

Star SPORT

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'Spain won't take the biscuit'

Spanish defender Raul Albiol said on Saturday the defending champions would be looking to beat Croatia in their final Euro 2012 Group C game on Monday. There have been fears expressed in Italy that with both the Spanish and Croats both on four points and the Italians on two the former two sides will ease up if they are drawing 2-2 in their game - it would make an Italian win over pointless Ireland irrelevant. However, Albiol sought to assuage Italian fears as expressed in the Italian media they would fall victims to a "biscotto", or biscuit in English.



SIDDIKUR eyes second Asian Tour title

Golf

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman closed in on his second ever Asian Tour victory as he stayed joint top of the leaderboard of the Queen's Cup on Saturday.

The 27-year old golfer, who had his first career top-10 in Samui, stayed in contention with an even par third round that put him on overall four-under-par 209 to share the lead with three others going into the final day.

The 2010 Brunei Open winner converted two crucial birdies on the 13th and 18th holes in the Santiburi Samui Country Club to cancel out two bogeys in the third round, putting himself in line for the first prize of the 300,000-dollar Asian Tour event.

Siddikur, who had built on a one-under-par first round with a three-under-par second, was a little disappointed with his putting in the third.

"Everything was good except for my putting. Didn't putt well but I'm grateful I did well on the back nine. On 13, I birdied from six feet and about seven feet on the last hole. But the front nine, I couldn't putt," said the golfer from Munshigonj as he spoke to Asiantour.com after the day's play.

"I saw Thaworn and the other guys missed their shots. I thought I had a good opportunity to get a birdie on the last. I'll just play my own game and don't need to do anything exceptional. Since the first day, I'm confident with my game," said Siddikur, who is currently eighth on the Order of Merit.

However, Siddikur is expected to face stiff challenge from the two local stars Thaworn Wiratchant, Varut Chomchalam and Filipino teenager Miguel Tabuena, all of whom are tied for the lead.

In fact, Wiratchant could have gotten a solo lead had he not dropped four shots over his last five holes to allow the others to catch up to him.

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PHOTO: ASIANTOUR.COM

Siddikur Rahman is a picture of concentration as he putts on the green of the Santiburi Samui Country Club in Thailand on the third day of the Queen's Cup yesterday.

Czech, Greece thru

AFF, Wroclaw



The Czech Republic and Greece became the first two teams through to the Euro 2012 quarterfinals, beating respective opponents Poland and Russia in their final group matches yesterday.

At the Municipal Stadium in Wroclaw, co-hosts Poland crashed out as they lost 1-0 to the Czech Republic here on Saturday with their opponents winning Group A.

Petr Jiracek scored the only goal of the game 18 minutes from time as the Czechs joined Greece - the 2004 champions - in the quarter-finals.

Few would have predicted such an outcome before the group games began and even fewer who saw the first halves here and

in Warsaw.

Poland were totally dominant in the opening period but seemed to have left it all on the pitch in that first 45 minutes and they were second best after the restart.

But it was a mistake that cost them as Rafal Murawski tried to drive forward from midfield and lost the ball with little cover behind him.

It means Poland have never reached the knock-out stages of the Euros while the Czech Republic did so for the third time in five editions.

Given the hosts' absolute need to win it was no surprise they set a manic tempo from the off and the first half hour must have made uncomfortable viewing for the visiting Czech fans.

Twice in the opening minutes the home fans let out a brief cheer but Dariusz Dudka's overhead bicycle kick and Ludovic Obraniak's free-kick both hit the side-netting rather than the back one.

The Czechs did have one sniff themselves but Vaclav Pilar swiped at thin air from 12 yards from Theodor Gebre Selassie's cross.

A horribly misplaced pass from Jaroslav Plasil was intercepted by Polish

captain Jakub Blaszczykowski and he slipped in Borussia Dortmund team-mate Robert Lewandowski, but he sliced his shot well wide.

Such was Poland's dominance that even their defence started getting in on the act and Sebastian Boenisch shot wide when well placed before sending Czech goalkeeper Petr Cech scurrying across his goal to scramble the ball behind from a long-range volley.

Marcin Wasilewski threw himself at a cross from deep but his header was gathered easily by Cech.

Towards the end of the half Poland's electric pace -- which seemed to have provoked a couple of flashes of lightning and an enormous crack of thunder - slowed markedly and the Czechs came back into it.

But a deflected Jiracek shot and Pilar's low effort did not overly tax goalkeeper Przemyslaw Tyton, who kept his place despite the return from suspension of Wojciech Szczesny.

The second half was the reverse of the first with Poland melting away and the Czech Republic piling forwards.

David Limbersky skipped

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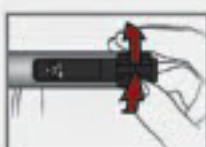
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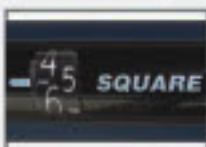
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