

What to WATCH

STAR Cricket
England v New Zealand
First Test, Day 2
Live from 4:00pm
SET Max
Indian Premier League
Hyderabad v

Rajasthan
Live from 8:30pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm
TEN Sports
Rome Masters
Quarterfinals

Live from 4:00pm
TEN Action
Copa del Rey
FINAL
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm
TEN Sports
Rome Masters
Quarterfinals

the glory begins

Led by Ernest Mangall, the first champion team of Man United featured the fantastic four from Manchester City - Billy Meredith, Herbert Burgess, Jimmy Bannister and Sandy Turnbull.



1907-08

Real eye Copa joy

AFP, Madrid

 Real Madrid will hope to end a difficult season on a high when they face Atletico Madrid in Friday's Copa del Rey final, with Los Blancos aiming to continue their long-running dominance in meetings with their city rivals.

An acrimonious campaign marred by on-pitch failure and behind-the-scenes unrest is set to end with manager Jose Mourinho leaving Madrid, but the Portuguese will hope to bow out with one more piece of silverware.

Madrid will finish a distant second behind champions Barcelona in La Liga and once again failed in their bid to win that elusive 10th European Cup, losing to Borussia Dortmund in the semi-finals, so all that is left is the chance to win back the Copa del Rey, which they also won in Mourinho's first season in charge two years ago.

Both clubs wanted this game to be played in Madrid and Real's Santiago Bernabeu home, with its 80,000 capacity, got the nod over Atletico's smaller Vicente Calderon.

That would appear to give Mourinho's side even more of an edge but, when the clubs last contested the final, Atletico beat Real 2-0 at the Bernabeu in 1992, with Bernd Schuster -- the German who later coached Los Blancos -- and Paulo Futre scoring the goals.

Madrid also lost 2-1 to Deportivo in the 2002 final despite the Spanish federation allowing them to stage the game at the Bernabeu to mark Real's centenary.

However, Atletico, the club of the grimy working-class quarters of southern Madrid, have endured over a decade of misery against their wealthier neighbours, from the upmarket Chamartin district to the north.

Remarkably, they have not won any of the last 25 meetings between the teams since a 3-1 win at the Bernabeu in October 1999, a season in which they were relegated.

In a sense, though, there is no disgrace in that -- figures reported recently by sports daily AS indicated that Real's budget for this season is 517 million euros (\$665m) compared to 123 million euros (\$158m) for Atletico.

Diego at it again

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentine soccer great Diego Maradona insulted reporters and kicked a photographer after arriving home in Buenos Aires on a visit from Dubai, where he works as a sports ambassador.

A fellow passenger on Tuesday's flight further accused the former Argentina captain and coach, who was accompanied by his 22-year-old girlfriend, Rocio Oliva, of insulting and pushing him.

Maradona, 52, came to Argentina to meet Diego Fernando, the son he had with former girlfriend Veronica Ojeda, and surprise his younger daughter, Giannina, on her birthday, local media reported on Wednesday.

Television news reports showed an ill-tempered Maradona surrounded by microphones and blinded by photographers' flashes calling reporters "bad people" for asking him about his visit and screaming he would "only talk to his (journalist) friends."

Later, Maradona was driven to the home of his former girlfriend in the vicinity of Ezeiza to see his 3-month-old son for the first time.

"On the way, in heavy rain, Maradona made the car stop, got out with a Havana cigar in his hand, took some stones from the edge of the highway and started throwing them at reporters' cars and kicked a photographer's leg," a paparazzo told La Red radio.



PHOTO: AFP

Chelsea players celebrate with the Europa League trophy after their victory over Benfica in the final at Amsterdam Arena on Wednesday

Chelsea make history

AFP, Amsterdam



A 93rd-minute header from Branislav Ivanovic gave Chelsea a stunning 2-1 victory over Benfica in the Europa League final on Wednesday as the London club claimed the trophy for the first time in heart-stopping fashion.

The game in Amsterdam seemed destined for extra time after Fernando Torres' superb 60th-minute opener for Chelsea was cancelled out by an Oscar Cardozo penalty, only for Ivanovic to net a dramatic winner with a looping header in stoppage time.

Moments later, Chelsea's players greeted the final whistle with a jubilant mass embrace, as they became the first team to simultaneously hold the Champions League and Europa League titles.

They will relinquish their

Champions League crown in 10 days, but more lasting is the statistic that they are only the fourth club to have claimed Europe's three major trophies -- including the now-defunct Cup Winners' Cup -- after Ajax, Bayern Munich and Juventus.

Chelsea's interim manager Rafael Benitez, meanwhile, joins Giovanni Trapattoni as one of only two coaches to have won the trophy with two different clubs, following his 2004 success with Valencia.

The manner of defeat was cruel on Jorge Jesus' enterprising side and means that Benfica have now lost seven consecutive European finals since claiming their last major continental crown in 1962.

Benfica's previous game was a damaging 2-1 loss to Porto that may have ended their Portuguese title hopes, but they banished any fears about their mental state with an assured start to the game

that bordered on insouciance at times.

Indeed, so authoritative were Benfica, and so lacklustre Chelsea, that only an apparent inability to shoot at the appropriate moment prevented Jesus' side from taking the lead before half-time.

Cardozo headed an early chance over the bar, Eduardo Salvio saw a shot blocked, Rodrigo miscued twice during a frantic goal-mouth scramble, and Nicolas Gaitan twice fired over after neat approach play.

With languid former Chelsea man Nemanja Matic orchestrating Benfica's attacks from a deep position, the English side were struggling to find a foothold.

They did not test Benfica goalkeeper Artur until Oscar put an effort straight at him in the 27th minute, although the Brazilian was almost deceived by a swerving Frank Lampard shot that he palmed over the bar in unorthodox fashion seven minutes before half-time.

We deserved glory'

REUTERS, Amsterdam



UEFA
EUROPA
LEAGUE

Matchwinner Branislav Ivanovic said Chelsea deserved to win the Europa League with a 2-1 success over Benfica on Wednesday after a "difficult season".

The Serbian defender headed a stoppage-time winner from a corner to secure a second successive European trophy for the Premier League side after they won the Champions League for the first time last season.

"This team deserved this, because we have had a very difficult season and a lot of games," Ivanovic, suspended for the 2012 showpiece which Chelsea won after a penalty shootout victory over Bayern Munich, told ITV.

"In the end, today was a very hard game and Benfica played very well. But we scored from set pieces and work very hard preparing that part of our game. We deserve that trophy."

"It was a great feeling to play a final, another European final for us as a team and a great win for us. Now it is time to celebrate."

Chelsea were playing their 68th game of a marathon season and were only in the Europa League after dropping into it after becoming the first Champions League winners to be eliminated in the group stage the following season.

Veteran midfielder Frank Lampard went close to winning the match late in normal time when his 30-metre piledriver struck the woodwork.

"No-one deserves this more than Ivanovic - he has been fantastic," he said. "You make your own luck, and we stick together in this group. The club deserve it."



England (1996-2009) App 115 Goals 17
Man Utd (1993-2003) App 265 Goals 62
Real Madrid (2003-07) App 116 Goals 13
LA Galaxy (2007-2012) App 98 Goals 2
AC Milan (2009/2010) App 29 Goals 2
PSG (2013) App 9 Goals 0

He captained England between 2000 and 2006, played at three World Cups, and has played more times for his country than any other outfield player.

Beckham moved to Los Angeles in 2007, winning two MLS Cup titles with the Galaxy, but spent two loan spells at Milan and then returned to Europe in January this year, when he signed a short-term deal with PSG.

He won six league titles, two FA Cups and the 1999 Champions League with United, before joining Madrid in 2003, where he won the Spanish league title four years later.

Beckham's title triumph with PSG made him the first British player to have won league championships in four different countries, after previous successes in England, Spain and the United States.

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