



Super Cup champions Mohammedan SC are ecstatic as they pose with the trophy after beating Sheikh Russel in the final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

What they said

SPORTS REPORTER

Two of the best footballing minds of the country were at battle in the Super Cup final yesterday. For Maruful Haque, the treble-winning coach of Sheikh Russel KC, it was a bid to snatch a record-breaking fourth domestic title in a season, which would have not only been an unprecedented success, but also a rare feat in football itself. But his dream was undone by Saiful Bari's hardworking boys who delivered a much-deserved and much-craved-for title to Mohammedan.

SAIFUL BARI
Mohammedan coach



"It is not a surprise. Something like this happened when Denmark won the European Championship in 1992, after they failed to qualify, they only got the chance to play when another team [Yugoslavia] withdrew.

"It is a great moment for me as I have been able to deliver a title to Mohammedan after a long time. It is a victory for football as the two sides played neck and neck and it was huge entertainment for the fans.

"The secret behind the success was my players' motivation. They were motivated as this was a platform for the local players who might not have got a chance to play if the foreign players were playing.

"This is a reminder for the team management to form a stronger and big-budget side in the next season.

"I knew my players could bounce back as they are younger and more energetic than the opponents. During the half time, I told my players that we were playing against a side who were masters of bouncing back and you would have to do this against them."

MARUFUL HAQUE
Sheikh Russel coach

"Obviously this is very disappointing to lose the last title after winning three in the same season. It could have been a great season had we won this title too.

"I think we should have won this match, but the defensive mistakes cost us the match.

"We should not have conceded after going one up. I'm not naming any names, but the way the defenders let the ball through when conceding the goal was unpardonable. I don't think my players were tired towards the end, they played in the same tempo."

MAMUN KHAN
Mohammedan goalkeeper
Player of the final

"I was confident that if the match rolled into tie-breaker, I could pull this off. This is my first Super Cup triumph. I was a little worried as we missed a few chances today, which did not happen in the earlier matches. This triumph is a reward for me as well as a reward for the team."



A crucial meet for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER



There are a number of vital issues that await the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) at the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Annual General Meeting (AGM), scheduled to take place in London later this week.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon, who left for England yesterday morning, made the board's core points of discussions in the meet quite evident through a series of media appearances last week.

The Anti-Corruption and Security Unit's (ACSU) report on suspected match-fixing in Bangladesh, rated by the president as the board's 'topmost priority', is likely to be handed over to the BCB at the meeting. Papon had earlier hinted at the possibility of having 'multiple meetings' with the ICC regarding the report.

The other agenda in the offing is the ICC's proposal for an 'alternate venue' for the Twenty20 World Cup in 2014, which is scheduled to begin in Bangladesh in March next year. The BCB president will have to convince the ICC that Bangladesh were capable of hosting a mega event after the ICC was unhappy about the progress at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

While the BCB election -- as per Papon's statement last week -- is not an agenda in the meeting, the issue will be discussed. The board, as per ICC's guidelines, was supposed to have elected an executive committee by June this year. However, a legal battle waged with regard to the constitution of the board has further stalled its progress. The ICC is expected to provide its opinion regarding the scenario during the meet. The president also aims to make progress about the proposed tour of India, a country that Bangladesh has not toured for a full series.

MOHAMMEDAN complete underdog fairytale

Mohammedan 4 (1)
Sheikh Russel 2 (1)

ANISUR RAHMAN



A truly outstanding display of spirit and dogged determination landed Mohammedan SC their second Super Cup trophy in three editions, after they overcame star-studded treble-winners Sheikh Russel KC 4-2 in a thrilling penalty shoot-out in the final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The tournament, which gave the promising local players a platform to showcase their skills in absence of foreign booters, lived up to its billing after producing a final worthy of its name and pomp, thanks to a nerve-racking contest which had its fair share of almost everything a good football match promises. There were excellent goals, attacks and counterattacks, brilliant individual skills, outstanding saves, scuffles and the odd expulsion, and to top it all -- the penalty shootout where Mohammedan held their nerve to deal a killer punch to Sheikh Russel's bid for a quadruple of titles. Some 10,000 holiday spectators who defied the afternoon drizzle had their money's worth.

The match had rolled into a shoot-out after Mohammedan's promising forward Wahed Ahmed cancelled out Zahid Hasan Emily's 27th -minute strike nine minutes into the second half and the extra thirty minutes failed to produce a decider.

Mohammedan defender Mintu Sheikh walked up to the spot to take the decisive spot kick. He sent the Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee the wrong way and punched his right fist in the air as the Black and Whites faithful, starved of such joy for the last four years, burst into raptures.

Both the team's first shooters had con-

verted their respective spot-kicks before Mohammedan's veteran defender Rajani Kanta struck straight to the Sheikh Russel goalkeeper. Mohammedan goalkeeper Mamun Khan redeemed his skipper by stopping the next shot from Nahidul Islam. Sabuj Kumar then hit the sidebar to hand back the advantage to Mohammedan, who converted the next three spot kicks to confirm the title, the last one being Mintu's decider.

Before the match, Mohammedan coach Saiful Bari Titu had promised delivering a memorable match, and his team -- a mixture of youth and experience -- justified the coach's words by dominating the proceedings right to the end. Even as the Sheikh Russel players got weary towards the end, the Mohammedan players kept fighting after going down to Emily's goal, which was a simple tap-in on a cross from Zahid Hossain.

The focus was on Mohammedan winger Mobarak Hossain, who was later adjudged the most value able player of the tournament. But it was his strike partner Wahed Ahmed who hogged the limelight, scoring the equaliser. The newly called-up striker to the national side latched on to a long ball from Tapu Barman before outsmarting defender Uttam Kumar and slotted the ball home after his initial shot was parried back by goalkeeper Biplob.

Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque had stated the wet field might be their only obstruction to performing well, but in reality their star cast failed to justify the hype, with key players like Mamunul Islam and Zahid Hossain remaining inactive throughout the game and failing to show their neat build-up play. The Sheikh Russel defence was sloppy in letting in the goal by Wahed. Wahed though received an unnecessary marching order in the second half of extra time, but that hardly foiled the celebrations for Mohammedan.

Nadal's shock exit

AFP, London



Roger Federer.

Journeyman Darcis clinched a 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 win to condemn the fifth-seed Spanish superstar to a first ever loss in the opening round of a major.

It also came just two weeks after 12-time Grand Slam title winner Nadal, the 2008 and 2010 Wimbledon champion, had celebrated a record eighth French Open crown.

The sensational result was the first time since Gustavo Kuerten in 1997 that a French Open champion had lost in the opening round at Wimbledon.

The defeat followed Nadal's second round shocker at the hands of Lukas Rosol of the Czech Republic at last year's Wimbledon.

But he refused to blame his constant

struggles with his knees for defeat.

"It's not the right day (to discuss my knees). I tried my best in every moment, but it was not possible this afternoon," said Nadal.

"On grass, it's difficult to adapt when you don't have a chance to play on the surface before Wimbledon.

"Darcis deserved to win today."

Darcis, 29, and nicknamed 'Shark', had come into Wimbledon with just two wins under his belt on the tour all year.

"Nobody was expecting my win today," said Darcis, who has now matched his best performance at the All England Club having reached the second round in 2009.

Second seeded Murray made history as the world number two cruised into the second round with a 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 victory over Germany's Benjamin Becker.

Federer began his bid for a record eighth Wimbledon title with a 69-minute demolition of Victor Hanescu.

Federer, 31, swept to a 6-3, 6-2, 6-0 win on Centre Court to celebrate the 10th anniversary of his first triumph at the All England Club.

SHOOT-OUT

Mohammedan 4 (1) – Sheikh Russel 2 (1)
Championship money: Tk. 50,00,000
Runners-up money: Tk. 20,00,000

Player-of-the-final: Mamun Khan (Mohammedan Goalkeeper)

Player-of-the-tournament: Mobarak Hossain (Mohammedan forward)

Coach-of-the-tournament: Saiful Bari (Mohammedan)

TEAMS

SHEIKH RUSSEL KC: Biplob (GK/C); Uttam, Linkon, Nahidul, Mamun Mia; Emu, Mamunul Islam, Mithun, Zahid (Sabuj), Anwar (Emon); Emily.

MOHAMMEDAN SC: Mamun Khan (GK); Mintu, Topu, Rajani (C), Yeasin; Manik, Maruf (Shariful/Iqbal), Shohag; Soheli, Mobarak, Wahed.

Referee: Abdul Hannan Miron.

Yellow card: Emily, Anwar, Zahid (Sk Russel), Maruf, Tapu (Mohammedan)

Red card: Linkon (Sk Russel), Wahed (Mohammedan)

Young India delight MS

Big cash bonanza for team members

AFP, Birmingham



India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni was thrilled by the performance of his youthful side after they snatched a five-run win over England in the Champions Trophy final at Edgbaston.

Ravindra Jadeja, the most successful bowler in the tournament with 12 wickets, was named man-of-the-match.

Jadeja first made a rapid 33 not out, which saw him share a partnership of 47 with Virat Kohli (43), before taking two for 24 with his left-arm spin in front of an overwhelmingly pro-Indian capacity crowd.

The 24-year-old was nicknamed "rockstar" by Australia great Shane Warne, his Indian Premier League captain at the Rajasthan Royals, because of his confidence in his own ability.

And that confidence was there for all to see after India were reduced to 66 for five batting first after losing the toss.

"Jadeja is someone who keeps it very simple," said Dhoni.

"He just looks for the right area and the ball does the talking. The good part was he contributed with the bat, which I feel is very important because he's someone who will have to bat at number seven.

"Now what we have seen is you can't play with six batsmen and five bowlers. You

know, the seven number slot is very crucial," wicketkeeper-batsman Dhoni added.

Meanwhile Jadeja said: "The [Edgbaston] wicket was slow and it was difficult to rotate the strike so myself and Virat Kohli built up a good partnership.

"I enjoyed bowling on this wicket, the ball was gripping and I was bowling to my strength."

India opener Shikhar Dhawan was named player-of-the-tournament after scoring 363 runs in five matches, including two hundreds, at an average of 90.75 and an impressive strike-rate of 101.39.

His 31 in the final was his most meagre effort of the tournament but, in the context of a low-scoring match, the 27-year-old left-hander's runs were valuable all the same.

"I think Shikhar, he has just carried forward his confidence from the Test innings that he played," said Dhoni.

"He's a slightly different character, but a fun-loving guy. At the same time, he backs himself to play those big strokes that he plays."

Meanwhile, the Board of Control for Cricket in India has announced a cash prize of 1 crore rupees to every playing member of the Indian cricket team and 30 lakh rupees to every support staff member following India's win in the Champions Trophy.

This was disclosed in a statement by Sanjay Patel, the honorary secretary of the cricket board.

Novak, Serena advance

AFP, London

Top seeds Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams cruised into the Wimbledon second round on Tuesday as the All England Club recovered from the shockwaves of Rafael Nadal's exit 24 hours earlier.

World number one Djokovic, the 2011 champion, beat Germany's Florian Mayer 6-3, 7-5, 6-4, in the Serb's first grass-court outing of the season and his first match since his shattering five-set semifinal loss to Nadal at the French Open.

Defending champion Williams, chasing a sixth Wimbledon title and 17th major, racked-up her 32nd successive win, cruising to a 6-1, 6-3 win over Luxembourg's Mandy Minella.

Russia's Maria Kirilenko, who made the quarter-finals last year, slumped to a first round exit at the hands of Britain's world number 38, Laura Robson, who claimed a 6-3, 6-4 win.

Kimiko Date-Krumm, just three months shy of her 43rd birthday and the oldest woman in the main draw, made the second round with a 6-0, 6-2 win over Carina Witthoef, an 18-year-old German qualifier, who was just four when the Japanese star made her Wimbledon debut in 1989.

Li Na, the Chinese sixth seed, enjoyed a comprehensive 6-1, 6-1 defeat of Dutchwoman Michaella Krajicek.

Argentinian eighth seed Juan Martin del Potro, who missed the French Open through illness, saw off Spain's Albert Ramos 6-2, 7-5, 6-1.

Australia's Bernard Tomic put out American 21st seed Sam Querrey, 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 2-6, 6-3 despite complaining of dizziness midway through the match and being forced to call for a doctor.



PHOTO: AFP

Rafael Nadal of Spain waves goodbye to the Wimbledon crowd after falling in straight sets to Belgium's Steve Darcis -- the Spaniard's first first-round exit in a Grand Slam -- on Monday.