

## **Sabina Yasmeen**

I begin this month's statement with a heavy heart. National U15 women's team forward Sabina Yasmeen left us on the afternoon of September 26. The spirited 14-year old forward was part of the U15 squad that would take part in the SAFF championship later this year.

I can only hope and pray that her family finds the strength to cope with her loss in these hard times.

## **AFC U16 Women**

The AFC U16 women's finals in Thailand saw Bangladesh put in a rather tough group alongside champions North Korea, Japan and Australia. The other group had Laos, China, South Korea and hosts Thailand.

The young Bangladesh team quite predictably lost to North Korea but, learning their lesson rather quick, played a well fought 3-0 against Japan and were quite glad to have been able to hold this Asian powerhouse to just 3 goals. People who watched the match, would realize that an even closer match was the one against Australia. Bangladesh lost the match 3-2 despite levelling the match from 1-0 behind at one point and playing for 65 minutes with 10 players as captain Krishna was sent off early in the first half

This has been a great learning experience for these young footballers who have taken Bangladesh to a new height. Reaching the last eight within Asia is no mean feat and I commend the team for never losing heart. This is one of the few teams that have been in a long term residency programme. These girls have been playing and training together for 10 months and in many ways exemplify the development path we would like other age group teams to follow. The BFF arranged a number of international matches and tours for this team to increase their exposure and add to their experience.

## **AFC U16 Boys**

Bangladesh lost to Yemen 2-0 but ended up beating hosts Qatar 2-0. With the UAE not taking part in this group stage match, Bangladesh came up as the runner up of the group. Whether the boys will move on to the next level will not be clear till all the groups play out their matches. Nonetheless, the boys have proven to be a well-oiled unit and we can already see some of the benefits of previous international experience. This is a squad that boasts some of the U14 boys who were also in the Bangladesh squad that won the plate championship of the Super Mokh Cup in Malaysia earlier this year.

We will now embark on organising a full time residency programme for this age group.

## **SAFF U18 Men**

Perhaps the most stimulating performance of the team was on the first day against our neighbors across the border. With the scoreline showing a dismal 3-0 in favor of India, our boys came back from the first half all but broken. We had little hope from this match other than wishful thinking.

But the U18 squad proved their mettle in the second half. With extraordinary grit and resolve, these young men turned the match around producing four goals right up to the end of the second half. This has surely been one of the most spectacular turnarounds in Bangladesh's history.

The boys ended the campaign as runners up.

Before moving on to other topics, I would like to take this opportunity and point out that Bangladesh teams have performed reasonably well at the international level. The age group players appear to be competing fairly well at the global level with their counterparts from other countries. These players will in turn move on to their respective national teams. The gulf of difference between the national teams, however, is evident. It appears then that the same players do not evolve or develop their game and hence markedly lag behind at the

top level.

### **BFF decides on BPL, BCL relegation, appoints managers for team U18, U16**

The Bangladesh Football Federation decided that one team will be relegated from the ongoing 'Saif Power Battery Bangladesh Premier 2017' and the 'Marcel Bangladesh Championship League 2017' at the end of the season. On the other hand, two teams will be promoted from the Championship League to the next 'Bangladesh Premier League 2018' in the next season. A BFF meeting also agreed that only three clubs, namely Abahani Ltd Dhaka, Mohammedan SC Ltd and Saif Sporting Club met the requirements of the renewed 'AFC Club Licensing' terms.

### **BPL matches postponed due to SAFF U-18 Championship**

The eighth round of ongoing 'Saif Power Battery Bangladesh Premier League 2017' was suspended from September 13 to the end of last month because of the on going U18 SAFF Championship.

It has indeed been rather challenging to get all the clubs to give up their young talents for training and then holding off their matches of the premier league so that the boys may play the SAFF games.

The BP 9<sup>th</sup> round is set to restart from Oct 2 and the BCL 2<sup>nd</sup> phase from Oct 4.

### **BFF announces schedule of AFC coaching courses**

Bangladesh Football Federation announced the schedule of AFC 'A' 'B' and 'C' Certificate Coaching Course.

According to the schedule the first phase of AFC 'A' Certificate Coaching Course will start from October 28 while AFC 'B' Certificate Coaching Course will begin October 14.

AFC 'C' Certificate Coaching Course has been scheduled from November 17, 2017.

### **BPL matches**

A few housekeeping announcements here.

SAIF Power Battery Bangladesh Premier League 2017 will resume with the 9th Round starting from 2nd October 2017 at Bangabandhu National Stadium . The first match will start at 4:30 PM & the second at 6:45 PM .

Bangladesh Premier League 2017 2nd window registration will start from 15 October and continue till 10 November 2017.

After 2nd windows registration, Bangladesh Premier League 2017, 2nd phase match will resume from 13th November 2017.

There will be no match at Chittagong M A Aziz Stadium or at Jessore Stadium due to unfavourable pitch conditions and insufficient facilities.

Marcel Bangladesh Championship League 2017, 2nd phase will start from 4th October 2017.