

SPORT



Abahani teammates Jubair Hossain (L) and Taskin Ahmed enjoy a momentary break from training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. There are plenty of expectations from both the leg-spinner and the pacer in the Dhaka Premier League this season. PHOTO: STAR

DPL 2016 PREVIEW

Can the giants rule again?

SPORTS REPORTER



Traditional heavyweights Abahani Limited and Mohammedan Sporting Club did not have the best of times during the last edition of the Dhaka Premier League (DPL). Abahani struggled quite badly in the first few matches of the league last season. In fact, so bad was their scenario that there were doubts regarding their qualification to the Super League stages.

They however, did manage to finish well and end third. In a similar vein, Mohammedan finished fifth.

In the season before that, Mohammedan finished fourth while Abahani just managed to avoid relegation and finished ninth.

After the last two seasons there was talk about how the traditional heavyweights are no longer the dominant clubs and the way some of the newer clubs, backed by corporate funding, have managed to settle themselves well in the circuit.

However, this season could be different. Abahani Limited have created easily one of the best sides of the league. Of the 13 players in their team eight have international experience while the remaining five have been doing quite well in domestic cricket as well.

In Tamim Iqbal, Liton Das, Mosaddek Hossain they have got a strong batting order. Add to that the talented under-19 player, Nazmul Hossain Shanto and it just gets better.

On the bowling front, they have got Taskin Ahmed, Abul Hasan, Saqlain Sajid and Jubair Hossain. They have got both the

pace and spin departments covered. It is going to get a lot better if Shakib Al Hasan manages to return from the Indian Premier League in time and gets a chance to take part in the Super League.

There will be a number of players who will be in the spotlight for Abahani. Taskin is likely to take a bowling test to redeem his bowling rights in international cricket after this tournament and he will want to do well here. Mosaddek is another player who will be looking to impress right before the Test series against India due to take place in August. He has been the most consistent batsman in domestic cricket so far and a good show here could earn him a call-up.

The other player of course is Jubair Hossain. The leg-spinner has been ignored by his domestic teams in the last year and yet he is still a favourite to make it to Bangladesh's Test outfit.

Compared to Abahani, Mohammedan have a slightly weaker team with not much international experience. However, they do have players who have put in good performances in domestic cricket. The likes of Naeem Islam, Ariful Haque, Nazmul Hossain Milon, Saikat Ali and Enamul Haque Jr have been putting in good performances in recent times.

Their key player though will be Mushfiqur Rahim. The Bangladesh Test captain has not been at his best lately and will definitely want to use this league to make a fresh start. He struggled in the last few T20 games, but now that he has returned to a format he is more comfortable with, his fortunes could change.

BFF ELECTIONS 2016

Tutul wants to be back with football

SPORTS REPORTER

Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul, a former director of Bangladesh Cricket Board and sports secretary of Bangladesh Awami League, added an extra flavour to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) polls by submitting his nomination for the posts of senior vice-president and vice president from the Save Football panel.

Despite being a former footballer, Tutul had been involved with cricket for long, and the influential sport organiser has now joined Save Football panel, which alleged that the Salahuddin-led committee has failed to develop football in the last eight years.

"I have come to contest in BFF polls after being requested by my nearest ones, but I don't have any magic. However I will try to take football to its previous standard," Tutul said.

"Having known everything, I have come here with a hope of winning."

"When I was a BCB director, we had started with Tk 33 lakh deficit, but had Tk 78 crore as FDR before I left BCB. I believe our team can take football to a good position if we are elected," said Tutul, who was seemingly behind the screen for the Salahuddin-led panel in the last elections.

A total of 58 nominations were submitted against 21 BFF posts yesterday after 62 nominations were sold for the April 30 elections.

Of 58 nominations, four candidates -- Kazi Salahuddin, Golam Rabbani Helal, Nurul Islam Nuru, Kamrul Ashraf Khan Poton -- submitted nominations for the president post. Four candidates -- Tutul, Abdus Salam Murshed, Manzur Kader and Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan -- submitted nominations for senior vice-president post while 11 candidates -- Tabitha Awal, Badal Roy, Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi, Sheikh Mohammad Maruf Hasan, Khurshid Ahmed Babul, Mominul Haque Saeed, Ashraf Uddin Ahmed Chunu, Lokman and Nazib Ahmed -- submitted their nominations for four vice-president posts.

Fizz tastes first win after Warner blitz

STAR SPORTS DESK



Mustafizur Rahman finally managed to taste a win in the Indian Premier League 2016 when the Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Mumbai Indians by seven wickets at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday.

After restricting the Mumbai Indians to 142, captain David Warner smacked a brilliant, unbeaten 90 off 59 deliveries to lead Hyderabad home in 17.3 overs. Warner hit four sixes and seven fours during his knock and was the reason why Hyderabad managed to finish so calmly.

For the first time in the tournament, the other players in the team aside from Mustafizur came to the party as opposed to the first two games where the Sunrisers Hyderabad seemed overly reliant on the Bangladesh pacer.

Mustafizur's figures yesterday were slightly expensive, when compared to his previous figures. He finished on 1 for 32 in four overs. However, the figures don't do justice to the way the left-arm pacer bowled yesterday. In the 15th over of the match, Mustafizur's second, he was driven for two fours. Both of them though were more of a result of poor fielding.

The first one was a straight drive from Ambati Rayudu and that was fumbled by captain David Warner. Three balls later a sloppy piece of fielding from Ashish Reddy in the mid-off region led to another boundary. That over led to 13 runs.

However, he came back well in the last two overs, giving away just 11 runs and also scalping a wicket. He bowled a low full-toss in the 19th over to hit timber and get rid of Hardik Pandya. He almost got rid of Harbhajan Singh in the next ball. He bowled a slower cutter which almost provided caught-and-bowled opportunity. A diving Mustafizur though just failed to grasp the ball before it hit the ground.

Pacers Barinder Sran who finished with figures of 3 for 28 and Bhuvaneshwar Kumar who took one wicket at the cost of 17 runs ensured that Hyderabad do well yesterday. The team effort led to the Mumbai Indians getting restricted to 142.

Misbah sets sights on Eng and beyond

AFP, Islamabad

Ageing Pakistan Test captain Misbahul Haq on Monday confirmed he will not only lead his side in their four-match series in England this summer, but is determined to play on until the tour of Australia which will end in January next year.

He is Pakistan's most successful Test captain, having led his country to 20 wins, 11 draws and 11 defeats in his 42 matches in charge -- a better record than the legendary Imran Khan.

But his desire to continue has been in doubt since Pakistan's 2-0 win over England last November, compounded by a calf injury in January that flared up during the Pakistan Super League a month later. Misbah, who turns 42 next month, said he had now made up his mind and was determined to play on, pending form and fitness.

"I am working on my fitness," he told AFP. "I am trying to get a contract with a county so that I can get some practice ahead of the England tour but if that doesn't come through then I will be touring England with Pakistan 'A' ahead of the four Tests to get acclimatised."

CCS bank on young brigade

SPORTS REPORTER



It is the time to express themselves. When a bunch of Bangladesh Under-19 players will play for the promoted Cricket Coaching School (CCS) in the Dhaka Premier Cricket League, their only target will be to establish themselves and increase their demand in the domestic circuit.

Under-19 players like Mohammad Saifuddin, Saeed Sarkar, Pinak Ghosh, Saleh Ahmed Shawon and Saif Hasan, apart from the veteran Rajin Saleh, will definitely expect their club -- which has reportedly been struggling with a crisis of funds to run their affairs -- to provide all of the facilities and assurances of payment, but their main focus should be on proving themselves as good players in the most coveted 50-over competition in the country.

"We have been playing together for the last four years. There are four-five players who played the Under-19 World Cup and we have a good understanding. We played First Division Cricket together but we know the Premier League is different and we are ready to take this challenge," said all-rounder Saifuddin.

"Our club is not a big name in the competition. So here lies the challenge for us and everybody will try to do something. We have our first target to play in the Super League," he added.

The pace-bowling all-rounder Saifuddin believes that good performance in the Premier League will open



FOCUS ON YOUTH: The Dhaka Premier League clubs signed up a number of under-19 players this season. Mohammad Saifuddin (L), Pinak Ghosh (C) and Saleh Ahmed Shawon were seen sweating it out at the Academy ground in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

different windows for him. "I have a target to get a place in the HP [High Performance] team and we have many other competitions in the future and a good performance in this league will help me a lot to make the cut in the different domestic competitions."

Rajin was also excited with the young brigade. "When I first saw the team I was a bit disappointed but finally I found that we have got a balanced unit who can spring surprises in the league. These young players have got the potential and proved themselves in the Under-19 team as well as

in different domestic competitions, so I am very optimistic."

"I never played for this club, which played in the first division league last season, but I am sure that these young players have got the ability to take the team to a respectable position," he added.

The seasoned cricketer was also not bothered with the talk about his club's financial crisis. "We just want to play and take our club to a good position in the league and the rest will be taken care of by the club officials. I have full confidence in the club."



Team BJMC striker Eleta Kingsley performs a somersault after scoring one of his five goals during the 6-0 drubbing of Feni Soccer Club in their KFC Independence Cup fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Feni Kingsley-ed

SPORTS REPORTER



Nigerian marksman Eleta Kingsley slammed a quintuple to power Team BJMC to a massive 6-0 win over Feni Soccer Club in their Group B fixture of the KFC Independence Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With Abahani having a good chance to progress to the semifinals with five points from three matches, Team BJMC did all they could to do in their final group match to keep their slim hopes alive by raising their tally to seven points from five outings.

BJMC will progress to the last four as the second team from Group B if Abahani fail to secure three points from their remaining two matches against Rahmatganj MFS and group leaders Sheikh Russel KC.

Even though BJMC did not play any attractive football, it was Kingsley who did everything he wanted to do on the pitch. The well-built striker struck goals one after another without facing any challenge from the Feni Soccer Club defenders and the goalkeeper Sujun Chowdhury.

Kingsley open the goalfest in the 36th minute before doubling the lead two minutes later with an angular shot from inside the box. The Nigerian completed his hat-trick -- the fourth hat-trick of the tournament after Sheikh Jamal's Wedson Anselme, Sheikh Russel's Fikru Tereefa and Muktiyodha Sangsad's Ahmed Kolo Musa struck the first three -- in the stoppage time of the first half.

Kingsley then widened the margin in the 51st and 71st minutes before his compatriot Samson Iliasu completed the rout in the 87th minute to set the record for the biggest win of the season.

Zaheer enters fray for PCB leadership

PTI, Karachi

Former captain and current ICC President Zaheer Abbas has joined the race to head the Pakistan Cricket Board following (PCB) calls for sacking the top brass after the national team's disastrous show in the Asia Cup and World T20.

"I am always available for Pakistan in any capacity. My term as ICC President ends this year but even while I have the ICC post I can also head the Board if required," he told reporters in Lahore at a function of Punjab Sports Board.

"At the moment no one has approached me for any position in the Board but yes if I am approached and invited to head the PCB I will not back down," he said.