

WHAT TO WATCH

TEN 1

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

Austria vs North Macedonia
Live from 10:00 pm
Netherlands vs Ukraine
Live from 1:00 am
(Monday)
TEN 1
COPA AMERICA 2021

Brazil vs Venezuela
Live from 3:00 am
(Monday)
Colombia vs Ecuador
Live from 6:00 am
(Monday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & STAR SPORTS 1

French Open 2021
Final
Novak Djokovic vs
Stefanos Tsitsipas
Live from 7:00 pm



Shakib the culprit, but BCB the enabler

BISHWAJIT ROY

There is an age-old cricket batting tip: play according to the merit of the ball. This does not only apply to batting; the statement stands true for all components of a game. To become successful in cricket is one part of the game, but another major part is playing according to norms and with decency, especially when it comes to the title of the gentlemen's game.

What Bangladesh premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan did at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Friday during a match between traditional rivals Abahani and Mohammedan in the Dhaka Premier League T20 encounter has been widely circulated on all media platforms. There should be no debate that what transpired on Friday is undoubtedly the ugliest thing that can happen in sport.

Kicking the stumps over after umpire refused a leg-before appeal and then uprooting the stumps while fuming at the umpire as well making indecent gestures towards the opponents dressing room was a far cry from what is called decency. To say the least and ignore the negative impact that the experienced campaigner's may have on the next generation of cricketers, there is hardly any doubt that the ace all-rounder's act was a serious offence according to the laws of the game.

There is no scope to link his behavior with factors surrounding Bangladesh cricket and there is no way we can shift focus from the

issue with ifs and buts.

The country's media told many stories and brought to the fore incidents relating to Bangladesh Cricket's alleged corrupt practices in domestic cricket, especially in lower-tier leagues, and that is something they must continue to do in the greater interest of the game. But nobody can use that to justify what Shakib did. Instead, we need to seriously examine the actions of the country's best cricketer and a role model to

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A very interesting twist came when Shakib quickly issued an apology on Facebook for 'human error', but the concerned authorities were unsure what they would do. Had they followed standard practice, it would not have taken

more than three hours to reach a decision regarding the punishment for a breach of the code of conduct. But the board failed to approach the issue according to the merit of the incident.

Would it be an overstatement if we said that the history of the BCB's failure to act according to the merit of incidents somehow encouraged the all-rounder to court more controversy? We need not go far. Shakib would not have been playing this match if the authorities had followed its rules.

The BCB and Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) held a hearing in relation to the breach of the bio-secure bubble during a Mohammedan practice session, with skipper Shakib among those present. The outcome of the hearing was strange because despite affirmation that a breach of the bio-bubble had occurred, there were no fines or suspensions meted out. The funniest part was that both the BCB and CCDM suggested that the matter was being taken seriously.

Just a few months back, Shakib was not even questioned for saying things against board officials to members of the media in a number of interviews regarding his NOC for the Indian Premier League. Authorities simply turned a blind eye.

Shakib probably is the biggest beneficiary of the BCB's unprofessional attitude, with his latest act is just another example of Bangladesh cricket failing to act according to merit and just taking a nosedive.

Djokovic conquers 'Everest', eyes 52-year landmark

AFP, Paris



Novak Djokovic can become the first man in 52 years to win all four Grand Slam titles twice in the French Open final on Sunday after conquering Rafael Nadal, the 'Mount Everest' of Roland Garros.

World number one Djokovic takes on Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas for the title with tennis history on the line.

Victory for the Serb will take him alongside Roy Emerson and Rod Laver as the only men to capture the four majors more than once.

It's an achievement that has proved even beyond the capabilities of Nadal and Roger Federer.

It is so rare an accomplishment that it hasn't happened since 1969 when Laver completed his second calendar Grand Slam.

Djokovic can pocket a 19th Slam with victory and move just one behind the record of 20 jointly held by Nadal and Federer.

Djokovic insists there will be no letdown physically or emotionally after reaching the final in Paris for a sixth time with an epic triumph over 13-time champion Nadal.

"It's not the first time that I play an

in the 2015 quarterfinals.

Nadal has only lost three times in 108 matches since his title-winning debut in 2005.

Djokovic, the 2016 champion, said it was his best win in Paris and ranked it among his "three greatest" ever performances.

He broke the Spaniard eight times from 22 break points and fired 50 winners.

A weary Nadal committed 55 unforced errors.

"It's hard to find words bigger than all the superlatives you can think of for Rafa's achievements at Roland Garros," said Djokovic who now leads their series 30-28 and had lost three finals in the French capital to Nadal.

"Each time you step on the court with him, you know that you have to kind of climb Mount Everest to win against this guy here."

Nadal, the defending champion and chasing a record-setting 21st Grand Slam title, refused to dwell on the consequences.

"I'm sad to have lost in the most important tournament of the year for me, but life goes on, it's nothing more than a defeat on a tennis court," said the 35-year-old who conducted a hasty press conference while Djokovic was



epic semifinal in a Grand Slam and then I have to come back in less than 48 hours and play finals," said the 34-year-old.

"My recovery abilities have been pretty good throughout my career."

His four-hour, four-set battle with Nadal is already jostling for a prime spot in the list of "greatest ever matches" at the Slams.

The 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 triumph gave Djokovic the honour of being the only man to have beaten Nadal in Paris more than once, having first achieved it

still giving his on-court interview.

Djokovic will be playing in his 29th Slam final on Sunday.

He holds a 5-2 record over Tsitsipas, a run which includes all three meetings on clay.

Tsitsipas, 22, and 12 years younger than the Serb, is in his first Slam final having ended a run of three semi-final losses by defeating Alexander Zverev over five sets on Friday.

Victory on Sunday would allow him to become the first Greek player to win a Slam title.

Tsitsipas hopes Novak prediction comes true

AFP, Paris

Stefanos Tsitsipas was once described by Novak Djokovic as having "the traits of a champion" and on Sunday he will hope to prove the Serb's glowing reference was not a misjudgement.

The charismatic 22-year-old, one of the widely-touted 'NextGen' of the sport looks to land the first significant bodyblow on the old guard when he tackles the world number one for the French Open title.

"He is a hard worker, dedicated, nice guy," said Djokovic.

"He's very smart and wise. I love the fact that he is more than just a tennis player and he's always looking to learn from experience and to understand something new about himself."

"That's the trait of a champion, of someone who has great potential to be number one in the world and win Slams and be a great ambassador for the sport."

Blond-haired and standing 6ft 4ins (1.93m) tall, Tsitsipas is the sport's picture-perfect public face and widely expected to be the natural heir to the likes of Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

He is already the youngest player to have defeated all three.

He is the first Greek man or woman to make a Slam final and already has seven career titles to his name including the prestigious ATP Finals in 2019. However, there is still much to prove.

He has won just twice overall in seven meetings with Djokovic with the Serb claiming both meetings on clay -- in a five-setter in the French Open semi-finals in 2020 and then in Rome on the eve of Roland Garros.

Ispahani title sponsor of Ban-Zim series

SPORTS REPORTER

Ispahani became the title sponsor of Bangladesh's upcoming tour of Zimbabwe next month, the company announced through a press release yesterday.

Bangladesh are scheduled to play a solitary Test, three ODIs and as many T20s during the tour.

The series will commence on July 7 with the lone Test and the first of the three ODIs will be played on July 16 while the T20 series will begin on July 23. All the matches will be held in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe.



Neymar will spearhead the Brazil attack when the hosts take on Venezuela in the opening match of the Copa America on Sunday night while Argentina will look to Lionel Messi to end a 23-year title drought.



PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Mancini's calls pay off

REUTERS, Rome



Roberto Mancini might be laughing now, but the Italy coach will not find it so easy to play down his team's chances of winning Euro 2020 if they continue like they started.

The Azzurri put in a dominant, swashbuckling display as they flattened Turkey 3-0 in Rome's Stadio Olimpico on Friday to start their campaign in style.

The victory marked their 28th consecutive game without defeat, leaving Mancini two games away from equalling double World Cup winning manager Vittorio Pozzo's all-time unbeaten record from the 1930s.

But when asked if his side were now among the tournament favourites, Mancini laughed.

"It was important to start well here in Rome and I think we satisfied everyone, for the fans and all the Italians watching. (But) there are six games to go and there are a lot of good teams," he said.

The second part of Mancini's answer showed that while he does not want his players to face the pressure that comes with being favourites, his ambition is nevertheless to reach the final in six games' time.

That does not seem like an unlikely proposition after an opening day performance that could not have gone much better, as all of Mancini's big selection decisions paid off. "Italy were almost perfect, dominating possession and creating a lot of chances without ever leaving themselves at risk," 2006 World Cup winner Alessandro Del Piero told Sky Italia.



Czech Barbora Krejčíková claimed her maiden Grand Slam title after beating Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 in the French Open final on Saturday. The 25-year-old is the first Czech to lift the Suzanne Lenglen Cup since Hana Mandlíková, who represented Czechoslovakia, triumphed in 1981.

PHOTO: REUTERS