



Abahani striker Twum Frank (R) controls the ball as Brothers Union defender Samuel Jankasa tries to intercept during their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani drop points again

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani slumped again in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League when Brothers Union held the Sky Blues to a 1-1 draw in their fourth match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Lucky Paul put Abahani ahead in the first half only to see his strike cancelled out by Adams Samuel Jankasa from a spot kick ten minutes from time. The second successive draw meant Abahani stayed at the joint second position along with Sheikh Russel KC with eight points from four matches, four points behind leaders Mukhtijodha Sangsad KC.

On the back of a 1-1 draw against archrivals Mohammedan SC in the previous match, Abahani started the game promisingly against Brothers but they gradually lost their control against a spirited side who came from behind

to snatch a valuable point from arguably the better side.

The Sky Blues dominated the initial proceeding but failed to keep up the tempo and were totally beaten in every department in the second half.

"The boys played very badly today and it was not technical or tactical but rather a mental problem which I can't change," said Abahani's Iranian coach Ali Akbar.

After missing a gilt-edged opportunity early on, Lucky Paul made amends by putting Abahani ahead in the 26th minute as right-back Nasirul Islam brilliantly pushed a Brothers defender's feeble clearance from Auwdu Ibrahim's free-kick to Paul. The Nigerian pulled off a clinical finish with his left-foot past Uttam Barua.

After taking the lead, everything started to go wrong for Abahani as they trudged along purposelessly. Their play was so uninspiring that Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu admitted he never saw the Sky Blues put up a poorer

show at this level.

Jamal Hossain was the inspiration for Brothers and the diminutive midfielder unsettled the Abahani backline several times before Brothers were awarded a penalty when Abahani captain Samad Yussif brought down Olaleken Joshua inside the box in the 81st minute. Jankasa converted from the spot to restore the margin.

Despite putting on a poor show, Abahani could have won the game had Paul availed an 89th minute opportunity. But his angular effort from the edge of the box was well-held by Uttam Barua on his second effort to confirm Brothers' second point in fourth match.

"A draw against Abahani is a good result but I would have been more happy had we secured the full three points against them," said Brothers' Indian coach Syed Naeemuddin adding that the united approach was the key behind playing better football against Abahani.

Drama over

FROM PAGE 16
BPL governing council chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain however confirmed to the media that it will be Chittagong who will play the semifinals.

"According to the rule Rajshahi, Khulna, Dhaka and Chittagong are through," he said.

Asked why Barisal were told that they have qualified if that was the rule, Ashraf said the BPL governing council never informed Barisal officially about it. "We are not supposed to tell a team if they have qualified or not. The rule is there for everyone to read," he said.

Meanwhile, a large group of Pakistani cricketers will arrive from Dubai this morning for the semi-finals. While Shahid Afridi and Saeed Ajmal are slated to appear for Dhaka Gladiators, hard-hitting opener Awais Zia will join the senior pros in the same team. Chittagong will have Umar Akmal and Wahab Riaz while Mohammad Hafeez is set to play for Khulna Royal Bengals.

Except Afridi and Ajmal, none of the others were on the players' auction list.

Stars sign

FROM PAGE 16
Star striker Jimmy was also upbeat about Mohammedan's bright prospects this time but he expressed a bit of doubt about the motivation of the players.

"Most of the players were out of action for a long time and few of them even got engaged in different professions. So it will be tough for them to concentrate hundred percent on the game but we will try our level best to pay back the club's services," said Jimmy.

Usha Krira Chakra also completed their registration formalities as they signed up nine players, most of whom are from Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protishthan (BKSP). On the second day of the transfer, 73 players completed their registration formalities.



Master chef Tommy Miah (R) and Madrid Cricket Club official David Striton during a press conference at Tommy Miah's Hospitality Management Institute in Shyamoli yesterday.

Charity for Tommy Miah's academy

SPORTS REPORTER

Madrid Cricket Club will take two young cricketers from Sylhet to the fifth charity T20 tournament at La Manga Club in the Spanish capital in April.

Apart from taking the two players, all proceeds from the competition will go to the Tommy Miah Cricket Academy that is being established in Moulvibazar by the renowned chef. Tommy Miah will also host a charity dinner during the three-day event to raise funds for the academy.

This was revealed at a press conference

held yesterday at the Tommy Miah's Hospitality Management Institute in Shyamoli.

The phase-by-phase work will be completed in two years as the renowned chef serves up a cricketing institute in his home district. The academy will have the usual outdoor pitches, indoor facilities, schools, hostels and an entertainment centre where there will be activities all year round. Tommy Miah expects the academy to be running from the end of this year or early 2013.

Smith blitz

FROM PAGE 16
Hossain and Nasir Hossain picked up two wickets each while Shafiqul Islam and Smith picked one each for Khulna.

SCORES IN BRIEF
KHULNA: 186 for two (Smith 103 not out, Gibbs 41; Shakib 21 not out; Styris 1-21.)
SYLHET: 117 all out in 16 overs (Tanvir 26 not out, Trego 23; Razzak 2-8, Nasir, 2-15, Shahadat 2-21)
Result: Khulna won by 69 runs
Man-of-the-match: Dwayne Smith

Clarke best Aussie

FROM PAGE 16
sweep of India around the turn of the year.

In addition to his leadership of a team apparently in crisis when he took over in the wake of a 3-1 home Ashes defeat, Clarke has performed brilliantly with the bat. He has scored five centuries in 11 Tests since becoming skipper, hitting 1,167 runs at an average of 68.65 with his high score of 329 not out coming against the Indians in the second Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground

last month. Clarke succeeds Test vice-captain Shane Watson as the holder of the award after the all rounder, who returned from injury to the international fold on Sunday, won it back-to-back in 2010 and 2011.

Spin-bowling great Shane Warne, who retired from international cricket five years ago, also became the 35th player to be inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame at the ceremony in Melbourne's Crown Casino.

Aussie quick Clark quits

AFP, Sydney

Australian pace bowler Stuart Clark said on Monday he was retiring from first-class cricket after 24 Tests and 39 one-day internationals.

The 36-year-old claimed 94 Test wickets at 23.86, including 20 wickets in his first series against South Africa in 2006 and nine wickets in his Test debut in Cape Town.

He also captured 53 ODI wickets at an average of 27.86.

This season Clark took on the role of general manager of the Sydney Sixers in Australia's Twenty20 Big Bash League with the Sixers lifting the trophy in his first year in charge.

"The time is now right to step away from the playing side and concentrate on my efforts with the Sydney Sixers," Clark said.

Levi joins Mumbai?

AFP, Johannesburg

South Africa Twenty20 batting sensation Richard Levi will play for Mumbai Indians in the 2012 Indian Premier League (IPL), according to reports Monday.

Levi, who scored the fastest T20 international century last Sunday in New Zealand, told national news agency Sapa he was looking forward to sharing a dressing room with childhood hero Sachin Tendulkar.

The opener from the Cape Town-based Cobras franchise replaces Australian Andrew Symonds, who cited family reasons for his retirement from professional cricket this month.

Levi created T20 history eight days ago with an unbeaten 117 against New Zealand in Hamilton -- his 45-ball century was the fastest in an international and included a record 13 sixes.

The total of the 24-year-old South African also equalled the highest scored in a T20 international, matching the mark set by Chris Gayle of the West Indies against South Africa five years ago.

Sami warms

FROM PAGE 16
will miss the services of Kieron Pollard who has to report to his cricket board for a national camp.

SCORES IN BRIEF
DHAKA: 116 all out in 18.2 overs (Stevens 28, Nazimuddin 26; Sami 5-6, Samuels 2-35).
RAJSHAH: 120-7 in 19.3 overs (Mushfiq 40 not out, Sabbir 27; Naved 2-19, Mashrafe 2-21).
Result: Rajshahi won by 3 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Mohammad Sami.

Sachin's last chance

India need to win with bonus point

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene says he is wary of what is shaping up to be Sachin Tendulkar's final chance in Australia to score his elusive 100th international century for India.

Tuesday's tri-series one-day international in Hobart will be the Indian batting great's last innings in Australia unless his team can find a way to bring off a bonus-point victory over Sri Lanka to stay alive for the series finals.

To date it has been a forgettable tour for the Indians, who lost all four Tests to Australia and have won just two of their seven matches in the tri-series.

The pressure is on the "Little Master" to produce one last piece of brilliance to get the World Cup champions the bonus-point victory over Sri Lanka they need for a chance

to stay in the tournament.

Tendulkar has been unable all tour to achieve his 100th international century. But his ability is not being discounted by Sri Lanka, who would also need to lose their last game against Australia in Melbourne on Friday to miss the finals.

"You never know," Jayawardene told reporters in Hobart on Monday. "I've played against him on so many occasions, he's produced some brilliant individual performances."

"They're a good side so you have to expect something different from them I'm sure because they need a big win."

India slipped into Hobart on Monday following an 87-run loss to Australia in Sydney on Sunday and left the talking about Tuesday's crucial match to their Sri Lankan opponents.

"I have to feel for them. It's been a long tour, especially when you're not winning it becomes a much longer tour," Jayawardene said.

David's India thoughts

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia opener David Warner said on Monday he sensed "desperation" among the Indian visitors as they try to salvage something from their dismal down under tour.

Warner, who helped Australia secure their place in the tri-series ODI finals following a massive win over India on Sunday, said he was surprised by how poorly the tourists had been given the talent and experience at their disposal.

The 25-year-old batsman was man-of-the-match after top-scoring with 68 as Australia romped to a bonus-point 87-run win over India in Sydney.

The defeat compounded a wretched run by India, who were hammered 4-0 in the Test series against Australia and have won just two of seven tri-series games.

India must claim a bonus-point (five point) win over Sri Lanka in Hobart on Tuesday and hope the Sri Lankans lose to Australia in Melbourne on Friday to have any hope of playing in the best-of-three match finals series.

Warner said India captain Mahendra

Singh Dhoni had voiced disappointment at two controversial umpiring decisions that went against his side on Sunday, revealing the urgency of his desire to arrest their slump.

"We can see the desperation from the Indians this summer... they're trying to get something out of it," Warner told reporters.

"They got beat 4-0 in the Test series and now they're not doing too well in the one-dayers so they're trying to appeal for anything at the moment."

Warner said he was surprised that India's world class line-up had struggled during the tour, particularly with the bat.

India were again skittled out cheaply on Sunday -- for 165 off 39.3 overs in reply to Australia's 252 for nine.

But Warner backed them to bounce back sooner or later.

"They're a very, very good team and there's some serious talent in the side," he said.

"They definitely haven't lost interest, they're always out there for a contest. They'll find their form eventually, after this series."

Warner said the Indian batsmen were letting little things affect them, such as people moving behind the sightscreen.

"Little things are playing on their minds... so it's obviously affecting their game."

Mesmerising Melzer

Tennis

AP, Memphis

Jurgen Melzer is playing so well again that not even a broken toe could slow him down.

The Austrian capped his amazing run through the Regions Morgan Keegan Championships by beating Milos Raonic of Canada 7-5, 7-6 (4) on Sunday for his fourth career title and first since 2010.

"If anybody would've said last Friday, especially in the morning after seeing the doctor, that I'll be holding the trophy next Sunday, I would've called him a fool," Melzer said. "But sometimes, you know, life plays games like that. Maybe it took a little bit of the pressure off in the beginning."

Melzer ran over and hugged his coach, Joakim Nyström, in the front row after finishing off the victory.

Back troubles knocked Melzer from eighth in the world last spring to 38th coming into Memphis, but he played well in helping Austria beat Russia in Davis Cup two weeks ago. Then he broke his right big toe when he caught his foot in a hotel bedspread

in the dark, and a doctor found the break on an X-ray on Feb. 17. Melzer returned to the court for practice two days later and survived three-set tiebreakers in his first two rounds to advance in Memphis.

Melzer showed no signs of any discomfort as he ousted top-seeded John Isner in the quarterfinals and No. 3 seed Radek Stepanek in the semifinals before downing the fourth-seeded Raonic, who was trying to win his third title this year and second in two weeks.

"If I play like this to win a tournament, I'll break a toe any day," Melzer said.

The 30-year-old picked up the 277,915-dollar winner's check following his first championship since taking the title in his hometown of Vienna in 2010. He called it a relief to win again, especially an event with 500 ranking points.

"After a tough season last year, it's obviously something nice," Melzer said.

Melzer countered the power of the 21-year-old Raonic by placing his shots well with many going to the Canadian's backhand. Melzer closed out the 97-minute match when Raonic put a backhand into the net to end a second-set tiebreaker.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
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33 SUV's milieu, maybe

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8 Uses Brillo
9 Troubles
10 Laugh-a-minute type
11 Agile
17 Staff leader?
19 Office-holders
22 Frequently

36 Ballroom favorite
38 Actress/author
39 Rowing need
40 Part of Hispaniola
43 Eccentric
47 In the wings
49 Boleyn or Bancroft
50 El —, Texas
51 Sports-caster
52 Little lice
53 Press
54 Chef

23 Egg-yung link
24 Sprite
25 Ump
26 Anti-
27 Doctrine
28 Society new-comer
29 Greek vowel
31 Chesapeake, for one
34 Betrays
35 Leave out
36 U.K. fliers
37 Debonair
39 "The Three Faces —"
40 Kachina wor-shipper
41 Somewhere out there
42 In that case
43 Shrek, for one
44 Okla-homa city
45 Oppositionist
46 Exam
48 Help

Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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E V S G R R P N V F N Q S H Z B D
P S B C C X L R Z H R H V F D N C K N Q.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BREAKFAST CEREAL CONSISTING OF ENRICHED BITS OF SUGAR-COATED FLATFISH: FROSTED FLUKES.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals O