

SPORT



31
DAYS
TO GO



Impeccable Imrul

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's home of cricket, the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium at Mirpur, witnessed its first double century by a Bangladeshi batsman yesterday, when left-handed opener Imrul Kayes stroked his way to a resolute 204 in the third innings of the final of the Bangladesh Cricket League.

Middle-order batsman Mithun Ali provided good support by scoring his eighth first-class century and remained unbeaten on 111 to place the Prime Bank South Zone in a position of strength.

The pair shared a 254-run stand for the third wicket and in the process took their side to a nearly unbeatable position. The Southerners finished the third day on 410 for 3 to already take a massive lead of 446 runs.

With two more days to go, even if the game ends as a draw, South Zone

will be crowned champions due to their first innings lead over their opponents--the BCB North Zone.

Imrul and Mithun's performances came against the flow, in a game that saw batsmen from both sides voraciously throw away their wickets, on a good batting track, on the first two days.

Imrul, who got out at long on while playing a lazy drive in the first innings, seemed to have learnt from his mistake and played a well-controlled innings. The one major difference in yesterday's innings was his ability to curtail himself from playing shots in the air. He did hit nine sixes during his six-hour vigil, but most of those well-timed hits came off some below-par deliveries.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PRIME BANK SOUTH ZONE: 271 and 410 for 3 in 90 overs (Imrul 204, Mithun 111 not out; Forhad 1-34)
BCB NORTH ZONE: 235

Slow left-armed Taijul Islam, who had taken eight wickets in the first innings, was bound to be the major threat and once Imrul found his way around him, he looked in impeccable form.

While his tactics did let him get the better of Taijul, he however did go through a nervy patch against the spinner moments before he reached his 200.

While in the 180s, Imrul went down the track and attempted to hit Taijul out of the ground. The spinner saw that coming and fired one outside the off-stump. It compelled Imrul to abandon his shot and dive back to his crease. Two balls before that delivery, Imrul skied Taijul in the air and almost gifted a catch to the long-off fielder, who was standing on the boundary line and took the catch much later than expected. There were also a couple of drop catches, however, at the end of the day nothing could stop the batsmen from reaching his career-best score.

'Had to score a double ton'

According to Imrul Kayes, the kind of 'environment' that Bangladesh's cricket is in now, a batsman just needed to score a double hundred in order to get accepted in the big league. By that statement Imrul indicated the string of 200s that dominated Bangladesh's domestic competition this year.

Shamsur Rahman, Forhad Reza, Taiabur Parvez and Asif Ahmed are a few names that scaled the mark earlier this year.

"I always wanted to score this double hundred, especially in the recent past since it seems that in the current scenario, being a top order batsman, you have to have a double hundred in your bag, to get the right recognition," joked Imrul.

"On a serious note though, walking next to players who have scored 200s made me feel gutted at times. I used to tell myself why can't I do that? And finally I did, so I am really happy," he added.

Imrul's plan was to play the ball along the ground for as long as possible. "When I came in to bat I never thought of a 200. My target was not to play any big shot and to focus on the next delivery. It was when I reached the 140-mark that I backed myself to reach 200. I just had to play with a cool head."



PHOTO: STAR

South Zone opener Imrul Kayes celebrates his double hundred against North Zone on the third day of the Bangladesh Cricket League final at SBNS in Mirpur yesterday.

Capela leaves MSC job

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC coach Rui Capela Batista has given up on his coach's position and left the country on Saturday night, four months into his six-month contract, triggering speculation that he left the club due to disagreement with the club management over on-field issues.

There is a whisper that the Portuguese coach could not accept his side's 0-3 defeat against Sheikh Jamal DC in their last league match.

"The talk is baseless. Mohammedan also suffered defeat to Team BJMC. Does it mean they gave it away?" asked MSC director Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan yesterday.

"He left his job to take care of his wife, who is suffering from cancer and has recently been admitted to hospital," said Lokman.



Manchester City's Belgian captain Vincent Kompany hoists the English Premier League trophy after beating West Ham United on the title-deciding final day at the Etihad Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

City crowned champions

AFP, Manchester



Goals from Samir Nasri and skipper Vincent Kompany saw Manchester City to a 2-0 win over West Ham as they claimed their second Premier League title in three seasons.

Sunday's final day of the league season victory at City's Eastlands ground crowned a triumphant first English campaign in charge for Manuel Pellegrini, the Chilean manager celebrating his first domestic championship in Europe.

Winners of the League Cup earlier in the year, City added the championship in fairly routine fashion.

While City's main challengers Liverpool faltered in the past two

RESULTS

Cardiff 1 (Bellamy 15) **Chelsea 2** (Schurrle 72, Torres 75)
Fulham 2 (Woodrow 61, David 90+4) Crystal Palace 2 (Gayle 28, 84)
Hull 0 **Everton 2** (McCarthy 9, Lukaku 46)
Liverpool 2 (Agger 63, Sturridge 65) Newcastle 1 (Skrtel 20-og)
Manchester City 2 (Nasri 39, Kompany 49) West Ham 0
Norwich 0 **Arsenal 2** (Ramsey 53, Jenkinson 62)
Southampton 1 (Lambert 28) **Manchester United 1** (Mata 54)
Sunderland 1 (Borini 50) **Swansea 3** (Dyer 7, Emnes 14, Bony 54)
Tottenham 3 (Paulinho 14, Baker 35-og, Adebayor 38-pen) Aston Villa 0
West Brom 1 (Sessegnon 56) **Stoke 2** (McAuley 22-og, Adam 87)

weeks -- notably in losing at home to Chelsea and squandering a three-goal lead to draw at Crystal Palace -- the unflappable Pellegrini ensured his club kept their composure, culminating in Sunday's victory over Sam Allardyce's Hammers.

By the time Nasri shot City into a 40th minute lead, the pressure around Eastlands had already been lifted considerably with the surprise news from Anfield that Liverpool had fallen behind to Newcastle.

That left Pellegrini's team in the position of potentially being able to lose to West Ham and still regain the title they won so memorably on the final day of the season in 2012.

Nonetheless, defeat seemed highly unlikely with City enjoying 75 per cent of the possession prior to the opening goal.

SWITZERLAND 1954

The Miracle of Berne

Switzerland was the obvious choice of venue for the fifth World Cup. FIFA's headquarters were in Zurich and 1954 marked the 50th anniversary of its formation. The competition proved to be a financial success and received limited TV coverage for the first time.

FIFA once more found it necessary to change the format, reverting to a pool and knock-out system. The 16 teams were divided into four groups with two teams in each group seeded. The two seeded teams, strangely enough, did not need to play each other in the group. Also remarkable was that extra time was needed if the scores were level in the group matches!

Hungary were the new force to be reckoned with. They banged in goals with a frequency never seen before in a World Cup. They beat West Germany 8-3 and South Korea 9-0. The world was introduced to players like Puskas, Kocsis, Hidegkuti and Czibor. Another team among the favourites was Uruguay. They still hadn't lost a match in World Cup history at this stage and their run continued also after the group stage after beating Czechoslovakia and Scotland.

The quarterfinal between Austria and Switzerland brought a new World Cup record. Austria won 7-5, that's the highest number of goals ever in a World Cup match. Uruguay beat England 4-2, and Hungary beat Brazil by the same score in one of the most brutal matches ever, later dubbed as 'The Battle of Berne'. West Germany, who had from their early thrashing by Hungary in the first round, beat Yugoslavia.

The semifinal between Hungary and Uruguay is regarded to be one of the best ever in a World Cup. Hungary won 4-2 after extra-time and with that, Uruguay's unbeaten run was broken. The Germans had

hit top form and trashed their neighbours Austria by 6-1 and the stage was set for a great final.

Rain dampened the final, but not the Hungarians' resolve as they blasted their way to a 2-0 lead with goals from Puskas and Czibor, leading spectators believing a rout might be on.

The Germans had other ideas, however, and battled back brilliantly to level the scores through Maximilian Morlock and Uwe Rahn. It was 2-2 and only 20 minutes had been played.

The action swung back and forth for the rest of the first-half and most of the second, but with extra-time looming Rahn struck the championship winner with five minutes left, brilliantly set-up by Fritz Walter.

In the dying minutes Puskas ran onto Toth's pass to slide the ball under Turek, only for Mervyn Griffiths, the authoritarian, high-profile Welsh linesman to call it offside. Thirty seconds from the end, Czibor put everything into a shot, but Turek, tremendously agile for a man of 35, turned it away.

It was the end of Hungary's virtual invincibility. They had strong claims to that unwanted title: best team never to win the World Cup. For them this was the end of the World.

FACTS & FIGURES

Winners: West Germany
Runners-up: Hungary
Leading Scorer: Sandor Kocsis (HUN)--11
Teams: 16
Matches: 26
Goals: 140
Attendance: 889,500



The jubilant West Germans do a victory lap after beating the mighty Hungarians 3-2 in the final in Berne.

PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

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