

TEN 1
England vs New Zealand
Second Test (Day 3)
Live from 4:00 pm
SONY SIX & TEN 2
EURO 2020
Wales vs Switzerland
Live from 7:00 pm

Denmark vs Finland
Live from 10:00 pm
Belgium vs Russia
Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & STAR SPORTS 1
FRENCH OPEN WOMEN'S FINAL

Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova vs Barbora Krejčíková
Live from 7:00 pm
T SPORTS
PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE
Quetta Gladiators vs Peshawar Zalmi
Live from 10:00 pm



(L-R) Shakib Al Hasan kicks at the stumps and then uproots them before banging them on the ground in a fit of rage during Mohammedan's Dhaka Premier League fixture against Abahani at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The all-rounder then gets into a verbal spat with Abahani coach Khaled Mahmud, who is restrained by the players of the two teams. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shakib takes frustration to the extreme

MAZHAR UDDIN



The historic battle between archrivals Abahani and Mohammedan SC may have faded over the years but Shakib Al Hasan certainly felt the heat of the rivalry and took it to new heights, or depths based on how you look at it, during a Dhaka Premier League T20 encounter yesterday.

What Shakib did at the home of cricket in Mirpur yesterday has hardly ever been seen on a cricket field in any top-level game and it coming from an experienced player like him was even more shocking.

Shakib, who is captain of Mohammedan, lost his temper not once, but twice. First, he kicked the stumps over when umpire Imran

Parvez refused a leg-before appeal against Abahani skipper Mushfiqur Rahim in the fifth over. In the very next over, Shakib uprooted the stumps with his hands while fuming at the umpire after the umpire called for the covers to be brought out due to rain before the final ball of the sixth over.

The players went off after rain halted proceedings with Abahani at 31 for three in 5.5 overs in case of 146 runs, but Shakib escalated things once again by making indecent gesture towards the Abahani dressing room.

That caused Abahani coach and Bangladesh Cricket Board director Khaled Mahmud to become enraged and engage in a war of words before Mohammedan batsman Shamsur Rahman pacified Mahmud and separated him from the situation.

However, after the incident, it was learned that the star cricketer went to the Abahani dressing room and offered apologies.

Although there was no immediate reaction from match officials, the chairman of the Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan informed that such incidents happen on the cricket field.

"A lot of things happen on the cricket field. As it was a Mohammedan-Abahani encounter, we saw a lot of excitement on the field and we saw an incident involving Shakib Al Hasan. You have also witnessed what happened as it was telecast live on Facebook and YouTube and it is unfortunate. We know that the players might get heated in some situations but we always feel the players should keep their emotions under control," CCMD

chairman Kazi Inam Ahmed said. "However, like any international game, we have a designated department. The match referee and the umpires are expected to give a report by tonight (Friday night). On that basis we will act accordingly."

According to former Bangladesh captain and international match referee Raqibul Hasan, such offenses can lead to suspensions and financial penalties, or both.

"If such incident took place on a cricket field, it is a breach of minimum level-2 offence. In such cases, the match referee would take the on-field umpire's report and on that basis a decision can be taken," said Raqibul.

Interestingly, Shakib was involved in the breach of the bio-secure bubble during a Mohammedan practice session just

two days back.

The BCB and CCMD held a hearing with a strange outcome. Despite the affirmation of a breach and Mohammedan officials admitting to being aware of it, there were no fines or suspensions meted out.

According to many, Shakib's outburst yesterday was related to biased umpiring decisions, questions about which have been raised in domestic cricket over the years.

Many also indicated that the reason for the umpire to call off the play just a ball before the sixth over was to favor Abahani in the calculation of the D/L method considering the result of the game. But Mohammedan were already ahead in terms of the D/L method after the fifth over. They eventually won the game by 31 runs.

Shakib's Facebook apology

Dear fans and followers, I am extremely sorry for losing my temper and ruining the match for everyone and especially those who are watching from home. An experienced player like me should not have reacted that way but sometimes against all odds it happens unfortunately. I apologise to the teams, management, tournament officials and organizing committee for this human error. Hopefully, I won't be repeating this again in the future. Thanks and love you all.

Ngidi gives South Africa the edge

REUTERS

Seamer Lungi Ngidi showed all his guile to take five wickets for 19 runs as South Africa skittled West Indies for 97 and seized the initiative on the first day in Saint Lucia on Thursday.

After winning the toss, the home side posted their lowest test total against South Africa, who reached the close on 128 for four in reply, a lead of 31 runs on a wicket that is proving difficult to score on.



Rassie van der Dussen (34 not out) and Quinton de Kock (4 not out) will resume on the second day, seeking to steady what has been a brittle top six in recent times.

West Indies' firebrand teenage fast bowler Jayden Seales - who has only played one previous first-class match - accounted for fellow debutant Keegan Petersen (19) in South Africa's innings.

The impressive Seales (3-34) also removed opener Aiden Markram (60), and another debutant Kyle Verreynne (6), all caught behind the wicket, validating his selection in place of the injured Shannon Gabriel.

South Africa's tight lines and nagging length with the ball starved the West Indies of scoring shots as Ngidi and fellow seamer Anrich Nortje (4-35) claimed nine of the wickets to fall.

Nortje also cracked the helmet of batsman Nkrumah Bonner, who went on to make 10 from 32 balls but was later diagnosed with concussion.

He has been replaced in the game by Kieran Powell, who will bat in West Indies' second innings.



Players of Belgium, the top-ranked team in the world, pose for a photograph during training on Thursday as they start their Euro 2020 campaign against Russia in one of three matches tonight. (R) Wales captain Gareth Bale trains ahead of their game against Switzerland.



PHOTO: TWITTER/REUTERS

The pandemic that cancelled the Copa America in 1918

AFP, Sao Paulo



"Rio is a giant hospital," screamed one headline. "No doctors, no medicine," said another.

"Government criminally negligent," decried a third.

With such damning words splashed in giant print across the front pages, Brazil decided it had little choice but to postpone the Copa America football tournament.

No, not this year's highly controversial, Covid-19-battered event -- the 1918 edition, which was called off over the Spanish flu.

With the clock ticking down to the 1918 "South American National Teams' Championships," as the world's oldest-running international football tournament was then known, the planet was in the midst of a pandemic nightmare eerily similar to today's.

A dangerous virus was wreaking havoc around the globe on its way to killing an estimated 50 million people in two years.

The pandemic did not spare Brazil, which was due to host the tournament.

With a month to go, the now-extinct Rio de Janeiro newspaper Gazeta de Noticias ran the headlines above.

Except for the yellowed paper they are printed on, they could easily be mistaken for articles from the Brazil of 2021, where Covid-19 has claimed 480,000 lives, and far-right President Jair



Brazil went on to win the 1919 Copa America title, originally scheduled for 1918, at home.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bolsonaro stands accused of driving the death toll higher with his policies.

Just days ago, the current Copa America, which opens Sunday, looked set to suffer the same fate as the tournament's third edition 103 years ago.

Already postponed by 12 months because of the pandemic, its fate looked dire when original co-hosts Colombia and Argentina fell through because of violent anti-government protests in the former and a Covid-19 surge in the latter.

But Brazil's Supreme Court ruled Thursday the tournament could go ahead.

The Brazil of 1918 was already starting its love affair with football. Just four teams -- instead of the 10 today -- were slated to take part

home, particularly at night, and many establishments shut their doors.

Football, however, remained open for business well into the health crisis.

Newspapers of the era report footballers playing sick. Others died of the disease, including British striker Archibald "Archie" French, of Fluminense, and Joao Cantuaria, star of Sao Cristovao.

"Football only stopped when the death toll really hit a critical level," history professor Joao Malaia of Santa Maria Federal University told AFP.

Rio recorded its first death in the pandemic one month before the tournament was due to begin.

Two weeks from kickoff, the Brazilian Sporting Confederation asked for it to be postponed.

From October to December that year, an estimated 65 percent of Brazil's 30 million people were infected with the virus.

Rio, then Brazil's capital, registered 14,348 deaths. Sao Paulo, the economic capital, registered 2,000.

"Many fell dead on the street, their faces pressed against the gutter. And that's where they stayed," wrote Nelson Rodrigues, one of Brazil's greatest authors and football columnists, in 1971.

The organisers ultimately postponed the tournament until May 1919, when the pandemic was starting to dissipate.

Led by striker Arthur Friedenreich, Brazil won the first of its nine Copa America titles.

Title beckons for late bloomers

AFP, Paris



Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and Barbora Krejčíková, two of the most unlikely Grand Slam finalists of the modern era, meet in Saturday's French Open title match at the conclusion of a shock-heavy tournament.

World number 32 Pavlyuchenkova has reached this stage for the first time at the 52nd attempt, 10 years after making a first Slam quarter-final in Paris.

Krejčíková, ranked one place lower, has long been labelled a doubles specialist and this is just her fifth appearance in a main draw singles at the Slams, having never previously got beyond the last 16.

However, both women have capitalised on a draw where the top seeds fell and just kept falling.

"The 14-year-old me would tell me 'What took you so long?'," said 29-year-old Pavlyuchenkova who played her first Slam event in 2007.

"It's been a long road. I had my own long special road. Everybody has different ways. I'm happy I'm in the final."

Pavlyuchenkova is bidding to become the fourth Russian champion at Roland Garros after Anastasia Myskina (2004), Svetlana Kuznetsova (2009) and Maria Sharapova (2012 and 2014).

Always considered to possess the weapons to win a major -- she has 37 career wins over top 10 players -- Pavlyuchenkova was often written off as "too nice" to succeed when it mattered most.

At the French Open in 2011, she was a set and 4-1 up on defending champion Francesca Schiavone but faltered and a semi-final place slipped away.

"I'm nice to people but I'm not nice at all," she said. "I mean, obviously I'm respectful but when I'm on the court, I'm doing my job and I fight, and I want to kill my opponent every time I play."

That steely attitude has served her well in Paris this year where she defeated third seed Aryna Sabalenka, former number one Victoria Azarenka as well as doubles partner Elena Rybakina, all in three sets.

Krejčíková is bidding to become just the second Czech women's champion in Paris, 40 years after Hana Mandlikova triumphed.

The 25-year-old is already a Grand Slam champion, having captured the women's doubles with Katerina Siniakova at Roland Garros and Wimbledon in 2018.

Her late blossoming as a singles specialist, however, means she has yet to play in the main draw at both the All England Club and US Open.



PHOTO: REUTERS/TWITTER

First-time finalists Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (R) and Barbora Krejčíková (inset) will face off in the final of the French Open women's singles today.