

Star SPORT

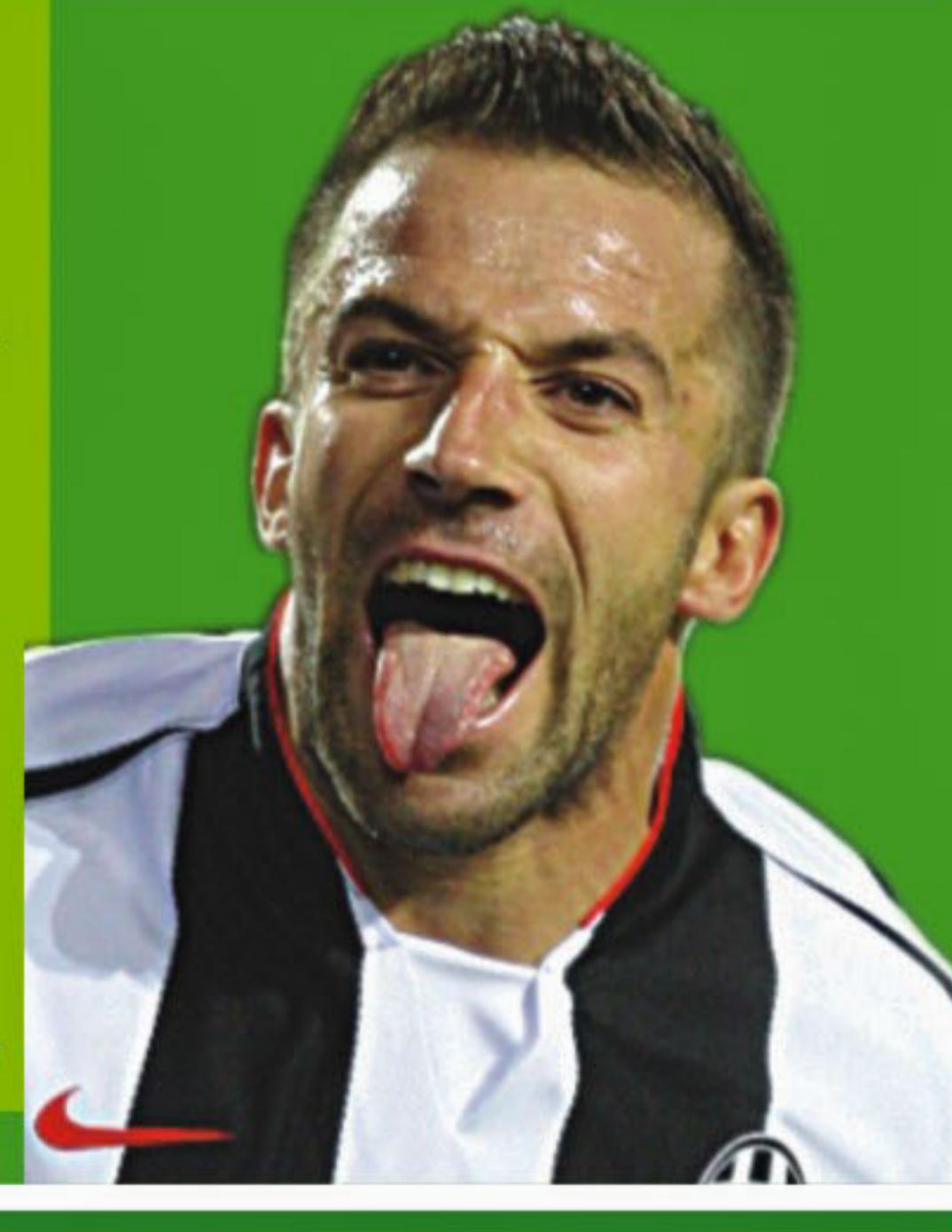
City

DHAKA SATURDAY MAY 7, 2011, E-MAIL: sports@thecitystar.net

One more year for Del Piero

Veteran forward Alessandro Del Piero on Thursday signed a one-year contract extension with Juventus keeping him at the club next season. Del Piero, 36, has been at Juve since 1993, winning five Serie A titles, one Italian Cup and the Champions League in 1996. Del Piero signed his contract in the new Juventus Stadium that will be the club's home from the beginning of next season.

—AP



Femi Orunni (2nd from L) of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club is under challenge from Muktijoddha Sangsad's James Moga (2nd from R) during their Grameenphone Bangladesh League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The match ended 1-1.

PHOTO: STAR

Muktis salvage a draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Grameenphone
Bangladesh League 2010

Leaders Muktijoddha Sangsad came from behind to play out a 1-1 draw against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club in their crucial Grameenphone Bangladesh League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian striker Femi Orunni put Sheikh Jamal ahead in the 61st minute only to see his strike cancelled by substitute winger Zahed Parvez Chowdhury in the 74th minute. That meant Muktijoddha Sangsad averted defeat at the hands of the star-studded Sheikh Jamal, who had earlier beaten the All Reds in their two meetings this season.

The third draw in 13 matches helped Muktijoddha Sangsad to maintain the lead with 32 points, three and four points clear of second-placed Abahani and third-placed Sheikh Jamal, who have 29 and 28 respectively from an equal 13 matches.

On a back of a 4-1 thrashing of Brothers Union in the previous match, Muktijoddha Sangsad appeared lacklustre and came into the game with a defensive strategy. They were under tremendous pressure from the outset but changed their strategy to play attacking football once they conceded the lead and levelled the margin after bringing three changes in the second half.

"I am not unhappy with the result. From my two-season experience in the professional football league, I can say one thing that when a team leads the table, the players show tendency of playing defensive and we can't come out from this practice today. However, they played attacking after going down and deservedly equalled the margin," said Muktijoddha coach Maruf Haque after the game.

Sheikh Jamal, who came into the game with a morale-boosting 3-1 win over holders Abahani, clearly had the upper hand in the first half yielding a number of good opportunities through both flanks but their Cameroonian striking duo of Stephan Loga Bouga and Sergio Fils Chico failed to cash in on some opportunities.

Even Muktijoddha Sangsad goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee looked nervous and made some elementary errors before defenders Dami Emmanuel and Rajani Kanta Barmon rescued their side at the cost of corners.

"We should have won the game as we created a lot of chances but there was a problem in finishing and it was a bad luck not to win the game. We could have gone close to the league leaders had we won the game and I think it has become a bit difficult to cover the four points," said Sheikh Jamal coach

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Warne to quit playing

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Australian bowling legend Shane Warne Friday said he will quit all professional cricket after the current Indian Premier League season, bringing the curtain down on an extraordinary career.

"Yes this is my last year playing IPL," Warne, 41, posted on his Twitter account. "I will miss the IPL but it's been fun for the last 4 seasons... I've had a great time -- but it's time to say goodbye to IPL."

"Thanks for kind words re my bowling -- but it's 100 percent my last four games of professional cricket unless we make finals."

The leg-spin great, widely considered one of the best bowlers ever, took 708 Test wickets before retiring from international cricket after winning the Ashes series in 2006-07.

In 2008 he withdrew from first-class cricket in Britain, where he had played for Hampshire, and only prolonged his on-field involvement with the game in the high-profile and lucrative IPL.

As skipper-cum-coach of the Rajasthan Royals franchise, he guided a squad of young and relatively unknown players to the title in the tournament's inaugural season in 2008.

The franchise's fortunes dipped in the next two editions but this year they appear well-placed to reach the knockout rounds, with five wins from 10 outings.

"A big thank you to everyone that has helped me -- supported me through all the ups and downs -- hope you have enjoyed watching me play," tweeted the flamboyant Warne.

He has played 52 games for Rajasthan so far, picking up 56 wickets at an average of 24.66.

"We have a spirit in the squad similar to IPL 1 -- it would be great to leave on a high -- I'm proud of the way we have

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No football under floodlights

SPORTS REPORTER

The matches of the ongoing Bangladesh League will now be held in daylight instead of using floodlights as the Bangladesh Football Federation received instructions from the Prime Minister's office.

The matches at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and Birsreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium will now start at 4:30pm instead of 5:00pm due to electricity crisis, said a BFF statement yesterday.

"There is instruction from the Prime Minister's office not to hold matches under floodlights. So, the matches will start at 4:30pm from tomorrow (Saturday)," said BFF member Fazlur Rahman Babul.

The football's governing body stuck to their decision to hold the match under floodlights despite repeated appeals from media before being forced by the PM's office.

Bijoy seals T20 series for Academy

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Anamul Haque Bijoy continued to impress with the bat as his rapid 60 helped GP-BCB National Cricket Academy to a seven-wicket win over South Africa Cricket Academy in the second and final Twenty20 game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The hosts clinched the series 2-0 after drawing the four-day match series 1-1 and losing the one-day series 1-2 earlier. Man-of-the-match Bijoy struck a 78-run second wicket stand with Myshukur Rahman as the home side reached 139 for three in 19 overs, chasing the South Africans' 136-7 in 20 overs.

Bijoy struck five boundaries and a six in his 49-ball effort where he made sure the innings kept its momentum. After Soumya Sarkar fell for thirteen, Bijoy and Myshukur played varied knocks, the latter hitting a boundary and six in his 40-ball 34 as he aided the No 3, who was finally dismissed

with his side needing 24 to win from 22 balls.

Bijoy had earlier made 169 in the second four-day game to set up a huge victory for the Academy side and yesterday too his fine half-century scripted an easy win. He began the season with a century of course and throughout, especially his stint with Abahani in the Premier League as well as his fine work behind the stumps for the Premier League side and Dhaka has impressed many.

Later, Nasir Hossain and Mominul Haque coolly reached the winning target with six balls to spare as the hosts completed a face-saving series win in the shortest format.

Paceman Hardus Viljoen and off-spinner Patrick Botha took a wicket each as the visitors would return home today with good memories after a somewhat successful tour.

Earlier, paceman Alauddin Babu again impressed with the new ball as he quickly removed Lenert van Wyk in the third over. He later had top-scorer Dominic Hendricks out

bowled for 37 and he also ran out dangerman Viljoen in the slog overs.

Hendricks made 37 off 33 balls with the help of two sixes while Christian Schoeman, the double-

centurion from the first four-dayer, struck five boundaries in his 23-ball 34.

Patrick Botha had given the visitors a fine start but he failed to take off from his 14-ball 20 as he was cleaned up

by Nasir's off-spin.

Leg-spinner Noor Hossain Munna also picked up two wickets which included South African Cricket Academy skipper

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GP-BCB National Cricket Academy players rejoice after they clinched the two-match Twenty20 series against South Africa Cricket Academy at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangalore crush Punjab Gayle makes history

AFP, Bangalore

DLFA
INDIAN
PREMIER
LEAGUE

Chris Gayle became the first batsman to hit two centuries in the Indian Premier League when he smashed a 49-ball 107 in Royal Challengers Bangalore's 85-run win over Kings XI Punjab on Friday.

The West Indies opener, who scored an unbeaten hundred against Kolkata Knight Riders last month, cracked nine sixes and 10 fours in a superb display of power-hitting to help Bangalore post a challenging 205-6.

Bangalore, with Gayle taking 3-21 with his off-spinners, then restricted Punjab to 120-9 for their fifth win in nine matches of the Twenty20 tournament. Seamer Sreenath Aravind took 4-14.

Punjab could never recover after losing four wickets, including those of hard-hitting Australians Adam Gilchrist and Shaun Marsh, for 34 runs in the opening six overs.

South African Ryan McLaren (28), Paul Valthathy (21) and Dinesh Karthik (20) were

the main scorers in Punjab's dismal batting performance.

Mumbai currently lead the 10-team league table with 14 points, followed by Kolkata (12), Chennai (12), Bangalore (11), Rajasthan (11), Kochi (10), Delhi (eight), Deccan (six), Punjab (six) and Pune (four).

Gayle went for big shots early in his innings, hitting Australian paceman Ryan Harris for two sixes in an over. His best came in the eighth over when he smashed two sixes and as many fours off seamer Praveen Kumar.

The opener, who raced to his half-century off just 28 balls, dominated a 111-run stand for the second wicket with Virat Kohli (27) before falling in the 15th over, caught at deep mid-wicket off leg-spinner Piyush Chawla.

South African AB de Villiers then hit an unbeaten 27 off 14 balls to help Bangalore cross the 200-mark.

Harris was the most successful bowler with 3-38, including two wickets off successive balls, while Chawla finished with 2-37.

Aus preferred three Tests

Cricket

CRICINFO

Australian cricket administrators met the formal announcement of a truncated Test series against South Africa by saying they would have preferred to play three matches rather than two. The slim provision for five-day matches has been explained as the by-product of a distended schedule, which is swollen still further by the presence of the Twenty20 Champions League. Also of note is the series' status as a return favour for South Africa's presence in Australia for the prime Boxing Day and New Year's Tests in Melbourne and Sydney over several tours, which kept them overseas at peak time in their own country.

"We would prefer to play three Tests and the discussion we're having with South Africa is around playing four the next time we go there," A Cricket Australia spokesman told ESPNcricinfo. "Bear in mind this is two bonus Test matches -- this particular visit to South Africa is over and above what the FTP

originally contemplated, and it is part of negotiation we had with them about them playing the Boxing Day Test here in Australia the last two times they played.

"We, as part of the negotiation, agreed to play cricket in South Africa so they could have the Australian team as a draw-card for their home market."

The Champions League will once again sit uneasily in between Australia's international commitments, this time in Sri Lanka and South Africa, but CA remains bullish about the need for international players to be capable of adapting. The spectre of Michael Hussey and Doug Bollinger, and their horrendous preparation for last year's series in India, still hangs over the team.

"Michael Hussey and us agreed to disagree about that particular timing last summer, but if you talk to cricketers around Australia, none of them have a sense that their preparation is or has been compromised by our approach to the Ashes last summer," the spokesman said. "It is a fact of life the world has got three formats and is very different from when all Australia did

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SHANE WARNE