

HODDLE AND HIS MORATA MIXUP

Glen Hoddle has been keeping an eye on Alvaro Morata for a long time — even in his days as an Italian player apparently. There's something wrong with that sentence, isn't there? That's because the Juventus striker is actually Spanish. The BT Sport pundit put his foot in it while reacting to Bayern Munich's 4-2 extra-time victory over Juve on Wednesday. "I remember seeing Morata play for Italy against England and he looked good." You sure about that, Glen? Morata has six caps already for Spain and should go to Euro 2016 as part of Vicente del Bosque's squad this summer. As you'd expect, Hoddle has been taking some abuse since making the gaffe on air.



—AGEN-CIES

Depleted booters face UAE in warm-up today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national football team will take on the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after sixteen years in international friendly today as part of their preparations for next week's World Cup and Asia Cup Qualifier against Jordan.

The match will get underway at the Zayed Sport City Stadium in Abu Dhabi at 9:00pm (BST).

UAE have never lost to Bangladesh in their four previous meetings, once defeating the men in Red and Green 7-0 in the 1993 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. The last meeting between the two sides, in an Asian Cup Qualifiers fixture in November 1999, ended in a 3-0 loss for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's Spanish coach Gonzalo Sanchez Moreno is clearly focused on the team combination for next Thursday's tie against Jordan, instead of highlighting a result against the UAE, who are 113 places ahead of Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings and favourites to qualify for the final round of the World Cup from Group A of the qualifiers.

The 43-year-old coach will hope to avert a humiliation against the UAE, who recently handed 10-0 and 8-0 defeats to Malaysia and Timor Leste respectively in the ongoing World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers, as Bangladesh have been reduced to a depleted side following the exclusion of 12 key players due to bans imposed by the game's governing body, bookings, injuries and lack of form.

On the eve of his side's departure,

Moreno said that both fixtures would be much more difficult for them due to inadequate preparations, but he also stated that his charges would be ready for the challenge with a target of performing well.

Moreno also expressed his concerns over his vulnerable backline, which features captain Rezaul Karim, Ariful Islam, Kesto Kumar, Tapu Barman, Wali Faisal, Shakil Ahmed, Nasirul Islam and Raihan Hasan. The coach will not only have to settle on a four-man backline, but also pick a possible starting eleven for the Jordan tie during the warm-up match.

Aside from the defence, there is also a problem up front, following an injury to striker Shakhawat Hossain Rony, which leaves young Nabib Newaj Jibon as the lone hitman in Moreno's 4-1-4-1 formation.



THE SUPERSUBS: Bayern Munich substitutes Thiago (L) and Kingsley Coman celebrate after the former gave the Bavarians the lead against Juventus in their UEFA Champions League Round of 16 tie at the Allianz Arena yesterday. Coman also got his name on the scoresheet minutes later.

PHOTO: AFP

Siddikur starts strong at happy hunting ground

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman ended the first round of the Hero India Open in joint-16th position, four shots behind leader Daniel Im of the USA.

Siddikur, who won the 2013 edition of the tournament, started the event off in fabulous fashion with a birdie on the very first hole at the Delhi Golf Club, a course that has been favourable to him. However, he slipped up on the third hole as he carded a bogey to return his score to par.

The 32-year-old, who has missed the cut in three of his six Asian Tour events this season, got back on track with three birdies on the 6th, 8th and 16th holes to finish the round at joint-sixteenth in the US 1,660,000 dollar event.

The leader, Im, hit seven birdies and returned no bogeys to finish on top, with three golfers claiming second place, just one shot behind. Five golfers shared fifth place, while a further six were joint-tenth.

Siddikur was joined by seven other golfers at sixteenth.

Central Zone win second title after day of draws

Lack of interest frustrates winning captain

SPORTS REPORTER



Both the last-round games ended in draws and the outcome was good enough for Central Zone to regain the title of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCBL), the premier first-class competition in the country, yesterday. Riding on Marshall Ayub's unbeaten hundred, Central Zone put in a better batting display in Mirpur in their second essay in chase of a 366-run winning target to secure nine points, increasing their tally to 64 points while North Zone, their last-round opposition, finished third with 49 points after gaining 11 points.

At Fatullah, East Zone gained a point less than opponents South Zone, but with seven points they finished runners-up securing 53 points. After Mosaddek Hossain's big hundred (152) Shohag Gazi took charge to make 146 off 181 balls that contained 12 fours and six sixes to take South Zone's first innings total to a mammoth 601, but Liton Das and Irfan Sukkur helped East Zone leave the field with their heads high as they amassed 189 runs without any loss before stumps were drawn for the day. South Zone ended with 41 points.

Seasoned campaigner Mosharrif Hossain led Central Zone to clinch their second title, so there was a reason for the left-arm spinner to be excited. "Yes, happy as we regained the title," said Mosharrif. He however expressed



Marshall Ayub
562 runs



Abdur Razzak
38 wickets

his disappointment over the scant attention given to a very important domestic tournament.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Season	Champion
2012-13	Central Zone
2013-14	North Zone
2014-15	South Zone
2015-16	Central Zone

MOST RUNS (2015-16)

Player	Team	Runs
Marshall Ayub	Central	562
Raqibul Hasan	Central	521
Alok Kapali	East	518
Shamsur Rahman	Central	508
Mominul Haque	East	493

MOST WKTS (2015-16)

Player	Team	Wkts
Abdur Razzak	South	38
Mohammed Sharif	Central	21
Sanjamul Islam	North	20
Shohag Gazi	South	18
Abu Jayed	East	16

"I think the standard has improved. We might not have reached the desired competitiveness but I must say the standard has gradually improved. It's nice to see that the batsmen scored big hundreds in good numbers and bowlers did some good job, though most were the old campaigners."

"Players were serious in their jobs as all are professional who know the importance of first-class cricket, but unfortunately a very important domestic competition hardly got attention from media and the people who are in charge of the game. Basically all our attention is with our national team and everybody is now focusing on T20 cricket but that is not the case in other parts of the world. It can be suicidal for our cricket and we may face its consequences in the future. We must encourage our young players to play the longer version, so I would request the board to make sure some matches will be telecast live," opined Mosharrif.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NORTH ZONE: 378 and 293-8 dec in 73 overs (Nazmul 55, Jahurul 83 not out; Sharif 2-64, Tanveer 4-66) v **CENTRAL ZONE:** 306 and 257-2 in 54 overs (Shaykat 57, Marshall 101 not out, Rakibul 54 not out)

Result: Match Drawn.

EAST ZONE: 442 and 189-0 in 41.3 overs (Liton 103 not out, Irfan 75 not out) v **SOUTH ZONE:** 601 all out in 155.5 overs (Nafees 90, Mosaddek 152, Gazi 146; Kamrul 2-84, Kapali 3-63)

Result: Match Drawn

Bayern 'wow' Pep

Arsene defeated by Barca 'artists'

AFP, Munich



Bayern Munich's stunning four-goal fightback to beat Juventus had the 'wow' factor for Pep Guardiola as the Bavarians reached the Champions League quarter-finals for the fifth season in a row.

Substitutes Thiago Alcantara and Kingsley Coman scored extra-time goals as Bayern roared back to beat Juve 4-2 in their last-16, second-leg tie and seal a 6-4 aggregate victory.

A stunned Bayern found themselves 2-0 down after 28 minutes at the Allianz Arena as Paul Pogba and Juan Cuadrado struck for the Italians before the Bavarian side floored the Italians with four unanswered goals.

But the hosts left it late as Robert Lewandowski netted on 73 minutes before Thomas Mueller's dramatic equaliser in the 91st minute forced extra time.

Just as Juventus had fought back in Turin to draw the first leg 2-2, Bayern came back in Munich. Thiago put Bayern ahead for the first time on 108 minutes before fellow replacement Coman -- on loan from Juventus -- curled in a superb strike on 110 minutes to cap the fairytale finish.

"Four goals against an Italian team. Wow!" beamed Bayern manager Guardiola. "I don't know how often that has happened in history that a German team has scored four goals against an Italian side. It was a great game for the fans. We played against last season's finalists and to come back from 2-0 down is very hard."

The fightback keeps alive Guardiola's dream of bringing the Champions League trophy to Munich at the third and final attempt before his high-profile move to Manchester City next season.

It was a heartbreaking end for last season's finalists Juventus.

"Of course I am disappointed," said their

coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"But I have to pay my team a big compliment: we played one of the favourites for the title and we played better than in the first leg. That's football, we made our first big mistake after 90 minutes. And they scored from one of their first few chances through Lewandowski.

"We could have reacted better, but we didn't have the strength left to score another goal. We were 2-0 up and we could have been 3-0 up, but it's not easy to get a result here."

Juventus captain Gianluigi Buffon said the tie had been decided by fine margins.

"Football results depend on chances," said the 38-year-old.

"They attacked a lot in the second half and took advantage of their chances. It's always a pity to concede a goal in the last minute of a game, but I'm proud of my team. We are going out with our heads held high."

Meanwhile, after Arsenal's 3-1 defeat at the hands of Barcelona, which saw them go out on an aggregate score of 5-1, Arsene Wenger hailed Barcelona's front three of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar as capable of turning football into art as all three struck to eliminate his side from the Champions League.

"We have to admire art and they have two or three players that transform normal life into art," said Wenger.

"I have to say we played against a team with the best strikers I've seen. The three are exceptional and from nothing they can create a chance. We didn't take the chances we created and the quality of Barca's creativity in the final third, especially Messi is exceptional. He didn't miss one first touch in 90 minutes

"For me it is suffering, but it is exceptional what he does."

However, Wenger defended his record in Europe as four of the past six years they have bowed out to dominant Barca and Bayern Munich sides.



STAR ECONOMICAL BOWLER: Dushmantha Chameera was quite a handful for Afghanistan with his pace, so much so that the Afghans concentrated on playing him out safely, scoring just 19 runs off his four overs.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Proteas open against Eng

AFP, Mumbai



England need a win against South Africa Friday after defeat in their opening World Twenty20 match while the Proteas want to get their bid for a first international trophy off to a strong start.

Captain Eoin Morgan's England side were blown away by a Chris Gayle century at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Wednesday night as the West Indies won by six wickets.

Morgan will be looking for more from his batsmen after they fell short of his target of 200, finishing on 182, and from his bowling attack who he said performed below-par.

The English skipper rued losing the toss to West Indies captain Darren Sammy, and said that the toss would again play a big part on Friday in Mumbai's humid conditions.

For South Africa the match marks the start of their quest to once and for all remove the chokers tag that skipper Faf du Plessis admits has become "a monkey on their back".

Since 1991, the Proteas have been the nearly men of World Cups in both T20 and 50 over cricket, falling agonisingly short of the final on several occasions.

Despite their failure to win a major trophy, South Africa are one of the tournament favourites and are currently in third place in the T20 world rankings.

Djokovic's revenge, Serena's domination

REUTERS, California



Novak Djokovic avenged his only loss of 2016 with a ruthless 6-3 6-3 victory over Feliciano Lopez as the Serbian top seed eased into the quarter-finals of the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday.

An eye issue forced Djokovic to retire against his Spanish opponent at the Dubai Duty Free Championships last month but he had his sights set firmly on victory for their rematch in California.

The world number one needed just 66 minutes to prevail as he won 75 percent of his points on serve and broke Lopez three times.

"I have respect for his game, which definitely made me very cautious of approaching this match and made me very determined to impose my game plan from the very beginning," Djokovic told reporters.

"I was very solid. I didn't allow him to come to the net too many times. It was a good performance."

Djokovic enjoyed his best performance of the tournament to date and next meets Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, who defeated Dominic Thiem 6-3 6-2, as the defending champion seeks an unprecedented fifth title at Indian Wells.

Earlier, fourth seed Nadal, three times a

champion at Indian Wells, rallied from 5-2 down in the final set, saving a match point on the way, before going past 18-year-old German prospect Alexander Zverev 6-7(8) 6-0 7-5.

"I am especially happy about the mentality on court, the fighting spirit during the whole match, believing that I can win a match during the whole time even in the toughest situations," Nadal said.

On the women's front, a dominant Serena Williams proved far too strong for defending champion Simona Halep as the American eased into the semi-finals of the BNP Paribas Open with a 6-4 6-3 victory on Wednesday.

The world number one has yet to drop a set in four matches in California, and Williams made a tricky opponent on paper look completely over-matched in the quarter-final encounter.

The 21-time grand slam champion blasted 28 winners to Halep's nine. She also recorded seven aces, aptly closing out the match with an unreturnable serve down the middle.

Williams also broke the Romanian's serve four times and improved her head-to-head record to 7-1 against her fifth-seeded opponent.

A right knee injury forced Williams to withdraw from the event last year, when she ended a self-imposed 14-year absence at the tournament, giving Halep a walkover in their scheduled semi-final.

