

MSC keep rolling sans Shakib

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the resolution of the Shakib Al Hasan saga that went on for the past two days after the star cricketer once again made headlines for all the wrong reasons, the eighth round of the Dhaka Premier League T20 competition hit the field yesterday and, despite the rain halting a majority of matches yesterday, things eventually seemed to return to normal.

Shakib was suspended for three matches and fined Tk 5 lakh for kicking down the stumps near the umpire Imran Parvez in rage after being denied LBW appeal in the fifth over of their game against Abahani on Friday. Shakib was also seen threatening the umpire before again blowing his top and uprooting the stumps and slamming them in a fit of rage when the umpires called for covers to be brought on due to rain in the same over.

Mohammedan officials have appealed to the CCDM to minimise Shakib's suspension and there was talk that Shakib may fly to the USA within the next couple of days to spend time with his family.

However, even without Shakib, Mohammedan continued their winning run and registered a fifth win in eight games with a five-run win (D/L method) over Old DOHS Sports Club.

Irfan Shukkur top-scored with an unbeaten 42-ball 64 and helped Mohammedan post 154 for five. In reply, DOHS ended up on 115 for 4 after 16 overs as rain forced a stop to the game. DOHS eventually lost the game by D/L method.

Abahani returned to winning ways after defeat in their previous



Prime Bank players congratulate Abahani opener Munim Shahriar for his blistering 92-run knock, which helped his side to secure a 30-run victory in the Bangabandhu Dhaka Premier League T20 competition in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

eventful battle against archival Mohammedan as Mushfiqur Rahim's side registered a comfortable 30-run win over Prime Bank Cricket Club by D/L method in another rain-affected encounter.

Abahani rode on young opener Munim Shahriar's blistering unbeaten 92 off just 50 balls, which included five sixes and nine fours, to post a big total of 183 for 3. Prime Bank ended on 143 for six in 19 overs after rain forced a premature end to the game. Skipper Tamim Iqbal's 55 was the top score for Prime Bank while Mohammad Mithun added

34. Pacer Tanzid Hasan picked up two wickets for Abahani.

Despite the defeat, Prime Bank are still on top of the points table with six wins from eight games while Abahani, also with six wins from eight games, are in the second spot due to an inferior run rate.

Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's unbeaten 50 helped Gazi Group chase down a 139-run target with five wickets against Khelaghar SKS.

Mahmudullah steadied the ship after Gazi lost a few early wickets in chase and the experienced right-hander remained unbeaten on 58 off 48 balls, which featured two sixes and three fours, to guide

his side to a fifth win.

Interestingly, there was some dissatisfaction over poor umpiring in yesterday's matches. Legends of Rugganj batsman Sabbir Rahman was not happy after he was given caught behind. The cricketer tried to protest the decision and stood his ground for a while before walking back to the dressing room. Rugganj lost the game by seven runs in the D/L method.

In the other two matches of the day, Prime Doleswar SC sealed their fifth win by beating Partex Sporting by five wickets while Brothers Union defeated Shinepukur Cricket Club by one run in by D/L method.

'I feel as if I'm about to go training now'

AGENCIES



First there was shock, then came despair, and, after an agonising wait, joyous relief. There is no sight in football more shocking than a player falling to the ground under no challenge and seemingly with no injury.

A famous Finland victory in their first game at the finals of a major tournament was eclipsed by near-tragedy when Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen, who remained in hospital and was in stable condition, collapsed during their Euro 2020 match.

He suffered a cardiac arrest when he collapsed, his team's doctor confirmed on Sunday, but the reason remained unclear.

"He was gone; we did cardiac resuscitation, it was a cardiac arrest. We got him back after one defib (defibrillation)," Morten Boesen told a news conference, adding that Eriksen remained in hospital for further tests after his collapse on Saturday.

"The exams that have been done so far look fine," Boesen added. "We don't have an explanation to why it happened."

His former cardiologist Dr. Sanjay Sharma of St. George's University of London earlier said Eriksen had no prior heart issues during his time with Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur.

The Danish players had been in contact with Eriksen via a video conference, said Peter Moller, director of Danish football association DBU.

Coach Kasper Hjulmand said Eriksen had told him he did not remember much from Saturday's collapse and that he was eager to get back on to the pitch.

Hjulmand quoted the midfielder as saying: "I think you are feeling worse than I am. I feel as if I'm about to go training now, boys." "Christian is in good spirits and it's a huge relief for the players after all this uncertainty," Hjulmand said. "There is no doubt that we have been on the ropes."

Finland skipper Tim Sparv described the contest as an emotional roller-coaster.

"Our thoughts are with Christian Eriksen and his loved ones during these difficult times," Sparv tweeted. "Football is so insignificant when something like this happens. Life is precious. Take care of each other."



People write get well messages on a wall at a fanzone in Copenhagen after Denmark's Christian Eriksen collapsed on the pitch during his side's Euro 2020 match against Finland on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Sterling gives England prefect start

REUTERS, LONDON

Raheem Sterling finally found his tournament touch when his goal gave England a deserved 1-0 win over Croatia at Wembley on Sunday as they began a European Championship with a victory for the first time in nine attempts.

Sterling, something of a surprise starter after a flat end to the domestic season but a favourite of manager Gareth Southgate, slid home a 61st-minute shot after great work by Kalvin Phillips to end an individual drought that had run through England's three previous major tournaments.

On a boiling hot day England started strongly, lost their way for a while but regained control as Croatia barely managed a shot, giving the home side the early advantage in Group D that also includes Scotland and the Czech Republic. The game lacked the drama and jeopardy of the teams' 2018 World Cup semi-final, won by Croatia, and losing on Sunday was no disaster for them given the way the draw pans out, but it was a morale-boosting victory for England as they set off once again in search of their first title since 1966.

Roared on by a noisy 22,500 crowd -- a quarter of Wembley's capacity -- England started full of bright intentions and put huge pressure on the visitors, pinning them deep in their own half. Phil Foden, his bleached hair channelling Paul Gascoigne from Euro 96, almost gave them a dream start when he cut in from the right and



England's Raheem Sterling celebrates his all-important goal against Croatia in their Euro 2020 Group D opener in front of around 20,000 fans in the sun-drenched Wembley Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

curled a low shot beyond Dominik Livakovic but agonisingly saw it come back off the post after the slightest of deflections from the toe of Josko Gvardiol.

Phillips, impressive all afternoon, had a 25-yard shot blocked but, instead of riding the early momentum, England lost their way. Croatia's classy midfield trio of Mateo Kovacic, Luka Modric and Marcelo Brozovic began to stroke the ball around and, with the sun beating down, the pace and energy seeped out of the game. England eventually shook themselves out of the torpor and struck when Phillips drove through the retreating

defence, rode two tackles and played the ball expertly into the path of the darting Sterling who, under pressure, just got enough on the ball to steer it home.

Sterling had looked lively all day and celebrated his first major tournament goal with gusto, though he should have added a second 13 minutes later but blazed wildly over the bar.

Croatia were then forced to show a bit more ambition and threw on their attacking subs but though England's defence looked a little shaky at times there were few chances for an equalizer.

'Hope to represent Bangladesh as far as my career goes'

Finland-born Tariq Raihan Kazi is the second expatriate footballer after Jamal Bhuiyan to represent Bangladesh at international football. Tariq, who once played for Finland U-17, U-18 and U-19 national teams, made his debut for the men in red and green against Afghanistan in the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers on June 3 before playing his second match against India in Qatar. The 20-year-old earned plenty of praise for showcasing brilliant performances as right-back in both games. From Doha, Tariq answered to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman's queries -- about his journey to Bangladesh, participation in domestic league and future plans.

DS: Finally your dream to play for Bangladesh came true, so how did you feel after wearing the red and green jersey?

TRK: I feel delighted and proud to represent this wonderful nation.

DS: You have already featured in two matches -- one draw followed by a defeat. What was the experience on the ground, in those two matches?

TRK: The experience was great regardless of the results. Matches were of high quality and played at a high tempo and moreover, it has also been nice to compare my level to other international players.

DS: You were initially selected for the Three Nation Cup in Nepal but forced to leave due to injury. It must have been frustrating. How did you motivate yourself to be selected again?

TRK: Of course it was disheartening to get injured but over time I turned the frustration into motivation and just pushed myself to work harder to achieve my goals.

DS: You had come a long way to play in Bangladesh's domestic competitions from 2020 before being selected for national team eventually. How challenging was it for you, especially after playing over at Finland?

TRK: Indeed it has been a tremendous challenge -- coming to a new country with different climate for instance, but day-by-day I am adjusting and improving.

DS: You played at different age-groups for Finland and consequently had a good opportunity to feature for Finland's senior side but what inspired you to come to Bangladesh?

TRK: Everything I learned over at Finland, in football as well as in life, I cherish fondly. But my key inspiration behind switching national teams was the pride of playing for my father's country which feels exceptionally meaningful.



DS: How long do you want to represent Bangladesh, now that you are only 20?

TRK: I hope I stay fit, healthy and keep learning to become a better player with each passing day so that I can represent the country as far as my career goes, so at least 15 more years, I hope.

DS: As you have experienced top-flight football in Finland and participated in Europa League, what are the obstacles in the way of Bangladesh football's development?

TRK: Well, off the top of my head are the facilities where we work at -- gyms, training pitches and stadiums.

DS: With a lot of players missing the next match of the World Cup Qualifiers, how do you think a young Bangladesh team may perform against Oman?

TRK: This match will be a glorious opportunity for us. Everyone who ends up playing will obviously give his fearless best on the pitch. We are nothing but optimistic about this match and we will do the things the way we have been working at trainings for the best result possible.

New Zealand humble England

REUTERS, BIRMINGHAM

New Zealand crushed hosts England by eight wickets in the second and final Test on Sunday to seal a 1-0 series win after chasing down a target of 38 runs on the fourth day at Edgbaston.

The result meant New Zealand, who thoroughly outplayed the hosts in the match, secured a first test series win in England since 1999 and only their third overall in the country.

England had been reduced to 122-9 at stumps on day three with a slender lead of 37 runs and Olly Stone was caught behind off Trent Boult on the first ball of the day on Sunday, leaving the visitors on the verge of a famous victory.

Latham praised the squad's depth after they came into the contest having made six changes from the drawn first test at Lord's.

"It's great to have that performance under the belt. We were outstanding over the four days, everyone who came in did their roles," Latham said.

"England have a fantastic bowling attack and we played them really well. We adapted well and put good numbers on the board."

England skipper Joe Root said his team had "massively underperformed".

"It hasn't been our best week, has it? Credit to New Zealand they have outperformed us throughout the game," Root said.

New Zealand will enjoy an extra day's rest before they take on India in the ICC World Test Championship Final starting in Southampton on Friday.



Barbora Krejickikova (R) became the first player to win both the women's singles and doubles title in Paris since Frenchwoman Mary Pierce completed the feat in 2000. Krejickikova and Katerina Siniakova beat Iga Swiatek and Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-4, 6-2. The 25-year-old Krejickikova, who will climb to 15th in singles following her maiden Grand Slam singles title on Saturday, will return as the world number one doubles player when the rankings are updated today.

PHOTO: REUTERS