

Rooney's horse finishes last

Wayne Rooney's successes on the soccer field have yet to transfer to the race course.

The Manchester United striker endured a miserable debut as a racehorse owner when his colt finished last in its first race on Wednesday. Two-year-old Pippy was always near the rear after a slow start and he never got into the race, which was run on rain-softened ground at Chester in northwest England.

The horse, ridden Wednesday by Richard Kinscote, is jointly owned by Rooney and wife Coleen, who both were on hand to watch the Manor House Stables Lily Agnes

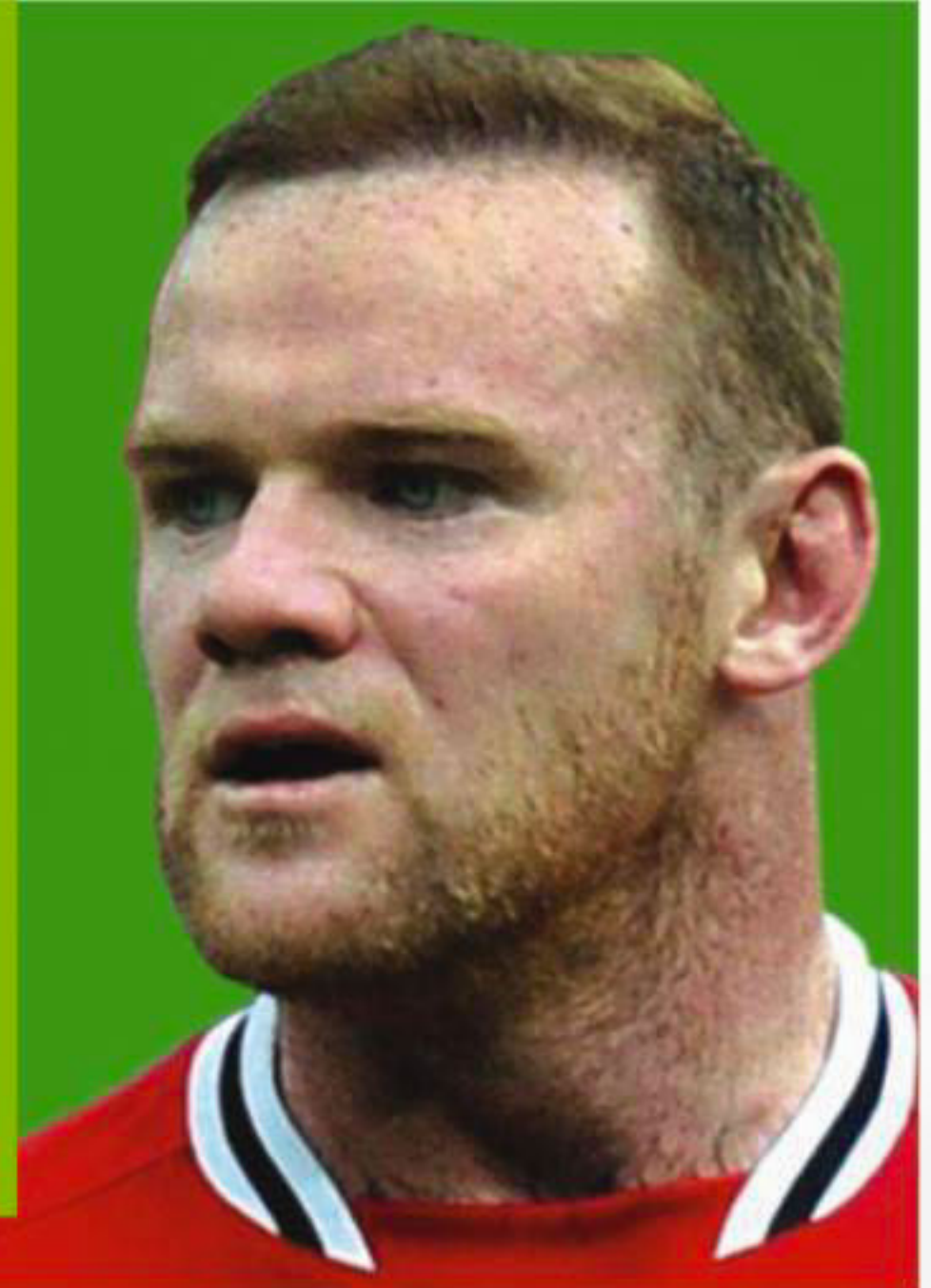


PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Siddikur Rahman celebrates after putting on the 18th hole at the Kurmitola Golf Club to win the bti International Open Championship yesterday.

U-15 squad named for 3-dayer

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 14-member Under-15 team for the first three-day match against the visiting Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) Under-15 side.

The match starts today at the BKSP.

U-15 TEAM

Omar Faruk, Aryan Fahim, Asadur Rahman, Kazi Riazul Islam, Aminul Islam, Jalal Uddin, Samir Md. Kutubuddin, Mohammad Sagor, Kazi Anik, Alif Akhter, Monirul Islam, Mohammad Sentu, Mejbaur Rahman and Rabbi Hasan.

GYC tennis underway

SPORTS REPORTER

The GYC Northern Hatcheries Premier Tennis tournament got underway yesterday at the Gulshan Youth Club.

Dhaka City Corporation chief executive officer Nazrul Islam declared the tournament open, releasing balloons while power, energy and mineral resources secretary Mezbah Uddin and GYC president Rafez Alam Chodhury were among others present. Gulshan Youth Club (blue) and Engineers' Recreation Centre played the opening game.

Nat'l v'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Titans Club, Bangladesh Police and Satkhira won their respective men's matches in the Walton National Volleyball Championship at the Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

Titans defeated Chittagong 3-0, Police defeated Khulna and Chittagong by identical 3-0 margins and Satkhira beat Narail 3-1 in the men's section while Rajbari women's team registered a straight 3-0 win over Chittagong women's team.

Siddikur blazes to title

SPORTS REPORTER



It was Siddikur all the way. The 27-year almost effortlessly took the bti International Golf Championship title as he amassed an aggregate of 13-under-par 275 while his nearest competitors (three of them tied for second place), finished with a 2-under-par 286. As the venerated golfer putted his last hole, fittingly the last one to complete the event, a loud cheer went up from the fans and guests who had congregated for this last day of the event.

"I'm excited and happy to win the tournament. I thank Kurmitola Golf Club, the sponsors bti and others concerned for the event which can be a great advert for our golf," said the retiring Siddikur.

Siddikur, who had problems mastering this course in the past, as he fell behind to Shakhawat Hossain Sohel in the bti Open last year, and Jamal Mollah more recently in the PGTI Bangladesh Open in January, showcased his

improved game as he kept surging throughout the four days.

The one-time Asian Tour winner, who is expected to leave for the United Kingdom to participate in the US Open qualifying, carded six birdies against one bogey to enjoy his best day of the event.

Siddikur attributed this success to his training in the United States recently, which according to him has made him overcome some of his shortcomings.

As Siddikur surged towards a definite victory, the race for second place proved an exciting one and in the end it was shared by Sri Lanka's Mithun Perera, and Bangladesh's Jakiruzzaman and Jibon Ali, with aggregates of 2-under-par 286.

Mithun, who is currently ranked 22nd in the Asian circuit, crept up with a 2-under-par last round to climb to second. The 25-year old from Colombo, who is a big fan of Siddikur, said this tournament -- although a small-budget one -- gives players like him an opportunity to play interna-

tional level golf in different circuits.

Liton Howlader finished fifth (one-under-par 287), amateur golfer Dulal Hossain in sixth (par 288), Shakhawat Hossain Sohel, Jamal Mollah and bti's amateur golfer Mohammad Nazim on joint seventh (one-over-par 289) and India's Raju Ali Mollah in tenth (3-over-par 291).

Siddikur got a cheque of Tk 3.03 lakh while the three joint-second placed winners got Tk 1.17 lakh each.

Chief guest major general Matiur Rahman handed over the trophy while managing director of sponsors Building Technology & Ideas Ltd. FR Khan handed over the cheque of Tk 303,750 to the title winner Siddikur.

The managing director of bti also announced that they would organise such international tournaments regularly from now on.

BPGA president appreciated the role of bti and the media in promoting golf in Bangladesh. He also expected the participation of big corporate houses to sponsor professional golf in the country.

Nasir going to Canada finally

SPORTS REPORTER

Nasir Hossain was finally able to fly last night for Canada to play a T20 exhibition match between Asia XI and Rest of the World XI to be held in Toronto on May 12.

The Bangladesh all-rounder finally got the Visa on special arrangement yesterday. Nasir was originally scheduled to fly to Canada on May 8 but he did not get the visa in time.

"Finally, I got the visa today. I'm really happy that I got the visa to travel to Canada," said excited Nasir yesterday.

Cricket Canada has arranged the match to raise funds for the development of the sport in the country and they confirmed Nasir for the Asia XI for the amount of 5000 Canadian dollars.

Pybus arrives for interview

Newell, Greatbatch also on Tigers coaches' shortlist



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has narrowed down the national team head coach's shortlist to three candidates, and is likely to make their choice very shortly as one of the front-runners arrived here last night. Richard Pybus, the English coach who is based in South Africa, is in the capital for an interview with the BCB directors over the weekend.

Despite repeated attempts to unearth the accurate information regarding Pybus's arrival, the BCB source could not confirm whether he arrived last night or is to arrive this morning. Apart from Pybus, the BCB will also be speaking to Englishman Mick Newell and former New Zealand batsman Mark Greatbatch, rounding off the three-man list.

Since Pybus is the first to arrive, reaching the capital from Cape Town this morning, he has the best chance among the three. The Daily Star Sport has learned from a well-placed source. Newell's lack of international exposure and Greatbatch's past record might work against them while Pybus too hasn't coached an international side since 2003.

The BCB will sit with Pybus as the first of the candidates and are likely to invite Newell and Greatbatch soon after. This is a slight departure from the last time a coach was appointed, as Stuart Law got the post without an interview.

BCB media committee chairman Jalal Yunus said, "We have made a shortlist of three to four candidates. We will be calling them shortly for interviews and if we like the coach, we will finalise him. We will only decide after that [the interviews]."

Due to Bangladesh's excellent Asia Cup showing, several big name coaches applied for the role soon after Stuart Law made official his resignation on April 16. It was a different sort of search for the cricket board who were met with an unprecedented number of applicants who were willing to take on the role. It made the job easier as they cast their net far and wide, not particularly high-profile ex-cricketers but also high-profile coaches.

Pybus has had a prolific coaching career, having taken up the line of work in his mid-twenties. He was poached by Pakistan for their 1999 World Cup campaign while at Border, before returning to the South African provincial side. He returned to Pakistan for the 2003 World Cup and later had stints in Titans and Cape Cobras (South Africa) and Middlesex (England). He was with the Cobras until March this year; he was also linked to the South Africa job last year, with the position eventually going to Gary Kirsten.

Newell, the Nottinghamshire director of cricket, also remains in the picture after emerging as the first candidate last week. It was learned that the BCB are still in talks with him.

The interesting pick among the trio is obviously Greatbatch who was an above-average opener for the Kiwis but has had a mixed record when it comes to coaching after retiring in 1998. He had stints at home and at Warwickshire on the English county scene and was also the New Zealand coach when they were mauled 4-0 by Bangladesh in 2010.



RICHARD PYBUS

Farashganj stun Muktijoddha

SPORTS REPORTER



The second leg of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League got off to a stunning start as relegation-threatened Farashganj SC beat title-contenders Muktijoddha Sangsad 1-0, thanks to an 83rd minute strike from their new Nigerian recruit Henry Chindo.

The start of the second leg drew in a lot of attention, following the suspicious Brothers-Rahmatganj match last month, but both matches played yesterday produced unexpected yet fair results. The win for Farashganj eased their relegation fears as they jumped to seventh while Muktijoddha potentially lost some ground on leaders Abahani who have a match in hand. The other match played at the Tangail Stadium, ended 1-1 as defending champions Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club were held by hosts Team BJMC.

Guinean hitman Ismael Bangura put BJMC ahead in the 13th minute for his third strike of the league but in-form Nigerian striker Kester Akon cancelled that later in the

first half for his seventh goal of the league.

BJMC now have 17 points from 11 outings, four behind second-placed Muktijoddha Sangsad while Sheikh Jamal leapfrogged to the sixth position with 12 points from 11 matches. Farashganj have 11 points.

Farashganj sensibly adopted a counter-attacking approach against a side they lost to 2-0 in the first-leg and it proved vital in the course of the match.

Shafiqul Islam Manik drafted in Mohammedan-released Basden Wilcox along with fellow Nigerian Sunday Chizoba, but both of them were unimpressive and hardly penetrated the Farashganj backline.

National striker Mithun Chowdhury also found a place in the starting eleven, in absence of injured Zahid Hasan Emily but the second highest scorer of the last league, failed to capitalise on the opportunity he was given after a long time.

Farashganj launched three sharp attacks in the first half but Congolese Siyo Zunapio squandered two of those opportunities and a third one came off the woodwork on the 18th minute.



Farashganj SC players join in a victory parade after their win against Muktijoddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR