

Sports

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2015

IPL IN TURMOIL AS TEAMS BANNED IN BETTING SCANDAL Page 18

LIVERPOOL THUMP THAI ALL STARS

BANGKOK: A host of new Liverpool signings got their first chance to play in team colors under torrential Bangkok skies yesterday as the Reds comfortably defeated the Thai All Stars 4-0 in a friendly.

The English Premier League side were visiting the Thai capital for the first stop on an end-of-season tour that will also take in Malaysia and Australia.

Adam Bogdan, Joe Gomez and Danny Ings all made their debut appearance in the first half at the imposing Rajamangala stadium.

Success came within three minutes. A clever pass from Joao Carlos Teixeira found Lazar Markovic, who easily took the ball round the keeper and slotted it home.

Shortly before half time it was two as a Teixeira corner found Mamadou Sakho who flicked the ball into the far corner with a thumping header.

Kiatasuk Senamuang's All Star team, made up of local premier league players, showed energy and determination but were easily out-matched in quality, rarely pestering the Liverpool defenders or goal line. In contrast Thai keeper Warut Mekmusik was tested throughout, forced to make good saves against shots by Ings and Jordan Rossiter that looked like they were all but going into the back of the net.

The second half began with an entire team change by manager Brendan Rodgers allowing Nathaniel Clyne, James Milner and Divock Origi to make their debuts accompanied by driving monsoon rains that hampered visibility and soon turned much of the stadium's running track into a virtual moat.

As fans and press scurried to the back of the stands to shelter, Liverpool kept on the attack, showing little sign of being bothered by the deluge.

In the 52nd minute captain Jordan Henderson picked out Adam Lallana with a cheeky rabona who thundered home the third goal of the night.

New man Origi must have thought he would never make it four with the ball hitting the woodwork twice and a yards out shot denied by a remarkable save from the Thai goalkeeper.



BANGKOK: Liverpool's Danny Ings jumps for the ball during their friendly soccer match against Thailand All Stars, at Rajamangala national stadium. — AP

But the young Belgian was finally rewarded in the 86th minute with a header off a Henderson cross that careered into the Thai goal. Conditions at the lightly filled 50,000 capacity Thai stadium were somewhat removed from Anfield, with the mercury hovering around 31 centigrade (89 fahrenheit) even once the heavens opened.

By the latter stages of the game any hopes for a clever passing game had evaporated with the ball regularly coming a halt in an increasingly waterlogged pitch.

English football commands a huge following in Thailand and it is not uncommon to see entire skyscrapers in Bangkok decked in advertising featuring stars from the premier league.

The kingdom has become a regular stop-

ping off point for lucrative pre-season tours around Asia with Chelsea and Leicester both making trips to Thailand this summer.

Liverpool have now made five visits to the capital since 2001, winning four and drawing one. The visitors are scheduled to leave Bangkok after the match for Malaysia.

The tour has been somewhat overshadowed by the absence of Rahim Sterling who had initially been named in the 30 man squad. On arriving in Bangkok Monday, Brendan Rodgers confirmed the 20-year-old was leaving for a rival club, bringing to a close what has become this summer's most acrimonious transfer. British media say Sterling is off to Manchester City in a £49 million (\$76 million, 68 million euro) deal. — AFP



KANSAS: US midfielder Gyasi Zardes (20) and Panama midfielder Miguel Camargo (14) battle for the ball as Panama's Anibal Godoy (20) also defends during the second half of a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match. — AP

US DRAW WITH PANAMA

KANSAS: The United States recovered from a poor first half and earned a 1-1 draw against Panama on Monday that kept the Central Americans from clinching an automatic spot in the CONCACAF Gold Cup quarter-finals. In a physical, testy, battle at Sporting Park in Kansas City, the Americans overcame a 1-0 half-time deficit when Michael Bradley slotted home from close range in the 54th minute.

The unbeaten Americans had already clinched their spot in the quarter-finals from Group A before the match. Haiti, meanwhile, advanced to the knock-out phase by beating Honduras 1-0 courtesy of a Duckens Nazon goal.

Panama, who drew all three of their games at the tournament to finish on three points, will now have to wait to see if they can qualify as one of the two best

third-placed teams. The Central Americans came out inspired on Monday, looking for their first win and Luis Tejada appeared to have given them the lead in the 10th minute only for the goal to be ruled out for offside.

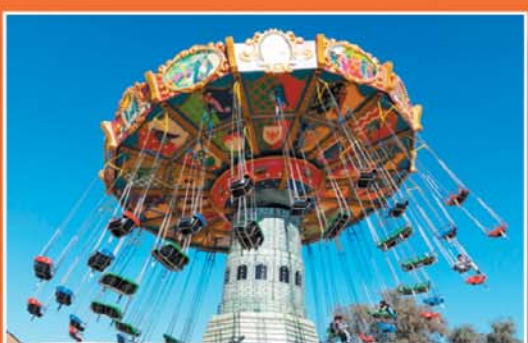
Panama did finally strike in the 34th minute when Blas Perez finished off a pass from Tejada. The US struck back early in the second half as Alejandro Bedoya played a great ball into the box to Bradley who finished.

The match had several testy moments with three Panamanians receiving yellow cards. "It's always tricky when you have one team who has advanced and another team playing for everything," Bradley said. "At the end of the day we'll take our points and move on." —Reuters

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