

Star SPORT

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Neymar jets in to set up win

Neymar scored one goal and set up a second to help Santos to a 3-1 Brazilian championship win at Figueirense, only 24 hours after helping Brazil beat Sweden 3-0 away in a friendly.

The spiky-haired forward hired a private jet to take him from Stockholm to Florianopolis, a 14-hour trip, to try and help his struggling side revive their Brazilian championship fortunes.

Santos, who sorely missed the 20-year-old while he was playing for Brazil at the Olympic Games, said that the player had paid for the trip while Neymar displayed a photograph on his Twitter account, showing himself lying in bed on board the



Idle coaches, wasted talent

Football

ANISUR RAHMAN

Football is a team game which needs a number of qualified and licensed coaches in the past decade and a half -- 107 to be precise -- who have been licensed by the Asian Football Confederation -- 18 of them A-licensed, 29 B-licensed and 60 C-licensed. However, this number is a paltry one considering that more than 14,000 (approx) footballers need to be groomed both in the capital and outside.

Bangladesh have produced quite a number of qualified and licensed coaches in the past decade and a half -- 107 to be precise -- who have been licensed by the Asian Football Confederation -- 18 of them A-licensed, 29 B-licensed and 60 C-licensed. However, this number is a paltry one considering that more than 14,000 (approx) footballers need to be groomed both in the capital and outside.

Football's governing body held the first coaching course for AFC C license in 1996 and since then only three more such AFC C license courses were held in 1999, 2006 and 2007, the last one being organised by AFC during the AFC U-14 Football Festival in BKSP.

After completion of these courses, the first coaching course on AFC B license was held in 2007 where 10 out of 24 participants came out successfully but the coaches' education has never gathered proper pace even under the dynamic leadership of Kazi Salahuddin.

Salahuddin's first four-year stint as BFF President saw only two coaching courses held; the first one was on AFC B license in 2010 with 16 more coaches out of 23 participants emerging and the second one was on AFC A license in the same year where 16 participants out of 21 earned certificates.

But the basic training (AFC C license), in a bid to increase the number of qualified coaches, remained ignored over the last four years though some 87 applicants including former national booters Wasim Iqbal, Jewel Rana, Abu Faisal, Atiqur Rahman, Mintu, Don, Nizam, Mostakim, Shimul, Samrat, Nira, Ekram Rana and Shamim had applied for the AFC C license course two years ago.

Some applicants alleged that a vested group within the football federation do not want former national booters to come into the coaching profession, which is why they did not take any steps to hold the AFC C license courses.

Abu Nayeem Shohag, acting general

secretary, dispelled the suggestion saying that they could not hold the coaches' coaching course due to a financial crisis but they are going to hold two AFC C license courses in September and December. He also informed that the football's governing body was thinking of introducing its own license course in the near future.

The sadder part of the scenario is that most of the 107 coaches that Bangladesh have are based in Dhaka, and there are not many qualified coaches to groom the players who come from outside. 17 of those qualified coaches are appointed by BFF, a few others are appointed by the Premier league and Championship League clubs, while the rest remain unemployed. Even those appointed by the BFF remain idle most of the time due to lack of engagement.

What it results in is that the vast number of players who ply their trade outside Dhaka are not groomed under a well-trained coach, and as a result lack the basic technique in shooting, dribbling, passing and positional knowledge. They remain heavily under-prepared for the challenge of the premier league or the national teams, which is a regular objection of the foreign coaches who take charge of the national teams.

City or United?

FARAZ IHTESHAM



Last season saw the English Premier League title race going down to the wire with the closest possible finish ever. Manchester City and Manchester United both collected 89 points, but City ended up winning the title on goal difference; their first title for 44 years, thanks to Sergio Agüero's last-minute heroics in their final match against Queens Park Rangers.

The question that arises in this new 2012-13 season is this:

Is the United era truly over and has the City era begun? Man City sure look confident of repeating their success as they have made only one major signing so far, buying 21-year-old England international midfielder Jack Rodwell from Everton. Maybe coach Roberto Mancini has enough depth in his squad with the likes of Agüero, Balotelli, Tevez, Nasri, Silva, Toure in top form.

And City are also the book-makers' favourites to win their second consecutive EPL title, which they demonstrated in fine style by dismantling FA Cup winners Chelsea in the Community Shield last Sunday.

Manchester United are not one to give up without a fight and Sir Alex Ferguson had new players coming in to bolster his team this season with Japanese superstar Shinji Kagawa and Dutch hot-shot Robin Van Persie. Shinji is coming over from the Bundesliga to make United stronger in midfield and attack while Van Persie was last season's top scorer and best player in the league. Ferguson is hoping to have Van

Persie ready to play for their season's opener against Everton on Monday.

Chelsea only finished sixth last season in the Premier League but miraculously won the Champions League masterminded by their interim manager Roberto Di Matteo. Di Matteo was rewarded with a 2-year deal and an open cheque book to buy new players.

Chelsea bought Belgian winger Eden Hazard, Germany international Marko Marin and Brazil starlet Oscar but lost the services of stalwart Didier Drogba who left for China. Chelsea would be looking to improve on last season's stand-

ings while Di Matteo will be hoping to bring home more silverware with his shrewd tactics.

Arsenal finished the previous season on 70 points and in 3rd place overall but they were a distant 19 points behind the leaders. Wenger may consider leading the club to a third-place finish as a success considering their limited budget and limited resources.

Arsenal strengthened their squad with the likes of Santi Cazorla, Lukas Podolski and Olivier Giroud; hardly star material players but lost their one world-class striker Robin Van Persie to the Red Devils.

Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool and Newcastle

United would most likely be challenging for mid-table positions. The task gets more difficult for Spurs' new manager Andre Villas-Boas as he is all set to lose star man Luka Modric to Real Madrid.

Liverpool begin life under new manager Brendan Rodgers and have added midfielder Joe Allen and Italian striker Fabio Borini to their ranks but the squad looks weak

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Manchester United's latest signing Robin Van Persie (L) holds his new jersey with club manager Sir Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford yesterday. Van Persie joined United in a £24 million switch from Arsenal.

PHOTO: AFP

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MCC wants India to host 1st D/N Test

ANI, London

The world cricket committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), who are English cricket's original law makers, has suggested that the first ever day/night Test match should be held in India, or in the Indian sub-continent, where attendance during Test matches is currently recorded as being on the lower side.

"The committee suggests that the first day/night Test Match should be played in a country where attendances are currently poor, at grounds and times when there is little dew, and at an accessible venue," The Nation quoted the MCC, as saying during its annual meeting.

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Shoaib wants coaching job

AFP, Lahore

Controversial former fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar threw his hat into the ring on Friday to become Pakistan's next bowling coach.

Pakistan have been hunting for a bowling coach since appointing Australian Dav Whatmore as head coach in March, with former Essex paceman Ian Pont the leading contender.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) set up a three-man committee to find a suitable candidate but so far nothing has been finalised.

"I am ready to be the bowling coach for Pakistan," Akhtar, 37, told reporters. "If the PCB contacts me then I will offer my services."

The paceman, whose career was plagued by fitness and discipline problems, retired from cricket after the World Cup last year and has since been involved in business.

He took 178 wickets in 46 Tests and 247 in 163 one-day internationals.

Eng in early trouble

Cricket

AFP, London

Fast bowlers Morne Morkel and Dale Steyn reduced an England side without dropped star batsman Kevin Pietersen to 94 for four at tea on the second day of the third Test against South Africa at Lord's on Friday.

That left England 215 runs adrift of the tourists first innings 309.

England, however, like South Africa, were staging something of a recovery from 54 for four -- remarkably both sides lost their fourth wicket on the same score.

Ian Bell was 20 not out and Jonathan Bairstow 19 not out, with their stand now worth 40.

South Africa, 1-0 up in the three-match series, only have to avoid defeat at Lord's to replace England as the world's top-ranked Test side.

England axed Pietersen, despite his superb 149 in the drawn second Test at Headingley, because the South Africa-born shotmaker sent "provocative" text messages, believed to be critical of his team-

mates, to Proteas players.

But without him, England saw Steyn take two wickets for one run in four balls and Morkel two for three in 11 in ideal sunny batting conditions.

Morkel struck first when, off the last ball before lunch, he bowled England captain Andrew Strauss, playing his 100th Test and 50th as skipper on his Middlesex home ground, between bat and pad with a well-directed delivery from around the wicket.

That meant Strauss would have to wait to see if he could join South Africa captain Graeme Smith in scoring a hundred in his 100th Test after the Proteas skipper achieved the feat in an innings victory in the series opener at The Oval.

Steyn then removed Jonathan Trott, lbw on review, and Alastair Cook, well caught by Jacques Kallis at second slip, for single figure scores.

James Taylor was then caught by first slip Smith off tall paceman Morkel, and Bairstow, recalled in place of Pietersen, walked out with England in a dire position.

Bairstow had managed just 38 runs in his first three Tests, all against the West Indies,

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PHOTO: INTERNET

South Africa fast bowler Dale Steyn (L) is ecstatic after removing England opener Alastair Cook during the 2nd day of the 3rd and final Test at Lord's yesterday.