

What to WATCH

SONY SIX
Australia v New Zealand
First ODI (D/N)
Live from 9:30am

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Dusseldorf v Paderborn
Live from 1:30am (Saturday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Premier League
Bangladesh Police v Rahmatganj
Time: 6:30pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

LEICESTER PLAYERS ISOLATED

A number of Leicester players have shown symptoms of coronavirus and have been "kept away from the squad", manager Brendan Rodgers said on Thursday. As it stands, a full Premier League programme is scheduled for this weekend, with third-placed Leicester due to travel to struggling Watford on Saturday, despite widespread cancellations of matches across Europe. Leicester boss Rodgers, quoted on the club's official Twitter feed, said at his pre-match press conference that disruption would be a "shame" but public health was more important than football. "We're guided by football and federations," he said. "We have to press on with our work and prepare as normal."



Paris Saint-Germain players climbed up a Parc des Princes stand overlooking the street to celebrate their Champions League Round of 16 win with the thousands of fans outside the empty stadium on Wednesday. Neymar gave the hosts the all-important opening goal in the 28th minute as the Parisiens won 2-0 on the night and 3-2 on aggregate. "We heard the fans, we saw them before the game, I had never seen that before," said stand-in captain Marquinhos. "It is what football is about, it's about passion, that's what we're here for."

PHOTO: TWITTER

Real go into quarantine

La Liga suspended

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid went into quarantine on Thursday as La Liga announced Spain's top two divisions will be suspended for at least two weeks over the coronavirus.

La Liga authorities made the decision after Real Madrid confirmed its senior football team is in quarantine after one of the club's basketball players tested positive for the virus. A club statement read: "A player from our basketball first team has tested positive for the COVID-19 coronavirus. Since then, recommendations were made to quarantine both the basketball and football first team, given that the two squads share facilities in Ciudad Real Madrid."

La Liga has also followed Italy's Serie A in suspending its matches, after a meeting on Thursday with the Spanish Football Federation and the Spanish Players Union (AFE).

It was decided on Tuesday that games in Spain's top two divisions would be held behind closed doors but those over the next 14 days will now be suspended.

UEFA also called a meeting last night to discuss suspending the Champions League and Europa League.

Neymar inspires PSG turnaround

AFP, Paris

Paris St Germain put their Champions League last-16 traumas behind them as they beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 on Wednesday to reach the quarter-finals, although no fans were in the stadium to witness the achievement.

Neymar and Juan Bernat scored before halftime to secure a 3-2 aggregate win for PSG after a game played behind closed doors due to the coronavirus, which has infected 2,281 people and killed 48 in France.

The result eased painful memories of 2017, when PSG were eliminated 6-5 on aggregate by Barcelona after letting slip a 4-0 advantage, and of last season when they lost to Manchester United on away goals after a 2-0 win at Old Trafford.

The French champions reached

They are great players, but they lost humility. After they won, they did a lot of tweets, a lot of Instagram, a lot of words, a lot of this and that. We kept that in mind. It gave us a little rage. And it worked to our advantage.

PRESNEL KIMPEMBE
PSG DEFENDER



"Our only virus is Paris SG," a banner in the empty arena read.

"It was a perfect game," said centre back Marquinhos, who with Presnel Kimpembe marshalled the PSG defence. "We now need to keep the same mindset for the rest of the competition."

PSG were without captain Thiago Silva while Kylian Mbappe started on the bench after suffering from a sore throat.

The French side dominated possession and had the first clear chance when Edinson Cavani's cross shot from Di Maria's through ball was deflected by keeper Roman Buerki.

Neymar put the hosts ahead in the 28th minute as he headed home Angel Di Maria's free kick for his 35th goal in 57 matches.

Bernat doubled the lead on the stroke of halftime by flicking Sarabia's attempt past Buerki.

PSG pressed high after the break while Erling Haaland, who scored a double in the first leg, never looked likely to add to his 10 Champions League goals this season.

Thorgan Hazard and Axel Witsel made way for Julian Brandt and Giovanni Reyna as Dortmund coach Lucien Favre looked to freshen up his attacking line and PSG were suddenly on the back foot.

A brawl erupted two minutes from time after Can fouled Neymar and pushed the Brazilian to the ground.

Can was sent off while Di Maria picked up a yellow card which means the Argentine will be suspended for the first leg of PSG's quarterfinal.

Hamilton fumes; ATP suspend tour

AFP, London

The ATP announced Thursday it was suspending the men's tennis tour for six weeks "due to escalating health and safety issues" arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is not a decision that was taken lightly," said ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi.

Elsewhere, World champion Lewis Hamilton said he was "very surprised" that the Australian Grand Prix was going ahead, as more Formula One staff were isolated and teams limited contact with fans.

"I am really very, very surprised that we're here. I don't think it's great that we have races but it really is shocking that we're all sitting in this room," Hamilton said at an official press briefing.

Asked why he felt the race was still on, Hamilton replied: "Cash is king."

Sheikh Jamal go top

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal climbed to the top of Bangladesh Premier League table with a 2-0 win over Sheikh Russel after leaders Saif SC stumbled to a 1-1 draw against lightweights Arambagh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Three-time champions Sheikh Jamal extended their winning streak to four games and now top the 13-team table with 12 points, one more than second-placed Saif SC, who could have gone top with an outright win in their sixth match.

However, Saif squandered a lead but were perhaps happy with the point after losing their home match 0-2 to Sheikh Jamal.

Reigning champions Bashundhara Kings have 10 points, as do Abahani and Chattogram Abahani.

Following a morale-boosting win over Saif SC in Mymensingh, Sheikh Jamal took on struggling Sheikh Russel at home and got a goal each from Gambian duo Solomon King and Omar Jobe.

Sheikh Russel came close to breaking the deadlock in the ninth minute but Nigerian defender Alison Udoka saw his powerful shot ricochet off the post. Jobe then threatened by breaking into the box before defender Uttam Kumar Banik blocked his shot.

But the Sheikh Russel defenders could

not stop Solomon, who brought Kesto Kumar's long ball under his spell on the edge of the box before stepping up and dispatching a powerful shot past goalkeeper Ashraf Islam Rana in the 24th minute.

In the 55th minute, Jobe changed the direction of Zahid Hossain's shot to ensure Sheikh Jamal's fourth victory as well as Sheikh Russel's third defeat in six matches.

In the second match, Saif SC faced a stiff challenge from Arambagh under floodlights sans their two foreign players -- Jahongir Ergashev of Tajikistan and Rwandan defender Emery Bayisenge.

Arambagh, who now has five points from as many games, created chances one after another but their forwards failed to capitalise before Saif SC took the lead against the run of play with defender Yeasin Arafat heading home a corner from fit-again Jamal Bhuiyan in the 28th minute.

After resumption, Saif SC had more possession in midfield and Jamal rattled the post in the 51st minute before Arambagh hit back through a header from defender Didarul Haque in the 61st minute.

Both Arambagh and Saif SC came close to taking the lead again. First, Eleta Kingsley broke into the box, but the Nigerian was denied by Saif goalkeeper Pappu Hossain in the 72nd minute. Saif SC then saw young forward Faisal Ahmed Fahim drive wide when facing an open net.

'They could play proper football'

Klopp says after defeat to Atletico

REUTERS, Liverpool



There are no points in the Champions League for aesthetically pleasing or entertaining football but Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said something didn't feel right about his team's defeat by defence-minded Atletico Madrid on Wednesday.

Diego Simeone's side were outplayed for large parts of the match and looked destined to be overwhelmed by Liverpool when Roberto Firmino scored early in extra-time to give his side a 2-1 lead on aggregate after Georginio Wijnaldum's opener.

But Marcos Llorente, the great nephew of six-times European Cup winner Paco Gento, hauled Atletico back into the tie with two strikes from outside the box before Alvaro Morata added a third to stun Anfield.

Klopp, who guided his team to the final in the past two seasons, couldn't resist some barbed comments about his counterpart Diego Simeone's tactics.

"I don't understand with the quality they have, the football they play. They could play proper football but they stand deep and have counter attacks," Klopp told reporters.

"We accept it of course but it doesn't feel right tonight. I realise I am a really bad loser, especially when the boys put such an effort in against world class players on the other side who defend with two rows of four," he said.

It was hardly a surprise, though, that the Spanish side adopted such an approach -- a tight defence and compact midfield has been the hallmark of Atletico during Argentine Simeone's eight years in charge.

Simeone cannot call on the world-class playmakers and strikers available to La Liga rivals Barcelona and Real Madrid and compensates with organisation, work-rate and an ability to work out the best way to punish opponents.

"We came here to win, I respect his identity and with the quality we have, we try to exploit deficiencies in the opposition, that's what we do," said the Argentine when confronted with Klopp's criticism.

Simeone also claimed that the result was 'unjust' as Atletico had the advantage of extra time to find an away goal.

"What I have to say, and will be saying at the next UEFA coaches' meeting, is what I think is unfair," said Simeone. "Today was unjust because we had 30 minutes of extra time to score three away goals. Liverpool never had that. We had 30 more minutes to score an away goal and Liverpool didn't. That's not fair. The rule favoured us today but it might go against us in the future. Liverpool had 30 minutes fewer to score an away goal. That's wrong."

Klopp knows, however, that despite this

We don't know where our limit is when it comes to hanging in there and suffering, just like we did today. We all defended until the death and when a team all digs in like this, things like this happen. Scoring the goal that sent us through is a feeling that cannot be described.

MARCOS LLORENTE
ATLETICO MIDFIELDER

disappointment, this is a memorable season for Liverpool who lead the Premier League by 25 points will surely be crowned English champions for the first time in 30 years.

So, he was not about to let his frustration turn into criticism of his strikers for the failure to convert chances into more goals.

"I loved the way we played in the 90 minutes, we played exceptionally well. For two and a half years we have had an exceptional ride in the Champions. Tonight, the crowd exceptional and the boys fought hard," he said. "We know in the last two years we had some lucky moments in the Champions League, you have to, to reach two finals, but today it was like everything was against us in the decisive moments."



Alvaro Morata (L) scored the third goal in extra time, adding to Marcos Llorente's brace, as Atletico Madrid silenced Anfield and eliminated reigning champions Liverpool from the Champions League in the Round of 16.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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