

Abahani's chance to catch up



SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Mohammedan are looking forward to consolidating their lead in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League when they take on archrivals Abahani in the last match of the first leg at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium today.

Mohammedan, who share the lead in the 11-team table along with Usha KC with 27 points each, are three points ahead of archrivals Abahani and a win against the Sky Blues will give the Black and Whites solo lead before the start of the Super Five stage.

Star-studded Mohammedan are in great form having notched up nine consecutive victories while Abahani, except for their loss against Usha KC in the opening match, posted eight straight victories and are expected to put up a good fight against their old foes.

It will be the second meeting this season between the two perennial rivals after Abahani won the first meeting 5-4 on penalties in Club Cup semifinal, which ended 3-3 in normal time.

"Abahani won that match luckily, so we are not too worried about them and we will go there for a victory," said Mohammedan's

German coach Peter Gerhard Rach adding that he always respects opponents, whether they are heavyweights or lightweights.

Abahani goalkeeper Zahid Hossain was brilliant in that match against Mohammedan as he thwarted numerous attempts and stopped one of the penalty shots in the tiebreakers to make the difference. But the goalkeeper will miss today's crucial match due to fever and coach Mahub Harun was a bit worried with the absence of his seasoned custodian.

"Our main worry is in the goalkeeping position as Zahid is suffering from dengue and Aynul will stand in his place," said Harun.

The backline of Abahani looked vulnerable compared to the other big teams in the league as they have conceded eight goals in nine matches and Harun said that they were working on it ahead of the crucial game.

"The match against Mohammedan is very important for us as a win will put us level while a defeat will derail us from the title race," added Harun.

Meanwhile two matches took place yesterday. In one of them, Sonali Bank defeated Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club 2-1 to return to winning ways while Azad Sporting Club completed their campaign on thrashed Bangladesh Police 6-1 to complete their campaign on seventh position.

Metropolitan selection chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Ten players shared the lead in the Metropolitan Selection Chess Tournament at the close of the third round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday.

The leaders, who secured maximum three points from three games, are Masum Hossain, Hafizul Islam, Fahad Rahman, Faisal Hossain, Shahjahan Kabir, Shamsul Kabir, Shahnaz Mohammad Faruk, Mokaddesur Rahman, A.B. Bappi and Belal Hossain.

Top 16 finishers of the nine-round Swiss-League based competition will qualify for the upcoming National Chess Championship.

Kiwis suffer double blow

CRICINFO, Antigua

Fast bowler Trent Boult and wicketkeeper-batsman BJ Watling have been ruled out of the New Zealand side for the first Test against West Indies, starting in Antigua on Wednesday. Both men are suffering from quad injuries and they did not take part in the tour match against the WICB President's XI, a game in which the New Zealanders narrowly escaped with a draw, leaving 13 players available for selection for the Test.

Left-arm fast bowler Neil Wagner has emerged as a strong candidate to make his Test debut after impressing during the tour match, in which he took 3 for 65 and then played a fighting lower-order innings to hold the side avoid defeat.

Wagner, 26, was born in South Africa and qualified for New Zealand selection in April, and he could be part of a three-man pace attack alongside Chris Martin and Doug Bracewell.

Visa hassle

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procedure too late after an alleged competition among its officials to be part of the 17-member squad. The BFF decided on July 14 to send the team to take part in the Cup Denmark Festival and they started the visa procedure the next day.

When drawn attention on it, Aslam claimed he was not aware of the visa complications as he was busy with the final of the school football tournament and promised to send this team to India to a competitive tournament instead.

The 24-member squad was supposed to fly out of the country tonight to take part in a football festival in Denmark which kicks off tomorrow. Bangladesh were supposed to play their matches from Friday.

"We contacted with the visa officer at the Sweden Embassy from where the visas are given for Denmark and the visa officer informed us that they have been processing it through proper channel. But he could not ensure when the visas will be provided," said Bangladesh Football Federation's assistant manager Jaber bin Taher Al Ansari.

London diary

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It will be the first time Big Ben has been rung outside its regular schedule since February 15 1952, when it tolled every minute for 56 strokes from 9.30am for the funeral of King George VI. The chiming for London 2012 will be a live performance as everything will have to be done by hand.

London set

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But come today, when the women walk out onto the pitch in Cardiff, the tears and the slights will be forgotten and forgiven. With the backing of an entire nation, the Games are set to begin.

This is Bolt's time

Jamaica's Olympic 100m and 200m champion Usain Bolt talks about his rivals for the sprint crown, the horror of false starts and how he plans to make history at London 2012 in an exclusive interview to The Guardian on Tuesday. The Daily Star Sport is publishing portions of the interview for its readers.

"This will be the moment, and this will be the year, when I set myself apart from other athletes in the world," Bolt says in a quiet but dramatic statement of intent on the brink of the Olympic Games in London. The world's fastest man talks with unusually deep concentration, and a calm seriousness of purpose, as he stresses his belief that he will seal his dizzying legacy in the coming days.

"A lot of legends, a lot of people, have come before me," Bolt says. "But this is my time."

There is composure, rather than arrogance, in Bolt's voice. In a candid and open interview, the 25-year-old Jamaican dealt with the shadows of his recent dips and doubts and the threatening figure of his friend, and now imposing rival, Yohan Blake. Bolt knows that if he can overcome all his new challenges, and disappointments over the last year, he can join sport's most exalted pantheon.

No man has ever successfully defended his 100m Olympic and 200m titles on the track. Carl Lewis's name is now in the record books after his second-place finish to Ben Johnson in the 1988 Olympic 100m final in Seoul was upgraded to a gold medal following the doping scandal which ruined that race forever. But no sprinter has retained his 200m Olympic crown -- let alone repeated a hatrick by also winning the 4x100m relay for a second successive time. If Bolt replicates his feats from the Beijing Olympics, where he won three gold medals with blistering speed and irresistible panache, his name will echo alongside near mythic sporting figures like Jesse Owens, Muhammad Ali, Pele and Michael Phelps.

In 2008, three billion people, apparently, watched Bolt shatter the world record and win the 100m final with ridiculous ease in Beijing. His blurring 6ft 5in frame, and huge stride, helped produce the most exhilarating trick of time. Running faster than any man had ever run before, Bolt was so far ahead of his straining rivals he made it appear as if he had slowed to a saunter as he spread his arms wide in a "look-at-me" gesture and crossed the winning line. He wore the expression of a man who had conquered the world.

This time, in London, will be different. Bolt could be tested in exacting ways. Yet an even larger global television audience will be entranced by the prospect of him securing his reputation as the greatest sprinter in history.

The mistaken assumption used to be that Bolt simply needed to turn up, mug for the camera with some dance-hall

steppin', and then run and win, before reaching for his arrow-shooting victory pose. "What can I do?" he says. "You can only do your work and let people believe what they want. I work my hardest because I know what it takes to be a champion. I know what I want and I'm focused on what I need to do to win."

Yet a contrasting quartet of races now flits across the usually sunny outlook of the brilliant and charismatic Jamaican. Last year, at the World Championships in Daegu, South Korea, Bolt lost his 100m title after he was disqualified following a false start while Bolt cried out in agonised frustration, as he stalked around a confined area behind the track, the re-started race was won by Blake, his club-mate and younger rival.

Two months ago, in late May, Bolt ran the worst 100m of his professional career and recorded a time of 10.04sec in Ostrava of the Czech Republic, failing to break 10 seconds for the first time in three years. "I had a bad start and had no feeling the whole race," a dejected Bolt told the massed cameras and recorders. "My legs kinda felt dead. I don't know the reason. The first 40 metres were really bad. I never felt the power out of my legs."

Bolt still won that low-key race but, tellingly, he suffered two defeats in three days at the Jamaican trials. On June 30, he was beaten in the 100m by the 22-year-old Blake, who won in 9.75sec -- 0.11sec quicker than Bolt. More shockingly, on July 1, Blake defeated Bolt in the 200m, a distance over which the Olympic champion had been considered "unbeatable" for years.

Yet, training in Birmingham as he winds down his preparations for London, Bolt remains engagingly uncomplicated. He does not shy away from a single question or seek refuge in evasive self-effacement. Instead, he is honest in underlining a belief that his "ups and downs" will make retaining his three Olympic titles all the sweeter.

"Definitely," Bolt says, reaching for his favourite word. "When you go through a lot it helps because you can say all these things happened for a reason. The key thing to remember is that hard work does pay off. If you put the work in, it will definitely pay off in the long run."

Bolt speaks plainly when suggesting that, after enduring unfamiliar adversity, he has become mentally stronger. "Yeah, definitely. It gets annoying but, after a while, you get used to people making their own comments and just judging you. But I'm always positive. I know what I want. I know what I am capable of. But it makes you stronger when you have to work so hard to get better and you have to go through all these trials. So I don't stress. I just focus on what is necessary."



USAIN BOLT

Gayle boost for WI

First Test against NZ starts today



CRICINFO, Antigua

The West Indies captain Darren Sammy is confident the return of Chris Gayle will be the top-order boost his side needs to post winning totals in the Test series against New Zealand. Gayle is set to play his first Test since December 2010 when the two teams walk out in Antigua on Wednesday, and his absence over the past 18 months has left an enormous hole at the top of the order.

During the standoff between Gayle and the WICB, the West Indies Test side used five different opening batsmen and between them they managed only three half-century partnerships in 31 innings. This year the results have been even worse: during the series against Australia and England the West Indies opening partnerships averaged 14.45.

Gayle has played only one first-class match since his last Test but he showed no signs of rustiness against the red ball, crunching 165 from 155 balls for Jamaica against the Windward Islands in February. He also enjoys playing New Zealand; his Test average of 74.54 against them is his highest average against any country, and despite some low scores against them at the end of the recent ODI series he was comfortably the dominant batsman of the limited-overs portion of the tour.

"It's very exciting. I know he's looking forward to being back in white clothes as well," Sammy told reporters in Antigua ahead of the first Test. "Not just Chris but the entire team is looking forward to the Test series and hopefully we can continue the form we showed in the T20 and one-day series."

"Our opening position has been a spot of bother for us, but with the experience [of Gayle] back there hopefully we can see off the new ball and put a good total on the board. The new ball we have struggled for the last year or so. His experience, he can pass it on to the younger players. But at the end of the day you've still got to go out there and put the performance out there in the middle, because we've got a good side on paper but you still have to go out there and

do the business."

The two-match series provides West Indies with an excellent chance to improve their recent Test record; the only one of their past 10 Test series they have won was against Bangladesh. They can also take confidence from the tour match over the past few days, when the New Zealanders narrowly avoided defeat against the WICB President's XI in a match in which several Test squad members performed strongly.

"We had five or six of our guys playing against New Zealand in the practice game. I think they did it well," Sammy said. "Kemar [Roach] came back from injury and he had a good bowl. [Shivnarine] Chandernpaul [made 51], [Narsingh] Deonarine scored a hundred,



PHOTO: INTERNET

West Indies captain Darren Sammy (R) and his New Zealand counterpart Ross Taylor pose with the series trophy on Monday ahead of the first Test in Antigua.

[Assad] Fudadin looked good. The guys who played during the one-day series have had a chance to go home and rest up and come back fresh."

One of those men who has taken some time off was the offspinner Sunil Narine, who was the Player of the Series in the ODIs against New Zealand and is the only specialist slow bowler in the West Indies Test squad. The visitors struggled against Narine's variations during the limited-overs games and Sammy said that while the challenge in Test cricket was different, Narine would again be a handful.

"[On] the type of wickets we play on in the Caribbean, spin plays an important role," Sammy said. "We have a world-class spinner in Narine, who proved that throughout the one-day and T20 competition that he's a handful here in the Caribbean. It's a different ball and batsmen don't have to attack him, but I back him to go out there and do well for us."

Sri Lanka humble India

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when he held a superb return catch to dismiss Sehrawat and then had Kohli caught behind to put pressure on India.

Mathews reduced India to 38-3 when he bowled Rohit Sharma for no score before Perera removed Suresh Raina (one) for his third wicket.

India retained the side which won the first match while Sri Lanka replaced injured paceman Nuwan Kulasekara with debutant seamer Isuru Udana. The third one-day inter-

national will be played in Colombo on Saturday.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Table with columns for batsmen (Gambhir, Sangakkara, Malinga, Sehrawat, Perera, Kohli, Mathews, Raina, Dhoni, Pathan, Ashwin, Zaheer, Ojha, Yadav) and their runs, wickets, and other stats.

Table with columns for Sri Lanka batsmen (Malinga, Udana, Perera, Mathews, Herath) and their runs, wickets, and other stats.

Scotland easy

FROM PAGE 16

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the "Narail Express" who was the hero in the last match against Ireland with all-round performance, was the most successful bowler again, picking up two wickets for 22 runs in 4 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SCOTLAND: 162-7 in 20 overs (Berrington 100, MacLeod 19, Coetzer 14, Mommsen 12; Mashrafe 2-22, Razzak 1-33, Shakib 1-37, Riyad 1-20)

BANGLADESH: 128 all out in 18 overs (Tamim 26, Ashraf 8, Shakib, Mushfiq 9, Riyad 9, Nasir 7, Zia 9, Mashrafe 15, Razzak 1, Sunny 1 not out, Hasan 9, Davey 3-23, Haq 3-27) Result: Scotland won by 34 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Richie Berrington.

Int'l tourney

FROM PAGE 16

the meeting. Nazmul Karim Sagor, a member of the committee and director of Chittagong Abahani, informed that they would start their work through the Federation Shield where 18 teams will participate; seven of them from Bangladesh Championship League, five from services, three each from University and districts. They have planned to stage the tournament in three separate venues in three districts, he also informed.

Meanwhile, nearly three months after the appointment of the newly elected executive committee, the BFF has not yet formed all of its sub-committees though heads of some committees have been disclosed. On July 22, the BFF disclosed four full-member committees including Competitions Committee and they had its first meeting yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 37 Drop cloths? 1 Physician Niels 5 Dine member 8 Ener-vates 12 Sheltered 13 Tray contents 14 Small combo 15 Authentic 16 Ultramodernist 17 On in years 18 Senility 20 Beige 22 Super-natural 26 Tumbler 29 Party bowl-ful 30 Swelled head 31 Mature 32 Half dozen 33 Uppity one 34 Mischievous kid 35 Expert 36 Expenditure

Solution time: 25 mins.



Grid for the crossword puzzle with numbers 1-36 indicating starting positions.

CRYPTOQUIP

I Q A Z E K J S G Z E P K B B Q P C D M K L G Z S K C D Y C D G Z K B E A O O B G Y G D S , C Z G K B C U G R C I K R S I K S U C D L C D M J G G B C D M . Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN MY BABY MUTT BARKED ITS "GOODBYE" IN THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE, I RECKON IT WAS A PUPPY CIAO. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T