

Sony & Emeka power Sk Jamal

Abahani 6 pts behind leaders

SPORTS REPORTER



A scintillating performance from Haitian Sony Norde helped Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club overcome the hurdles of Mohammedan Sporting Club with an easy 3-0 win in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Inspirational Sony first provided a lead to Sheikh Jamal before feeding both goals for Nigerian hitman Emeka Darlington, who kept up his goal-spree to top the score-list with 14 goals from as many matches.

The tenth win in 14 matches means Sheikh Jamal extended their lead to 34, six points ahead of second-placed Abahani, who beat Team BJMC 2-1 in the third match of the day, thanks to one goal apiece from Portuguese Leonildo Suares and Shahedul Alam while Ismael Bangoura pulled one back for BJMC.

Mohammedan stuck to their previous third position with 23 points from 14 matches.

Despite dazzling shows against Kolkata Mohammedan in the IFA Shield, Sony's form significantly dipped since then, apparently because he was not focused on the games following attractive offers from different Indian clubs; but he finally shrugged off his poor performance to shine in a match which was very important for Sheikh Jamal in the title race.

"Actually I have always been in fear of picking up injury as some of the opponent players try to tackle me maliciously," said Sony. "Now Sheikh Jamal's win is important to me and I want to make my club champions in the league.

"I was focused on the match against Mohammedan and had hard training yesterday," said Sony. "Yes, I could not score much [3 goals] in the league but I had assisted at least 10 goals for my team."

Sony's Haitian partner Wedson Anselme and Emeka also played well to tear apart the Mohammedan backline several times and they should have taken a 2-0 lead within the first five minutes.

But, they did not waste much time to go ahead, thanks to a stunning run from Sony down the left to beat two defenders to latch a powerful low shot on the edge of the box to beat Mohammedan goalkeeper Titumir Chowdhury.

Afterwards, Sony whipped a nice cross from the left for Wedson, who set up Emeka to tap in open net to double the margin in the 22nd minute while Sony entered the box from the left to dance past two defenders, but his shot to the far post went narrowly wide, much to the relief for Mohammedan, in the 38th minute.

After resumption, Sheikh Jamal kept on the momentum to step up on attacks and Wedson again squandered another chance two minutes into the second half and then Mohammedan survived conceding an own goal, thanks to a denial by the post in the 51st minute.

Sheikh Jamal sealed their seventh victory over Mohammedan in the league when Emeka slid onto a low cross from Sony in the 61st minute and the Black and Whites had to end the match with 10 men after substitute Hemanta Vincent was given the marching order in the stoppage time of the second half.

Away at the MA Aziz Stadium, hosts Chittagong Abahani



Sheikh Jamal's Haitian hitman Sony Norde rockets the ball past Mohammedan defenders to score the first goal against the black and whites in their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Farashganj thump Victoria

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj SC moved into the second position of the table in the Premier Bank Bangladesh Championship League with an emphatic 3-1 win over Victoria SC at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Pasban Mollah, Mohammad Ripon and Moloy struck one goal each for Farashganj SC while Rubel pulled one goal back for Victoria, who were in the sixth position with nine points from 11 outings.

With four points in 11 matches, Farashganj SC raised their point tally to 18, just nine points behind leaders Rahmatganj MFS.

Shane will be missed, says Mushfiquir

SPORTS REPORTER



A 'good motivator' is the demand from captain Mushfiquir Rahim as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) goes on the hunt for a head coach of the Tigers.

The board has already started the search for the new head coach and also communicated with some candidates following Shane Jurgensen's sudden departure. Speculations have been aplenty about the probable candidates and the latest name to surface is a former Bangladesh coach -- Dav Whatmore. The Australian has just been released by Pakistan. But the BCB seems to have little interest in him.

In the meantime, Whatmore will assist Afghanistan, Ireland, Scotland and the UAE in their preparations for

the 2015 World Cup after joining the ICC High Performance Programme (HPP) in an advisory role.

In the wake of all the speculations, Bangladesh captain Mushfiquir said: "The important thing is the new coach needs to settle in our culture and get to know about the players in a very short time. But the most important thing is we need a coach who can motivate us. If we get someone with that personality then our team will improve more. In this level mental issue is more important than skill."

The wicketkeeper-batsman was giving his opinion while talking to reporters yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur where he came to attend the farewell reception of Jurgensen.

Mushfiquir went with the popular saying "Life doesn't stop for anybody"

when asked whether Jurgensen's departure hurt the team's plans for the 2015 World Cup. But the little man dubbed his former mentor as a good human being.

"I did have the opportunity of closely working with him as the team captain and undoubtedly he is a nice man. I think Bangladesh team needs a friendly man like him who gives everybody equal respect. We will definitely miss him," said Mushfiquir.

"I talked with him after his return but he requested me that it's his personal matter. And it [the decision to resign from the post of the Tigers' head coach] also came from his family. So, you can't say anything more after that. But whatever the Almighty does is the best. You never know when a better thing will happen, only time can say. But ultimately it is us who will have to play and we will try our best to play with responsibility."



Bangladesh cricket captain Mushfiquir Rahim (R) shares a laugh with outgoing coach Shane Jurgensen as they shake hands at the latter's farewell party at BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Will it be Razzak v Taijul?

BCL final between North and South starts today

SPORTS REPORTER



When BCB North Zone and Prime Bank South Zone lock horns in the final of the Bangladesh Cricket League from today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, there will be some individual battles going on in the five-day affair apart from the fight for the trophy itself.

It will be interesting to see the contest of the two left-arm spinners in experienced Abdur Razzak and young Taijul Islam, who is already considered as a bright prospect in the longer-version cricket.

Razzak led from the front with his

tweakers to take South Zone into the final and has already 19 scalps in his account, but Taijul is well ahead of his senior fellow as he topped the bowling chart with 27 wickets and, like Razzak, he also played the pivotal role in taking the Northerners into the title decider.

"It is always encouraging when a young player challenges the older ones and I always love to take the challenge from the young players. I did not get enough opportunity to watch the bowling of Taijul but he is a good bowler and already proved his worth by taking so many wickets," said Razzak while relishing the challenge from a young prospect.

Selector Habibul Bashar however said that the young pacers could steal the show in the final. "Both [Razzak

and Taijul] are left-arm spinners but they are different in their bowling. We all know what type of a bowler Razzak is, but Taijul is a traditional spinner who tries with loop, flight and he has got the ability to take wickets. But we are waiting for some action from the pace bowlers as there is grass on the pitch and, as far as I know, it will not be removed," said Bashar.

"There is a chance the teams can field three pacemen and if it happens then it will be really interesting," added the former national skipper.

Razzak however was still confident as he said: "If there is bounce then the spinners can also dominate the proceedings. I am however not sure whether the grass on the pitch will finally stay."

FRANCE 1938

Piola, the silent killer

The 1930s were dominated by Italian football. Italy won the 1934 World Cup title at home, two years later they won the Olympic gold in Berlin and in 1938, they side successfully defended the World Cup title in France. Each of the winning team had an outstanding player: in 1934 it was Guiseppe Meazza, in 1936 Ugo Frossi, and 1938 was marked by Silvio Piola.

Piola made history with his performances at the 1938 World Cup. After two goals in the quarterfinals against the hosts, France (3-1), the French media baptised him 'Executioner of French'. In the final, Piola scored the goal to go ahead 2-1 and then the last in the 4-2 triumph over Hungary. The Hungarian international Pal Titkos later described his impressions of the final: "Silvio Piola had a fantastic physique and constantly overran his opponents. He was a man of great versatility and a centre forward without fear. He exploited any opportunity for shooting on goal."

Piola was discovered as a youth by a football-enthusiast priest, Don Sassi, who was immediately impressed by the 1.78m, 77kg player because of his intrepid nature, his speed, and his jumping and shooting power. A good grasp of the game and quick reflexes in front of the opposing goal made Piola an outstandingly promising talent. Don Sassi procured the young forward for the then extraordinarily successful club US Pro Vercelli, a club in the bishop's city in the Po flats. The son of a cloth merchant, he played his first championship game for the 'Eagles' at the age of 16.

On March 24, 1935, Piola made his debut for the national team in Vienna. Italy defeated Austria 2-0. Piola stood in for Giuseppe Meazza and scored both goals. At the 1938 FIFA World Cup, he not only finished the second highest scorer with a tally of five goals, he was also elected the best player of the tournament. Piola, who



PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

Silvio Piola, the star of 1934 World Cup and the all-time leading scorer of Serie A, juggling with the ball.

scored two and assisted in one of the altogether four goals in the final in Paris, played his last international match as captain of the 'Squadra Azzurra' against England (1-1) in Florence on May 18, 1952. He earned 34 caps and scored 30 goals.

In between his first division debut on February 16, 1930, in Bologna and his farewell as a football professional on July 3, 1954, in Bergamo were 24 years in which Piola played for Pro Vercelli, Lazio Rome, AC Turin, Juventus Turin and FC Novara, achieving a total of 566 championship matches and 290 goals. He still holds the match-record in Italy. He became famous for his acrobatic overhead and falling side-kicks which were celebrated in stadia around the world as artistic sensations of that time. Even after his active career Piola remained linked to football. He became manager of Lazio Rome, then Italy's junior coach, adviser to the Italian Football Association in 1976, and was given an honorary doctorate by the University of Rome for his life merits in 1987.

Sk Russel set to take on Lankans

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel KC will be looking forward to notching up a victory in the AFC Presidents' Cup when they take on Sri Lanka Air Force Club in their second match at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo today.

Having played out a goalless draw against last edition's runner-up KRL Football Club of Pakistan, Sheikh Russel are seemingly upbeat about today's clash and want to all but confirm their final-round berth by beating Sri Lanka Air Force, who are currently the table toppers with a 1-0 win over Ugyen Academy of Bhutan in the four-team group opener.

The boys of Sheikh Russel had light jogging, training and swimming yesterday ahead of their crucial tie, which will decide the fate of Bangladesh Premier League champions.

"We have been in trouble following poor performance in the ongoing professional football league at home but I think we almost overcame our poor state with a draw in the tournament opener and we are now confident to play better tomorrow (Friday)," said Sheikh Russel veteran defender Hasan Al Mamun.

"Winning the match is more important. We are not thinking about the opponents. We want to score and win the match against Sri Lanka Air Force," said Montenegrin coach Dragan Djukanovic, according to messages received yesterday.

Rafa, Serena in last 8

AFP, Madrid

World number one Rafael Nadal remained on course to retain his Madrid Masters title with a comfortable 6-1, 6-4 win over Finland's Jarkko Nieminen on Thursday.

Next up for the 13-time Grand Slam champion is a meeting with sixth seed Tomas Berdych after the Czech came through in three sets against Bulgarian 12th seed Grigor Dimitrov 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Japan's Kei Nishikori continued his fine form on clay after winning in Barcelona two weeks ago as he outlasted eighth seed Milos Raonic in two tie-breaks 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/5). Serena Williams maintained her quest for a third consecutive Madrid Open title with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Spain's Carla Suarez-Navarro.

Maria Sharapova also moved into the last eight with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Australian Samantha Stosur and set up an intriguing quarterfinal against world number two Li Na, who came from a set down to beat 16th seed Sloane Stephens 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 to reach last eight.

Ireland-SL second ODI washed out

AFP, Dublin

The second one-day international between Ireland and Sri Lanka in Dublin on Thursday was abandoned without a ball bowled due to rain.

Umpires Richard Kettleborough and Richard Smith took the decision after a 2:00pm local time (1300GMT) inspection, ruling the outfield too wet for any play.

It had rained heavily overnight and further rain in the morning also left damp patches on the pitch.

Sri Lanka won the two-match series 1-0 after their 79-run victory in Dublin on Tuesday.