

What to WATCH

Maasranga TV & TEN Cricket

Bangladesh v Zimbabwe

Second T20I

Live from 5:30pm

SET Max

Indian Premier League

Kolkata v Bangalore

Live from 4:30pm

Rajasthan v Chennai

Live from 8:30pm

TEN Sports

Madrid Open Final

Live from 5:00pm

ESPN English

Premiership

Fulham v Liverpool

Live from 8:00pm

STAR Sports English

Premiership

Man Utd v Swansea

Live from 9:00pm

Serie A

Petrov profoundly touched

Aston Villa captain Stiliyan Petrov used his final programme notes Saturday to thank the club's fans for their vocal support as he tries to overcome leukaemia.

Villa's fans have risen to applaud him in the 19th minute of every game -- a reference to Petrov's shirt number.

Petrov said: "Aston Villa will always remain in my heart."

"I am so grateful for the opportunity I was given here and, to the fans, I am so grateful for the way you have supported me over the years, especially during the past 14 months or so. This has touched me profoundly."



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Pellegrini to join City

AFP, Madrid

Malaga manager Manuel Pellegrini is in line to take over at Manchester City next season according to reports emerging from Spain on Friday night.

Madrid sports daily AS claims that City are willing to pay the EUR4 million (\$5.2m, £3.4m) release clause in Pellegrini's contract to take him from the financially troubled Spanish club.

The Chilean, who led Malaga the quarter-finals of the Champions League in their first ever appearance in the competition this season, is thought to have been targeted by the director of football at City, Txiki Begiristain.

Begiristain met with Pellegrini's agent Jesus Martinez last month in Madrid and AS also claim that should Pellegrini move to Manchester that could clear a way for talented Malaga playmaker Isco to become City's latest big-money signing come the end of the season.

MADRID OPEN

Nadal romps into final

AFP, Madrid

Rafael Nadal cruised into his seventh consecutive final since returning from a seven-month injury layoff as he beat compatriot Pablo Andujar 6-0, 6-4 to reach the Madrid Masters final.

World number 113 Andujar was blown away in the opening set, winning just nine points, as Nadal broke three times to take it 6-0.

The 11-time Grand Slam champion was given a slightly tougher test in the second, but needed just the one break to go 5-4 up before serving out the match.

Nadal will now face Tomas Berdych or Stanislas Wawrinka in the final on Sunday.

"Five months ago I could not have dreamed of everything that has happened during these past few months," he said in a post-match interview. "It's almost a dream to be back in another final at home here in Madrid."

Domingo new SA coach

AFP, Johannesburg

Russell Domingo, who was on Saturday appointed as South Africa's next head coach, said he planned to build on the structures put in place by incumbent Gary Kirsten.

Domingo, 38, is assistant coach to Kirsten, who announced on Friday he would not be renewing his two-year contract which expires at the end of July.

"I know what David Moyes is feeling," said Domingo, comparing the challenge of taking over from a successful coach as being similar to Moyes's appointment to succeed Alex Ferguson as Manchester United manager.

Under Kirsten, South Africa became the number one team in the world Test rankings.

"Hopefully I can continue to take the side to another level," said Domingo. "I know we have achieved the top in Test cricket but there's still lots of other work to be done."

NOTICE

Due to unavoidable circumstances, we could not print the CROSSWORD today. We regret any inconvenience. However, from now on CROSSWORD will appear on The Daily Star's Op-Ed page.

Sports Editor

Lampard breaks record

Chelsea secure Champions League football next season

AFP, Birmingham

Frank Lampard scored twice to become Chelsea's outright record goalscorer as Rafael Benitez's team fought back to beat Aston Villa 2-1 on Saturday and effectively ensure Champions League football next season.

A hugely entertaining and eventful contest at Villa Park saw Paul Lambert's team take an early lead through Christian Benteke and they looked well set when Chelsea's Ramires was sent off on the stroke of half-time.

Benteke though followed him down the tunnel after the restart, however, and it proved a major turning point as Lampard soon equalised before dramatically surpassing former Chelsea striker Bobby Tambling's long-standing club record in the 88th minute by making it 203 goals for the Blues.

Third-placed Chelsea now have a six-point advantage over Tottenham, who have a game in hand in fifth, but have a superior goal difference over their London rivals of 17 goals.

The only negative for the visitors at Villa Park was the sight of John Terry being carried off on a stretcher, casting a doubt over the centre-half's availability for the Europa League final against Benfica in Amsterdam on Sunday.

Defeat meant relegation-threatened Villa remained on 40 points and the Birmingham club will now

anxiously await Wigan's midweek game with Arsenal.

Victory for Wigan could see the Latics defy the drop at Villa's expense if they beat the Midlands club on the final day of the season.

Villa were celebrating by the 15th minute when a fine Yacouba Sylla through-ball sent Benteke through from the left and, after outfoxing Gary Cahill with ease, the Belgian international squeezed a low shot inside Petr Cech's near post.

Chelsea's irritation boiled over just a minute later when Ramires collected his first caution for a cynical lunge on Benteke.

Chelsea star Frank Lampard celebrates his first of two goals during their Premier League match against Aston Villa at Villa Park yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Messi fit for title tilt

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona manager Tito Vilanova expects Lionel Messi to be fit for his side's trip to Atletico Madrid on Sunday as the Catalans go in search of the win that would seal their fourth title in five years.

Messi came off the bench to score twice in last weekend's 4-2 win over Real Betis as he continues his recovery from a hamstring injury he suffered at the beginning of April and Vilanova is hopeful he will be ready to start against Atletico.

"He has had a good week, he has trained well, to a very good level," he told a press conference on Saturday.

"If he is ready for 90 minutes we will see in the match, but in principle yes he is."

Barca's canter towards the title has been somewhat delayed and distracted by Real

Madrid's fine league form in recent months and Barca's own humiliation at the hands of Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

However, Vilanova is sure due credit will be given to his side when they do eventually wrap up the title and is even targeting matching Madrid's league record tally of 100 points from last season.

"I do believe the league is given value, but we had such a good first half of the season that it gave the sensation that it was a league that had been won for a long time."

"Madrid have had such a great second-half that if we had relaxed we would have had problems, but we need to close out the league. We are competing against what people say is the best Madrid in history, the one of 100 points. We are lacking the final point, which is the difficult one."

Sensational Wigan stun City

AFP, London

Substitute Ben Watson scored an injury-time winner to give Wigan Athletic a sensational 1-0 win over Manchester City at Wembley Stadium on Saturday in the biggest FA Cup final upset in 25 years.

With extra time beckoning, Watson met a Shaun Maloney corner with a near-post header to stun 2011 cup winners City and give Wigan the first major trophy in their 81-year history.

Victory represented a fairytale moment for the modest northwest club and their chairman, Dave Whelan, who punched the air with delight at the final whistle, after a shock that stands comparison with Wimbledon's 1988 success over

Liverpool.

Watson's goal completed a miserable season for City and their manager, Roberto Mancini, who awoke on Saturday to media reports that he is about to be replaced by Malaga manager Manuel Pellegrini.

True to expectations, City started on the front foot, with Wigan goalkeeper Joel Robles forced to parry a dipping Yaya Toure half-volley in the fourth minute after Carlos Tevez hit the wall with a free-kick.

Wigan refused to be cowed, however, and City soon found themselves on the back foot.

Callum McManaman should have done better than curl wide from seven yards after cutting inside Matija

Nastasic from Arouna Kone's sweeping pass, while Gareth Barry had to produce a carefully timed challenge on McManaman right on the edge of the City area.

Wigan had been subdued, but with 15 minutes to play, Maloney almost broke the deadlock with a cunning free-kick from wide on the right that bounced off the top of the bar.

Wigan were given further reason for optimism in the 84th minute, when Pablo Zabaleta was shown a second yellow card for felling McManaman as he bore down on goal.

Maloney whipped the resulting free-kick wide, but Wigan had the momentum and in the first minute of injury time, Watson glanced Maloney's corner past Hart to write his name in cup final history.

Top two's clash at Madrid

REUTERS, Madrid

Serena Williams's tactic of staying in her hotel room and being "boring" appears to be paying off after the world number one swept past Sara Errani on Saturday to set up a Madrid Open final against rival Maria Sharapova.

Chasing a 50th career title at the clay event in the Spanish capital, defending champion Williams was far too strong for Italian seventh seed Errani on the Manolo Santana show court, winning 7-5, 6-2 before Sharapova made short work of 16th seed Ana Ivanovic of Serbia to win their semifinal 6-4, 6-3.

The Russian second seed and world number two, 26, will replace 31-year-old American Williams at the top of the rankings if she gets the better of her in Sunday's title match.

Williams, whose interests away from tennis include fashion and acting, said she had been avoiding "too many extra-curricular activities" to

concentrate on match preparation.

"I usually just stay in my room really and be the most boring person you can ever imagine," she told a news conference. "That's kind of the way I get focused."

Sharapova will be a different proposition to Errani as the French Open champion, who beat the Italian in last

SERENA WILLIAMS

year's Roland Garros final, is among the players on the Tour who can come close to matching Williams for power.

However, she has only beaten the American twice in 14 attempts, and never on clay, and both those victories came almost a decade ago.

"I look forward to it," Williams said.

MARIA SHARAPOVA

Bresnan, Swann back

AFP, London

Graeme Swann and Tim Bresnan were both recalled by England in a 12-man squad announced Saturday for next week's first Test against New Zealand at Lord's following their respective recoveries from elbow surgery.

Off-spinner Swann and seamer Bresnan both last played Test cricket in the series-clinching win over India in Nagpur in December and missed the recent drawn three-Test series in New Zealand.

However, Nottinghamshire's Swann and Yorkshire's Bresnan have both since proved their fitness playing county cricket this season.

With star batsman Kevin Pietersen already ruled out because of knee trouble, there were few surprises in the squad announced by England national selector Geoff Miller.

The same six specialist batsmen who played in England's last Test -- the dramatic draw against New Zealand at Auckland two months ago where wicket-keeper Matt

Prior's unbeaten hundred helped stave off defeat with just one wicket standing -- were included. Swann, as widely predicted, replaced Monty Panesar as the only specialist spinner in the squad while England opted against naming an extra seamer, as they did when Durham's Graham Onions was included before last year's corresponding first Test of the English season, against the West Indies.

"Both Graeme Swann and Tim Bresnan have worked hard to regain fitness following elbow surgery and have demonstrated through their performances for their counties that they are ready for the challenge of international cricket," Millers said.

Although billed in some quarters as a mere 'warm-up' for England's subsequent home Ashes series against Australia, this two-Test contest -- the second match is at Headingley later this month -- promises to be considerably more interesting than that after Alastair Cook's side were held to a 0-0 draw in three matches in New Zealand.



SQUAD
Alastair Cook (captain), Nick Compton, Jonathan Trott, Ian Bell, Joe Root, Jonathan Bairstow, Matt Prior, Graeme Swann, Stuart Broad, James Anderson,