

Sony powers Sk Jamal into final

SPORTS REPORTER



Haitian forward Sony Norde produced yet another dazzling performance to power pre-tournament favourites Sheikh Jamal DC into the final of the Walton Federation Cup with an emphatic 3-0 win over Abahani in the first semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Sony struck twice in the first half, taking his goal-tally to seven, after his compatriot Wedson Anselme had opened the scoring, to take the Dhanmondi-based outfit to the final of the Federation Cup for the fourth time in a row.

The 2011 champions had showed their prowess in their 3-1 win over traditional powerhouse Mohammedan in the quarterfinal and they played yesterday's match in the same vein turning the 'unofficial final' into a one-sided affair.

Sheikh Jamal's attacking trident – Sony, Wedson and Nigerian Emeka Darlington – tore apart the defence of Abahani, who had boasted of not conceding any goals in the tournament thus far. All that pride bit the dust when Sheikh Jamal virtually killed off the game, scoring three goals within the first 40 minutes, much to the frustration of approximately 7,000-strong holiday crowd, most of whom were rooting for the Sky Blues.

The first goal came as early as the fourth minute when Emeka cleverly put a chip over two defenders for Wedson, dinked it over the advancing goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel. Sony then made it 2-0 in the 21st minute, availing a defensive fumble from Atiqur Rahman Meshu before rounding Sohel and finishing with an angular

shot. The Haitian marksman increased the margin in the 39th minute with a low left-footed shot after Wedson had released him inside the box.

All that domination in the attacking third came with complete command in the midfield where Mamunul Islam and Sohel Rana combined to neatly distribute the ball. The margin of victory could have been bigger for Sheikh Jamal had Wedson's attempt not hit the woodwork in the first half or had Sony not floundered a penalty kick deep into the stoppage time.

Abahani hardly made an impression going forward as they were mostly confined to guarding their own goal and had to face elimination at the hands of Sheikh Jamal for the third consecutive time. The frustration got to the Abahani faithful who hurled abusive words towards the team management, especially manager Satyajit Das Rupu, for their disappointing performance.

"The win was an outcome of hard work. We knew, after beating Mohammedan, that Abahani would pose a threat, but we were prepared for them," said Sheikh Jamal coach Joseph Afusi adding that the first goal lent them confidence, the second gave the balance and the third one helped them establish control over the game.

Abahani coach Amalesh Sen said that the first two goals were due to defensive mistakes while the third goal threw them out of the tie.

"We had the chance of making a comeback even after conceding the lead in the very fourth minute due to a fumble of defenders, but they made the same mistake again and threw away the chances," said Amalesh.



Sheikh Jamal's goal scoring Haitian duo Wedson Anselme (C) and Sony Norde (R) celebrate their Federation Cup semifinal victory over Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Siddikur misses Cut in HK

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman missed the cut in the 1.3-million-dollar Hong Kong Open after finishing the second round in joint 99th position yesterday.

The two-time Asian Tour winner returned a card of three-over-par (73) in Round 2 for an overall score of four-over-par (144), two strokes more than the cut mark.

A total of 75 golfers made it to the weekend rounds with scores of one-under-par or better. Jbe Kruger of South Africa is heading the leaderboard with seven-under-par (133).

Starting the day at 69th position with one-over-par (71), Siddikur jeopardised his chances further when he bogeyed three of the first five holes in the morning at the Hong Kong Golf Club.

A birdie on the sixth hole somewhat resurrected his cause, but another bogey on the 17th hole made sure Siddikur missed the cut fourth time in the current Asian Tour season.

Muktijoddha-BJMC semifinal today

SPORTS REPORTER



A rejuvenated Muktijoddha Sangsad KC will be looking to book the final berth of a tournament in nine years when the three-time champions take on a spirited Team BJMC in the second semifinal of the Walton Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Muktijoddha Sangsad have not made it to the final of any tournament since the 2005 Federation Cup even though they finished runners-up twice in the professional football league since then. However, this Muktijoddha side have showed great prowess by dispatching holders Sheikh Russel KC 1-0 in the group stages before getting rid of two-time champions Brothers Union with a 2-0 win in the quarterfinal. The All Reds are upbeat about their chances of

making against the 2011 Federation Cup runners-up Team BJMC today.

"I am getting expected service from both the foreign and local players and if they can carry the momentum into the semifinal, we can expect another good result," said Muktijoddha Sangsad coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, reminding that they have set their sights on finishing among the top three in all the tournaments and league this season.

However, BJMC will be a tough side to break down as they have come from behind twice before beating Sheikh Russel 5-4 in a tiebreaker in the quarterfinal. Coach Ali Ashgar Nasir believes staging fightbacks is the main strength of his side.

"Though there are few limitations in my side, we will play positive football against one of the strongest sides of the tournament. The win over Sheikh Russel will be our inspiration," said Nasir.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

BD finish on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh won another eight gold in the Asia Pacific Regional Games of Special Olympics on the concluding day at Newcastle, Australia yesterday.

Out of the eight gold, three each came from table tennis and athletics and two came from CR cricket unified team and CR cricket team events while two silver medals came from athletics and one from swimming, according to official website of Special Olympics.

Rais Ahmed and Nipa pair won table tennis gold in Division M-3, Nipa and Farhan Ethu won gold in table tennis MX-7 category and Rais Ahmed, N Rahman pair won another gold medal in the same discipline.

Sumon Khan won gold in 100m Run in M-8 category, Bibi Fatema won shot-put gold in women's 3kg of F-2 category and Ratan Mia won gold medal in 100m Run M-1 category.

Swimmer Parul Akter won silver in freestyle relay, Humayun Kabir won silver in 100m Run M-1 and Sumon Khan won silver in shot-put men's 4kg category.

It has been learnt from an unofficial source that Bangladesh won a total of 77 gold and 55 silver medals, where each of the members of the cricket teams were credited with one gold each.



(L-R) Bangladesh cricketers Rubel Hossain, Abdur Razzak and Elias Sunny pose with the ICC World Twenty20 trophy during its unveiling programme at the Hyundai showroom in Tejgaon yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Clarke, Haddin put England to sword

AFP, Adelaide



Michael Clarke and Brad Haddin plundered centuries before a firebrand Mitchell Johnson blasted out England captain Alastair Cook to leave the tourists reeling in the second Ashes Test on Friday.

Skipper Clarke claimed his third century in five Ashes Tests and his 26th overall, while vice-captain Haddin smashed four sixes in his fourth Test ton to help the home side declare at 570 for nine.

Johnson, hurling down 150 km/h (93 mph) thunderbolts, knocked over Cook for three in his second over to ram home Australia's advantage.

By the close of the second day, the tourists were hanging on against a hostile Australian attack at 35 for one with Michael Carberry on 20 and Joe Root, who took one on the chest from Johnson, not out nine.

"It was very important that we

batted deep in this first innings and to get 550 on the board and that ball that got Cook was a cracker, it swung late," Haddin said.

It was very much Australia's day as Clarke and Haddin put on 200 runs -- the highest sixth-wicket stand in all Tests in Adelaide, eclipsing the 191 shared by Imran Khan and Wasim Akram for Pakistan in 1990.

Clarke continued his love affair with the Adelaide Oval with his sixth century in nine Tests at the famous ground, while Haddin brought up his third Ashes hundred.

Clarke, dropped by Ian Bell at short leg on 91, played the captain's knock while Haddin chanced his luck to bring up his third consecutive score over 50 in the series.

Johnson, the man-of-the-match with nine wickets in Australia's huge 381-run win in the first Gabba Test, put the icing on the cake with the psychological wicket of Cook, who scored 148 in England's innings win in Adelaide three years ago.

U-19s start with a win

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Under-19 team made an emphatic start to their seven-match youth ODI series against the West Indies yesterday by inflicting a 104-run defeat on the visitors at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

The hosts, who had stuttered to 84 for 6 in 30 overs, fought back through a 119-run partnership in the seventh wicket between Mosaddek Hossain (77) and Saeed Sarker (83). The partnership resurrected the Bangladesh innings as they posted 222 for 9 in their fifty overs. Mosaddek hit two sixes and seven fours in his sedate 107-ball knock while Saeed smashed eight boundaries and four sixes in 66 balls, having come in to bat at number nine.

Off-spinner Ramaal Lewis (3-24), who removed both the openers, was the pick of the bowlers for the visitors.

The visitors' innings never gathered pace as they were taken aback by Bangladesh's spinners and were bundled out for a meager 118 in 44.5 overs. Slow left-arm Nihaduzzaman (2-18), off-spinner Mosaddek (2-16) and leg-spinner Jubair Hossain (3-30) ran through the visitors' batting order.

Bangladesh coach Richard McInnes was pleased to see the fighting spirit of his team.

"We were in trouble but we fought back and played very smartly, which is a good sign. We are still a bit inconsistent with our batting, but I am very happy with our bowling and fielding effort," said McInnes.

‘Have to play fearless cricket’

SPORTS REPORTER

Ever since Bangladesh's opponents for the first round of the ICC World Twenty20 -- Afghanistan, Nepal and Hong Kong -- were finalised, talks regarding the challenges that each of the teams would pose started making rounds in the country's cricketing fraternity.

Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim felt that it would 'not be easy' to get past the first round; off-spinner Shohag Gazi emphasised on the need for the team to be at their very best while former chief selector Faruque Ahmed said that it would be a 'big upset' if the hosts don't qualify.

Dashing opener Tamim Iqbal's mantra, though, remains different. The left-hander does not want to think too much about the first-round scenario.

"Whenever we think about a particular match too much, we eventually become slightly shaky and that's when the troubles begin. A similar sort of pressure worked against us in Zimbabwe as well," said Tamim during a signing ceremony as Brand Ambassador of the Matador Shaving Industries in the capital yesterday.

"It's a crucial task. We have to win all the three matches to qualify. Bangladesh will have to play fearless cricket. If we do that then there won't be any problem,"

he added.

Tamim believes that performing well against Sri Lanka in January and in the Asia Cup in February would help Bangladesh's buildup to the World T20.

With an aim of forming the best possible team for the World T20 next year, the BCB is organising three T20 matches between Bangladesh and Bangladesh A, starting from December 8. Tamim, however, will be missing out on those games as he is still recovering from an abdominal injury which was initially identified during the New Zealand series.

"I'll be giving my first fitness test tomorrow (today). I am following my physio's advice. My target is to become match-fit by mid-December," he said.

"It does not hurt now, everything is fine. But because we have plenty of time right now and there is no hurry, the physio wants

me to be fully fit before I return to the field," Tamim added.

Away from T20 cricket, the BCB is still working on finalising a vice-captain for the national side. When asked if the board has approached the left hander for the role, Tamim said, "If the board thinks that I'll be capable of handling this role, they will assign me. As of now, no one has officially told me anything about it and I am not thinking about it either."



TAMIM IQBAL

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