

# SPORT

## Transfers deferred at last moment

**SPORTS REPORTER**

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) postponed the inter-club players' transfer for the Bangladesh Premier League yesterday evening, just hours after issuing a press release that the one-and-a-half-month-long market would get underway on Friday.

In the absence of official comments from the BFF on the postponement -- other than the press release which cited 'unavoidable circumstances' as the reason for the deferment -- there have been whispers that the delay is designed to give the federation time to amend some regulations in the league bylaws which would give undue advantage to influential clubs locked in a dispute over top players.

In the lead-up to the transfers there has been disagreement among three clubs -- Mohammedan SC, Sheikh Russel KC and Abahani -- over booters Zahid Hossain, Shakil Ahmed, Mamun Mia, Nahidul Islam, Mithun Chowdhury, all of whom allegedly received advanced payment from more than one club before the transfer window opened. Consequently, all three clubs have been claiming those players for their respective outfits.

The league bylaws state that a club must obtain a player's signature on the registration and contract papers provided by the BFF and

no vouchers and judicial or non-judicial stamps would be considered. It was learnt that one or two of the clubs involved in the dispute were trying to insert vouchers and non-judicial stamps as valid proof of player registration and payment, and that a section of the BFF was allegedly helping those clubs.

A source close to the BFF related that the yet unapproved bylaws of the 7th Bangladesh Premier League, and the yet-to-be-finalised neutral venue were the reasons behind the postponement of the players' transfers. However, reporters present at the scene witnessed an influential club official expressing his ire, to a BFF official over telephone, over the possibility of losing those players who were given advanced payment on vouchers instead of the BFF registration forms if the transfers began on Friday.

The question of why the federation has taken such a decision on the eve of the start of the transfers despite the date being finalised a month ago is a puzzling one, but no clear answers are forthcoming. BFF president Kazi Salahuddin and the chairman of Bangladesh Professional Football League Committee Salam Mursheedy are abroad while general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag could not be reached on his mobile phones.

The professional football league committee is supposed to sit on Wednesday to decide a fresh date for the players' transfers.



National football team's Dutch coach Lodewijk de Kruijff (C) passes some tips on to his charges during a practice session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday. PHOTO: STAR

## U-19s finish with big loss

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Bangladesh Under-19s finished their disappointing tour with a nine-wicket defeat to England Under-19s in their all-important last game of the tri-nation tournament at the County Ground, New Road, Worcester last night.

Bangladesh Under-19s scored 198 after batting first. The home team then rode on Ryan Higgins' unbeaten hundred to score 199 for one in 40.5 overs.

The victory took the home side to the final of the tournament where they will meet Pakistan Under-19s while Bangladesh Under-19s finished the tournament with only one victory (against England Under-19s) in six matches.

Rifat Pradhan gave the early breakthrough in the chase but Ryan Higgins (112 not out) joined Jonathan Tattersall (73) to steady the ship and the pair were unbeaten at 183.

Earlier, Bangladesh Under-19s recovered from an early collapse thanks to Joyraz Sheik, who scored 47 off 66 balls with four boundaries.

## \$61,000 for Bradman bat

**AFP, Sydney**

A bat used by Australian great Donald Bradman and signed by his 1948 'Invincible' team sold for 61,000 Australian dollars at auction in Melbourne on Thursday, reports said.

Bradman used the Sykes bat to score 115 in his final first-class innings at home before the team travelled to England 65 years ago. It sold for well above its anticipated value of 20,000 dollars, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation said.

The bat was signed by Bradman and his teammates, who included Lindsay Hassett, Ray Lindwall and Keith Miller.

The Invincibles went on to become -- and remain -- the only Australian side to go through an entire Ashes tour unbeaten.

The item had spent 20 years on display at the Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA) and is mounted in a wooden display case. The bat was sold by Leski Auctions.

Legendary Australia batsman Bradman, who died aged 92 in 2001, played his last match in England in 1948.

## Bartoli hangs up her racket

**AFP, Cincinnati**

French tennis star Marion Bartoli made a shock retirement announcement Wednesday, ending her career at the top of her game just six weeks after winning Wimbledon.

Citing a string of injuries, Bartoli dropped the bombshell shortly after losing in the second round of the Cincinnati Masters to Simona Halep.

Bartoli, who is currently ranked a career-high seventh in the world, suffered a stunning 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 defeat to the 21-year-old Romanian.

"It's time for me to retire and to call it a career. I feel it's time for me to walk

away," said the 28-year-old as she wiped away tears.

The announcement comes just two weeks before Bartoli was scheduled to compete in the US Open in New York.

Bartoli said Wimbledon helped her reach her goal of winning a Grand Slam but also took a toll on her physical and mental well-being.

"I've been a tennis player for a long time, and I had the chance to make my biggest dream a reality," said Bartoli, who won more than 11 million dollars in prize money during her 13-year career.

"I felt I really, really pushed through the ultimate limits to make it happen. But now I just can't do it anymore," she said.

"I've been through a lot of injuries since the beginning of the year. I really

pushed through and left it all during... Wimbledon."

"I really felt I gave all the energy I have left inside my body. It [Wimbledon] will stay forever with me, but now my body just can't cope with everything," she added.

Bartoli, who turned professional in 2000, has battled a series of injuries over the past few years and has played just three matches since her Wimbledon victory.

She won a match last week in Toronto over American Lauren Davis but lost to 33rd-ranked Slovak Magdalena Rybarikova the next day.

"I have pain everywhere after 45 minutes or an hour of play," Bartoli said. "I've been doing this for so long... body-wise I just can't do it anymore."



Wimbledon-winning French star Marion Bartoli is overcome by emotion while announcing her retirement at the Cincinnati Masters in Ohio on Wednesday. PHOTO: AFP

## Zuzana, Jehue win titles

**REUTERS/AFP, Moscow**

Trinidad and Tobago's Jehue Gordon won his nation's first World Championships gold for 16 years when he pipped Michael Tinsley to the world 400 metres hurdles title by a hundredth of a second in a lunging finish on Thursday.

Gordon's storming second 200 metres enabled him to mow down the fast-starting Tinsley right on the line, forcing the American to settle for silver again after his second place at last year's Olympics.

Gordon, the world junior champion in 2010, clocked a season-leading 47.69 with Tinsley (47.70) followed home by Serbia's Emir Bekric, who set a national record in 48.05.

Ato Boldon, who won the 200 metres crown in 1997, was Trinidad's last world gold medalist.

Czech Zuzana Hejnova came back strongly in the second half of the race to win gold in the women's 400 metres hurdles on Thursday.

The Olympic bronze medalist is unbeaten this season and clocked the fastest time in the world this year of 52.83 seconds for victory.

Dalilah Muhammad of the United States was second in 54.09 and her compatriot and

2011 world champion Lashinda Demus took third in 54.27.

Russia's Olympic champion Natalya Antyukh did not make the final.

Sweden's Ethiopian-born Abeba Aregawi won the women's 1500m title.

Aregawi, who was only cleared to run for Sweden in December 2012, six months after receiving Swedish citizenship, clocked 4min 02.67sec.

American Jennifer Simpson, the defending world champion, took silver in 4:02.99 with Kenyan Hellen Onsando Obiri claiming bronze (4:03.86).

Meanwhile, Ukrainian Bohdan Bondarenko's display of steely gamesmanship paid off handsomely as he dominated the men's high jump on Thursday.

Bondarenko confirmed his staggering season form with a well-timed path to gold ahead of Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim, who claimed silver at 2.38m on countback from Canada's Derek Drouin.

In a competition filled with high drama in front of an almost-capacity crowd at the Luzhniki Stadium on the coolest evening of the Worlds, the jumpers delivered a great spectacle of high-quality.

## Pakistan plan Test under lights

**AFP, Karachi**

Pakistan cricket authorities said Thursday they have proposed playing day-night Tests in the upcoming series against Sri Lanka in the United Arab Emirates in a bid to attract bigger crowds.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) last year approved the idea of day-night matches played under floodlights as a way to stem dwindling interest in Tests in many countries.

No country has yet tried the new format and the ICC has left it to individual boards to decide when and how to experiment.

"We have proposed the idea of playing day-night Tests with Sri Lanka in December-January in UAE and their reply is awaited," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) spokesman Nadeem Sarwar told AFP.

PCB staged the five-day final of its premier first-class tournament, the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, under lights in December 2011, an event appreciated by the ICC.

The challenge facing such Tests has been to find a ball that is clearly visible in both sunshine and floodlights, and Sarwar said a discussion on the colour of the balls to be used was under way with the Sri Lankan board.

"We have sent them a dozen cricket balls of pink and orange colour so that they can have further tests," said Sarwar. "Nothing has been finalised."

## Power-packed Sheikh Jamal

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club are set to build a formidable side for the upcoming 2013-14 season with the inclusion of a maximum of 10 current national players as well as eight discarded national booters.

Sheikh Jamal DC had stunned all by signing 16 national players in their debut season in 2009, a move that helped them to win the season's professional football league. Last season however, they had to be content with runners-up finishes in the Federation Cup, Independence Cup and the Bangladesh Premier League which prompted them to form a considerably stronger side this season with an aim of winning all trophies.

The line-up not only strengthens the Dhanmondi-based outfit, but also weakens other teams as Jamal have confirmed players from last season's treble-winner Sheikh Russel KC, four-time professional league winner Abahani and traditional giants Mohammedan SC.

According to club manager Anwarul Haque Helal, the current confirmed national players in Jamal's setup are Mamunul Islam, Mohamamd Linkon, Ryhan Hasan, Nasir Chowdhury, Kesto Kumar, Mobarrak Hossain, Shohel Rana, Toklish Ahmed, Shakhawat Hossain Rony and Yeamin Hossain Munna while the erstwhile nationals are Monaem Khan Raju, Mohammad Yeasin, Alamgir Kabir Rana, Ziaur Rahman, Mazharul Islam Himel, Enamul Haq Sharif, Mashudur Rahman Mustaq. Apart from the 18 mentioned, defenders Jahurul Islam and Didarul Islam and goalkeeper Riad have also been signed up for the Dhanmondi-based club.

Sheikh Jamal also confirmed brilliant Haitian hitman Sony Norde, who was considered one of the major architects of Sheikh Russel's treble last season. Sony's compatriot Jean Alexendra is also expected to come to Bangladesh for a trial for Sheikh Jamal while the club is bringing back its former Nigerian winger Femi Orunmimi and retain the services of Nigerian midfielder Okemeri for the next season.

Sheikh Jamal's Nigerian coach Joseph Afusi and the national team's former Argentine trainer Ariel Colman are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today before the preparation camp for the next season gets underway from tomorrow.

## Novak, Andy get going

**AFP, Cincinnati**

Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray overcame some anxious moments to post straight-set victories Wednesday in their opening matches at the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters.

Top seed Djokovic had to fight back after his game went awry briefly in the opening set on the way to a second-round win over Argentine Juan Monaco 7-5, 6-2.

Second-seed Murray kick-started his run-up to his US Open title defense with a resounding 6-2, 6-3 defeat of Mikhail Youzhny in their second round match. Both players received a bye in the first round.

Murray, the world number two, who was eliminated a week ago in the Montreal third round, made sure that was not repeated at this hardcourt tournament.

He needed just 70 minutes to see off his Russian opponent and move into a match with Julien Benneteau of France.

Djokovic is trying to complete an unprecedented career haul of all nine Masters 1000 titles and only needs to win here in order to reach the goal.

"I stopped moving my legs, I didn't really go for my shots," he said of his play in the first set.

## Farah chasing Bekele

**AFP, Moscow**

Britain's Mo Farah will bid to become the second man to achieve the double of the world and Olympics 5000 and 10000 metres titles while Usain Bolt begins his defence of the 200m on Friday at the World Athletics Championships.

Farah, who won an emotional double gold at the Olympics last year in the Somalia-born athlete's adopted home city of London, produced a courageous display to win the 10000m last Saturday and starts firm favourite to defend his 5000m title.

If successful he will emulate Ethiopian Kenenisa Bekele's double in 2009 which followed his victories in the 2008 Olympic Games.

Farah, whose American training partner Galen Rupp was a huge help to him in the 10000m and will again be in the field, admitted Sunday's race had taken more out of him than he had expected and just did the bare minimum to qualify for the final at the shorter distance.

"It's going to be a demanding race and I

need as much energy as possible to have the reserves when the final kick comes," said the 30-year-old.

Farah, whose post 10000m race rub-down had to be improvised under a tree outside the stadium as security men would not allow him into the official area, said people shouldn't regard victory was his for the taking.

"I was getting texts from people just saying go and do it," said Farah.

"I'm like: it's not as easy as that. If it was, it would be boring. Seriously. If it was, everyone would be winning."

His chief opponents should be Kenyan duo Edwin Soi, the only athlete to beat Farah at the distance this year, and Olympic bronze medalist Thomas Longosiwa.

With both the Kenyans and Ethiopians likely to try and gang up on Farah, the Briton will once again be looking for the faithful Rupp to sacrifice himself in paving the way for him to take gold.

Bolt has kept a low profile since he powered to victory in Sunday's 100m final, regaining the title he lost when he was disqualified for a false start in Daegu two years ago.