

CHAMPIONS TROPHY
Tickets to be cheaper

CricInfo, undated

Pakistan are planning to slash the prices of tickets for next month's Champions Trophy after experiencing near empty stands for the Asia Cup Games earlier this summer when the ticket rates were very high.

A seat for the Pakistan-India match in a decent enclosure in Karachi's National Stadium was reportedly priced around 3,000 rupees. Shaqat Naghmi, Pakistan Cricket Board's chief operating officer, said on Wednesday that the tickets would cost almost 30-40 per cent less than those in the Asia Cup.

"We want to ensure that all Champions Trophy matches attract sizeable crowds and will take all possible measures for it," Naghmi told the News. "We will consult the ICC and try lowering the ticket prices."

However, the PCB and the ICC now face a big challenge because the eight-nation tournament will be played during the fasting month of Ramadan. Normally, Pakistan doesn't host international series during this period and it remains to be seen whether spectators will fill up the stadiums during the tournament.

To facilitate the spectators, it has been decided to time the matches in such a way that the innings break comes at Iftar time when one breaks his fast (at dusk). Efforts are also being made to provide for free Iftar meals for spectators but implementing such an idea would cost the PCB around Rs 15 million.



Abhinav Bindra (R), who won India's first individual Olympic gold in the men's 10m Air Rifle at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, shows his medal to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during a reception to the hero at the Prime Minister's residence in New Delhi yesterday.

SHOOTING
Tears of joy for Du

AP, Beijing



China's Du Li left her previous shooting event weeping and so distraught she was considering dropping out of the Olympics.

On Thursday tears flowed again, but this time they were those of joy and relief as Du left clutching the gold medal in the women's 50-meter, three-position rifle event.

Du led by one point entering the finals and shot a 101.3 to win the event with an Olympic record 690.3 points. Silver medalist Katerina Emmons finished with 687.7 points.

"During the first event I did perform very bad and it was a big pity," Du said. "I let many people down. I thought about giving up but during the past days fans gave me

a lot of support and my spirit resumed."

The victory eased the sting of Du's performance in the 10-meter air rifle event, where she was a favourite but finished fifth. She said the pressure of competing at home got to her.

It looked like she might be in for a similar fate on Thursday when she scored a round-low 8.7 on the first shot. She turned it around on the next shot, scoring a 10.3 and didn't falter after that. She wrapped up the win with a 10.8 on the ninth shot.

"I was a little nervous," said Du, whose 589 points in qualifying tied an Olympic record. "I made the same mistake that I made at the 10m air rifle. But I knew I couldn't repeat the same mistake for the remaining shots."

Du said she received many postcards and words of encouragement since her first event and was touched by those sentiments. She thanked Emmons, who consoled her after that loss.

"What was most difficult was not the (last) four years, but the last four days which felt longer than four years," she said. "It was so hard since I lost my first, but I held on."

Emmons, of the Czech Republic, came in second after taking gold in the 10m air rifle. She is married to American shooter Matt Emmons.

She's proving to be a reliable shoulder to cry on. She and Matt began dating soon after she consoled him following a 2004 debacle when he lost an almost sure gold medal by shooting the wrong target on the last shot.

Emmons said this isn't her strongest event, so she was happy to simply make the finals.

"I wasn't nervous at all because I already won a gold medal, so I was very calm coming into the final," she said.

Cuba's Eglis Yaima Cruz got the bronze, American Jamie Beyerle finished fifth.

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Overall Medal

	G	S	B
GER	6	2	3
AUS	5	4	7
JAP	5	3	3
RUS	3	8	3
FRA	2	7	6
GBR	2	2	3
CZE	2	1	0
GEO	2	0	1
CUB	1	3	2
PRK	1	2	4
AZE	1	2	1
NED	1	1	4
ROM	1	1	2
MON	1	1	0
SVK	1	1	0
UKR	1	0	4
SUI	1	0	3
SPA	1	0	1
FIN	1	0	1
IND	1	0	0
THA	1	0	0
HUN	0	3	1
ZIM	0	3	0
KAZ	0	2	2
SWE	0	2	1
ALG	0	1	1
AUT	0	1	1
KGZ	0	1	1
TUR	0	1	1
COL	0	1	0
NOR	0	1	0
SLO	0	1	0
VIE	0	1	0
ARM	0	0	4
BRA	0	0	4
BEL	0	0	2
INA	0	0	2
TAI	0	0	2
ARG	0	0	1
BUL	0	0	1
CRO	0	0	1
EGY	0	0	1
LIT	0	0	1
MEX	0	0	1
TAJ	0	0	1
TOG	0	0	1
UZB	0	0	1

Williams sisters

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record four-and-a-half years as world number one.

Venus Williams' defeat was even more unthinkable given her Wimbledon win last month, but the 2000 doubles and singles champion wilted in a pressure-cooker atmosphere created by thousands of noisy fans.

Li becomes the first Chinese to reach an Olympic semifinal where she will play either top-ranked Jelena Jankovic or Russian sixth seed Dinara Safina.

Number four seed Serena Williams, also one of the clear favourites after a series of pull-outs, was seeking her first singles medal after winning doubles gold in 2000 but missing Athens 2004 injured.

After a blistering start she appeared to run out of steam, double-faulting to hand over the second set and quickly going 5-1 down in the decider.

"I didn't serve really well. It was what it was. It hasn't sunk in yet," said the glum American.

Federer's dismal start to the American hardcourt season, with defeats to Gilles Simon and Ivo Karlovic, has given his rivals hope and Blake, wearing a red headband with his white shirt and blue shorts, started with grim intent.

Big guns cruise

AFP, Paris



Europe's big guns Barcelona, Juventus and Arsenal are in pole position to shoot into the group stages

though Liverpool have work to do as the 2008/09 Champions League began in earnest on Wednesday.

With 41 weeks to go to the May 27 final at Rome's Olympic stadium, club football's most prestigious and richest competition

hotted up as top clubs fought it out for a ticket to the money-spinning pool stages.

Barcelona and Juventus both had 4-0 victories, over Wisla Krakow and Artimea Bratislava, but Arsenal were far from convincing in a 2-0 victory at Dutch club FC Twente and Liverpool were simply mediocre in a 0-0 draw at Standard Liege in third qualifying round, first leg action.

William Gallas and Emmanuel Adebayor were on target for Arsenal who were outplayed for much of the match before going ahead against the run of play.

"They imposed a very physical game on us, with man marking all over the pitch. They did that with a lot of belief and spirit," said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger afterwards.

"In the first half, they had some chances, but in the second half we slowly took over.

"They have given so much in the first half, they could not keep the same pace and tightness in their marking. From then on, we looked more comfortable."

Wenger added: "We were a very young team and we did not lose our nerve, did not panic." In the end maybe our technical superiority allowed us to score two goals - that is a massive advantage for the second leg, but we will be on our toes."

Former England manager Steve McClaren, now the FC Twente boss, was thrust into the spotlight once more against glamorous opponents when the draw was made. On the night however his team did not have the lucky breaks when needed.

"I think we should have scored in the first half," McClaren said. "You don't get many chances and you have to take them. We didn't do that. We lost concentration on two occasions and got punished."

"That's what happens in Europe against the top teams. The inexperience in the dressing room showed and we have to learn from it. But I can't fault the performance. We had Arsenal rattled, especially in the first half."

It was disappointment for the Fernando Torres and Robbie Keane strike duo as Liverpool stuttered to a goalless draw against Standard Liege.

Kick-off was delayed to allow

groundsmen to clear toilet rolls from the pitch and, when the action got underway, Liverpool had to weather an early goal scare which would have changed the complexion of the tie.

In the sixth minute, Alvaro Arbeloa gave away a cheap free-kick from which the ever-present Marouane Fellaini rattled a header against the post.

It was criminally sloppy defending that should have cost Liverpool more than it did, with many in the stadium justifiably claiming that the ball had gone over the line.

After the match Liverpool keeper Jose Reina told ITV television that he wasn't sure if the ball had crossed the line.

"I don't know," Reina said. "I still don't know. We will have to see it on TV because it's much easier to see. The important thing is we got a result and we have to improve for the second leg."

Barcelona, who have gone two seasons without a trophy, began their planned comeback in style by disposing of Wisla Krakow 4-0. Two goals came from Samuel Eto'o and Xavi Hernandez and Thierry Henry got the others.

As for Juventus, they made a confident return to European action, thrashing Slovak champions Artimea Bratislava with goals from Mauro Camoranesi, Alessandro Del Piero, Giorgio Chiellini and Nicola Legrottaglie.

Lampard signs new deal

Football

AFP, London

Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard ended speculation about his future by signing a new five-year contract with the Premier League club on Wednesday.

Lampard, 30, had been repeatedly linked with a move away from Stamford Bridge during the last year, but he finally agreed to stay just four days before Chelsea's Premier League opener against Portsmouth.

"We've signed my new contract today (Wednesday)," Lampard told Chelsea TV. "I'm personally very happy and I hope I've made the Chelsea fans happy. I've had seven great seasons here and now I can have many more."

"It's been a difficult summer for many reasons and that was one of the frustrating things, a lot of things were said that were untrue, some

things were said that were slightly true and that was frustrating. Now we can put that to bed and concentrate on football."

The England star had been negotiating a new contract since last season, with Chelsea offering a four-year deal and Lampard holding out for an extra year.

Former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, now in charge at Inter Milan, tried to take advantage of the stalemate during the close-season when he made an offer for Lampard.

Chelsea rejected Inter's bid but they were aware Lampard would have been out of contract at the end of this season and could walk away on a free transfer.

The Blues have avoided that scenario by agreeing to Lampard's demands and the former West Ham player, who is now contracted until 2014, should finish his career in west London.

Lampard, who cost Chelsea 11 million pounds (13.7 million euros)

from the Hammers in June 2001, thanked the club for giving him time to decide on his future following the death of his mother last season.

"My world got turned upside down and I don't think it is anything anyone appreciates until you go through it," Lampard said. "The club gave me time and I appreciate that."

"I feel for sure I've made 100 percent the right decision, for myself, for my family and for Chelsea Football Club."

"This has always been a very important contract for me, I've just turned 30 and I see it as my final big contract to see my playing days out at Chelsea."

Blues manager Luiz Felipe Scolari believes the dynamic midfielder's decision bodes well for Chelsea's bid to overhaul Premier League champions Manchester United.

"I am delighted that Frank has committed his future to the club," Scolari said. "He is a key player for me and vital to Chelsea's future successes."

Golden girl Rice

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It has been a spectacular year for Rice, who first grabbed the world's attention in March when, wearing a Speedo LZR at the Australian Olympic Trials, she lapped about six seconds off her best time in the 400 IM to set a new world record of 4:31.46. With three golds in her pocket, Rice's fame Down Under is about to explode, and she already enjoys a celebrity unimaginable to any U.S. swimmer outside of Michael Phelps and Dara Torres: When she and Eamon Sullivan, the world record-holder in the men's 100 free, broke up recently, it led the news Down Under for three days.

Expect the media here in China to go nuts over a group of their own swimmers. As gratifying as the 4 x 200 silver was for the Games' host country, it wasn't even its brightest moment of the day at the Water Cube. In the women's 200 fly, Liu Zige and Jiao Liuyang finished 1-2, with Liu shattering bronze medalist Jessica Schipper's world record by nearly a second and a half. Pang, who held off Hoff in the

relay, would have been the top qualifier in the women's 100 free final had she not false-started in the semifinal and been disqualified. (Her mistake opened the door for world-record holder Libby Trickett of Australia to sneak into the final.)

USA swimming officials knew so little about Liu that the heat sheet passed out by a team official before the race had almost no information beyond her height, her birth date and her time in the Olympic preliminaries. The sheet didn't have much more info on Liu's teammate, Jiao Liuyang, who came in second. Yet the crowd at the Water Cube embraced them like established heroes, roaring with approval as the two tore through their final lap.

"I didn't expect I could swim so fast," said Liu. Asked if coach Shang Yadong had purposely kept her under wraps before the Olympics, Liu said, "No, he didn't. I've improved only in the last year."

Like Rice, Liu picked a good year to do it.

Stage set for

FROM PAGE 17

A total of 55 nomination papers were submitted on the final day yesterday for the August 28 BHF polls.

Ad-hoc committee general secretary Sajed Adel will compete for one of the five vice-president posts. His rivals are former hockey and football international Pratap Shankar Hazra, Shahrar Alam, Shahjahan Sarkar, MR Manzoor, Azizur Rahman Raju and Abdul Gafur.

The competition, mainly, would be between two panels led by Sajed-Shahrar and Jamil-Rashid Shikder but it was learned that both parties had come to an accord that Jamil will have no opposition.

Still, Shahrar Alam wanted to submit his nomination paper for the post of general secretary but had to change his mind with stern protest from the opponent panel.

The election commission will publish the final list of candidates on August 20 after scrutinising on August 18.

BUNDESLIGA PREVIEW
The coming of Klinsmann

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

Lounges lined with rattan furniture, statues of Buddha that release 'positive energy', training made more exciting by carrying them out on nude beaches.

Yes, you got it right -- Die Bundesliga is back.

After a year, that could well be described as a Bayern Munich blitzkrieg (with a positive outcome, mind you) aka 'The Oliver Kahn farewell tour' with a sidebar of 'The Danke (thank you) Ottmar Hitzfeld campaign', the Bundesliga steps into a new era when Bayern Munich take on Hamburg tonight at the magnificent Allianz Arena.

Last season, the Bundesliga was all about Bayern Munich. The club that everyone loves to hate outlaid a massive 69 million euros to bankroll the purchase of Franck Ribery and Luca Toni.

Both transfers proved to be a major hit, with Toni finding the back of the net as seamlessly as he missed it during the Euros. Ribery though proved to be the straw that stirred the drink, taking the game to unprecedented level of enjoyment for the fans and the players. For this he was voted both the German player of the year and the Player's player of the year.

Mind you, that is a big honour. The German have only ever voted another foreigner to that award; Gonzales Alliton, once of Werder Bremen if you are interested.

But that was last season. Oliver Kahn has since bid his final good-bye and Ottmar Hitzfeld exited in tears of joy.

So what makes the Bundesliga watchable this season?



MARKO MARIN



LUCA TONI



ANDREA BARZAGLI



JUERGEN KLINSMANN

The answer is Juergen Klinsmann of course.

When Bayern decided to go for Klinsmann to replace the considerable shoes of Hitzfeld, more than one eyebrow were raised. Here was

beloved Klinsi.

A firm believer in progression, Klinsmann has painted a picture of a Bayern where everyday is marked by some improvement in a player. Develop the individual, develop

the team -- a mantra that a financially solvent club like Bayern need to follow to compete with the big boys of the Premier League at the moment.

The holy trinity was sold, and in came Klinsi with his sweeping changes. The old training centre was made into a 'performance centre' complete with lively furniture, energy inducing statues and more appropriately, eight-hour workdays.

It might take some time, but innovation might just pay off.

Which is more than you can say for Wolfsburg coach Felix Magath's antics. Trying to make the players were not bored with the rigorous demands of pre-season, Magath took the players to a beach to train. And it was just not any beach -- it was a nude beach.

The players were not drawn into the spirit of things however, retaining all their clothing although the scenery was best described by Italian international Christian Zaccardo as 'exciting'.

Zaccardo is a recent signing for the Volkswagen funded Wolfsburg and he along with international teammate Andrea Barzagli will look to propel Magath's team into a Champions League slot this season at the least.

Werder Bremen are as always, the other pretenders to the throne. Thomas Schaaf has been around long enough and if the club can cope with the loss of Tim Borowski to Bayern and keep the moody Diego in check, don't count them out to put up a fight.

Which brings us to Schalke. Having made the last eight of the Champions League last season, the Royal Blues will look to go one better. In came new coach Fred Rutten and along with him the giant Dutch hardman Orlando Engelaar. To bolster their attack,

Schalke have also roped in Jefferson Farfan and they look like genuine title contenders.

Hamburg did too, until the departure of Rafael van der Vaart to Real Madrid. Martin Jol (he of Spurs) has not started off on the right foot having to sell off his best asset. The Dutchman will therefore be looking to get the best out of the considerable talents of Vincent Kompany and Ivica Olic.

And that is where the title-challengers end and the pretenders begin.

Once a force to be reckoned with by Bayer Leverkusen now languish mid-table but will be looking to the mercurial talents of Patrick Helmes and Stefan Kiessling to fire them.

VfB Stuttgart will be counting on massive Euro-flop Mario Gomez and midfielder Tomas Hitzlsperger.

But the most noises can come from recently promoted Moenchengladbach. They have in their books the youngster Marko Marin, who is all set to make his big break this year.

The 18 Bundesliga clubs have this season invested a total 117.45 million euros in new players, which is down on the spending of 171.63 million euros the previous summer.

But that doesn't take away the enjoyment factor.

The Bundesliga still records the most goals per game of any top league in Europe and it's famous for nail biting finishes.

Last season was the (wait for it) 18th consecutive time they finished top of the scoring heap and eight times in the past 16 seasons the league has been decided on the final day.

So if drama and excitement is your thing -- the Bundesliga definitely is.

Don't miss it.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 34 "You — There" 55 Recognized 11 Type squares 19 Pos-sessed 21 Fine, to NASA 23 Google alternative 24 Rainbow 4 Lewd 25 Bygone Yugoslav leader 26 Mediocre 27 Old Italian coin 28 Dominate 32 Aspirer 33 Hazmat protection 35 Schuss 36 Firmament 38 Minion of Satan 39 Hoosergow 42 Blueprint 43 Gino-mous 44 Smiling devil 45 Silent 46 Blackbird 48 Phony story

DOWN 1 Salt amount 2 Sandwich treat 3 Sunup 4 Lewd 5 Director Forman 6 Altar affirmative 7 Some let it all hang out 8 Teeny fly 9 Agent mouse! 10 Label

Solution time: 25 mins.

ACROSS 1 NINCOMP 2 POOP 3 PAUL 4 WIRE 5 MEASURE 6 APPOINT (OUT) 7 SPEEDY 8 STEAD 9 MCKINLEY 10 FIRST LADY 11 MOSQUE 12 VIP 13 STITCHES 14 BROCK 15 GROOVES 16 BOSS 17 KVELCHES 18 GENTLY 19 FAIR OF HAIR 20 ANCIENT REFUGE 21 ONASSIS, FAMILIAR 22 NOT PRE-RECORDED 23 CURIOUS KID'S QUERY 24 UNYIELDING COURAGE

DOWN 1 THERE 2 RECOGNIZED 3 SALT 4 SANDWICH 5 SUNUP 6 LEWD 7 DIRECTOR 8 TEENY 9 AGENT 10 LABEL 11 TYPE 12 SQUARES 13 FINE 14 GOOGLE 15 RAINBOW 16 BYGONE 17 YUGOSLAV 18 LEADER 19 MEDIocre 20 OLD 21 ITALIAN 22 COIN 23 DOMINATE 24 ASPIRER 25 HAZMAT 26 PROTECTION 27 SCHUSS 28 FIRMAMENT 29 MINION 30 OF SATAN 31 HOOSERGOW 32 BLUEPRINT 33 GINO-MOUS 34 SMILING DEVIL 35 SILENT 36 BLACKBIRD 37 PHONY 38 STORY

CRYPTOQUIP

XH X YNGE DKVC KVV NOJE

ILDIVH KTU UN K OKEXJCL

KPC. LNG PNGV DKL X'I

K DJKDNTJU YJEHNEIJE

Yesterday's Cryptquip: BECAUSE I DON'T ESPECIALLY LIKE TO CONSUME PORK, AT MY DELI I USUALLY ORDER LAMB ON RYE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: V equals L

FIXTURES

Friday
Bayern Munich v Hamburg

Saturday
Schalke 04 v Hannover 96, VfL Wolfsburg v Cologne, Bayer Leverkusen v Borussia Dortmund, Karlsruhe v VfL Bochum, Energie Cottbus v 1899 Hoffenheim, Arminia Bielefeld v Werder Bremen

Sunday
Eintracht Frankfurt v Hertha Berlin, Borussia M'gladbach v VfB Stuttgart