

PSG's Pochettino guarded over Messi move



Lionel Messi and Mauricio Pochettino during a match

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino played his cards close to his chest when tackled on Spanish radio over a potential move for Lionel Messi.

Pochettino's fellow Argentine is out of contract with Barcelona at the end of the season, prompting speculation of being reunited with former Barca teammate Neymar at PSG.

"Everyone dreams of having the best players with him," Pochettino told Cadenas Ser late on Tuesday.

"I have huge respect for the players I have in my team but I must also have respect for players in other teams," the former Tottenham boss, who replaced Thomas Tuchel at the Parc des Princes at the start of this month, added. Despite playing coy Pochettino highlighted the "very strong" bonds that existed between the two of them, "like love for Newell Old Boys", one of the clubs in Rosario in their homeland.

Muharraq battle past Ahli in thriller

Victors take down defending champs in low-scoring affair for league-leading ninth win in 2020/2021 Zain Bahrain Basketball League

● Muharraq squander 16-point lead before closing the game strong to thwart Ahli fightback

● Mansour Kasse scores 39 points, grabs 21 rebounds to lead Samaheej past Al Ettihad

TDT | Manama

Muharraq edged past defending champions Ahli 77-71 last night in a battle between heavyweights in the 2020/2021 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

Muharraq were in control for much of the contest and led by as many as 16 in the second quarter, but Ahli roared back and even gained the advantage midway through the final canto.

Muharraq, however, were able to deliver the decisive baskets down the stretch. Mohammed Buallay banked in a three-pointer to give the victors a 75-68 lead with 24 seconds to play. And after Ali Aqeel replied with his own triple on the other end for Ahli, Bader Abdulla Malabes iced the result with two pressure-packed free-throws and just 11 seconds on the game clock.



Muharraq forward Mohammed Kuwayed goes for a lay-up in traffic against Ahli last night

Muharraq came away with their league-leading ninth win in 10 contests as they stayed atop the standings, while Ahli suf-

fered their second defeat to go with seven wins.

Muharraq enjoyed a balanced attack in the low-scoring affair.



Mohammed Buallay had missed 10 straight three-point attempts last night before making his decisive basket from beyond the arc with 24 seconds to go

Buallay was their leading scorer with 12 points. He had previously missed 10 attempts from beyond the arc before hitting his crucial triple with less than a half-minute to go.

Mohammed Juma'a chipped in with 11, while Malabes and Ali Shukrallah finished with 10 points apiece, with Shukrallah also taking down 13 rebounds. Mohammed Kuwayed and Serbian Aleksandar Mitrovic contributed nine points each in the win.

American Robert Upshaw spearheaded Ahli with 32 points and 14 rebounds. He and skipper Mohammed Qurban played the full 40 minutes. Qurban finished with eight assists but just four

markers.

Ahmed Aldurazi, who was facing his long-time team for the first time since moving to Ahli in the off-season, had 15 as Ahli's only other player in double figures. Ahli took to the hardwood without their dynamic backcourt tandem of Maitham Jameel and Hesham Sarhan.

In yesterday's other game, Samaheej defeated Al Ettihad 90-77.

Samaheej made a game-changing run early in the fourth quarter that extended their three-point lead to double digits.

They had their biggest lead at 15 right before the final buzzer as they improved to a 4-6 win-loss record.

Senegalese professional Mansour Kasse had a monster effort of 39 points, 21 rebounds and five assists for Samaheej, while Basel Adel added 21. Ahmed Fateel contributed nine points but dished out 12 assists.

American Marcel Jones had 26 points and 28 rebounds to pace Ettihad, who fell to a 3-6 mark. Ahmed Ghanim chipped in with 16 points, eight rebounds and seven assists in the loss.

League action continues tonight with Al Najma facing Nuwaidrat at 5.30pm, followed at 7.45pm by Bahrain Club playing bottom club Sitra.

Sigfusson: 'Learn from mistakes'

TDT | Manama

Bahrain head coach Hall-Andor Johann Sigfusson is hoping that the national team learn from their mistakes as they head into the main round of the 27th IHF World Men's Handball Championship, being held in Egypt.

The Bahrainis won 34-27 against DR Congo on Tuesday to put them through to the competition's next phase, which they begin today against Croatia.

Following that victory, though, Sigfusson believed that there is still plenty of room for improvement, despite the big result.

"It wasn't an easy match at all," said the Icelandic tactician, who led Bahrain past the preliminary round of the world championship for the first time in four appearances.

"DR Congo have a player of superior physical stature that can't be countered. We lost focus in part of the first period and we had to calm down a little to secure the win.

"I think our fast breaks weren't as good as they should be and we have to improve in the next round. What's more important than the win is learning from our mistakes."

Bahrain and Croatia are in Group II of the main round, along with Qatar and Japan, as well as defending world champions Denmark and Argentina, who also advanced from the Bahrainis' pool in the preliminaries.



Bahrain coach Halldor Johann Sigfusson watches from the bench as his team warms up for their match against Congo

Bahrain will no longer face the Danes and the Argentinians, as their results from the previous stage will carry over.

Following their match today, Bahrain take on Qatar on Saturday and then Japan on

Monday.

Bahrain need to finish in the top two in Group II to make it through to the quarter-finals, but they are already assured of their best-ever finish in the world championship.

Main round groups

(Top two teams in each advance to quarter-finals)

Group I: Hungary, Spain, Germany, Poland, Brazil, Uruguay

Group II: Denmark, Croatia, Qatar, Argentina, Japan, Bahrain

Group III: Portugal, France, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Algeria

Group IV: Sweden, Russian Handball Federation, Egypt, Slovenia, Belarus, North Macedonia

Shakib stars in Bangladesh win over Windies

AFP | Dhaka

Shakib Al Hasan claimed four wickets for eight runs in his international comeback to set up an easy six-wicket victory for Bangladesh over West Indies in the first one-day international in Dhaka yesterday.

Debutant pacer Hasan Mahmud also impressed with the ball, picking up 3-28 as the hosts bowled out the weakened tourists for 122 before racing to 125-4 in 33.5 overs.

Skipper Tamim Iqbal top-scored with 44 off 69 while all-rounder Shakib played his part with the bat, hitting 19.

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosen took 3-26 to give the home batsmen some trouble but his effort was not enough to defend the visitors' meagre total.

Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad were unbeaten on 19 and nine runs respectively to complete the win, helping Bangladesh take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Opting to bowl first, Bangladesh earlier wrapped up the West Indies innings in 32.2 overs.

"No complaints, we bowled extremely well. Not just the spinners, but the pacers as well," said Tamim at the prize-giving ceremony.

West Indies captain Jason Mohammed said he was disappointed with his side's performance.

"It wasn't easy to start on, but we didn't have enough guys getting partnerships and those



West Indies' Alzarri Joseph (L) is clean bowled off Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan

44

runs were scored by Bangladesh skipper Tamim Iqbal off 69 balls to become the top scorer

ately put pressure on the West Indies.

He bowled Andre McCarthy for 12 before West Indies' stand-in captain Jason Mohammed was stumped off his bowling for 17.

Nkrumah Bonner went for a duck leg before wicket in Shakib's next over to leave the West Indies struggling at 56-5.

Kyle Mayers hit 40 off 56 balls and added 59 runs with Rovman Powell (28) for the seventh wicket to bring some respectability to the visitors' score.

Hasan's pace removed Powell and Raymon Reifer with successive deliveries to end the resistance.

Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan dismissed Mayers as the West Indies lost their last five wickets for seven runs.