

## HURST REUNITED WITH WORLD CUP BALL

Hat-trick hero Geoff Hurst was reunited with the 1966 World Cup final ball as England celebrated the 50th anniversary of its finest glory on Saturday. Hurst scored three goals to help England secure its only World Cup trophy and former West Ham striker Hurst remains the only man to have scored a hat-trick in a World Cup final. Hurst revealed over the weekend that German midfielder Helmut Haller had 'stolen' the ball after the final and remained in Germany for 30 years. It was eventually brought back from the player's loft during the European Championships in 1996 and is now in England's national football museum in Manchester. "It is such a priceless piece of memorabilia that anyone who touches it has to wear white gloves," Hurst said. Hurst - not wearing gloves - was at the 1966 World Cup exhibition at the SSE Arena at Wembley and held the ball to big cheers from the crowd.

—AGENCIES



## IOC to have final say on Russian athletes

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



The International Olympic Committee has said a three-member panel will make the "final decision" on which Russian athletes can compete in the Rio Olympics, set to begin in less than a week.

The panel will examine each case individually and make the "final decision" before Friday, IOC spokesman Mark Adams said late on Saturday.

A ban on individual Russian athletes followed a report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren for the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) stating that Russian doping of athletes had been organized by the sports ministry and aided by the Russian secret service at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

Rejecting calls for a blanket ban on Russia, the IOC decided on July 24 that individual sports federations should investigate athletes implicated in the report and decide who should be excluded.

So far, at least 117 individuals from the 387 that the Russian Olympic Committee wanted to enter have been excluded.

Russian sports minister Vitaly Mutko said Saturday he expected 266 athletes to compete. Boxing, golf, gymnastics and taekwondo feder-

ations have yet to report their decisions.

The three-member panel is made up of Ugur Erdener, president of World Archery and head of the IOC medical and scientific commission, Claudia Bockel of the IOC athletes commission, and Spanish IOC member Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Two Russian swimmers, Vladimir Morozov and Nikita Lobintsev, on Saturday launched the first challenge against the IOC sanctions excluding them from the games.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) will hold an emergency session in Rio on Sunday to hear their appeal, according to sources close to the case.

Morozov, 24, and Lobintsev, 27, have called on CAS to declare "invalid and unenforceable" an IOC order for federations to exclude athletes implicated in the investigation into Russia's state-run doping system.

They were among seven Russians banned by the International Swimming Federation (FINA) last week after the order was published.

Morozov and Lobintsev have taken their action against the IOC and FINA.

Morozov said in a letter to FINA president Julio Maglione that he had never failed a drug test by Russian and international experts.

WADA president Craig Reedie, who called for a complete ban on Russian athletes in Rio, is to address the IOC meeting on Sunday.



After getting off to a terrible start in the Bangladesh Premier League with two losses in as many games, Sheikh Russel trained hard at the Sagorika Mohila Complex in Chittagong yesterday with hopes of turning things around against Chittagong Abahani today.

PHOTO: ANRUP KANTI DAS

## Sk Russel aim to rebound

SPORTS REPORTER



After a day's break, the third round of the JB Bangladesh Premier League resumes today with a high-voltage fixture as Chittagong Abahani take on Sheikh Russel KC at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

The first two rounds saw contrasting performances with the minnows dominating the opening round before the giants and title contenders, with the exception of Sheikh Russel KC, bounced back strong in the second round -- which saw 22 goals scored across six matches, which was double the amount of goals in the first round.

Promoted Uttar Baridhara and minnows Rahmatganj MFS produced upsets in the first and second rounds respectively by beating big-spenders Sheikh Russel, treble winners in 2012-13. That feat saw Rahmatganj ascend to the top of the table along with four other teams by the end the second

round while Uttar Baridhara claimed the number two spot with three points.

Now Bottom-placed Sheikh Russel, in an attempt to salvage the wreckage which is now their season, have lifted the internal ban imposed on Ethiopian striker Fikru Teferia.

Teferia missed the entire Federation Cup and first two matches of the league following his scuffle with Nigerian striker Paul Emile during the Independence Cup.

"Actually we created a lot of scoring chances against Farashganj but we could not avail any of them and it might be because of not having a real striker upfront. Zahid Hasan Emily and Shakhawat Hossain Ronny are not fit yet but Fikru is supposed to play tomorrow [Monday]," said Sheikh Russel captain Atiqur Rahman Meshu, adding that the whole squad was down-trodden after two successive defeats.

"Chittagong Abahani have improved match after match. They are ahead of us in terms of performance. We have to come out of our poor form by putting up better per-

formances. If we win against Chittagong Abahani, then it will be a morale boost for us," said the discarded national defender.

Joint league leaders Chittagong Abahani have been in a fantastic rhythm after playing two big matches against Abahani and Mohammedan. In their opening match, Chittagong Abahani held their Dhaka namesakes to a 1-1 draw, but during the second the port city outfit outplayed the more popular Black and Whites, striking four goals. Left-winger Rubel Mia is in great touch, having scored three goals from the two matches, while teenage right-winger Mohammad Ibrahim has proven to be menace to defenders. Hence, the impending clash between Chittagong Abahani and Sheikh Russel is expected to be a mouth-watering occasion for spectators.

In the day's first match, giant-killers Rahmatganj will take on title holders Sheikh Jamal DC, who bounced back in their second match with a 5-3 win over Baridhara after playing out a 1-1 draw against Arambagh KS.

## Saintfiet on 2-week vacation

SPORTS REPORTER

Tom Saintfiet, the Bangladesh national football team's head coach candidate, left here for Belgium in the early hours yesterday for a two-week vacation to be with his pregnant wife after spending nearly three weeks conducting a six-day training camp of the national team as well as watching 12 matches of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League (BPL).

The 43-year-old coach was supposed to put pen on paper for a three-month deal with the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) on July 27 but the experienced Belgian coach skipped the process citing sickness, but he is also believed to be linked with a job in Nigeria.

"He is supposed to fly out from Belgium on August 16. We have already booked his return ticket confirmed it after the nod from Saintfiet. The contract has not been signed yet, but there are no differences between us and the conditions of the deal are settled. If he signs the deal, he has to work for the full three months here," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

Saintfiet is supposed to return here on August 17 and watch the sixth-round matches of the BPL before starting a training camp from August 21 for the Asian Cup Qualifier play-off against Bhutan on September 6.

## BFF boss meets with potential sponsors

SPORTS REPORTER

In the quest to meet the huge expenditure of the national football team as well as its coaching staff, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin held a meeting with potential sponsors such as Max Group, Toma Construction and Impress Group at his personal office in Panthapath on Sunday.

"If we want to develop our national football team, we need a huge fund to bear the cost of the coaching staff. We can't provide the proper training to the national football team due to a lack of funds. We have asked them [potential sponsors], if they come forward, then it is possible to develop the national team completely and they have agreed in principle and verbally to be with us," said Salahuddin, adding that they would sit again on August 8 for the final discussion and agreement.

BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag informed that the BFF president is also seeking more sponsors to tag with the national football team and all sponsors would equally share the expenditure of the national football team.

## Zlatan off the mark in four minutes

REUTERS, Gothenburg



Zlatan Ibrahimovic netted a superb goal just four minutes into his Manchester United debut and promised that there would be much more to come after they thrashed Turkish side Galatasaray 5-2 in a friendly in Gothenburg on Saturday.

The 34-year-old Swede, who arrived at Old Trafford on a free transfer after a trophy-laden four-year spell with Paris St Germain, wasted no time in making his presence felt, flinging himself into the air to meet Antonio Valencia's cross.

He did not get the cleanest contact on the ball but his scissors kick bounced past Fernando Muslera in Galatasaray's goal and sent thousands of Swedish fans into raptures.

With Wayne Rooney netting twice and Valencia recording three assists against the rudderless Turkish outfit, a delighted Ibrahimovic said it was shaping up to be an exciting season, especially if United's transfer target Paul Pogba arrives from Juventus.

"I'm going to help the team as much as I can and do what I'm good at, creating chances and scoring goals," he told Swedish TV.

"There is something big on the go, it's going to be very interesting this year. Let us say that if Pogba comes too, it's going to be very interesting," he added with a smile.

Galatasaray threatened to spoil Zlatan's party when Sinan Gumus headed the equaliser from a Wesley Sneijder free kick, and Portuguese winger Bruma then rifled home to put Galatasaray ahead four minutes before the break.

Ibrahimovic went off at halftime as coach Jose Mourinho rang the changes, but starting fullback Valencia was again the architect as Rooney steered home United's second 10 minutes into the second half.

When Marcus Rashford was felled in the



Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored just four minutes into his debut for Manchester United against Galatasaray on Saturday.

box three minutes later, Rooney stepped up to fire home the resulting penalty.

Valencia got his third assist when Marouane Fellaini headed home his cross, before substitute Juan Mata stabbed in a fifth to round off a dominant display by United, who open their Premier League campaign away to Bournemouth on Aug. 14.

## Gabigol shines in Rio warm-up

AFP, Goiania



Teenage star Gabriel Barbosa scored a superb individual goal as Neymar returned to lead Brazil to a comfortable 2-0 victory over Japan in an Olympic warm-up game here Saturday.

The 19-year-old Santos striker, who has been linked to European clubs including Juventus, gave Brazil a 1-0 lead in the 33rd minute after a mesmerising slalom through the Japan defence.

The shot by the forward known to fans as "Gabigol" took a big deflection on its way into the Japanese net but there was no denying the electrifying burst of skill which created the opener.

Barcelona superstar Neymar -- desperate to lead Brazil to victory in the Rio de Janeiro Olympics after the agony of the 2014 World Cup -- created Brazil's second from a corner, headed in by Marquinhos in the 41st minute.

Neymar and Gabriel formed a potent attacking trident alongside Gabriel Jesus, the 19-year-old Palmeiras attacker who is reportedly close to signing for English Premier League side Manchester City.



Lewis Hamilton eased to the finish line in the German Grand Prix, crossing the finish line 6.9 seconds ahead of the competition yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Hamilton extends lead

REUTERS, Hockenheim



Lewis Hamilton cruised to an unchallenged victory in Sunday's German Formula One Grand Prix to extend his lead over Mercedes team mate Nico Rosberg at the top of the world championship standings.

Hamilton seized the advantage at the start from pole-sitter Rosberg, who drove an underwhelming race in front of his home fans, and was never headed.

The Briton crossed the line 6.9 seconds ahead of Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo, on the podium for the second race in a row on his 100th grand prix appearance.

His team mate Max Verstappen finished third, his fourth top-three result, to give Red Bull their first double rostrum in over a year.

Rosberg, who had looked unbeatable after topping every practice session, was only fourth after falling back at the start and collecting a five-second time-penalty for forcing Verstappen off the track.

It was Hamilton's sixth victory in the last seven races and fourth in succession. The 49th of the reigning champion's career left him two adrift of Frenchman Alain Prost's mark of 51.

He now leads Rosberg by 19 points in

the standings with nine rounds of a record 21-race season remaining.

"Get in there Lewis, great work mate. Beautiful start, fantastically managed," the Briton's Mercedes team said to him over the radio on the slowing down lap.

"Fantastic job guys, awesome pitstops and just throughout the weekend as always, well deserved," Hamilton replied.

Sebastian Vettel was fifth on his first appearance in Ferrari colours on home soil, crossing the line 32.5 seconds adrift of Hamilton, with team mate Kimi Raikkonen capping a disappointing weekend for the Italian team in sixth.

Nico Hulkenberg finished seventh for Force India, ahead of Jensen Button who brought home points for McLaren in eighth.

Williams driver Valtteri Bottas was ninth ahead of Sergio Perez who handed Force India a double-points finish with 10th.

Formula One now heads into its annual summer break before reconvening for the Belgian Grand Prix.

Sunday's result gave Hamilton, who trailed Rosberg by as many as 43 points following the Spanish Grand Prix in May, the crucial psychological edge in the title battle heading into the second half of the season.



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