

 Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Nor'wester played spoilsport to the Independence Cup football tournament yesterday, leaving one match postponed altogether and disrupting the other for more than 40 minutes.

The match between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra at the Bangabandhu National Stadium had turned into a place-deciding match as both teams were ensured automatic qualification after Chittagong Abahani, the other team of the group, declined to take part in the competition.

An 83rd minute strike from Sheikh Russel's Russian recruit Eduard Sakhnevich decided the match in favour of the Dhanmondi club. Sheikh Russel had also won the Bangladesh League match between the two teams by same margin.

The result meant Sheikh Russel topped Group B but were yet to learn who their quarterfinal opponents would be as Group C remained undecided after storm put paid to the match after 65 minutes at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium. Muktioddha Sangsad were leading Arambagh Krira Sangha 3-0, courtesy of a brace from Mohammad Roni and one from Kanchan, before the storm hit. The floodlights went off leaving the match suspended for more than 40 minutes. The match will be replayed at the same venue at 4:30pm today.

Back at the Bangabandhu, the first chance fell on the tenth minute to Mohammedan's Nigerian striker Emeka Christian who wriggled past a couple of defenders inside the penalty box before blasting it awfully wide of target.

Sheikh Russel's Effiong Duke found the back of the net on the 18th minute, but the goal didn't stand since he was clearly in an offside position when the ball came his way.

Mohammedan were forced to make a substitution soon

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Two Muktioddha and Abahani players are involved in an airborne tackle during their Independence Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. INSET: the dugouts at the stadium were blown away by the fierce storm that broke during the match, which caused a break in play, with the match eventually being completed.

PHOTOS: STAR

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Nayeem hits maiden ton

 Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A maiden first-class century by Iftekhar Nayeem gave Barisal a strong first day in their National Cricket League second phase game against Dhaka at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Barisal were well-placed at 292 for two when play was stopped at 4:15pm due to bad light with Nayeem and skipper Shahin Hossain involved in a massive third wicket stand.

Away in Rajshahi, Sylhet typically defended doggedly as they moved to 268-6 at stumps on the first day.

BARISAL-DHAKA

Coming into bat after experienced opener Nasiruddin Faruque fell for 13 in the eleventh over, Nayeem tackled the likes of Mahbubul Alam

Robin, Mohammad Sharif and Mosharraf Hossain quite well as alongside 24-year-old Bikash Sharma, he added 85 for the second wicket.

Sharma hit 63 off 127 balls with nine boundaries before being trapped leg-before by young left-arm spinner Tayebur Rahman.

Nayeem and Shaheen then batted out the rest of the day as they added 170 for the third wicket and are still unbeaten. Nayeem ended the day on an unbeaten 135 off 257 balls with the help of 21 boundaries and two sixes. He reached his century off 204 balls.

Shahin, the veteran wicketkeeper, was not out on 77 off 125 balls with the help of ten boundaries.

For Dhaka, Robin and Tayebur took a wicket each.

RAJSHAHI-SYLHET

At the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium, Rajin Saleh continued his good form making 93 in Sylhet's first innings.

After winning the toss and deciding to bat first, the visitors fell into early trouble as they were 89 for four soon after lunch.

But Rajin and Tasamul Haque, who made 56 off 102 balls, added 109 for the fifth wicket before Rajin added another 59 for the sixth with Ijaz Ahmed, who was unbeaten on 42 off 69 balls.

Rajin held the innings together during his 214-ball knock that spanned almost five hours during the opening day, the discarded national player hitting 14 boundaries.

For the hosts, Taijul Islam took three wickets while Shahjada Hossain, Mukhtar Ali and Farhad Hossain took a wicket each.

BRIEF SCORES

BARISAL: First innings 292-2 in 89.1 overs (Iftekhar 135 not out, Shahin 77 not out; Robin 1-32).

SYLHET: First innings 268-6 in 90 overs (Rajin 93, Tasamul 56; Taijul 3-68).

Country first? Or club?

AFP, New Delhi



A Sri Lanka cricket board demand that national players involved in the Indian Premier League (IPL) return to prepare for an England tour has reopened the long-running club versus country debate.

Eleven Sri Lankan cricketers are playing in the money-spinning IPL, including Tillakaratne Dilshan, who is likely to lead Sri Lanka in England with Kumar Sangakkara having resigned the captaincy after the World Cup.

Dilshan plays for the Royal Challengers Bangalore IPL franchise along with fast bowler Nuwan Pradeep; Sangakkara is the skipper of Deccan Chargers and Mahela Jayawardene leads new team Kochi Tuskers Kerala.

The players have been asked to return to Sri Lanka by May 5, more than three weeks before the IPL ends.

Asked if they would abandon their respective franchise teams just as the tournament approaches its climax, Sangakkara was non-committal.

"It is up to the Indian board and Sri Lanka Cricket to negotiate on the date of our return," said the wicketkeeper-batsman.

"What we as players can do is to abide by the decision of our board."

The lure of easy money on offer in the Twenty20 competition where one needs to play a maximum of 15 games over six weeks has always tested the loyalty of players.

Australian Michael Clarke pulled out of the IPL in 2008, saying he wanted to focus on managing his workload and national commitments.

West Indies' Chris Gayle caused a furore when he arrived in England only two days before the first Test at Lord's as he was busy playing in the 2009 edition of the IPL, hosted by South Africa.

"We are all different and it's about who can adapt as quickly as possible and be ready physically and mentally," Gayle said at the time.

For the current tournament, explosive West Indies batsman Kieron Pollard chose to play for Mumbai Indians, owned by India's billionaire business tycoon Mukesh Ambani, and miss a series of home one-dayers against Pakistan.

New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori said the players could be spared the conundrum if an IPL window was provided in the international calendar.

"Most of the players would like for a window for the IPL," said Vettori, captain of Bangalore franchise. "A majority of the players understand that the country comes first."

"We would like to find a balance between playing for the country and playing for our franchises, so that no one misses the IPL and no one misses international cricket."

Flamboyant England batsman Kevin Pietersen has always made known his love for the IPL and admitted feeling gutted at missing this year's tournament due to an injury.

"I'm bitterly disappointed," said the South African-born batsman.

Pietersen was the tournament's most expensive player two years ago when he was snapped up by Royal Challengers Bangalore for 1.55 million dollars and was due to earn around 650,000 dollars playing for Deccan Chargers this season.

SA A clinch series 1-0

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa A clinched the two-match unofficial test series 1-0 after the second four-dayer was called off due to rain in Pietermaritzburg yesterday.

Not a single ball was possible on the final day after South Africa had ended Day Three on 320 for three with Dean Elgar unbeaten on 169 off 252 balls including 20 boundaries and two sixes.

In the first match, the hosts beat the second string side led by Mohammad Ashraful by 272 runs in East London.

The four-day leg of the tour saw only one half-century for the tourists, Nadif Chowdhury hitting 70 in the second innings of the first game.

None of the Test players scored more than 100 runs in the first game, Nadif's 89 being the tour highest for the visitors.

The five-match ODI series now begins on April 19. Elias Sunny, Forhad Reza, Jahurul Islam, Dollar Mahmud and Shuvogotohom Chowdhury will join the squad for the one-dayers.

DIV III CRICKET

Title Rapid Foundation's

SPORTS REPORTER

Rapid Foundation became Third Division Cricket champions after their 14-run win over Gulshan Youth Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, Rapid Foundation banked on Mamun's unbeaten 103 as they made 250 for 8 in 50 overs.

In reply, Gulshan Youth were bundled out for 236 in 47.4 overs with Liton scoring 56 off 44 balls.

For Rapid Foundation, Hasan took four for 40.

Both teams have been promoted to next season's Second Division Cricket League.

Chennai make U-turn

PTI, Chennai



Defending champions Chennai Super Kings rode on a blistering unbeaten 83 from Michael Hussey as they thumped Royal Challengers Bangalore by 21 runs to bounce back after their last match defeat in the Indian Premier League here on Saturday.

Playing his first match of the tournament, Hussey smashed 11 fours and a six in his 56-ball knock to anchor Chennai to an imposing 183 for five after electing to bat at the MA Chaidambaram Stadium.

Chasing 184 for five for a win, Bangalore struggled throughout after losing three key wickets inside the first five overs before AB de Villiers made a last-ditch effort to snatch a win with a strokeful 64.

But the asking rate, which rose to nearly 15 by the 15th over, was too much to overcome and Bangalore could manage 162 for seven in 20 overs to slump to their third successive loss in the tournament.

De Villiers played some stunning shots, including a reverse-sweep six off Tim Southee, to make a match out of it before he was out in the penultimate over. His 64 off 44 balls contained five fours and two sixes.

Albie Morkel and Suraj Randiv took two wickets each for Bangalore while Tim Southee, Ravichandran Ashwin and Sadab Jakati scalped a wicket each.

Bangalore were at the backfoot as soon as

they started the chase with two batsmen returning to the hut for just 17 runs on the board by the second over itself.

Opener Tillakaratne Dilshan's poor run of form in the tournament continued as he fell for a first-ball duck, caught by Anirudha Srikanth at mid-wicket region off Morkel in the second ball of the chase.

One-down Asad Pathan looked like he was not concerned by the early jolt and hit two fours and six off Morkel as if taking revenge for dismissing Dilshan.

Pathan's brief aggression turned out to be flash in the pan as he was sent packing for 14 (off five balls) in the second over by Southee who bowled the batsman who played across while attempting a scoop shot.

Bangalore's misery was compounded as the other opener Mayank Agarwal (7) departed in the fifth over with Ashwin striking in his first over.

Agarwal inexplicably went for a big shot without reaching to the pitch of the ball and ended up skying one to Morkel. Bangalore were 31 for three in the fifth over.

Besides de Villiers, Virat Kohli was the other Bangalore batsman who took the Chennai bowlers to task before he was out while trying to accelerate the pace with the asking rate rising steeply.

Kohli, who made 71 in a losing cause in Bangalore's last match, gave special treatment to Jakati with two fours and a six in quick succession but it was the same bowler who had the last laugh.



PHOTO: AFP

Chennai Super Kings batsman Michael Hussey mishits an attempted pull against Royal Challengers Bangalore in Chepauk yesterday.