

Bangoura treble fires NoFel

SPORTS REPORTER

BPL Guinean forward Ismael Bangoura slotted a hatrick for NoFel SC to help the side notch a come from behind 5-2 win over Rahmatganj MFS in a Bangladesh Premier League match on their home ground, the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.

Bangoura is the fifth player to score a hatrick in the ongoing professional football league after Ballo Famoussa of Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Zahid Hossain of Arambagh and Nabib Newaj Jibon and Sunday Chizoba of Abahani.

With their overall third win in 16 matches, newcomers NoFel SC leapfrogged to 10th position with 13 points, just two behind ninth-placed Rahmatganj MFS, who surprisingly suffered an identical 5-2 defeat against Abahani in their previous match.

NoFel, who were in threat of relegation by staying just ahead of Brothers Union and Team BJMC before the start of the match, conceded the lead in the very third minute when Uzbekistan's Furkar Jon found the back of NoFel's net with a curling free-kick in the third minute.

However, NoFel hit back to level the

margin two minutes later with Kamul Islam volleying an Ashraful Islam cross home from inside the box before Bangoura got the home side ahead in the 35th minute with a side-volley from inside the danger zone. Bangoura, who once played for Rahmatganj MFS, made it 3-1 by breaking the off-side trap two minutes from the break.

After resumption, Rahmatganj stepped up their attack and reduced the margin in the 50th minute, thanks to a cleaver header from Sohail Rana over NoFel's advancing goalkeeper Saiful Islam Khan. However, NoFel again regained control of the game as Jamir Uddin restored the margin with a grounder in the 54th minute while Bangoura completed his hatrick in the 65th minute with a solo effort.

At the Sylhet District Stadium, the visiting Saif Sporting Club handed a 3-0 defeat to hosts Sheikh Russel KC with Uzbek Otobek Zokirov, Colombian Deiner Andres Cordoba and Brazilian Alessandro Celin scoring in the 53rd, 61st and 79th minutes respectively.

With their 11th win in 17 matches, Saif caught up to third-placed Sheikh Russel with 36 points each but Sheikh Russel are ahead of Saif by virtue of a better goal difference having played one match less.



NoFel's Guinean striker Ismael Bangoura kisses the ground after scoring a hatrick against Rahmatganj in their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.



Brazil striker Gabriel Jesus (2nd from R) celebrates with goalkeeper Alisson (R) after scoring the final penalty to defeat Paraguay 4-3 in the tie-breaker of their Copa America quarterfinals at the Gremio Arena in Porto Alegre on Thursday.

Brazil exorcise penalty demons to reach semis

AFP, Porto Alegre

Gabriel Jesus scored the winning spot-kick in a tense penalty shoot-out as Brazil exorcised their demons to beat Paraguay on Thursday and reach the Copa America semifinals.

Twice before in 2011 and 2015 Paraguay had beaten Brazil at this same stage on penalties at the South American extravaganza.

William came closest to scoring in normal time for Brazil when he hit the post as Paraguay held out for a 0-0 draw for more than 40 minutes following the dismissal of Fabian Balbuena for a professional foul on Roberto Firmino.

Brazilian media had been almost in a state of paranoia before the match recalling the painful memories from Argentina in 2011 and Chile four years later when Paraguay produced stubborn defensive displays before snatching victory in the spot-kick lottery.

But it wasn't to be this time as Brazil goalkeeper Alisson saved Gustavo Gomez's opening spot-kick at the Gremio Arena in Porto Alegre.

Although Firmino dragged his effort wide, Derlis Gonzalez also fired past the post allowing Jesus, who missed a penalty in Brazil's last match, to be the match-winner.

The tournament hosts will face either perennial rivals Argentina or Venezuela in Tuesday's semifinal in Belo Horizonte.

Brazil started brightly and produced a

beautiful passing move in the fourth minute as local favourite Everton drove in off the left wing and found Dani Alves on the edge of the area, with the full-back slipping the ball on to Firmino, whose weak shot was straight at goalkeeper Roberto Fernandez.

Gremio forward Everton's popularity was clear in his home stadium as fans wildly cheered his every touch.

But the game quickly settled into the expected pattern, with Brazil dominating possession and playing countless passes while a well-drilled Paraguay doggedly held their shape and looked to counter at pace with direct runners.

Brazil lacked a cutting edge and even when Philippe Coutinho seemingly played in Firmino behind the defence following a Richard Sanchez mistake, the Liverpool forward was easily muscled off the ball.

The best chance of the first quarter fell to Paraguay as Hernan Perez found Gonzalez unmarked at back post but Alisson saved his near post shot.

It was turgid fare on offer to the Porto Alegre crowd, who started a slow clap just after the half hour.

Brazil reporters had asked coach Tite before the game if he was worried about fouls, which he replied were part of the game.

But three Paraguayan players were booked before half-time for overly robust challenges.

It wasn't until five minutes from half time that Coutinho got in behind the defence on the left and fired in a shot from an angle that

Fernandez saved comfortably.

Predictably, Brazil were booed off at half-time, for the third time in four matches.

Tite wasted no time in making a change, but it was a curious one swapping left-back Felipe Luis for Alex Sandro.

Neat interplay saw Firmino tee up Coutinho just outside the box but his precise finish was easily saved again.

Brazil had changed tactic and were driving more purposefully at the heart of the defence, with Arthur flashing a shot over the bar.

It paid dividends on 54 minutes when Firmino won a free-kick on the edge of the penalty area -- overturned from the original decision of a penalty by VAR -- and Balbuena was shown a red card for a professional foul.

Dani Alves's fierce low free-kick was deflected wide, though.

Brazil started to pull Paraguay's overworked defenders out of position and Arthur forced Fernandez into a diving save before Jesus dragged an effort wide.

With Paraguay unable to pose any threat Tite withdrew his defensive midfielder Allan and threw on winger William, with Jesus pushed into the middle alongside Firmino.

Almost immediately, Jesus missed a gilt-edged chance from eight yards out before Firmino headed a Marquinhos cross wide.

Tite went for broke, bringing on attacking midfielder Lucas Paqueta for full-back Alves and it almost worked but William saw his low left foot shot cannon back off the post sending the match into a tense penalty shoot-out.

FINANCIAL FAIR PLAY VIOLATIONS

Milan banned from Europe

AFP, Lausanne

AC Milan were banned from European football for next season on Friday over breaches of financial fair play rules, CAS, the top court for sport, announced.

European football's governing body UEFA had accused the club of violating financial fair play (FFP) regulations over the past three seasons and the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled in their favour.

"AC Milan is excluded from

participating in UEFA club competitions of the sporting season 2019/2020 as a consequence of the breach of its FFP break-even obligations" for the past three seasons, the court ruled.

UEFA initially found the Italian giants, who had qualified for the Europa League next season, guilty in June last year of violating financial rules which broadly limit club expenditure to club income in any given year.

2020 COPA AMERICA

Colombia will host final

AFP, Bogota

Colombia will host the final of the 2020 Copa America they're jointly hosting with Argentina, President Ivan Duque announced on Thursday.

The final will be played in the Metropolitan stadium in the Caribbean port city of Barranquilla, the local mayor Alejandro Char said, promising a "gala."

It will be the second successive year that the tournament is played as regional governing body CONMEBOL has decided to align the Copa America with the European Championships, to be played every four years and two years apart from the World Cup.

England see off Norway

AFP, Le Havre

A stunning strike by Lucy Bronze helped England to a 3-0 quarterfinal win over Norway in Le Havre on Thursday as Phil Neville's team eased into the last four of the women's World Cup.

David Beckham, a former colleague of Neville's for Manchester United and England, was among the crowd of more than 21,000 at the Stade Oceane to see midfielder Jill Scott open the scoring inside three minutes, becoming just the second English player to score at three separate women's World Cups.

Ellen White then grabbed her fifth goal of the tournament five minutes prior to half-time and Bronze made sure of the victory with a rising shot high into the net as the hour mark approached.

England were so comfortable towards the end that they could even afford to squander a penalty, with Nikita Parris having her late spot-kick saved.

There were striking similarities between Bronze's effort here and her goal that gave England a 2-1 win over the same opponents a round earlier at the 2015 World Cup in Canada.

The Lionesses went out of that tournament in the semifinals and also fell in the last four at Euro 2017. Now they will hope to go a step further, although a daunting challenge awaits against hosts France or holders the United States in Lyon next Tuesday.

Norway had declared ambitions of leaving France with a medal to show for their efforts, but after ousting



England defender Lucy Bronze (R) celebrates her goal against Norway in the Women's World Cup quarterfinals at the Oceane Stadium on Thursday.

Australia on penalties in the last round, this was a step too far for them.

It is impossible not to wonder how different things might have been in this game had the class of Ada Hegerberg been available to Martin Sjogren's team. They could not recover after falling behind to Scott's early goal, with Bronze charging forward down the right and cutting the ball back from the byline for the Manchester City midfielder to side-foot in off the far post after White had miskicked.

It was a landmark goal for Scott, who first found the net for her country against Argentina at the 2007 World Cup.

England looked like scoring every

time they came forward in the first half, with White hitting the post and Parris having a header saved by Ingrid Hjelmseth before the second goal came on 40 minutes.

Yet again the left side of the Norwegian defence was badly exposed as Parris teed up White to convert from inside the six-yard box.

Any hopes Norway had of a second-half comeback were doused in the 57th minute when Bronze was fouled by Ingrid Syrtstad Engen on another charge forward from right-back.

Substitute Beth Mead laid the ball back to Bronze from the resulting free-kick, and the Lyon star smashed home in style.

Nadal breathes a sigh of relief

Slated to meet Federer in semis

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal breathed a sigh of relief Friday after he was slated to meet eight-time champion Roger Federer in the Wimbledon semifinals.

Nadal's fears that he would be drawn in top-seeded favourite and defending champion Novak Djokovic's half of the draw -- and face him in the semis -- proved unfounded despite Wimbledon promoting Federer above him in the seedings.

The Spaniard, seeded third behind Federer, had complained earlier this week that Wimbledon's unique formula for seeding that combines ranking points with form in grass-court competitions was disrespectful.

World number one Djokovic will in theory face South African fourth seed and last year's beaten finalist Kevin Anderson -- who was promoted from eighth in the world -- in the last four.

Nadal, who comes in on the back of his 18th Grand Slam singles title after winning his 12th French Open which included beating Federer in the semi-finals, will do well to reach the last four as he has a tough looking draw.

He should have little trouble with his first round opponent, Yuichi Sugita of Japan, but after that things become more perilous.

Moody but talented Australian Nick Kyrgios -- who beat Nadal in the last 16 at Wimbledon in 2014 -- is a potential second round opponent and highly-rated Canadian youngster Denis Shapovalov could await in the third round.

If he emerges from those tussles he could face Croatia's 2017 Wimbledon singles finalist Marin Cilic in the last 16.

His great rivals Djokovic and Federer begin their campaigns against 35-year-old German Philipp Kohlschreiber and Lloyd Harris of South Africa respectively.

Kohlschreiber beat Djokovic earlier this year in the third round at Indian Wells.

The women's draw sees Australia's new world number one and French Open champion Ashleigh Barty open against China's Zheng Saisai with a potentially tricky date with Spain's 2017 champion Garbine Muguruza in the third round.

The most intriguing match-up could come in the fourth round with a rematch of last year's final between defending champion Angelique Kerber of Germany and American legend Serena Williams.

There is a first round match of the old and the very new as Williams's 39-year-old sister Venus will play compatriot Cori Gauff, who on Thursday at 15 years of age became the youngest woman to qualify for the tournament in the Open era.



WHAT TO WATCH

BTV, GTV & MAASRANGA
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
AFGHANISTAN V PAKISTAN
LIVE FROM 3:30PM
STAR SPORTS 3
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
AUSTRALIA V NEW ZEALAND
LIVE FROM 6:30PM

DAY'S EVENTS

BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE
BASHUNDHARA V MUKTIJODDHA
TIME: 4:00PM
VENUE: SHEIKH KAMAL STADIUM, NILPHAMARI