

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will play the World Cup?

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DAY'S
EVENT



Bangladesh League

Abahani v Muktiyoddha

Time: 4:00pm

Venue: Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur



What to WATCH

NEO Cricket

New Zealand v Pakistan

Fifth ODI

Live from 7:00am

ESPN

Sportscentre India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm



Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney scores his second goal against Aston Villa during their Premier League encounter at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

PHOTO:
AFP

McLeish wants McFadden to stay

AFP, London

Scotland striker James McFadden still has a future at Birmingham, his manager Alex McLeish insists despite a season wrecked by injury.

The player, who moved to St Andrew's from Everton three years ago, has been sidelined since August with knee ligament damage and is still some distance away from a return to full training.

But the Blues have an option on his contract which McLeish intends to activate.

"We will not be letting James McFadden leave at the end of this season," the coach said.

"The worst that will happen is that we will be taking up the option (on his contract)."

McLeish is also adamant Blues will not rush McFadden back into action ahead of schedule.

"James has not done any running yet and he would need to do almost a mini pre-season again," he said.

"He'll go back and get a check-up, then it will be determined by the specialist if there's a full healing process that has been achieved.

"James will then start the active work to get back to full fitness - but not before."

Rooney on the double

AFP, London



Wayne Rooney scored twice as Manchester United remained five points clear at the top of the Premier League after a 3-1 win at home to Aston Villa on Tuesday.

For much of the night it looked as if United might extend their lead but second-placed Arsenal came from behind to beat Everton 2-1 at the Emirates and so stay in touch with Sir Alex Ferguson's unbeaten side.

England striker Rooney's first minute goal -- his first in open play in the Premier League in 11 months -- gave the hosts the ideal start at Old Trafford.

Rooney controlled United goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar's long goalkick downfield before unleashing a 20-yard dipping shot past Brad Friedel.

The former Everton forward then doubled United's lead on the stroke of half-time when he turned in Nani's cross from close range.

Darren Bent, a 24 million pound transfer window capture from Sunderland, gave Villa hope with a 58th minute goal before United defender Nemanja Vidic blasted an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net five minutes later.

Louis Saha fired Everton into a 24th minute lead against Arsenal, although the French striker appeared to be several yards offside.

But Arsenal grabbed a 70th minute equaliser through

Andrey Arshavin.

And the Gunners completed their revival 15 minutes from time when unmarked defender Laurent Koscielny headed in a Robin van Persie corner.

English champions Chelsea, still 10 points behind United, came from a goal down to win 4-2 at Sunderland.

Blues captain John Terry made it 3-2 on the hour mark before striker Nicolas Anelka, whose place has come under threat following Chelsea's £50 million British record signing of former Liverpool striker Fernando Torres on Monday, put the result beyond doubt in the 90th minute.

It took Sunderland a matter of minutes to score the first of four first-half goals, with Phil Bardsley's swerving shot deceiving Petr Cech.

But Chelsea equalised through Frank Lampard's 15th minute penalty after Ahmed Elmohamady was ruled to have climbed over Ashley Cole in the box.

And eight minutes later Chelsea were in front when Sunderland goalkeeper Craig Gordon made up Salomon Kalou's mind by misguidedly rushing off his line.

However, Sunderland were level in the 26th minute when, after Elmohamady was fouled by John Obi Mikel, former Manchester United midfielder Kieran Richardson saw his 20-yard free-kick go under the Chelsea wall.

In Tuesday's other Premier League match, Wigan remained in the relegation zone after a 2-2 draw away to West Brom.

RESULTS

Arsenal 2 (Arshavin 70, Koscielny 75)

Everton 1 (Saha 24)

Man Utd 3 (Rooney 1, 45, Vidic 63)

Aston Villa 1 (Bent 58)

Sunderland 2 (Bardsley 4, Richardson 28)

Chelsea 4 (Lampard 15-pen, Kalou 23, Terry 60, Anelka 90)

West Brom 2 (Odemwingie 5, Fortune 79)

Wigan 2 (N'Zogbia 20, Watson 43)

Lazio halt Milan progress

AFP, Rome



Lazio produced a spirited rearguard action to hold Serie A leaders AC Milan to a 0-0 draw at the San Siro on Tuesday.

Lazio came into the match in third place in the league and knowing that a defeat would almost certainly rule them out of the title running.

And although the hosts dominated throughout, with Zlatan Ibrahimovic hitting both posts with a single shot, they could not find a way through the Romans' stubborn resistance.

Milan extended their lead at the top to five points but Napoli can close that to just two if they beat Chievo on Wednesday.

Lazio remain seven points off the summit but could lose third place to either neighbours Roma or Inter Milan when they play their games.

The first half was a truly forgettable affair as although Milan dominated possession and pinned back Lazio, they created little more than their negative opponents.

The first half-sight of goal came on 27 minutes when Mathieu Flamini's wayward shot went to Ibrahimovic whose

reaction header was woefully off target but hit a defender before going behind.

Lazio's best chance came when Milan centre-back Mario Yepes's defensive header landed on the top of his own goal.

On 34 minutes Ibrahimovic teed up Urby Emanuelson on a counter-attack but the Dutchman's finish was wild.

If the first half had been lacking in action, the first 10 minutes of the second quickly made up for it.

Ibrahimovic made space on the edge of the box and smacked a shot beyond Ferdinando Muslera but the ball ricocheted off both posts and back into the goalkeeper's grateful arms.



Milan striker Alexandre Pato (C) fights for the ball surrounded by Lazio defenders during their Serie A clash at San Siro on Tuesday.

PHOTO:
AFP

Jose's excuse



Football

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho said Tuesday that his players, who appear to be showing signs of being tired in recent league matches, are not used to playing so many matches each week.

"We have played nine games in one month, which is difficult for players who aren't used to this," he told a news conference ahead of his side's second leg semifinal against Sevilla on Wednesday.

"This team has been eliminated from the Spanish Cup in the first or second rounds in previous years, and it has left the Champions League in the last 16 in the previous six or seven campaigns. These players are only used to playing in La Liga," he added.

"Our goal is to fight to the end to win every competition. The problem of playing a game every two days is not of a physical nature, but rather psychological. It is a bit hard."

Real lost 1-0 at Osasuna on Sunday to fall seven points behind Barcelona in the league and Mourinho hopes to forget that setback by defeating holders Sevilla as Madrid try to win the competition for the first time since 1993.

Mourinho's side hold a 1-0 lead from the first leg, courtesy of Karim Benzema's goal, and hope to make home advantage count as they bid to end a run of two years without a trophy.

Wenger slams Chelsea



Football

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger has accused Chelsea of backtracking on their pledge to respect UEFA's financial fair play plans after the Blues spent £75 million (\$120 million) on transfer deadline day.

The arrival of Fernando Torres and David Luiz coincided with Chelsea's announcement of a £68.6 million operating loss for the last financial year.

Wenger believes this contradicts Chelsea's stated aim to balance the books and believes it signals a new era of spending by Blues' billionaire owner Roman Abramovich.

"It shows you two things; That for a while, Abramovich was a bit in no man's land where nobody could really guess whether he wanted to still invest or not," Wenger said.

"Certainly that has changed. He has decided to put big money in again, and that tells you that certainly in the summer more will come. He is back to full investment."

Bayern agree to play Dutch



Football

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich have agreed to play the Netherlands in a friendly in May 2012 to compensate the German champions for the loss of Arjen Robben to injury in the first half of this season.

Bayern have been quarrelling with the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) ever since Robben returned from the World Cup in South Africa last July with an aggravated thigh muscle injury.

It kept him out of football until January and Bayern have now settled the matter with a friendly against the Dutch national team on May 22, 2012.

"We are glad to have settled the issue," said Bayern's chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in a statement.

"It is good for the football community that we have found a fair and satisfactory solution."

IN brief

Duo taken to hospital

AFP, Rome

Milan were left counting the cost of Tuesday's 0-0 draw with Lazio at the San Siro as two defenders ended up in hospital.

Daniele Bonera was substituted at half-time and taken to hospital with a suspected head injury, Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri revealed after the game.

Nicola Legrottaglie replaced him to make his debut for the club following his transfer deadline day move from Juventus.

But he too was forced off after a gash was opened on his head following a challenge with Lazio's Czech forward Libor Kozak.

He was stretchered off and then also taken to hospital for treatment.

King faces groin surgery

AFP, London

Tottenham captain Ledley King is set for groin surgery on Wednesday after manager Harry Redknapp admitted the England international is nowhere near returning to action.

King has been troubled for several years by serious knee problems which restrict his training and playing time, but the latest injury has proved equally hard to shake off and the decision has been taken to go under the knife.

The 30-year-old has not played for Tottenham since limping off during his side's 2-1 win at Fulham last October.

The news comes as a blow to Redknapp, who is already without the suspended defender Michael Dawson and injured centre-backs Younes Kaboul and William Gallas.

With King sidelined, Redknapp is likely to be forced to rush long-term injury victim Jonathan Woodgate back into action as soon as possible.

Uche given green light

AFP, Madrid

Real Zaragoza's Nigerian international Ikechukwu Uche, who has undergone two operations on his right knee since 2009, has been given the green light by club doctors to play again, the club said Tuesday.

The 27-year-old striker picked up the injury during his second league match with the Spanish club, a 1-4 loss at Sevilla on September 12, 2009.

He underwent surgery on his knee later that month but required a second operation in July 2010.

Uche joined Real Zaragoza on a four year contract from Getafe in July 2009.

Garra punished for Drink-driving

AFP, Sofia

Levski Sofia's top scorer, French-born Malian player Garra Dembele, was handed an eight-month suspended sentence for drink-driving, Sofia's city court said Wednesday.

Dembele was handed the suspended sentence with a three-year probation period after being caught drink-driving in December and presenting police with a forged driving licence.

The 24-year-old Dembele, who has scored 31 goals in 40 appearances for Levski this season and tops the Bulgarian league scoring charts with 21 goals, had eyed a move from Levski before the close of the January transfer window.

But the court case against him means he will, at least temporarily, remain at the Bulgarian club.