

Tamim leads Barishal from the front with half-century

SPORTS REPORTER

Fortune Barishal rode on skipper Tamim Iqbal's brisk fifty to register their first win in the Bangabandhu T20 Cup beating Minister Rajshahi by five wickets in the days' second fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Chasing a modest target of 133, Barishal lost Mehedi Hasan Miraz early but skipper Tamim, along with young Parvez Hossain, added 61 runs for the second wicket to lay the foundation for the win.

Even though Parvez got dismissed for 23, Tamim went on and remained unbeaten on 77 off 61 deliveries to hand Rajshahi their first defeat in their third game.

Earlier, it was the seamers who set the tone for Barishal after Tamim had elected to field. Kamrul Islam led the way by picking up four wickets for 21 runs in his four overs. Interestingly three of those four wickets came in the 20th over of Rajshahi's innings.

Off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz bowled well too and picked up two wickets while seamer Taskin Ahmed bagged a wicket. More importantly, Taskin bowled at an excellent line and length to keep the pressure early on.

Despite a cautious start, Rajshahi lost their way in the middle and could only manage 132 for nine after twenty overs, with Mahedi Hasan top-scoring with 34 off 23 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF
RAJSHAHI: 132 for 9 in 20 overs (Mahedi 34, Fazle 31; Kamrul 4-21)
BARISHAL: 136 for 5 in 19 overs (Tamim 77 not out, Parvez 23, Hridoy 17; Mukidul 2-27)
Result: Barisal won by five wickets



Gemcon Khulna all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (L) looks on frustratingly as Anamul Haque departs following a mix-up between the two early in their match against Gazi Group Chattogram at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The ace all-rounder followed soon as Khulna failed to put up a fight in the match, losing eventually by nine wickets.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shakib's landmark in vain

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazi Group Chattogram continued their dominance in the ongoing Bangabandhu T20 Cup beating Gemcon Khulna comprehensively by nine wickets, registering their second consecutive win in the days' first fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Khulna's heavyweight batting order failed for the third straight game in the tournament as they were bundled out for just 86 runs in 17.4 overs.

For Chattogram, it was left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman who bowled brilliantly to pick up four wickets while conceding just five runs. Apart from Mustafizur,

spinners Nahidul Islam and Taijul Islam bagged two wickets each.

Chasing a small total, Chattogram openers Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar again remained clinical to guide through the chase without any sort of difficulties and reached the target with 6.2 overs to spare to hand Khulna their second defeat in three games.

The Chattogram opening pair added 73 runs which laid the foundation for an easy win. Even though Soumya departed for 26, Liton remained unbeaten on 53 off 46 balls with nine fours.

Earlier after being sent in to bat, Khulna came up with a different strategy by promoting Shakib Al Hasan to open the innings with Anamul Haque on a pitch that had something for the bowlers right

from the start.

Shakib reached a milestone of 5000 runs in T20s with a single off Shoriful Islam's delivery in the fourth over in his 312th shortest format game.

The star all-rounder, who had already scalped 355 wickets in T20s, also became the second player after West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo to have reached the double of 5000 runs and 350 wickets in the format.

But Shakib could not make the game memorable on the day of reaching the milestone as he is yet to gain his rhythm with the bat for the third game in a row in the tournament. The 33-year-old miscued the next ball he faced and was caught by mid-on off a Nahidul delivery on three.

Things got worse for Khulna right from the start as Anamul Haque was run out after a huge mix-up with Shakib on six.

Imrul Kayes, who was yet to score a run in the tournament, came at number three and seemed to gain some rhythm. Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad also failed with the bat and was out for just one as Khulna kept losing wickets at regular intervals, with Imrul's 21 being the highest score in the end.

SCORES IN BRIEF:
KHULNA: 86 all out in 17.5 overs (Kayes 21, Shakib 3, Mahmudullah 1; Mustafizur 4-5, Nahidul 2-15)
CHATTOGRAM: 87 for 1 in 13.4 overs (Liton 53 not out, Soumya 26, Mahmudullah 1-16, Shakib 0-14)
Result: Chattogram won by 9 wickets

All Blacks pay tribute to Diego

AFP, Newcastle

New Zealand captain Sam Cane laid an All Blacks No.10 jersey emblazoned with Diego Maradona's name in the centre circle ahead of their match against Argentina in memory of the football legend Saturday.

The 1986 World Cup winner, a rugby fan, died in his sleep on Wednesday aged just 60, plunging his South American homeland and football globally into mourning.

Both teams gathered in the middle at McDonald Jones Stadium in Newcastle, north of Sydney, ahead of their Tri Nations clash for the tribute.

It saw Cane symbolically place the shirt on the ground as a mark of respect ahead of their traditional haka.

There were suggestions that the 10 shirt of the Pumas' Nicolas Sanchez could be retired for the game in honour of Maradona, who wore that number when playing for Argentina. But he donned it as normal.

"I think he's a legend for everybody, but in Argentina he was almost a god," Pumas coach Mario Ledesma, who played 84 times for his country, said shortly before kick-off.

"He had the capacity of getting everybody together so we will miss him."

Maradona was a huge fan of any Argentine sporting team, and Ledesma met him several times.

"He came to many games, and he came once to our changing room after a game against the All Blacks in La Plata; we'd lost on the last ball," he said on Thursday.

"I crossed paths a couple of times, but not many. He had an attraction, the world stopped when he was there.

"He would watch tennis, hockey, rugby, football, whenever there was an Argentina jersey he was there and he was an example of how to represent that jersey."

Maradona was laid to rest on the outskirts of Buenos Aires after a ceremony attended by family and close friends, following a chaotic public wake.



Diego Maradona's death has touched not only footballing world but other sports around the world as well. The All Blacks, the most decorated rugby side in the world, paid a tribute to the Argentine legend, with Sam Cane laying Maradona's shirt on the pitch ahead of their Tri Nations Test against Argentina in Newcastle, Australia on Saturday. The New Zealanders won the match 38-0, exacting revenge for their stunning loss to the Pumas two weeks ago.



Liverpool forward Diogo Jota scores against Brighton in their Premier League fixture on Saturday. Pascal Gross grabbed an injury-time equaliser as the defending champions were held to a draw, moving them one clear of Spurs at the top.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Late penalty denies Liverpool

AFP, Brighton

Liverpool were frustrated by VAR as Pascal Gross's controversial late penalty rescued a dramatic 1-1 draw for Brighton at the Amex Stadium on Saturday.

Jürgen Klopp's side took the lead through Diogo Jota's second half strike after Brighton's Neal Maupay had missed a penalty in the first half. But Liverpool were stunned in stoppage-time when Andrew Robertson's challenge on Danny Welbeck was ruled a penalty after Stuart Attwell overturned his initial decision.

Gross converted from the spot, leaving Klopp sarcastically applauding the officials at the end of a disappointing week for Liverpool after their shock Champions League defeat at home to Atalanta.

Liverpool went back to the top of the table as a result of their draw, but the champions are just one point ahead of previous leaders Tottenham. Tottenham can regain pole position if they avoid defeat at Chelsea on Sunday, while the Blues will go top if they win.

It was one of those days for Liverpool, who also saw goals correctly disallowed by VAR for offside against Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane.

There was more bad news for injury-ravaged Liverpool as James Milner was forced off in the second half. Klopp had claimed it was almost a "crime" that Liverpool had to feature in the early Saturday match after playing in the Champions League just three days earlier.

He made six changes from the Atalanta game and Liverpool should have taken the lead in the opening moments when Fabinho unfurled a perfectly-weighted long pass that picked out Salah's run, but the Egyptian fired wastefully wide from just inside the Brighton area.

With Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez injured and Joel Matip rested, Klopp's makeshift defence were exposed when Maupay's pass sent the unmarked Aaron Connolly racing through on goal. But with just Liverpool 'keeper Alisson Becker to beat, Connolly guided his shot well wide.

During another well-timed incursion from Connolly in the 20th minute, he was tripped in the area by the Neco Williams after he was caught out of position. Maupay stepped up to take the spot-kick, but his side-foot effort went wide.

Liverpool thought they had hit back with a sucker punch when Salah sprinted onto Firmino's pass and scuffed his shot past Brighton keeper Mat Ryan. But VAR curtailed Salah's celebrations as he was ruled offside by the tightest of margins.

In a warning that Brighton failed to heed, Jota turned to flash a shot narrowly wide and in the 60th minute the Portugal forward put Liverpool.

Liverpool were seconds away from three points when Robertson went to clear in his own area as Welbeck closed in. Robertson's foot made contact with Welbeck, but there were few appeals from Brighton before Attwell awarded a contentious penalty after consulting the pitchside monitor.

Maradona's death being probed

AFP, Buenos Aires

Argentine prosecutors were investigating Friday the circumstances surrounding the death of Diego Maradona and whether it could have involved medical negligence, judicial sources said.

"There are already irregularities," a close family member told AFP.

Maradona's lawyer, Matias Morla, had earlier called for an investigation into claims that ambulances took more than half an hour to reach the football star's house in response to an emergency call on the day of his death.

A preliminary autopsy report established that Maradona died in his sleep at noon on Wednesday of "acute lung edema and chronic heart failure."

The prosecutor's office in Buenos Aires has opened a file entitled "Maradona, Diego. Determination

of the cause of death."

"The case was initiated because he is a person who died at home and no one signed his death certificate. It does not mean there are suspicions or irregularities," a judicial source said, requesting to remain anonymous.

The 60-year-old Argentine football legend was receiving round-the-clock medical care at a house in a gated community in Tigre, north of Buenos Aires, where he was recuperating from surgery to remove a clot on his brain in early November.

"You have to see if they did what they were supposed to do or if they relaxed," the family member told AFP. "The nurse made a statement when the prosecutor appeared on the day of Diego's death, then expanded her statement and finally went on television to say that what she said was forced on her, so there is some contradiction

in her statement."

The prosecutor's office is awaiting the results of toxicological tests on Maradona's body.

The three prosecutors working on the case have requested the star's medical records, as well as recordings from neighbourhood security cameras.

Another nurse caring for Maradona was likely the last person to see the star alive, at dawn on Wednesday, prosecutors said in a statement on Friday.

"From his words, it could be established that he was the last person to see (Maradona) alive at approximately 6:30 in the morning," as the night shift at the star's house was ending, it said.

The nurse, interviewed by prosecutors on Thursday, "referred to having found him resting in his bed, assuring that he was sleeping and breathing normally."

Maradona's nephew Johnny

Herrera was previously believed to have been the last person to see Maradona, at 11:30pm on Tuesday.

Prosecutors said the nurse present in his house at the time of death told them that she had heard Maradona "moving around inside the room" at 7:30am.

They said that at 12:17pm, "Maradona's personal secretary requested medical assistance, and an ambulance from the company +VIDA was present at 12:28pm, according to film records from the San Andres neighbourhood obtained by the prosecutor's office."

Several ambulances from other medical service providers arrived later.

Investigators have also established that Maradona's personal doctor, Leopoldo Luque, had already made a 911 call at 12:16 pm, requesting an ambulance.

Barca players set for €122m wage cut

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona were close to securing an agreement on Friday for a 122 million euros cut in players' salaries this season to help offset the financial hole left by the coronavirus pandemic.

The deal, announced in a statement by the club, must now be ratified by the players "in the coming days".

The reduction in their wage bill represents a welcome financial lifeline for Barca, hit hard by the loss of gate receipts at the Camp Nou and other effects of Covid-19 prevention measures.



Mohammad Sifat Sheikh (L) of Jashore District Sports Association keeps his body ahead of the others on way to winning the juvenile 110m hurdles event on the second and final day of the Bangabandhu 36th National Junior Athletics Competition at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Sifat's effort helped Jashore DSA become champions in the meet with seven gold, one silver and four bronze medals.

PHOTO: STAR

Sydney win women's Big Bash League

AFP, Sydney

Fine bowling helped propel Sydney Thunder to an upset seven-wicket win over Meg Lanning's Melbourne Stars and claim the women's Big Bash League title on Saturday.

Rachael Haynes' team restricted the Stars to just 86 for nine at North Sydney Oval and chased down the total easily with more than six overs to spare.

England star Heather Knight (26 not out) and Haynes (21 not out) steered them home after fast bowlers Shabnim Ismail (2-12) and Sammy-Jo Johnson (2-11) left the Stars' top-order in tatters.