



Fans wearing protective face masks are seated with social distancing in mind. Despite most sport being cancelled around the world as the spread of coronavirus continues, Bufalo Boxing in Managua, Nicaragua continued and caught the eye of a worldwide audience.



PHOTO: REUTERS

## Coaches go online to help peers, booters

ANISUR RAHMAN



"As there are hardly any fitness trainers at club level, most coaches have to look after the fitness aspect of the players. So I think the initiative of sharing fitness knowledge has helped coaches who have participated in this online class," was the simple admission from Haider Kabir Prince, head coach of Rising Star Club of Chottagram Premier Division Football League for the last 18 years.

Maruful Haque, Saiful Bari Titu and Julfikar Mahmud Mintu, three of the top coaches of the country had arranged a discussion on fitness of footballers for the coaches, players and organisers online in a time of social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic.

AFC A licence holder Titu and Mintu presented aerobic and anaerobic fitness training respectively while UEFA A licence holder Maruful discussed strength and endurance. The online classes were attended by 60 persons on Friday and Saturday.

them. As I work with age-group players, I learned what is necessary for fitness training of the budding players. After the discussion I feel I can train the players in a more effective way."

"There were many things to learn from the discussion and I think continuous discussions will help the coaches and virtually benefit the country's football," said another BKSP coach Mustakim Wazed. Titu however was a bit frustrated after the low turnout from the Bangladesh Premier League clubs' dugouts.

"We arranged the discussion from our responsibility. If anyone is benefited, then it is our success," Titu said. "It was just a token discussion but the individual has to study to improve as we have just shared our knowledge and experience with them."

"Muktijoddha Sangsad coach Abul Kaiyum Sentu, Bashundhara Kings assistant coach Abu Faisal and national women's team coach Golam Rabbani Choton participated in the discussion, but there were no other coaches from the Bangladesh Premier League. I think this discussion would have been far better had other BPL



Maruful



Titu



Mintu

"If any player has good skill and technique but doesn't have good fitness, then he won't be effective. So he must have the knowledge of how to maintain fitness and his coaches will play a key role in this regard," AFC B licence holder Prince said, adding that he also checked whether he was in the right direction of training by discussing the method with the speakers."

AFC A licence holder Masud Parvez Kaiser, assistant coach of Sheikh Russel KC, also attended the online discussion to rekindle the lessons he had forgotten.

"It was a good initiative indeed because there is no limit to learning. They discussed how to work with the players' fitness and coaches at different level. I believe I have been benefited by the discussion as I remembered lessons I had forgotten," said Kaiser, who is also involved with national team.

BKSP coach Imrul Hasan Imu, who played for Brothers Union last season, said, "I want to know more about fitness and training and I have got the guidelines from

coaches participated," Titu lamented.

The former national team coach also informed that they are planning to hold such discussion classes more in future but everything depends on the interest of the participants.

### TARAFDER DONATES TO STRUGGLING COACHES

Sports organiser Tarafder Ruhul Amin came to help the insolvent football coaches at the district and divisional level.

He donated Tk 25 lakh, providing financial assistance to 200 coaches who are in trouble due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Tarafder said that they enlisted three or four coaches from each of the 64 districts through the district football associations.

The president of the Bangladesh District and Divisional Football Associations (BDDFA) also informed that he would help coaches involved in lower-tier football leagues in Dhaka after scrutinising them through Dhaka Club Association.

## Arsenal to restart training

AFP, London

Arsenal's squad will be allowed back to their training ground from next week, although the club stressed they would still have to maintain British government guidelines designed to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

The Premier League side's players will have access to training pitches but on a strict rotational basis that will see them uphold social distancing measures.

"Players will be permitted access to our London Colney training grounds next week," said a club spokesperson.

"Access will be limited, carefully managed and social distancing will be maintained at all times.

"All Colney buildings remain closed. Players will travel alone, do their individual workout and return home."

This week saw Arsenal become the first Premier League club to agree a coronavirus pay cut with their players as manager Mikel Arteta and his stars slashed their wages by 12.5 percent. The club's current wage bill is around £230 million.

## I was 'clueless' on Test debut: Sachin

PTI, New Delhi



Sachin Tendulkar says he was "clueless" on his Test debut and almost cried thinking it was all over for him.

When he walked out for the last time 24 years later, Tendulkar would do so as a batting great with a record 200 Test appearances to his name.

"I was clueless, I have to admit that. I played the first Test as if I was playing a school match," Sachin told Nasser Hussain on Sportskeeps.

In his first Test in 1989, Tendulkar was up against a Pakistan pace attack comprising Imran Khan, Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis. Recalling the outing, he said, "Wasim and Waqar were bowling quick, and they were delivering short balls and all sorts of intimidating things they could do. I had never experienced anything like that, so the first outing wasn't a pleasant one.

"Occasionally, I got beaten by their pace and bounce, and when I got out on 15, I felt embarrassed when I walked back to the dressing room. I was like 'what have you done, why did you play like this' and then I went straight to the bathroom, and I was almost in tears."

Now the owner of innumerable records, Tendulkar, at that point in time, felt he was not good enough for international cricket.

"I felt I was completely out of place. I looked at myself and questioned myself and said: 'looks like this is gonna be your first and the last outing'. I felt that I'm not good enough to play at this level. I was upset and feeling low," Tendulkar said.

He said a conversation with Ravi Shastri, now the coach of the Indian team, helped him.

"I still remember the conversation I had with Ravi Shastri. Ravi said, 'you played as if it was a school match. You are playing against the best bowlers; you need to respect their ability and their skill'.

"Then I told Ravi that I got beaten by their pace. To which Ravi said: 'That happens to quite a few, you don't worry. You just look to go out and spend half an hour in the middle and then you will get adjusted to their pace,



and everything will fall into place after that.'"

Tendulkar was picked for the second Test and showed he had it in him with a gritty half-century.

"When I was picked to play in the second Test at Faisalabad, the only thing on my mind was, I'm not gonna look at the scoreboard. I will only look at the clock and not worry about scoring runs.

"I batted for half an hour, and I felt really comfortable and I scored 59 runs in that match and after that things started changing," Tendulkar said.

## Chelsea opt against 10% pay cut

AFP, London

Chelsea have said they will not impose a pay cut on their first-team squad in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

But the Premier League side added Saturday they had asked players to continue donating to charities during the ongoing pandemic.

It has been reported the west London club have been in talks with their players about a salary reduction of around 10 percent in a bid to reduce costs at a time when football has been suspended because of the virus.

That figure, however, is significantly lower than the Premier League's suggestion of 30 percent for all clubs.

But that has not stopped Chelsea from taking their own course of action as they highlighted the #PlayersTogether initiative launched by players earlier this month, which aims to raise and distribute funds for charities supporting Britain's state-run NHS.

The Blues also said they would not be taking advantage of the UK government's coronavirus job retention or furlough scheme.

## UK govt to hold restart talks with major sports

AFP, London

The British government plans to hold talks with major sports during the next week in a move designed to see a return of action as soon as possible amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The pandemic has led to the suspension of established sport in Britain.

But it is understood the government accept the potential boost to national morale that could come with a resumption of sport after months of Britain being in state of lockdown.

This week saw Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden tell MPs he had been having "productive talks" with governing bodies from across British sport on restarting following the coronavirus shutdown.

Meanwhile England and Wales Cricket Board chief executive Tom Harrison said his organisation had been asked by Dowden's department to lead a cross-sport group also including football, horse racing, tennis and rugby.

A source told the BBC that the upcoming meeting, the first of a regular series, represented a "quickening of the pace" and was intended to help sport resume "within weeks", if progress was made.

The meetings, however, are regarded as "preparatory", and meant to avoid a further delay to seasons being resumed once approval is granted, rather than indicate an imminent resumption of normal sporting activity.

Sports will be looked at on an individual basis, meaning some could resume sooner than others, although there is an acceptance any fixtures would have to be behind closed doors as things stand.

Any return of live action would also have to pass government guidance on hygiene, virus testing, and the maintenance of social distancing. They will also likely involve strict limits on the numbers of people allowed.

The coronavirus has led to the suspension of the 2019/20 seasons in both English football's Premier League and Football League. The start of the cricket season in England and Wales has been delayed until July, while this year's London Marathon, due to be run on Sunday, has been pushed back until October.

But the 2020 British Open golf and Wimbledon tennis championships have been cancelled completely, with the first nine races of the Formula One season called off.



With Covid-19 keeping sports stars indoors, retired tennis great Maria Sharapova and Australian cricketer Pat Cummins gave glimpses into their morning routine with these pictures on Instagram.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



## Archer had 'gone mad' after losing World Cup medal

AFP, London



England fast bowler Jofra Archer said Saturday he'd "gone mad" looking for his World Cup winner's medal after losing the prized piece of silverware while moving house.

Last year saw the Sussex quick establish himself on the global stage as he helped England win their first men's 50-over global title, with Archer's 20 wickets at 23.05 the most taken by any member of the

champions' squad.

The 25-year-old, who only made his international debut in 2019, was also given the daunting responsibility of bowling the Super Over in the final at Lord's.

Archer, however, held his nerve brilliantly as England edged out New Zealand in a thrilling finish decided on boundary countback after the teams' scores were level after both regulation play and cricket's answer to 'extra time'.

But the Barbados-born quick, who spent a lot of time on the sidelines in the recent past and was named as one

of Wisden's top five cricketers of 2019, admitted that he had lost the medal while moving to a new home.

Asked Saturday about where his medal was now, told BBC Radio: "I had it hanging off a portrait someone did for me and sent to me, I had my medal hanging on that.

"I moved flat and the picture is on the new wall but there's no medal. I turned the house upside down for about a week but I still haven't managed to find it.

"I know it should be in the house so I will keep eyes out for it but I've gone mad looking for it already."

## Warne revisits his dismissal on 99

NZH



Better known for his ability to terrorise batsmen with the ball in hand, the closest he came was scoring 99 against New Zealand in 2001 - before being caught on the boundary after trying to slog-sweep Daniel Vettori.

The all-time cricket great would never better that score, and recounted the innings speaking with Newstalk ZB's Martin Devlin.

"I had been pretty well for the day and we were in a lot of trouble," Warne said.

"New Zealand had played beautifully, were outplaying us and had been ahead. I walked out to bat knowing we had to pass the follow-on."

Warne batted away and reached 99, when Black Caps captain Stephen Fleming took the opportunity to try and get in the head of Warne.

"Flem comes in, says 'there's plenty of gaps out there for you' and I was thinking to myself, 'don't do anything silly, just pick the right ball'," Warne said. "So a couple of balls go past and I think 'right, that's it. This one's going'.

"In my head, I just thought a little sweep out to the boundary where there's a couple of fielders. Just sweep it along the carpet and get a single. I took this almighty wind up and tried to hit it for 12 back to Melbourne from Perth and bloody Mark Richardson had to take the catch."

However, the Australian believed he was robbed of the momentous achievement that day, with replays showing Vettori had bowled a no-ball.

To this day, Warne remains the cricketer with the most career test runs in history without notching a century - with 3154 runs.

