

# Star SPORT

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## Ban for Beckham

David Beckham of the Los Angeles Galaxy has been suspended for one game and fined an undisclosed amount by Major League Soccer for what the MLS termed "confrontational and provocative behavior" during and after the Galaxy's 4-3 loss to the San Jose Earthquakes last Saturday at Stanford Stadium.

Beckham seemed to become impatient with Earthquakes player Sam Cronin, who sat in front of San Jose's goal after a stoppage-time battle in the box. Beckham twice kicked balls in the direction of Cronin and referee Hilario Grajeda, who was standing next to Cronin. Beckham's second boot hit Cronin, then struck Grajeda. After the final whistle, Beckham had to be separated from Earthquakes players.



## Mushfiqur eager to prove T20 mettle

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim said yesterday that his team will be able to show their improvement in T20 cricket in the Tigers' upcoming tour of Europe.

"We know our record in T20 cricket is not good. We are still not good in the new format of the game. Due to lack of international matches we are not even in the ICC T20 international rankings while even Afghanistan occupy a spot in the rankings," said the Bangladesh skipper during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"We have a chance to break into the table if we can win matches on this tour. So it's a very good opportunity for us. The result was not as per our expectation on the recent tour of Zimbabwe but we are confident of winning the series against Ireland. Everybody has the self-confidence, but you know just self-confidence is not enough to win, rather you have to prove your skills. I believe everybody will be able to show their skills on the coming tour," he added.

But the wicketkeeper-batsman was well aware of the fact that finishing victorious will not be an easy task considering Bangladesh's away record, especially their poor record in T20 cricket. Bangladesh have so far played

18 T20 internationals, winning only four and having lost their only T20 match against Ireland -- a six-wicket reverse at Trent Bridge in the 2009 ICC World Twenty20.

Bangladesh also have bitter memories of their last Europe tour in 2010 as



PHOTO: STAR  
Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim talks to reporters at the BCB Academy ground yesterday.

they lost one match each against Ireland and Netherlands out of three games -- although then it was in the one-day version.

"Our experience against Ireland was not good at all, so this tour will not be an easy one for us. We don't have a good

record away and you know we are going to play in different conditions. And you know in T20 cricket no one can be considered a big team. We may be favourites in the series but I believe Ireland are tough opponents," observed Mushfiqur.

The Tigers skipper was however excited about the return of all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and pacer Shafiqul Islam. Shakib was rested for the Zimbabwe trip while Shafiqul missed the tour due to a shoulder injury.

"We have got back our two vital players. And the encouraging fact is that some of our batsmen returned to form during the Zimbabwe series, so I am confident that everybody will do their duty in the coming tour to win all the matches," he hoped.

The Tigers, who leave Dhaka on Wednesday, will play three T20 internationals against Ireland and then play one each against Scotland and Netherlands.

Mushfiqur also informed that new coach Richard Pybus has been developing some new ideas with the players and is trying to advance with a long term plan.

"We had a long discussion session today [Saturday] where our coach focussed on many things like where we want to see our team after ten years," said Mushfiqur.

The skipper also said that he was

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PHOTO: REUTERS  
Serena Williams holds the coveted trophy that she has won for a fifth time defeating Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland in the women's singles final at Wimbledon's Centre Court in London yesterday.

## 5-Wimbledon Serena

AFP, London



Serena Williams was crowned Wimbledon champion for the fifth time on Saturday as the American subdued a brave fightback from Polish third seed Agnieszka Radwanska to win 6-1, 5-7, 6-2 in a dramatic final.

Serena, who pockets a cheque for 1.15 million pounds, is the first woman over 30 to win Wimbledon since Martina Navratilova in 1990 and she needed all the experience gathered over her illustrious career to survive a remarkable revival from Radwanska.

After being completely out-classed for the first set and a half of her maiden Grand Slam final, Radwanska had Serena on the ropes before the sixth seed finally recovered her composure to reclaim the Venus Rosewater Dish in just over two hours on Centre Court.

Williams has now equalled her sister Venus's tally of five titles at the All England Club, but more significantly the 30-year-old's 14th Grand Slam crown is her first at the majors since her last Wimbledon triumph in 2010.

Inspired by the painful memory of her shock French Open first round exit against Virginie Razzano last month, Serena has spent the last month in a determined bid to re-establish her primacy. It is mission accomplished, but only just.

Radwanska had been so severely affected by an upper respiratory illness over the last few days that she withdrew from the doubles and cancelled her pre-match media commitments.

The 23-year-old, the first Pole to reach a Grand Slam final for 73 years, recovered sufficiently to play, but she might have wished she was back in her sick bed in the first set.

Serena's success has its foundations in a serve so powerful and accurate that John McEnroe describes it as the greatest the women's game has ever seen.

Williams has backed up McEnroe's view throughout this year's Wimbledon, hammering down hammering down 24 aces in her semifinal win over Azarenka to break the record of 23 she set earlier in the tournament.

She was quickly back in the groove in the final and bludgeoned the first of 17 aces -- taking her final tally for the tournament to a remarkable 102 -- to clinch the opening game.

Serena was equally powerful with her groundstrokes and converted her third break point for a 2-0 lead.

She broke again in the fourth game and, although sympathetic cheers echoed around Centre Court when Radwanska finally got on the scoreboard, it wasn't long before Williams closed out the set in just 36 minutes.

After looking out of sorts in the first set, a brief rain delay offered Radwanska a chance to regroup, yet it seemed any hopes of a revival had been snuffed out when Serena broke to love in the third game of the second set.

But to her credit Radwanska kept fighting and, finally unfurling the subtle shots which have proved so effective over the last fortnight, she converted her first break point to level in the eighth game.

Serena looked vexed by the Pole's changes of pace and nerves seemed to get the better of her as she surrendered the set with a succession of errors at 5-6.

On cruise control for so long, Williams was now being forced to battle for every point.

She thumped down four successive aces to hold serve and stepped up the power to land the decisive break for a 3-2 lead.

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## Abahani, Usha win

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani and Usha KC joined leaders Mohammedan SC and Sonali Bank with big wins in their respective matches of the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Abahani, the Dhanmondi-based outfit, took their points tally to 12 with a 7-2 win over Azad SC while they were later joined by Usha who slaughtered Wari Club 17-0. All four teams -- Abahani, Mohammedan, Usha and Sonali Bank -- have 12 points each even though Mohammedan and Sonali Bank have played a matchless.

Abahani's big victory was powered by their Pakistani recruit Shabbir Ahmed who scored four goals including a

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## Fixers let off the hook?

SPORTS REPORTER



While match-fixing is considered one of the major obstacles to the country's football development, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) itself is seemingly trying to safeguard those teams who allegedly played fixed matches in the just concluded professional football league.

After more than two months of investigation into the alleged fixed match between Brothers Union and Rahmatganj MFS, the Fixed-match Identification Committee is yet to submit its report, citing that they still haven't got the expert opinion to complete the final report.

But it has been learnt that the committee is delaying submission of the report due to pressure from the BFF high-ups, who are allegedly trying to get both teams off the hook by influencing the committee members and experts.

There are whispers in the BFF headquarters that there is huge pressure on the BFF high-ups from Brothers Union's general secretary Mahiuddin Mahi, who is also the general secretary of Dhaka City Awami Jubo

League (South).

It has also been learnt that one powerful BFF official has asked the football expert, who is assigned to give his opinion into the report, to just sign the report which has been prepared by them without the help of the expert.

Denying any influence either on the committee or the expert by the BFF high-ups, Abdus Salam Murshedy, senior vice president and chairman of the professional league committee, said, "We heard such rumours last time too before we punished Sheikh Jamal and Rahmatganj. But in reality, there is no such influence or pressure from us either on the committee or the expert. The federation is more transparent this time and has healthy environment and I am expecting to give you the report within this week."

The Fixed-match Identification Committee had earlier said that they had already singled out some important points of that alleged match and were waiting for the expert opinion in an attempt to submit a neutral and acceptable report to all.

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