

JONAS'S EMOTIONAL RETURN

Newcastle United's Argentina midfielder Jonas Gutierrez said he would remember his return to action on Wednesday after treatment for testicular cancer for the rest of his life. Gutierrez, 31, had surgery in Argentina in September to have his left testicle removed after a tumour was discovered and he since underwent a course of chemotherapy.

"I will remember for the rest of my life the reception. I'm really happy with the reception and the support the fans gave me and the support through the illness," he told the BBC.

—REUTERS



Sk Jamal retain title

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal retained the Federation Cup with a 6-4 win over Muktijoddha Sangsad in a pulsating final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian hitman Emeka Darlington and substitute Rubel Mia struck one goal each in the second half of extra-time to deliver the third title in fifth successive final appearance for Sheikh Jamal after the regulation time produced a 4-4 stalemate in an enthralling encounter at the big bowl.

Though Emeka and Rubel finally made the difference in the game, it was Haitian hitman Wedson Anselme, who struck a hat-trick that brought Sheikh Jamal back into the match after going 2-4 down against a matured Muktijoddha Sangsad at one stage.

SHEIKH JAMAL 6-4 MUKTIJODDHA

Just when it seemed that Muktijoddha Sangsad would go on to break their 10-year title drought as they were convincingly leading by 4-2 goals, they had to surrender the advantage in the face of constant attacks from Sheikh Jamal.

Wedson struck a brilliant brace in the second half -- in the 62nd and 70th minutes -- to level the margin and took the game into extra-time.

Sheikh Jamal got off to a brilliant start with a 6th minute strike from Emeka but the lead lasted only two minutes after

Muktijoddha defender Yeamin Munna equalised.

Six minutes later, Sheikh Jamal restored the lead with a placing shot from Wedson but they were soon stunned by national discard Enamul Haque, who scored a brace in the 39th minute and 41st minute to provide Muktijoddha Sangsad a hope of regaining the title after 10 years.

"Despite going 2-4 down, we never gave up the hope and I knew the boys have the ability to come back and they did it accordingly," said Sheikh Jamal coach Maruful Haque.

As there was hardly any difference between the players of two sides, it was a game of two tacticians and Maruful Haque had the last laugh over veteran coach Abu Yousuf.

"The players were instructed to put the ball behind the backline of Muktijoddha Sangsad which is a weak area of the opponents and the boys played accordingly to leave the field with a win," said Maruf.

Abu Yousuf blamed a lack of fighting spirit from his charges that caused them to surrender the lead and thus award the match to the opponents.

"Sheikh Jamal have a lot of quality players in reserve bench which I don't have and it made the difference as I saw my substitute players struggle to cope up with the pace," said Yousuf who gave up hope for a win after man-of-the-match Wedson struck the equaliser in the second half.



Sheikh Jamal players celebrate with the Federation Cup trophy after defeating Muktijoddha Sangsad in the final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Rajshahi clinch a thriller

SPORTS REPORTER

The sixth round of the National Cricket League managed to produce just one win as a majority of the four-day matches were affected by inclement weather. Rajshahi were the only team to come up with a positive result as they cruised to a four-wicket victory over Barisal at the BKSP.

It was an exciting finish which saw Rajshahi given a target of 353 runs on the final day. The aggressive intent from Rajshahi's players from the start made it clear that they were going for a win. The wicket seemed good to bat on, even on the fourth day and Rajshahi's batsmen took full advantage. It began with Myshukur scoring a resolute 80 before Tareq Khan coming in down the order to score a timely 77.

There was still a lot of ground to cover for Rajshahi and they needed a fine aggressive knock from down the order in order to complete the win. And that call was answered by none other than their skipper Forhad Reza. Reza came in at number seven and hammered a

32-ball 50 to take Rajshahi home in 89.3 overs, barely three balls remaining in the day.

The rest of the three games, Khulna versus Dhaka Metro, Sylhet versus Chittagong and Dhaka versus Rangpur, produced draws.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BARISAL: 235 and 364 all out in 83.5 overs v **RAJSHAHI:** 247 and 353 for 6 (Myshukur 80, Tareq 77, Forhad 50; Kamrul 3-82)
Result: Rajshahi won by four wickets. Player-of-the-match: Tareq Khan
KHULNA: 416 and 331 for 8 declared (Tushar 71, Nurul 62 not out; Shamsur 5-69, Elias 3-90) v **DHAKA METRO:** 341
Result: Match drawn. Player-of-the-match: Mehedi Hasan
SYLHET: 507 for 8 dec and 88 for 3 (Roman 31; Nafees 1-5) v **CHITTAGONG:** 332 all out in 124.3 overs (Iftakhar 126 not out, Faisal 60; Abul 3-31, Ahmed 3-89)
Result: Match drawn. Player-of-the-match: Alok Kapali
DHAKA: 335 and 259 all out in 89.3 overs (Nadif 49, Shuvagata 37; Sajedul 3-42, Shubasis 3-86) v **RANGPUR:** 306 and 100 for 1 (Liton 74; Shuvagata 1-40)
Result: Match drawn. Player-of-the-match: Rakibul Hasan

Young rescues MU

AFP, London



Ashley Young bolstered Manchester United's bid for a Premier League top-four place with an 89th-minute winner at Newcastle United on Wednesday, while leaders Chelsea preserved their five-point lead.

Young's strike, after a mistake by Newcastle goalkeeper Tim Krul, gave Louis van Gaal's side a 1-0 win that enabled them to maintain a two-point advantage over inform Liverpool, who won 2-0 at home to Burnley.

Chelsea kept their advantage at the summit intact by winning 1-0 at West Ham United, while second-place Manchester City, who have played a game more than the leaders, beat Leicester City 2-0.

Meanwhile, Swansea City striker Bafetimbi Gomis was said to be "fine" despite being stretchered off after collapsing

RESULTS

Liverpool 2 (Henderson 29, Sturridge 51) **Burnley 0**
Manchester City 2 (Silva 45, Milner 88) **Leicester 0**
Newcastle 0 Manchester United 1 (Young 89)
QPR 1 (Austin 82) **Arsenal 2** (Giroud 64, Sanchez 69)
Stoke 2 (Moses 32, Diouf 84) **Everton 0**
Tottenham 3 (Chadli 7, Mason 51, Townsend 60) **Swansea 2** (Ki 19, Sigurdsson 89)
West Ham 0 Chelsea 1 (Hazard 22)

on the pitch in the early stages of his side's 3-2 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur.

The major talking point of the first half at St James' Park was a clash between Newcastle striker Pappis Cisse and United defender Jonny Evans that may prompt disciplinary action from the Football Association.

Evans seemed to spit towards the floor after a tussle with Cisse, who appeared to react by spitting at the Northern Irishman's neck, but the referee did not take action.

Germany to extend with Loew

AFP, Berlin

World champions Germany are in advanced negotiations to extend national coach Joachim Loew's contract until the 2018 World Cup in Russia, German daily Bild reported on Thursday.

The 55-year-old Loew currently has a deal to take him through to Euro 2016, and the new deal includes a get out clause should either party wish to part company after the tournament to be held in France.

German Football Federation president Wolfgang Niersbach and his general secretary Helmut Sandrock have been in tight negotiations with Loew's agent Harun Arslan, Bild said.

Barca-Bilbao final

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona eased into the Copa del Rey final as they completed a 6-2 aggregate win over Villarreal with a 3-1 win at El Madrigal on Wednesday.

Luis Enrique's men will face Athletic Bilbao in the final for the third time in five years on May 30 after the Basques beat Espanyol 2-0 to progress 3-1 on aggregate.

Neymar had missed a penalty in Barca's 3-1 first leg win three weeks ago, but made amends after just three minutes when he turned home Lionel Messi's cross.

Jonathan dos Santos gave the hosts hope with an equaliser on the night against his old club, but Villarreal's chances of a famous comeback faded when Tomas Pina was shown a straight red card for a heavy challenge on Neymar.

Luis Suarez slotted home his 11th goal of the season to make it 2-1 before Neymar rounded off the scoring from Xavi's cross late on.

"I am very happy to be in the final again and we have to congratulate the team," said Neymar.

"Villarreal are a great team with a lot of high-quality players. We knew it was going to be a difficult game and that is why we started so well. We scored very quickly and that helped us."

However, victory also came at a cost as Sergio Busquets was stretchered off in the first-half with a high ankle sprain that could keep him sidelined for a significant couple of weeks with Barca set to face Real Madrid in La Liga on March 22.

Brazil recall Robinho

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



Brazil coach Dunga brought back veteran forward Robinho on Thursday as he named his squad for a pair of European friendlies against France on March 26 at the Stade de France and Chile on March 29 at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium.

Dunga, who succeeded Luiz Felipe Scolari after Brazil's World Cup misadventure in July, said the idea is to blood a squad in advance of June's Copa America in Chile but with an eye on the longer term.

"It is all about blending youth with experience," said the man who skippered the Selecao's 1994 World Cup winning side.

"Our main objective are the World Cup qualifiers (for Russia 2018) but before then we have the Copa America and two friendlies. The Selecao must build a winning mentality," he told reporters, saying he was "creating a base" of players looking to 2018.

He turned to old hand Robinho, formerly of Real Madrid, Manchester City and AC Milan but who spent last season on loan with Santos, as Zenit St Petersburg forward Hulk is injured.

Robinho did not make the World Cup squad but is back in favour with Dunga at the helm.

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Jefferson (Botafogo), Diego Alves (Valencia/ESP), Marcelo Groeh (Gremio)
DEFENDERS: David Luiz (PSG/FRA), Marquinhos (PSG/FRA), Thiago Silva (PSG/FRA), Miranda (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Filipe Luis (Chelsea/ENG), Danilo (Porto/POR), Fabinho (Monaco/FRA), Marcelo (Real Madrid/ESP)
MIDFIELDERS: Luiz Gustavo (Wolfsburg/GER), Fernandinho (Manchester City/ENG), Elias (Corinthians), Souza (Sao Paulo), Oscar (Chelsea/ENG), Willian (Chelsea/ENG), Douglas Costa (Shakhtar Donetsk/UKR), Philippe Coutinho
FORWARDS: Neymar (Barcelona/ESP), Robinho (Santos), Roberto Firmino (Hoffenheim/GER), Diego Tardelli

Good, can be better

FROM PAGE S1

on a placid wicket. Save Shakib every other bowler at least bowled one loose delivery in every over and was duly punished. The ground fielding was again appalling and had it not been for Nasir Hossain, Soumya Sarker, Sabbir or Shakib, who took those catches on offer and showed plenty of spring in their feet, it could have been even worse. Like it or not, the rest actually tried to hide at places where the ball had hardly been hit. To be honest, it is very difficult for a captain to set his fields with so many ageing legs.

Scotland's score could have been something like 400 if they were sides like England or New Zealand, the Tigers' next two opponents, against this toothless attack which actually had only four genuine bowlers. It is also inexplicable why the Bangladesh think-tank packed the side with so many batsmen when the top five or six is good enough for putting up a big total, with yesterday's match being another evidence.

And come next Monday at the Adelaide Oval in Australia, the Tigers will need to click in every aspect of the game if they are to create a small piece of history -- beat a nervous England and win a dream ticket to the quarterfinals.

FA charges Poyet

AFP, London

Sunderland manager Gus Poyet has been charged with improper conduct following a touchline altercation with his Hull City counterpart Steve Bruce, the Football Association announced on Thursday.

Poyet was sent to the stands during Tuesday's Premier League game at the KC Stadium for kicking a drinks bucket after Jack Rodwell was booked for diving and reacted by walking over to remonstrate with Bruce.

Bruce, a former Sunderland manager, responded angrily and had to be restrained by one of the assistant referees.

The Daily Star airtel

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