

Abahani stay in the hunt

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union's impressive run in the Nitel Tata Bangladesh Premier League continued as the All Oranges posted their fifth victory in last six matches with a 2-1 win over Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With overall seventh win in 15 matches, Brothers overtook Mohammedan SC to grab the third position of the ten-team table with 25 points. They are still 12 points adrift of leaders Sheikh Jamal DC and six behind second-placed Abahani, who raised their tally to 31 points after an empathic 5-2 win over Uttar Baridhara Club in the day's second match.

Abahani's victory was on the cards right from the beginning as they took the lead within 41 seconds when midfielder Shahedul Alam drove home from the edge of the six-yard box. Right-back Nasirul Islam doubled the lead in the 13th minute after playing a nice one-two with Awudu Ibrahim.

Awudu then set up the third goal for Portuguese Leonildo Soares, who found the back of the net with a placing shot in the 21st minute before Awudu himself got on the scoresheet with a strike in the 55th minute.

Baridhara pulled one back through Kenyan striker Collins Tiego in the 66th minute but Akele Patrick restored Abahani's four-goal cushion in the 81st minute. Baridhara substitute Dulal Hasan found a second consolation goal with a chip in the stoppage time.

Meanwhile, Brothers gave more evidence of their fortified attack after the inclusion of Haitian hitman Augustine Walson, who has struck four goals in last three matches while his Nigerian strike-partner Kester Akon has also been in great form to scoring seven goals. The two bagged one goal each in yesterday's match against Feni Soccer Club.

Brothers showed signs of a goalfest as Walson found the back of the net in the tenth minute, but his strike was controversially ruled out for off-side.

Walson however got himself on the scoresheet six minutes later when he availed a fumble from a Feni midfielder to advance into the box and place the ball past the left-hand of goalkeeper Mohammad Nehal.

Having survived two close calls, Brothers doubled the lead in the 40th minute through Akon, who drove a low shot to beat Nehal.

After the break, Feni put up some resistance and pulled one goal back in the 61st minute when substitute Ali Hasan latched on to a Chuka Charles cross and calmly placed the ball home from close range. But Feni's hopes of a comeback were shattered when goalkeeper Nehal was sent off in the 80th minute for handling the ball outside the box.

Brothers came close to widening the margin from a counter attack but a low drive from Nigerian striker Simon hit the woodwork, which in the end, mattered little to the outcome.



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani right-back Nasirul Islam (C) skips past Uttar Baridhara defenders during their 5-2 victory in the Nitel Tata Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Chess coach due in June

SPORTS REPORTER

Dutch Grandmaster Sergey Tiviakov is set to coach the national chess team ahead of the 41st World Chess Olympiad which will be held in Tromso, Norway from August 1-15.

Tiviakov is supposed to arrive here in June to conduct a month-long training where Grandmasters Niaz Murshed, Ziaur Rahman, Abdullah Al Rakib, Enamul Hossain Razib, and International Master Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar will be participating.

Bangladesh produced their best result as yet in the last edition of World Chess Olympiad with a 33rd-place finish.

Four cos submit offers

SPORTS REPORTER



Four companies submitted technical offers for the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB's) international media rights spanning from June 2014 to June 2020 yesterday.

According to BCB director Kazi Inam, these offers will be verified at a meeting at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today, after which the bidders who qualify will participate in the financial bid for the rights tomorrow.

"By technical offer we mean a list

of details that the board wanted from each of the companies. It had to do more with their profile and some other minute details. We will scrutinise the offers at a meeting on Thursday. If they have all met our requirements they will be able to participate in the bid," said Inam.

Mediacom, which owns Maasranga Television, Virgo Media which owns Channel 9 and Gazi TV made offers from the local market, while from the international market Sporty Solutionz -- which owns Star Sports -- made up the four offers yesterday.

"An open bidding will be held

at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel on May 16 with the participation of the qualified company or companies," the BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said yesterday.

As such no floor price for the bidding has been fixed as yet. It is something that the four-member committee organised to look after the issue still has to decide.

With regards to the matter, Chowdhury said, "We'll fix the floor price along with security money in tomorrow's (Thursday) meeting. Bidding will be completed through a transparent process and the highest bidder will be got the media right."

Novak makes winning return

AFP, Rome

Novak Djokovic made a winning return nearly a month after suffering a wrist injury, starting the Rome Masters on a rainy Tuesday with a 6-3, 7-5 defeat of Radek Stepanek.

The second-round victory after a bye was the first match for the world number two Serb since losing a Monte Carlo semifinal on April 19 to Roger Federer while suffering with his right wrist problem.

Djokovic, a two-time champion at the Foro Italico, was to have played last week in Madrid but held off. He won in Rome with new coach Boris Becker looking on.



Action from the Standard Chartered Trophy match between Bangladesh's Grameenphone and Hong Kong's SFALO Limited at Anfield on Tuesday morning.

PHOTO: COURTESY

GP low on score, high on spirit

AL-AMIN from Anfield



The hallowed turf at Anfield turned into a moving panorama Tuesday morning just before the kickoff of the Standard Chartered Trophy 2014 finals. 96 players from 14 different countries including seven from Bangladesh sporting jerseys of different colours walked onto the famous green turf to show their football skills in the five-a-side tournament.

The introduction of the players onto pitch was dramatic to say the least. With the famous Liverpool chant 'You Will Never Walk Alone' blaring from the infield sound system, teams came out through the historic tunnel of one of the best venues in the world one after another. It certainly gave nearly a hundred spectators the feeling that they were attending the opening ceremony of a major soccer event.

Bangladesh lost their opening game against Pakistan 2-0.

Goalkeeper Junaid's first touch of the ball was fatal as he let go a low shot from mid-pitch through his legs. The second goal, which the Grameenphone amateurs conceded against a Pakistani side that looked fitter and well-drilled for the occasion, came a couple of minutes later from a concerted attack down the flank. And what was expected to be a blood-and-thunder contest ended as a lop-sided affair. The battered GP boys however took some solace from the fact that their rivals lost their next game against Malaysia 6-0.

Placed in Group B the GP team got the opportunity to play six games. For records, they lost all their games; 3-0 against Indonesia, 6-0 against Malaysia, who scored their first goal within a minute after the kickoff.

Zainal Abidin, the self-proclaimed gaffer of the team, told yours truly that he had instructed his boys to score five.

"My target was five and I couldn't control anything beyond that," Abidin confessed after the game.

The GP boys actually conceded a seventh, which was cancelled as it came seconds after the final whistle of an eight-minute-at-a-stretch duration game on the rectangular green top which accommodated four games at a time.

A 7-0 defeat against Vietnam, followed by two more 6-0 losses at the hands of Europe and Hong Kong completed the GP journey. The only serious contribution from GP, one of two purely amateur sides in a competition where most countries presented strong academy teams, in the contest was four shots against the bar.

But the results were immaterial for the excited GP team members like many others who chose to relish their big moment of playing at Anfield for the rest of their lives.

After the group games, an all-Asian semifinals involving Thailand v Vietnam and Hong Kong v Singapore were guaranteed. Vietnam dispatched holders Thailand in the semis and then won the final against Singapore to

crown themselves as the SC Trophy 2014 winners with their own Luis Suarez (the player sported the number 7 shirt) hammering the all-important goal.

Vietnam might have claimed the silverware after a not-stop daylight action, it was actually those 140 mere mortals who are the eventual victors after a never-experienced-before full of dreams come true moments starting with a much-sought-after match ticket of Liverpool-Newcastle game in hand, enjoying the spill and thrills of those 90 odd minutes at Anfield on Sunday; getting the opportunity to sit on more than a century-old wooden benches inside the famed Anfield locker room the next day and then spreading their hands like wings in extreme delight while standing or kicking a ball on that sacred pitch at Anfield where dreams are made. Thank you Standard Chartered Bank, the proud sponsors of the Liverpool kits. Thank you Liverpool FC for giving these lads a chance to live the dream. Long live the bond between the two.

SWEDEN 1958

Fontaine: Just 13!

A third-choice striker for France going into the 1958 World Cup, Just Fontaine was to set the tournament alight with a record-breaking performance. Fontaine's astonishing mark of 13 goals in six matches in Sweden remains the record tally for a single player in the World Cup.

Born in Marrakech in Morocco, Fontaine signed for US Marocaine de Casablanca where he spent three seasons before leaving for France and joining Nice, a team he helped win the French Cup during his second season. In December 1953, Fontaine marked his international debut with a hatrick against Luxembourg and helped Nice and later Reims to the French championship titles, setting scoring records on the way.

His excellent run of form guaranteed his inclusion in the French squad for the World Cup in Sweden and Fontaine scored three against Paraguay as France run out 7-3 winners.

That win set the tone for his country's drive to the semifinals and Fontaine kept scoring notching two against Yugoslavia and another in the final group game against Scotland. He thumped two in the next match against Ireland and was rewarded with a match against Brazil, where they came up against Pele and company who proved too strong, ending the French dream with a 5-2 defeat. Almost inevitably Fontaine found the net in that match.

However, there was still the consolation of the third-place match, which proved decisive in setting Fontaine's record mark as he scored four times in a 6-3 win over Germany that took his record to 13.

The 1958 World Cup should have been the start of a long career for Fontaine but within a few years he was forced to retire after he twice broke his leg within nine months. Having played his last international at the age of 27, Fontaine finished with a record of 30 goals in 21 appearances.

Fontaine's scoring feats in the



JUST FONTAINE

World Cup are even more improbable in view of the fact that he was not even wearing his own boots: he had to borrow a pair from teammate Stephane Bruey.

He went on to manage France, Luchon, Paris Saint-Germain, Toulouse and Morocco, with mixed success. Now, at the age of 83, Fontaine lives in Toulouse, owns two Lacoste shops and predicts results for the French pools. "I spend my days playing belote [a French card game]," he says. "Other than that I watch the African Nations Cup, the Premier League, the Bundesliga, Serie A, La Liga..."

Fontaine has regularly dismissed the idea that goals were a cheaper currency in his day. "No, it wasn't easier to score in 1958," he said. "The state of the ball, the length of the trip over and the amateurism of the back-room staff made everything much more complicated than today....Above all else, referees protect strikers much more than they did in my day. So let me repeat it: 13 goals is an enormous total. Beating my record? I don't think it can ever be done."

India come on June 13

SPORTS REPORTER

The Indian cricket team will arrive in Dhaka on June 13 to play three one-day-internationals at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. The ODIs will take place on 15, 17 and 19 June.

This will be Bangladesh's first series ever since the formation of the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) new Future Tours Programme. India are likely to send a weakened side with both captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and top order batsman Virat Kohli unlikely to be in the team.

While India has played a number of ODIs in Bangladesh in various tournaments, the last time they played a bilateral ODI series was back in 2007, immediately after the World Cup in which India lost to the Tigers and exited from the first round. After the mega tournament, Bangladesh lost the three-match ODI series 2-0. The last time India played a bilateral Test series against Bangladesh was in 2010 when they won a two-match Test series 2-0.

So far India have played 16 ODIs in Bangladesh and won 14 of them.

Barnak, Police earn big wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Barnak Samaj and Police AC earned massive wins in the Green Delta Insurance Metropolis First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Barnak Samaj outclassed Combined SC by 7-1 goals while Police AC crushed Farashganj SC by 9-1 goals.