



Sheikh Jamal and Mohammedan players are locked in an aerial battle for possession during their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Sheikh Jamal won the match 2-0.

PHOTO:
AMRAN HOSSAIN

Sk Jamal blank Black & Whites

SPORTS REPORTER

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Three-time champions Sheikh Jamal Dhamondi Club made a winning start to their Bangladesh Premier League campaign with a 2-0 win over Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A youthful Sheikh Jamal made a brisk start, applying heavy pressure from the outset and created three chances within the first 10 minutes, but young striker Nurul Absar squandered all of those including one which rattled the woodwork in the fifth minute.

Gambian striker Mamoudou Bau kept Mohammedan's inexperienced defenders busy through his daunting runs down the right flank but the Black and Whites held their nerves in the opening exchanges to keep the scoreline at nil.

The Dhamondi giants looked demoralised following the sending-off of coach Joseph Afifi after 20 minutes, and Mohammedan took advantage of that, gaining more and more possession. However, a sudden strike deep into injury time of the first half from Mamoudou, who rounded off a defender outside the box before mustering a driving effort into the upper net, broke the deadlock.

lock. Mohammedan goalkeeper Mamun Khan was unable to stop the shot as the former champions went to the breather with a slender lead.

Mohammedan looked more confident after restart and launched some planned attacks through the right flank, but Samson Iliasu narrowly missed the target by heading over a free-kick from Mohammad Linkon in the 55th minute. Four minutes later, Kingsley Chigozie was incredibly denied by Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Mitul Hasan, who made a point-blank save to thwart the Nigerian's header.

BROTHERS 0 - 0 TEAM BJMC
SHEIKH JAMAL 2 - 0 MOHAMMEDAN
MAMODOU 45+, RAPHAEL 86

Sheikh Jamal were unlucky not to get a second goal when Raphael Odovin rattled the woodwork in the 81st minute before Mohammedan defender Monir ensured Sheikh Jamal's win by deflecting the ball into his own net while attempting to clear a goal-bound chip from Zahed Parvez Chowdhury in the 86th minute. Referee Azad Rahman, however, awarded the goal to Raphael.

BROTHERS HELD BY TEAM BJMC

Brothers Union were held to a goalless draw by

Team BJMC in the day's first match, which was mostly dominated by Team BJMC.

The charges of Jakaria Babu kept Brothers Union, coached by Italian Giovanni Scannu, on their toes as they looked in better physical condition than their counterparts, yet Team BJMC were unlucky not to secure all three points despite creating a few scoring chances.

BJMC came close to breaking the deadlock in the very second minute but Nigerian striker Kingsley Oshiohka was denied by the near post while Shariful Islam frustrated his team by floating a well-judged cross from Abdullah Al Mamun over the crossbar in the 15th minute.

However, Brothers found a nice opportunity to take the lead from a counter-attack on the half-hour mark when Haitian Augustin Walson put a forward-pass to Mohammad Rony inside the box, but the veteran striker failed to beat goalkeeper Shohag Hossain from a one-on-one situation.

After resumption, Abdullah Al Mamun wasted a good chance to put BJMC ahead by driving miles off target.

Both teams tried to hold possession in the latter part of the match but neither could find the elusive goal.

FINA WORLD C'SHIP Shila, Jewel disappoint

SPORTS REPORTER

SA Games gold medallist Mahfuza Khatun Shila put up a dismal performance in the FINA 17th World Championships as she became 41st among 52 participants in her pet event of 50m breaststroke in Budapest, Hungary yesterday.

Shila, who had set a new SA Games record in the same event with a timing of 34.88 seconds last year, finished yesterday's event with a timing of 36.53 seconds, which is 1.65 seconds more than her SA Games record.

Shila also took part in 50m freestyle where she finished 74th among 87 swimmers. She even finished behind Nepal's Sofia Shah and Aminah Shojan with a time of 30.73 seconds. The Bangladeshi swimmer participated in the freestyle event for the first time since the 2004 national swimming championship.

Jewel Ahmed, too, frustrated with a sorry performance in backstroke. Jewel, who finished 45th out of 46 in 100m backstroke, ended as 46th among 55 swimmers in 50m backstroke by clocking 28.50 seconds, some 3.33 seconds more than Indonesian Sudaar Tawa, who qualified for the 16-man semifinals as the last swimmer.



Siddikur five shots adrift

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman has a tendency of dropping his guard right after a brilliant round of golf.

The ace golfer lived up to that reputation yesterday with a disappointing showing in the third round of the Porsche European Open in Hamburg.

The two-time Asian Tour winner, who had raised hopes of a first ever European Tour title with a six-under in the second round, fluffed his lines at the Green Eagle Golf Course on Saturday with a one-over-par (73).

Siddikur was trailing overnight leader Ashley Chester of England by a single shot at the end of the second round. But the third day proved pretty disappointing as he kept missing the mark while most of the top-ten golfers on the leaderboard continued racking up the birdies.

Having started the day at eight-under-par (136), Siddikur traded four bogeys for three birdies as he slipped to joint 10th position on the leaderboard with an aggregate score of seven-under-par (209).

The two-time Asian Tour winner -- whose best performance in Europe to date was a second-place finish in the tri-sanctioned Mauritius Open last year -- was five shots off the pace, with England's Jordan Smith leading at 12-under-par (204).

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Sweden's Jens Fahrberg and Alexander Levy of France were tied for second at ten-under-par (206).

'They were devastated that we postponed that tour'

STAR SPORT DESK

With the pay dispute reaching a 'boil over' point, Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland questioned why the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA) should have a greater say over the game's management. He also said that it is of utmost importance for Australia to tour Bangladesh after that 'no show' on security grounds in 2015.

The on-going nasty pay dispute is something not very familiar in cricket. It is threatening Australia's tour of Bangladesh next month, the ODI series in India and more pressingly, this summer's Ashes series.

The announced Australian Test team for the two-Test series in Bangladesh have recently collectively voted to boycott the series if a MOU is not reached in a week. They are scheduled to begin training in Darwin from August 11 before departing for Dhaka on August 17.

The decision irked the CA and its chief the most with Sutherland expressing his concern that the ACA was doing so with the intent of dragging out the dispute, rather than ending it.

"To think about a situation where an Australian team doesn't go on an international tour, I just can't come to terms with that," he told The Australian in an exclusive interview.

"Let's not forget that the last time we were due to go to Bangladesh the tour was postponed."

"They were devastated by that. International cricket is built on reciprocity and a belief that we are all in this together, trying to promote the game at an international level."

In his detailed interview with the

Australian newspaper, Sutherland also lashed out at the 'well-paid' cricketers for refusing a generous pay increase at a time when the wages of most Australians had flatlined.

"The players have a really important role to play in the success of our sport but whether they should be decision-makers about where we invest our grassroots funding is a completely different matter," Sutherland said acidly.

"What would the players know about that? What would the ACA know about that?"



JAMES SUTHERLAND

"Our decision-making authority is compromised by some form of veto is unthinkable. There aren't many people who are getting significant pay increases right now. We have an extremely good offer on the table that allows well-paid cricketers to be even better paid."

The Australian also added that the CA's pay offer, which is on the table since March, would see the average wage of an Australian Test or one-day team member immediately jump 12 percent from \$1.16 million to \$1.3m. According to the latest ABS figures, national wages growth is running at a historically low 1.9 percent.

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The ACA however retorted by saying that the 'players are fighting for what is fair: for men and women and grassroots.'

The union's push to have a greater say in areas traditionally reserved for management was laid bare in a detailed pay claim presented by the ACA to CA last Thursday, shortly before Sutherland publicly announced his plan to submit the dispute to arbitration unless substantial progress was made in intensive negotiations, planned for this weekend.

The ACA, Australia captain Steve Smith and vice-captain David Warner have made a virtue of an offer by the players to set aside up to \$30m of their money to invest back into grassroots. Documents provided by the ACA to CA show that this offer comes with two significant strings attached.

The first being the cricketers' goodwill depends on them receiving 30 percent of forecast revenue. From which, they propose allocate 1.1 percent towards the needs of local cricket. The players would still pocket 28.9 percent, a figure of \$482m over five years.

Even when the historic inclusion of women players is taken into account, the players are asking for a bigger share than last time: 26 percent by men and 0.5 percent by women.

If the actual revenue comes in at a higher end, the players would give a greater slice to grassroots but only after sharing a player payment pool of more than \$550m.

The second is that the ACA is prepared to make this money available only if given the final say on how it is invested.

This caveat reflects the ACA's lack of trust on the governing body to spend where it is needed, rather than on the already bloated administration.

NATIONAL VOLLEYBALL PDB, Army in men's final

SPORTS REPORTER

Power Development Board (PDB) and Bangladesh Army moved into the men's final of the Shahjalal Islami Bank National Volleyball Championship after winning their respective semifinals at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PDB handed a 25-17, 25-22, 25-21 points defeat to Bangladesh Navy while Bangladesh Army defeated Titas Gas 25-17, 25-19, 25-16 in the second semifinal.

In women's semifinals, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation beat Rajshahi 25-13, 25-9, 25-17 to set up the final against Bangladesh Ansar, who defeated Chittagong District 25-14, 25-14, 25-17.

Both the finals will take place on Monday.

Opi hattrick drives BKSP

SPORTS REPORTER

Meraj Hossain Opi slotted a hattrick to power Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protishthan (BKSP) to an emphatic 3-0 win over Narinda Juniors Lions in the Dhaka Metropolis Football Tournament at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

In the day's other match, Azampur Football Academy defeated BFF U-16 squad 2-0, with Mohammad Shipon scoring both goals.

Board seeks to fix support staff

SPORTS REPORTER

The meeting of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) board of directors will be held today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. The board is now gearing up for the next elections, which is why the issue of the EGM and the AGM will be discussed.

The board is still awaiting the copy of the recent ruling from the Supreme Court regarding its constitution, but will still discuss its next course of action regarding the upcoming elections, which are likely to be held by November. The Supreme Court ruled that the BCB has the authority to amend its constitution and that the National Sports Council (NSC) could not amend the BCB's constitution.

Approval for the extension to coaching staff and some new appointments for the national team are also on the agenda, as well as the extension of the national selectors following the expiration of the Minhajul Abdein-led selection panel's tenure last June.

Former Australian cricketer Mark O'Neill had already arrived in the capital on Wednesday night and joined the national team as a batting consultant. However, the BCB only signed a one-month deal with him and there is a

chance that he may be considered as a long-term option if the board is satisfied with his work.

The BCB was looking for a new batting coach for the national team after they decided not to extend former Sri Lanka batsman Thilan Samaraweera's contract after the ICC Champions Trophy.

58-year-old O'Neill visited the facilities at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday along with head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, who returned to his job after a long vacation.

The Australian will start working from today when the national cricketers return to business after a two-day break.

"He [O'Neill] will work with the national team players and other cricketers during his special assignment. We may go for a long-term deal after the one-month stint. He was appointed yesterday and will begin working from tomorrow [Sunday]," informed BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday.

The board is also very close to appointing a spin bowling coach, something they have been working on for a while.

With the 2019 ICC World Cup in England now less than two years away, the board was looking forward to ensuring that head coach Hathurusingha, who will be the master planner for the mega event, will get all the requisite supporting staff.



Mark O'Neill (R), who has recently been appointed as Bangladesh's batting consultant, will be working with head coach Chandika Hathurusingha (L) ahead of the scheduled Test series against Australia.

PHOTO: STAR