

SPORT

Injury concern
for de Kruif

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national football team is grappling with injuries as their campaign for the 10th SAFF Championship nears. Captain Mamunul Islam, the key player in Bangladesh's midfield, is still recovering from a knee injury he suffered during the practice match against Sheikh Jamal DC on August 21. Another midfielder, Sohel Rana, sustained an injury during the last practice match against BFF XI on August 24.

Coach Lodewijk de Kruif therefore took a 21-member team instead of 20, including midfielder Monaem Khan Raju as a cover in case Mamunul or Sohel does not recover fully in time.

However, after reaching Nepal on Sunday, another player -- goalkeeper Shahidul Islam Sohel -- took a blow during training the following day which makes de Kruif's job much harder.

Therefore the coach is trying to reorganise the team and may adopt players who can play in different positions.

"Players are playing in different positions because we have some injuries in the team. The injuries were not a result of fatigue; rather a result of some silly things," said de Kruif after yesterday's training session at the Kathmandu Police Head Quarters Field.

The two injured midfielders Mamunul and Sohel did however attend light practice under the supervision of fitness trainer Yamali Mohammed.

The coach was more realistic than hopeful about the chances of his side in the tournament which Bangladesh won back in 2003.

"Two years back Bangladesh did not do well in the SAFF Championship. Things will not change in a day. We are working hard along with the players to get a good result in this tournament," said de Kruif.

De Kruif again asserted that India and Nepal are the favourites to progress from the group that Bangladesh are in.

Regarding pressing and passing football which is widely practised throughout the world these days, De Kruif said that his players are adapting very well with that type of football and getting better.

Bangladesh begin their campaign on Saturday with the match against hosts Nepal at the Dasharath Stadium before playing against defending champions India on September 3 and Pakistan on September 5.



Mamunul Islam (L) and Sohel Rana go through a light practice session under the watchful eyes of fitness trainer Yamali Mohammed at the Police Headquarters Ground in Kathmandu yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Clubs seek
foreign
edge

DPL deferred by 7 days

SPORTS REPORTER

The clubs of the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League have shifted their focus to foreign recruitment.

The new format of the players' transfer this has helped in engineering a level playing field for all participating clubs, which is why the clubs, especially the big guns, were trying to rope in some good foreign cricketers to bolster their squads.

Most of the clubs were yet to confirm their recruitments -- one of the reasons the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is going to defer the league by seven more days.

Mushfiquur Rahman Mohan, cricket committee chairman of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, however informed yesterday that they confirmed Zimbabweans Elton Chigumbura and Charles Coventry, Sri Lankan Dilshan Munaweera and Afghanistan cricketer Shapoor Zadran for the entire tournament while Sri Lanka master batsman Kumar Sangakkara will play two matches.

Sheikh Jamal acquired players like national skipper Mushfiquur Rahim, left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak and Jahurul Islam on a lottery-based, rotational system players' transfer that took place last Sunday.

Kvitova, Ivanovic sail

AFP, New York



Grand Slam winners Petra Kvitova and Ana Ivanovic advanced to the second round of the US Open on Tuesday while Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic awaited their openers at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Czech seventh seed Kvitova, the 2011 Wimbledon champion, fought off Japan's tenacious 92nd-ranked Misaki Doi 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 and Serbian 13th seed Ivanovic, the 2008 French Open winner, dispatched Georgia's Anna Tatishvili 6-2, 6-0.

On the men's side, Canadian 10th seed Milos Raonic fired 28 aces in beating Italy's Thomas Fabbiano 6-3, 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, to book a second-round date with Spain's Pablo Andujar, who dumped Dutchman Thiemo de Bakker 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

On Monday, US Open favourites Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams, with 28 Grand Slam titles between them, cruised into the second round.

Nadal, the second-seeded 2010 champion who watched the 2012 US Open from his home in Spain as he endured a seven-month injury layoff, cruised to a 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 win over America's Ryan Harrison to record a 16th win on hard courts this year.

The 27-year-old Spaniard has captured nine trophies since his return from injury in February, building up a 54-3 record in the process, and came into New York having won back-to-back Masters titles at Montreal and Cincinnati, comfortably erasing his shock first-round exit at Wimbledon.

Defending women's champion Serena Williams, a four-time winner, needed just an hour to see off Italian veteran Francesca Schiavone, 6-0, 6-1.

The top seed fired 13 winners and

broke the former French Open champion six times on her way to a second round match-up against Kazakhstan's Galina Voskoboeva.

Venus Williams, the back-to-back champion in 2000 and 2001 and the oldest woman left in the draw at 33, started her 15th US Open with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Belgian 12th seed Kirsten Flipkens, a semi-finalist at Wimbledon.

Williams, now ranked 60th in the world, next faces China's Zheng Jie after avenging a loss to Flipkens at Toronto earlier this month.

Federer, the former five-time champion and seeded a lowly seventh this year, was due to take on Slovenia's Grega Zemlja in the closing match on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

But heavy late evening rain meant the Swiss star, still bruised by his second round loss at Wimbledon -- his worst All England defeat in a decade -- will have to try again on Tuesday.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Ana Ivanovic of Serbia plays a forehand return to Anna Tatishvili of Georgia during their US Open match at Flushing Meadows yesterday.

Zimbabwe win in style

AFP, Harare



A sturdy 85 from Hamilton Masakadza and a crucial late cameo from Sean Williams saw Zimbabwe record their first one-day win over Pakistan since 1998.

Chasing 245 in the first one-day international of a three-match series on Tuesday, Masakadza laid the platform before Williams finished the job with an unbeaten 39 from 23 deliveries as Zimbabwe won by seven wickets with 10 balls to spare.

Although Misbah-ul-Haq held the Pakistan innings together in his 50th consecutive ODI as Pakistan captain, he was left to lament his decision to bat first at a venue where the pitch generally improves as the day goes on.

"We misread the pitch - it was looking like it was going to be slow in the second

innings, but I think it was slow in the first innings and played better in the second," said Misbah.

"Still I think Zimbabwe really deserved it - they played really well and played better than us. There was no panic in their batting line-up and they did it comfortably." Misbah finished unbeaten on 83 and shared in a 99-run stand for the third wicket with Mohammad Hafeez, who made 70, but with Pakistan's middle and lower order failing to fire they could only manage 244 for seven.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 244 for 7 in 50 overs (Jamshed 27, Shehzad 24, Hafeez 70, Misbahul 83 not out; Vitori 2-42, Chatara 2-32)

ZIMBABWE: 246 for 3 in 48.2 overs (Masakadza 85, Sibanda 54, Taylor 43 not out, Williams 39 not out; Ajmal 2-44)

Result: Zimbabwe won by 7 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Hamilo Masakadza.

BJMC draw
against West
Bengal

SPORTS REPORTER

BJMC drew against West Bengal by 12-12 points in their match of the Walton Refrigerator International Kabaddi Tournament at the National Kabaddi Stadium in Paltan yesterday.

Earlier in the day, Assam Kabaddi team thrashed Nepal Kabaddi team by 55-11 points, with five creditable Iona. The third match of the day was in progress when this report was filed.

ASIA CUP HOCKEY

Bangladesh play India today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be hoping to play their natural game in the AHF 9th Asia Cup when they take on holders India in their last pool match at the Azlan Shah Stadium in Ipoh, Malaysia today.

After their brilliant performance in the World Hockey League (Rd-2), many hockey lovers in the country had pinned their hopes on the national team to put up another good showing in the Asia Cup. But all those hopes have been extinguished by the awful performance of the side which has seen them fall by the wayside to South Korea and concede a shock 2-4 defeat at the hands of Oman; a side Bangladesh has beat 4-1 and 6-3 in their last two meetings before Monday's match in Malaysia.

The two consecutive defeats have all but shattered Bangladesh's hopes of finishing fifth or sixth and the players will definitely go into the match against India with low morale.

India defeated Bangladesh 5-1 in the World Hockey League (Rd-2) but Pakistani coach Naveed Alam wants his charges to play their natural game against the strong opponents.

Naveed said that his charges had got 15 scoring chances in the last two matches but the forwards could not convert those and he admitted that he had no explanation behind the failure of his strikers.

"Whatever happened in the last two matches, I want the boys to play their natural game against India," said Naveed adding that the players had not yet gotten used to the comparatively speedy blue turf.

SHAKIB
out for 3 weeks

SPORTS REPORTER



Ace allrounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to miss the first few weeks of the

Dhaka Premier League as he was diagnosed with a hair-line fracture on his left thumb yesterday. The player, who returned to the country on Monday following stints in England and the West Indies, will take three weeks to recover.

The left-hander suffered the injury during a training session with his Caribbean Premier League team Barbados Tridents. He reportedly hurt his thumb while trying to defend a bouncer.

"On August 18, before playing the semifinals, a bouncy ball hit his thumb during practice. Despite the pain he played the semifinals the next day," said Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) sports physician Debasish Chowdhury. "An X-ray scan back then had shown the possibility of a presence of a crack. That was confirmed to be a fracture today afternoon (Tuesday) after we did an X-ray here in a local hospital," he added.

Shakib, who did not bat in the match, bowled just one over and conceded eight runs. Barbados eventually went on to lose the game.

The team management however believe that the injury will not affect Shakib's chances of playing in the New Zealand series in October.

"It's a very simple fracture and takes four weeks to heal. Since 8-9 days have already passed, theoretically speaking he can begin skill training after a couple of weeks. He won't be sitting idle for too long though. He'll be doing fitness training and some soft catching as well," said Chowdhury.

According to coach Shane Jurgensen, the left-hander will have to report to him in 10 days' time to begin his fitness training.

Despite the injury Shakib seemed to be in a jolly mood at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Upon his return to the country, the allrounder had stated his desire to take a break from cricket for a few days.

Apart from missing a major portion of the Dhaka Premier League, Shakib will also not be able to participate in the three-day practice match between members of the preliminary squad for New Zealand series, scheduled to begin on September 3.

Four plead
not guilty

SPORTS REPORTER

Four out of the nine individuals charged with being involved in fixing in the Bangladesh Premier League by the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) formally submitted a not-guilty plea yesterday.

Lawyers of the accused -- Mosharraf Hossain Rubel, Mahbulul Alam Robin, Salim Chowdhury and Shihab Chowdhury -- stated that they had sent their replies to the ACSU via e-mail and submitted copies to the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) president and the chairman of the board's disciplinary committee, former chief justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, yesterday.

Yesterday was the last date for the individuals to submit their replies to the ACSU and the chairman of the BCB's disciplinary committee in response to the charges against them.

Mohammad Ashraf has already confessed to fixing. The other Bangladeshis accused, former national left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, was unreachable.

England rest
Ashes victors

AFP, London

England have rested several of their Ashes-winning Test side, including captain Alastair Cook, from a squad announced Wednesday for their upcoming one-day internationals against Ireland and Australia.

As well as Cook, England have left out Stuart Broad, Ian Bell, James Anderson and Graeme Swann from their party for the lone one-day international against Ireland and the five-match one-day series with Australia that follows.

However, star batsman Kevin Pietersen has been included in the squad for the Australia series.

Former Ireland international Eoin Morgan will captain the side in the absence of Cook and Broad, with the squad including five uncapped players in pacemen Chris Jordan and Jamie Overton as well as Morgan's fellow ex-Ireland star Boyd Rankin.