



Robben conjures Bayern's fifth

AFP, LONDON



Arjen Robben scored a heart-stopping 89th-minute winner to earn Bayern Munich a dramatic 2-1 win over German rivals Borussia Dortmund on Saturday after a thrilling Champions League final at London's Wembley Stadium.

With extra time beckoning, Robben collected a back-heel from Franck Ribery, eluded the challenge of Mats Hummels and rolled a delicate shot past Roman Weidenfeller to give Bayern their fifth European crown.

It was a moment of long-awaited deliverance for both Bayern and Robben, after defeats for the Bavarians in the final of the competition in 2010 and again in 2012, when they lost a cruel penalty shoot-out to Chelsea on home soil.

Robben had set Bayern on the way to victory after an hour of the first all-German final when he teed up Mario Mandzukic for the opener, only for Ilkay Gundogan to equalise from the penalty spot in the 68th minute.

Victory made Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes only the fourth manager to win the trophy with two different clubs, after a 1998 triumph with Real Madrid, as he prepares to step aside for incoming successor Pep Guardiola.

Having already claimed the German title, Bayern will now look to complete an unprecedented treble by beating Stuttgart in the German Cup final next weekend.

There was no second title for 1997 winners Dortmund, but Jurgen Klopp's side more than played their part on a night of gripping drama in front of 86,298 fans at the home of English football.

A hamstring injury denied Mario Goetze, the player who had generated the most column inches leading up to the final, a farewell appearance for Dortmund before his 37-million-euros move to Bayern.

His transfer was the latest show of strength from a side who romped to the Bundesliga title by a record-breaking 25-point margin, but Bayern were left look-

ing like the underdogs as Dortmund flew out of the blocks.

Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer had to save from Robert Lewandowski, Jakub Blaszczykowski, Marco Reus and Sven Bender, before Bayern finally came to life when Weidenfeller tipped a Mandzukic header onto the bar.

Javi Martinez sent a header onto the roof of the net from the resulting corner, but the best chances of the first half both fell to Robben.

On the half hour, Thomas Mueller's pass sent him clean through on goal, but the angle was prohibitive for a left-footed player and Weidenfeller rushed out swiftly to make a sprawling save.

The Dutchman found himself with only the goalkeeper to beat again moments before half-time when the ball fell kindly for him in a tussle with Hummels, but Weidenfeller stood up bravely and blocked with his face.

In between, Neuer produced a superb last-ditch block to thwart Lewandowski, who had deftly rolled Jerome Boateng from a Reus pass, as the play passed from one end to the other at breathless speed.

It looked as if another major final was set to pass Robben by, but on the hour he atoned for his earlier misses by creating the opening goal.

Ribery rolled a pass towards the byline and Robben evaded the offside trap by a matter of inches before nudging the ball beyond Weidenfeller and crossing for Mandzukic to hook the ball home from a yard.

Then Dante was penalised for an untidy high foul on Reus inside the area and Gundogan steered his penalty into the bottom-right corner to send the hordes of yellow-shirted fans behind Neuer's goal leaping from their seats.

Moments later, Dortmund were indebted to a breathtaking piece of defending from Neven Subotic, who slid in to hook Mueller's goal-bound shot off the line as Robben closed in for a tap-in.

But Bayern continued to push, Weidenfeller repelling fierce strikes from David Alaba and Bastian Schweinsteiger, before Robben tiptoed through the Dortmund defence to score a famous late winner.

Bayern Munich's Dutch midfielder Arjen Robben (C) is at the centre of celebrations moments after scoring the 89th-minute winner that sealed the Champions League for Bayern Munich at Wembley Stadium in London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

'BPL owes me 1 crore'

SPORTS REPORTER

"You can write this: I'm still owed around Tk 1 crore by the BPL (Bangladesh Premier League)," said Shakib Al Hasan yesterday. The star all-rounder had an informal chat with the journalists at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday where he agreed to go on record only for this comment.

Shakib played for champions Dhaka Gladiators in the second edition of the money-spinning tournament. Nonpayment issues have been dogging the tournament for some time now and the ICC (International Cricket Council) Anti-Corruption and Security Unit's (ACSU) investigation into match-fixing in the last edition has landed the tournament in even more trouble.

It is almost impossible to meet a cricketer and not hear complaints about BPL's nonpayment.

"Apparently we have no choice other than taking legal action for all the payments. We already served legal notice to the franchises," updated BPL's governing council chairman Afzalur Rahman Sinha yesterday.

BCB changes venue plan

SPORTS REPORTER



Contrary to its earlier decision of hosting the Dhaka Premier League outside the capital, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to stage the league at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium (SBNS) in Mirpur and at the BKSP.

The board had earlier stated that none of the grounds in Dhaka were ready to host the league. However, Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) chairman Jalal Yunus, at a press conference in Mirpur, informed reporters about the change of plans yesterday.

"These (SBNS and BKSP) will be the two venues inside Dhaka. We might include another venue outside Dhaka if we need to quicken the pace of the league," said Yunus. "If we find that the venues in Dhaka are not ready we'll host it in Rajshahi and Bogra."

Currently, the SBNS is going through an off season with the groundsmen replanting portions of the field and the wickets being rested -- measures needed to get the venue in prime shape before the New Zealand series in October.

Yunus further stated that the board would finalise the grade value of the cricketers within two days. It was learnt that the board wanted to talk to some of the cricketers regarding the proposed grading.

Questions were also raised regarding the participation of Pakistani players in the league, a common feature in previous editions of the competition. These were fuelled mainly due to the Pakistan Cricket Board's decision to not release its players for the Bangladesh Premier League earlier this year.

In reply, Yunus said, "The board has not put any embargo on any country as yet. If a club wants to bring a Pakistani player then they can do it. It is a matter for individual clubs."

Sixth IPL's final today

PTI, Kolkata

Embroiled in the spot-fixing scam, becoming champions for a third time would be a daunting task for the Chennai Super Kings when they take on the formidable Mumbai Indians in the summit clash of the scandal-marred Indian Premier League in Kolkata on Sunday.

The arrest of its management official Meiyappan Gurunath, who is the son-in-law of the team owner and BCCI president N Srinivasan, on the suspicion of betting would have surely dented the morale of the Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led side.

It will be a huge challenge for the players and their skipper to cope up with the situation and play their natural game against a team, which is keen to win that elusive trophy.

Chennai have been a part of four consecutive, five overall, finals but it is the best chance for Mumbai to take a good shot at the title in the sixth edition of the tournament and avenge their 2010 final defeat.

Shakib, Tamim in CPL's sights

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricketers Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal have been drafted in Pool A for the Caribbean Twenty20 Premier League. The pool also includes the likes of Aaron Finch and Albie Morkel. Six teams -- Antigua, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago -- will participate in the tournament that will run from July 30 to August 24.

Shahnaz seals it for Sylhet

SPORTS REPORTER

A four wicket haul by Shahnaz led Sylhet to a five-wicket victory over Rajshahi in the sixth Women's National Cricket League at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday. Batting first, Rajshahi were bundled out for 123 in 36 overs. In reply, Sylhet reached their target in 38.4 overs.

The boss won't resign

BCCI chief's son-in-law arrested

ANI, New Delhi



A defiant Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Narayanaswami Srinivasan on Saturday said that he had done nothing wrong with regard to the Indian Premier League, and categorically refused to resign from his position.

Srinivasan told media outside Mumbai Airport that: "I have done nothing wrong. I have no intention to resign. I cannot be bulldozed. This is all a political game and conspiracy. The BCCI will follow strictly all of its rules. The law will take its course."

Srinivasan was speaking soon after his arrival in Mumbai to meet with his arrested son-in-law Gurusanth Meiyappan, who was arrested late on Friday night after police said that they had substantial evidence of his role in betting and spot-fixing in the ongoing sixth edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Speculation is also rife that Srinivasan may be asked to step down from his post of president, pending completion of investigations into the IPL spot-fixing scam.

NEW LAW TO CURB MENACE

AFP reports from New Delhi that, the Indian government on Saturday announced a new law to deal with unfair practices in sport amid damaging allegations in the IPL.

"The government of India has decided to enact a standalone legislation to deal with unfair practices in sport. The government is committed to bring this law as soon as possible," Law Minister Kapil Sibal told reporters in New Delhi.

MAKE BETTING LEGAL: FICCI Meanwhile, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has called for legalising sports betting amid the scandal in which cricketers were allegedly paid tens of thousands of dollars by bookmakers in underhand deals.

In a proposal submitted to the Indian sports ministry, the FICCI said illegal betting to the tune of nearly 54 billion dollars was taking place annually in the country.

"India is continuing to lose billions of dollars in taxable revenue through black marketing operations in sports betting... The way forward to contain this menace is to legalise and regulate it," FICCI said in a statement on Friday.

Niaz draws again

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Murshed drew against Mongolian GM Gundavaa Bayarsaikhan in the 8th round of the Asian Continental Chess Championships in Manila, Philippines yesterday to collect 4.5 points from 8 games. In the women's section, Sharmin Sultana Shirin received a bye in the 8th round.

KIIT International Chess GM Enamul Hossain Razib and FM Nasir Ahmed earned 5 points each after end of the 8th round of the 5th KIIT International Chess Festival in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. GM Ziaur Rahman and FM Debaraj Chatterjee earned 4.5 points each. In the 8th round, Nasir defeated GM Igor Yagupov of Russia, Razib beat Sidhant Mohapatra of India and Zia lost to Kumaran B of India.

Paris set for Rafael, Serena dominance

AFP, Paris



Rafael Nadal can become the first man to win the same Grand Slam title eight times at the French Open, but the Spaniard may have to get past Novak Djokovic before he even contemplates history. In the women's game, Serena Williams has it all to lose as she is in the best streak of her career.

Since his return to the tour in February after a shock second round exit at last year's Wimbledon which was followed by an injury layoff, Nadal has collected six titles from eight finals.

Since his French Open debut in 2005, his record stands at 52 wins and a solitary defeat.

Nadal begins his campaign against Germany's Daniel Brands, the world number 60.

This year's top seed is Djokovic, beaten in last year's final by Nadal. He starts against Belgium's David Goffin, who reached the last 16 in 2012 after coming

through qualifying.

Roger Federer, who is the only other current player to have won the same Grand Slam (Wimbledon) seven times, is seeded two. The 2009 champion has lost four title matches to Nadal in Paris but enjoyed the better fortune in Friday's draw where his first two opponents will both be qualifiers.

Djokovic, who captured the season's opening major in Australia, needs a French Open to join Nadal and Federer as active players to have completed a career Grand Slam.

On the women's side, 31-year-old superstar Serena is on an unprecedented winning run going in to the consecration of the claycourt season at Roland Garros. Four straight tournament wins at Miami, Charleston, Madrid and Rome (the last three coming on clay) and 24 matches in all for the loss of just four sets represents the best unbeaten streak of her career. And yet there are demons to be confronted for the American diva in the city she says is her favourite place in the world.