



Bayern at ease, Milan up to turn the table

AGENCIES

Bayern Munich will feel much more comfortable going into the second leg of their Champions League playoff against Celtic as they will welcome the Scottish at the Allianz Arena on Tuesday.

Bayern have not lost in Munich in the Champions League since April 2021, a run of 20 games including battles against Real Madrid and Manchester City in the seasons they won the competition.

Goals from Michael Olise and Harry Kane gave Bayern a narrow advantage in the 2-1 win over the Scottish champions in the reverse fixture last week.

The late goal from Celtic's Daizen Maeda could prove vital if Brendan Rodgers' side are to progress to the knockout stages of the competition and eliminate the six-time champions. But it is a big ask for Celtic to win in Munich, especially as Bayern have only lost once at home all season. That defeat was against Bayer Leverkusen in the German Cup, at the beginning of December. Bayern have also never lost at home

against a Scottish team, winning seven and drawing three of their 10 matches.

While Celtic have never progressed in the Champions League when they have lost the first leg at home, going out on seven previous occasions so they have it all to do at the Allianz Arena.

Meanwhile, Dutch side Feyenoord have to battle their away record to register a memorable win against AC Milan in their second leg Champions League playoff at the San Siro after they beat the Italian giants 1-0 in the Netherlands last week. The visitors are winless in their previous five matches away from in all competitions and have an injury problem going into the contest, with 11 players expected to miss out.

Milan, on the other hand, will bank on their strong home record to take Feyenoord down as the Rossoneri have lost just twice at home in all competitions this season. However, Milan's previous five home victories have been by a single goal meaning they will have to do more than that to go through.

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ismail regained his status as the nation's fastest sprinter after four years, capitalising on the absence of England-based national record holder Imranur Rahman at the 48th National Athletics Championship held at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

Shirin Akter, meanwhile, maintained her dominance in the women's 100m event, securing the title for a record 16th time.

Ismail, who last won the 100m gold medal during the Bangladesh Games in 2021 before losing his title to Imranur Rahman in 2022, clocked 10.61 seconds -- 0.02 less than his Bangladesh Navy teammate Rakibul Hasan -- while Jubail Islam of Bangladesh Army won the bronze medal, clocking 10.89 seconds.

The race was closely contested, with Rakibul leading up to the 90 metre mark before Ismail produced a strong final surge to take the title.

"No one wants to lose his position, and I am no exception to that. There are many strong competitors in the 100m sprint, and I have been trying to improve myself day by day. I have trained for seven successive months to become the fastest man of this national championship," Ismail told reporters after



Bangladesh Navy sprinters Mohammad Ismail and Shirin Akter [bottom] race to the finish line first in their respective 100m events at the 48th National Athletics Championship held at the National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

becoming champion for the fifth time.

When asked about Imranur's absence, Ismail acknowledged that competing against him would have added extra pressure but insisted that the other sprinters had also performed at their best, making the victory no less challenging.

In the women's 100m sprint, Shirin of Navy was once again unstoppable as she clocked 12.01 seconds to win the 100m sprint, while Sumaya Dewan of Navy and Azmi Khatun of BKSP won silver and bronze medals, respectively, clocking 12.15 and 12.50 seconds.

"It was not easy to defend the 100m title because the competitors were also strong and performed well," said Shirin, crediting her consistent training under coach Abdullah Hel Kafi and the support from Bangladesh Navy for her success.

Controversy, however, overshadowed the 400m event, as organisers allegedly altered the competition format mid-tournament to accommodate star sprinter Zahir Raheen. Despite winning his heat, Zahir had failed to qualify for the final based on his timing.

Initially set to miss the final, Zahir was given another chance when organisers introduced semifinals -- an addition not originally planned. He then topped the semifinals to ensure his place in today's eight-athlete final.

Bangladesh Athletics Federation joint secretary and event manager Kitab Ali admitted to an oversight in not including semifinals in the schedule or informing athletes that final qualification would be based on the timing of the heats. However, he defended the decision to adjust the format, stating that it was done in line with IAAF regulations.

ধন্য দেশের পণ্য দিয়ে ছড়াই খুশির স্বাদ

দেশের মুজলা মুফলা প্রকৃতির খাঁটি শুণ অক্ষুণ্ণ রেখেই আমরা তৈরি করি বিশ্বমানের খাদ্যপণ্য। ঘরে ঘরে পৌঁছে দেই খুশির স্বাদ।
আমাদের উপর, দেশের মাটির উপর আস্থা রাখায়, দেশবাসীর কাছে আমরা কৃতজ্ঞ।

