

IPL FINAL TODAY Resilient KKR against first timers KXIP

PTI, Bangalore

The focus has remained firmly on cricket this time around and in what seems to be the perfect finale, the season's most consistent team Kings XI Punjab would eye a maiden triumph against the ever-resilient Kolkata Knight Riders in the title clash of the seventh Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

After a few controversy-marred seasons, the IPL organisers can finally heave a sigh of relief with the ongoing edition passing off rather smoothly.

Having cracked a 58-ball 122 that paved the way for KXIP's entry into their first IPL final, veteran opener Virender Sehwag along with Glenn Maxwell and David Miller will be the biggest threat for KKR, who will bank on their strong bowling unit, led by Sunil Narine.

Players from both sides will have their job cut out as they will look to gift their owners Shah Rukh Khan and Priety Zinta the trophy.

Unlike Kolkata, who have won the title once before, Punjab have never been a part of the finals.

For Kolkata, to repeat the feat of lifting the trophy for the second time, however, will be a daunting task considering the opponents they are faced with.



With the FIFA World Cup a little more than a week away, the streets of Dhaka have joined the party with flags and jerseys of Brazil and Argentina fluttering at every corner. Brazilian superstar Neymar's jersey was seen displayed yesterday at a roadside shop in Bangabandhu Avenue at Gulistan.

PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Russel stop the rot

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC won their first match under new coach Dragon Djukanovic, in the Bangladesh Premier League, after a 3-1 win over second-from-bottom Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Last season's treble-winners, who had lost three of their previous four matches since Djukanovic took over

the coach's job on April 20, took a 2-0 lead in the first half through strikes from Anwar Hossain and Mohammad Sumon, before Mathew Mendy reduced the arrears in the 78th minute for Feni. Substitute midfielder Pascal Millien restored the two-goal lead for Sheikh Russel just before the final whistle.

The win lifted the defending champions to sixth position with 20 points from 16 matches while Feni remained in ninth position with 11 points from 18 matches.

Sheikh Russel took the lead in the eighth minute when Anwar finished off a move from Sumon by slotting in a left-footed shot from inside the box. The All Blues dominated play in the first half and doubled the lead in the 28th minute when Sumon side-volleyed from top of the six-yard box on a cross from Fazle Rabbi.

Feni got their act together in the second half and after a spate of attacks, minimised the deficit through Mendy, who received a through pass in the middle of the

Russel half and ran past the opposition defenders before rounding the keeper and slotting at the back of the net. The match saw a few more end-to-end attacks and one of those, deep into stoppage time, resulted in Sheikh Russel's third goal. Haitian playmaker Millien, who had come in as a substitute midway through the first half, took an ambitious shot from just inside the box, which managed to slip under the Feni goalkeeper Mohammad Nehal and into the net after taking a deflection off a defender.



PHOTO: AFP

Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova (L) shakes the hand of her vanquisher, Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova, at the net after becoming the fourth of the women's top five seeds to exit the French Open at Roland Garros yesterday.

Pioneer League football final tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Narinda Junior Lions Club and Araf Sporting Club will face off in the final of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The final will begin at 4:30pm.

Narinda JLC reached the final beating Kollol Sangaa of Chittagong by 4-2 goals in the first semifinal while Araf SC confirmed their final berth defeating Tangail Football Academy by 3-2 goals in the second semifinal.

The champions will receive Tk 1 lakh as prize money while the runners-up will get Tk 50,000.

Flintoff's making a mistake!

AFP, London

England great Ian Botham said Andrew Flintoff was making a "massive mistake" in coming back to play Twenty20 county cricket after five years out of the game.

Flintoff, like Botham a pace bowling all-rounder and ex-England captain, was forced to retire through injury in 2009, his ankles and knees having repeatedly suffered from the pounding they took as he charged in.

However, Friday saw Lancashire announce the 36-year-old Flintoff was now a member of their Twenty20 squad, with 'Fred' set to make his comeback against arch-rivals Yorkshire at Old Trafford next week.

"While I wish him all the very best, I think he is making a massive mistake," Botham wrote in his column in Saturday's Daily Mirror tabloid.

Sangakkara's ton just enough

Sri Lanka level series

AFP, London



Kumar Sangakkara's first century at Lord's laid the platform for Sri Lanka's nailbiting seven-run series-levelling win against England in the fourth one-day international on Saturday.

Just days after they'd been shot out for 67 during a 10-wicket defeat at Old Trafford, Sri Lanka made 300 for nine after being sent into bat. Sangakkara's 112 -- his first hundred at Lord's in any format -- was the centrepiece.

England needed what would have been their joint second-highest total to win a one-day international. But their pursuit of a victory target of 301 was rocked immediately when Lasith Malinga reduced England to 10 for two by removing captain Alastair Cook and Ian Bell.

But Jos Buttler, who came in with England in dire straits at 111 for five, brought the hosts back into the match with a brilliant maiden ODI hundred, the fastest ever scored at Lord's.

England got the target down to 20 off two overs and then 12 off the last one, bowled by Malinga.

Buttler took a first-ball single but Chris Jordan then drove Malinga straight to Dilshan at long on.

A target of nine off two balls was beyond new batsman James Tredwell and Malinga, who took three for 52 had again proved himself a superb 'death' bowler.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 300 for 9 in 50 overs (Sangakkara 112, Dilshan 71, Mathews 30, extras 20; Gurney 4-55, Anderson 2-60, Jordan 2-67)

ENGLAND: 293 for 8 in 50 overs (Buttler 121, Bopara 51, Root 43, Ballance 42; Malinga 3-52, Mendis 2-60)

Result: Sri Lanka won by 7 runs

USA 1994 Brazil conquer new world

From a disco diva to the 'Divine Ponytail', USA '94 ended in the same way it began -- with the horror of a missed penalty. Roberto Baggio's missed spot-kick in the shoot-out which handed Brazil their fourth title, was the final act of a thrilling tournament that had tragedy of a murdered player and the disgrace of a legend's failed drugs test, yet succeeded in conquering football's final frontier -- the United States.

Despite the often fearsome heat and humidity, USA '94 witnessed some thrilling games and shocks, starting with the Republic of Ireland's victory over Italy in New York. Italy, though, recovered to reach the last 16 and were only 90 seconds away from being eliminated by Nigeria until Baggio came alive -- following up his own equaliser with an extra-time penalty winner.

Argentina imploded against the talented Romanians after Diego Maradona, still their talisman at the age of 33, tested positive for a performance-enhancing drug and was expelled from the tournament.

But even that shocking news was put into perspective by the fate of Andres Escobar, who was gunned down outside a restaurant in his home city of Medellin just days after his own goal in a 2-1 defeat by the hosts.

Brazil were left as the only non-European team in the quarterfinals. With the exception of their strikers, Romario and Bebeto, Carlos Alberto Parreira's side had less flair than their predecessors but far more steel, personified by their captain Dunga, which was a quality they needed to see off the US after having Leonardo sent off before half-time for a vicious but uncharacteristic elbow that shattered Tab Ramos's cheekbone.

They could still turn on the Samba style when needed, however, and Branco's brutal free-kick settled their classic last-eight clash with the Netherlands. Elsewhere, another late show from Baggio edged out Spain and the biggest upset of the tournament saw outsiders Bulgaria knock out holders Germany. Sweden



PHOTO: DAILY STAR ARCHIVE

Golden Ball winner Romario kisses the World Cup trophy while captain Dunga (R) and teammate Branco look on after their win in the final over Italy.

joined them in the last four, but only after a nail-biting end to their clash with Romania, which was decided on penalties.

The high-scoring Swedes were up against Brazil for a place in their first final since 1958 but, having fought out a 1-1 draw during the group stage, they were beaten, thanks to Romario's 80th-minute header.

Another two-goal salvo from Baggio had ended Bulgaria's run and set up a rematch of 1970 final. The final saw two exhausted sides fight out a tame stalemate at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena and for the first time, a World Cup final was to be decided on penalties.

Baresi and Marcio Santos both missed and, after an exchange of two successful kicks, Daniele Massaro's poor effort was saved by Claudio Taffarel. After Dunga had given Brazil the advantage, up stepped Baggio, so deadly all tournament. He blazed over, choosing power over the precision that had served him

so well, and Brazil were crowned champions for the fourth time.

For Parreira success was vindication of his belief that Brazil would only regain their mantle as world champions if they added defensive discipline to their attacking verve. "Although most of the Brazilian and international press were always criticising my philosophy, I stuck by my ideas and my principles," he said afterwards. "It feels great because, like Frank Sinatra in that song, I did it my way."

FACTS & FIGURES

Winners: Brazil

Runners-up: Italy

Leading Scorer: Oleg Salenko (RUS), Hristo Stoichkov (BUL)--6

Teams: 24

Matches: 52

Goals: 141

Attendance: 3,587,538

In WC

head-to-head,

Brazil won 2 matches while Argentina won 1

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