



New Zealand in control

AFP, Bridgetown

Kane Williamson's second century of the series put New Zealand in a comfortable position at 260 for five in their second innings, a lead of 236, at lunch on the fourth day of the third and final Test at Kensington Oval on Sunday.

His unbeaten 121 and the support of all-rounder Jimmy Neesham (51) in a fifth-wicket partnership of 91, tilted the balance of an intriguing match which saw the West Indies making the ideal start to the day with the wicket of Brendon McCullum in the fourth over.

New Zealand's captain fell for 25, lbw to Kemar Roach to become the fast bowler's 99th Test wicket and leave the visitors uncertainly placed at 135 for four, only 111 runs ahead.

However, Williamson found another capable partner in Neesham, the left-hander stealing the spotlight from his senior partner in hoisting four sixes during an entertaining innings. Occupying the vital number three position in the batting order, Williamson's innings was one of calm assurance before lunch, in contrast to the start of his effort on the third evening when he could have been stumped down the leg-side off the first delivery by spinner Shane Shillingford.

He started the morning by going after Shillingford, lofting him for four over long-on and never looked back, reaching the century in 249 minutes off 173 balls with 15 fours.

Neesham, who played well for 78 in the first innings before being run out, completed his second half-century of the match but perished playing one attacking shot too many.

In the second over of the day from debutant Jason Holder, he drove powerfully but straight to Kraigg Brathwaite at short extra-cover.

Pugnacious wicketkeeper-batsman BJ. Watling, on 15, will resume after the interval with Williamson.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: First innings 293
WEST INDIES: First innings 317 all out (Brathwaite 68, Edwards 58, Ramdin 45, Gayle 42; Wagner 4-64, Neesham 2-12, Boul 2-71)
NEW ZEALAND: Second innings 260 for 5 (Williamson 121 not out, Neesham 51, McCullum 25; Roach 3-46, Holder 2-26)

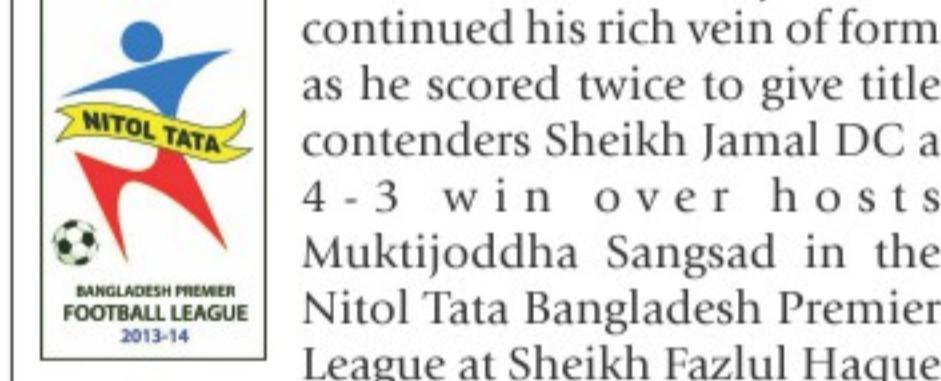


On top from nowhere ... Colombia playmaker James Rodriguez popped up as the highest scorer, 5 goals, of this World Cup with two sublime strikes against Uruguay on Saturday.

PHOTO: GETTY

Sony powers Sk Jamal

SPORTS REPORTER



Haitian forward Sony Norde continued his rich vein of form as he scored twice to give title contenders Sheikh Jamal DC a 4-3 win over hosts Muktijoddha Sangsad in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League at Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj yesterday.

Sony's brace helped Sheikh Jamal DC go 12 points clear of nearest rivals Abahani, who have 39 points having played a match less than Sheikh Jamal's 22.

Sheikh Jamal now need just seven points from their remaining five matches to take an unassailable lead as well as ensure their second professional football league title.

The Haitian hitman had been going through a goal draught in the ongoing league after his brilliant debut season last year but it seems that Sony is now back to his best, under the guidance of coaching director Maruful Haque, as Sony struck seven goals in the last five matches to raise his tally to 13 goals.

Abahani are three points ahead of Mohammedan at second position.

He has dropped the first set in all three rounds so far and tackles 19-year-old Australian wildcard Nick Kyrgios, the world number 144, for a place in the quarter-finals.

Federer, who won the last of his seven Wimbledon titles in 2012, tackles Spanish veteran Tommy Robredo who has made the fourth round for the first time at the 13th attempt.

Federer has won 10 of his 11 meetings against his fellow 32-year-old but Robredo triumphed when they last met at the US Open fourth round in 2013.

Murray has reached the last 16 for the seventh year in succession and has dropped just 19 games in three rounds, comfortably a personal best in his tournament history.

The third-seeded Murray plays Kevin Anderson, the first South African to make the fourth round for 14 years.

On the women's side of the draw Maria Sharapova is peaking just in time to take advantage of Serena Williams' stunning exit.

Sharapova, who has yet to drop a set after routing Alison Riske 6-3, 6-0 in the third round, heads into the second week as the newly-installed favourite following Alize Cornet's shock 1-6, 6-

3, 6-4 victory over world number one Williams on Saturday.

Serena's defeat is a huge boost for French Open champion Sharapova, who had been scheduled to meet the American top seed in the quarter-finals.

That would have been a major obstacle to Sharapova's hopes of winning Wimbledon for the second time as she had lost her previous 15 meetings with Serena.

But with Williams vanquished, the Russian will face German ninth seed Angelique Kerber on Monday for a place in the quarter-finals.

Of the other title contenders, 2012 Wimbledon runner-up Agnieszka Radwanska faces Russian 22nd seed Ekaterina Makarova.

Third seed Simona Halep of Romania, beaten by Sharapova in the recent French Open final, reached the last 16 for the first time with a 6-4, 6-1 win over Swiss teenager Belinda Bencic and faces Kazakh world number 72 Zarina Diyas.

Petra Kvitova takes on China's Peng Shuai, while former world number one Caroline Wozniacki meets Barbora Zahlavova Strycova, the Czech world number 43.

No pressure on Rodriguez

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

World Cup sensation James Rodriguez said that Colombia would feel "no pressure" against Brazil in the quarterfinals after inspiring his side to a 2-0 victory over Colombia.

The 22-year-old scored a contender for goal of the tournament with an exquisite volley in the 28th minute of Saturday's last-16 game at the Maracana before doubling his tally shortly after half-time.

Colombia will now face the hosts in Fortaleza on July 4 and Rodriguez believes that his side's four consecutive wins in the tournament mean that Brazil will have to take them seriously.

"There's no pressure," said the Monaco playmaker.

"Obviously we have to watch Brazil closely. They have very good players and they play good football, but they'll have to watch us closely as well."

"We have good players and we can be dangerous. I think it's going to be a beautiful match."

Rodriguez's man-of-the-match display prompted Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez to liken him to Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, but he was modest in his own assessment of his performance.

"I only want to help the team," said Rodriguez, who is now the tournament's top scorer with five goals.

"I'm playing at a good level. We're scoring goals and I'm happy because of that."

Although Brazil needed penalties to overcome Chile after a 1-1 draw in their last-16 tie on Saturday, Colombia coach Jose Pekerman said that his side would not underestimate them.

"Having come through such a difficult

match as Brazil did, it always raises the level of confidence because they are already in the quarterfinals and they're approaching the final stages," he said.

"We know the potential that Brazil have. It will be a great match. They are two countries that interpret football in the same way."

While Brazil will enter the game as favourites, Pekerman believes that his well-drilled side have the weapons to make the hosts feel uncomfortable.

"At this level, there are a lot of elements that have to be balanced out," he said.

"That's why teams need players who are focused so that they clearly understand their roles and don't give away space."

"They need to have the tactics to be able to change things in the course of a match and they also need the psychological side, which plays an important part in football."

"Sometimes a team with a lot of potential, if they don't find the result and they need to win, they can't play so brilliantly."

"So the competition becomes interesting because a team with less individual stars can disturb the balance of the other team."

Pekerman also said that it would be unfair to simply dub the game a clash between Rodriguez and Brazil superstar Neymar.

"In terms of individuals, I always say that this has to do with the team," he said.

"All players give their best when the entire team is working well, and our team performances are even."

"James is scoring important goals, but [Juan] Cuadrado is also playing at a great level, as are the strikers, the wingers, the full-backs. We also have a great goalkeeper [David Ospina]."

"We're playing very well as a team and we're going through a good moment, but we know the match will be hard and that Brazil have the capacity to cause us problems."

Hockey squad trimmed to 20

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday trimmed their preliminary squad for the Asian Games and World Hockey League (Round-1) 35 to 20 after the one-month camp in Bangla-desh Krira Shikkha Protishthan.

The selection committee pinned hopes on old guns, except for defender Salam Sadik and goalkeeper Abu Sayeed Nippon, who have been given the chance for the first time in the senior fold.

The selected players are: Ashim Gop, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Salman Sadik, Rokonuzzaman, Farhad Ahmed Shitul, Sarwar Hossain, Sheikh Mohammad Nannu, Sabir Hossain, Krishna Kumar, Hasan Jubair Niloy, Pushkor Khisha Mimo, Abu Sayeed Nippon, Khorshedur Rahman, Taposh Barman, Belal Hossain, Mainul Islam Koushik, Rafiqul Islam, Irfanul Haque, Abdullah Al Mansur and Rabbi Salehin Rocky.

TT Federation polls held

SPORTS REPORTER

Khandokar Hasan Munir has been elected the general secretary of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation after he beat Zobera Rahman Linu in the polls held at the National Sports Council yesterday.

Of the 73 councillors, 70 cast their votes to elect four vice presidents, one general secretary, two joint secretaries, one treasurer and 16 members.

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