

What to WATCH

NEO Sports
French Open
Second Round
Live from 3:00pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm

STAR Sports2
Int'l Friendly Soccer
England v Ireland
Live from 1:00am
(Thursday)



England spinner Graeme Swann looks up to the heavens after taking a five-wicket haul, fifteenth of his career, during the fifth day of the second Test against New Zealand in Headingley on Tuesday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Rafa extremely excited

AFP, London



Rafael Benitez said on Tuesday that he was "extremely excited" about his appointment as coach of Napoli, vowing to respect the club's traditions and "very, very special" supporters.

The 53-year-old Spaniard has signed a two-year contract with the Italian club and succeeds Walter Mazzarri, who has joined one of Benitez's former clubs, Inter Milan.

Benitez will arrive in southern Italy after a successful but testing season as interim manager of Chelsea.

He faced opposition from the club's fans following his appointment in November, but led the club to Europa League glory and a third-place finish in the Premier League.

Napoli finished second in Serie A this season, their best finish since a side featuring Diego Maradona won the Italian title in 1990, and Benitez said he was confident of taking the club forward.

"Now that the agreement is confirmed, I can say I am very happy and very satisfied for having committed to a great club with an illustrious heritage like Napoli," he wrote on his official website, www.rafabenitez.com.

"I understand the history of the city and how the club forms a fundamental part of the culture and traditions of Naples.

"I must confess that I am extremely excited because I can share my passion for football with the fans of Napoli; it is proven that they are very, very special.

"I look forward to experiencing each and every one of the fans of Napoli and their strong support for this project that we will begin.

"I'm happy to become a member of that great family of Naples and thus we can share the triumphs together."

Fans thank Mancini

INTERNET, Undated

They say one good turn deserves another, so when former Manchester City boss Roberto Mancini took out a full-page ad in the Manchester Evening News thanking fans, it was soon agreed by supporters that the act would be reciprocated.

City follower Adam Keyworth started the "Grazie Mancini" fund, with the aim of buying some space in Italian sports newspaper La Gazzetta Dello Sport to convey some gratitude. According to The Metro, over 700 Citizens raised more than the required £7,000 (\$10,500), with any surplus funds being redirected to a local children's charity.

The ad has finally appeared in today's edition of the famous pink paper. It's not a full-page, and there's no superimposed image of the Community Shield (the trophy for which all City fans are surely eternally grateful) but the gesture is sincere.

No vuvuzela at Confed Cup

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

The "caxirola", Brazil's percussion answer to South Africa's plastic vuvuzela horn, will be banned at next month's Confederations Cup for security reasons, organizers said Monday.

"Fans will not be allowed in stadiums with musical instruments and that includes the caxirola," said Medeiros Hilario, the official on the Cup's Organizing Committee who is in charge of security.

"We will apply this measure during friendly games, then during the Confederations Cup," which will be held in Brazil from June 15-30, he added.

The ban will become effective from Sunday when Brazil and England clash in a friendly match at Rio's iconic Maracana stadium.

The decision followed an April 28 incident during which irate fans hurled dozens of caxirolas on the pitch during a match between Bahia and Vitoria.

The caxirola, named the official instrument of the 2014 World Cup which Brazil will also host, was unveiled by President Dilma Rousseff last month.

Djokovic advances

AGENCIES, Paris

World number one Novak Djokovic, bidding to win a first French Open and become just the eighth man to complete a career Grand Slam, beat David Goffin of Belgium 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 7-5 on Tuesday to reach the second round.

The top-seeded Serb will face Guido Pella of Argentina for a place in the last 32.

"Thanks to all the fans for waiting. It was a good match, David is a good player and has a lot of talent," said Djokovic.

"I'm happy to win and hope to continue like this."

Djokovic, the runner-up to Rafael Nadal in 2012, had waited patiently to get his first round underway after heavy rain had robbed the schedule of more than four hours of play.

But Goffin, who made the last 16 in 2012 after coming through qualifying, was not overawed by the challenge but lacked the firepower to consistently trouble the world number one.

After taking the first set on the tie-break, the 26-year-old Australian Open champion was 2-1 up with a break in the second before Goffin, the world number 58, levelled for 4-4.

The Serb clawed that break back immediately in the ninth game before going on to secure a two-sets lead.

A break in the 11th game of the third was all Djokovic needed to secure victory in the next game with a swooping forehand.

Australian Samantha Stosur waited 2 1/2 hours to play because of rain, then quickly won her opening match.

The 2010 runner-up swept the first nine games and drubbed 42-year-old Kimiko Date-Krumm 6-0, 6-2.

Osvaldo ditched SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Michael Agazzi (Cagliari), Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus), Federico Marchetti (Lazio), Salvatore Sirigu (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA)

Defenders: Ignazio Abate (AC Milan), Luca Antonelli (Genoa), Davide Astori (Cagliari), Andrea Barzagli (Juventus), Leonardo Bonucci (Juventus), Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus), Mattia De Sciglio (AC Milan), Cristian Maggio (Napoli), Angelo Ogbonna (Torino), Andrea Ranocchia (Inter Milan)

Midfielders: Alberto Aquilani (Fiorentina), Giacomo Bonaventura (Atalanta), Antonio Candreva (Lazio), Alessandro Cerci (Torino), Daniele De Rossi (Roma), Alessandro Diamanti (Bologna), Emanuele Giaccherini (Juventus), Claudio Marchisio (Juventus), Riccardo Montolivo (AC Milan), Andrea Pirlo (Juventus), Andrea Poli (Sampdoria)

Forwards: Mario Balotelli (AC Milan), Stephan El Shaarawy (AC Milan), Alberto Gilardino (Bologna), Sebastian Giovinco (Juventus), Marco Sau (Cagliari)

AFP, Rome

Roma striker Pablo Osvaldo has been thrown out of the Italy squad due to his behaviour during Sunday's Italian Cup final, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) said Monday.

Osvaldo started the 1-0 defeat to bitter city rivals Lazio on the bench and after the match argued with his coach Aurelio Andreazzoli and refused to accept a loser's medal.

"Pablo Daniel Osvaldo will not take part in the Confederations Cup ... due to the Roma player's behaviour yesterday (Sunday), after having lost the Italian Cup, he abandoned the presentation ceremony without his club's authorisation," said the FIGC statement.

Italy coach Cesare Prandelli is known to rule with a strict code of conduct and has previously ditched players who were serving club bans for violent conduct.



Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani controls the ball during a training session in Montevideo on Monday. Uruguay take on France in an international friendly next month.

18 to victory

Man Utd's most dominant title success under Ferguson came in 1999-2000, when they won the league by 18 points. Buoyed by the incredible Treble success of 1999, the Reds were unstoppable.



1999-2000

AFP, Leeds

Graeme Swann bowled England to a commanding 247-run win in the second Test against New Zealand in Leeds on Tuesday with rain unable to save the tourists.

Off-spinner Swann took six for 90, for a Test-best match return of 10 for 132, as New Zealand, chasing an improbable 468 for victory, were dismissed for 220.

This win gave England the two-match series 2-0 after their 170-run win in the first Test at Lord's.

Swann's figures topped his previous Test match-best of 10 for 181 against Sri Lanka in Colombo last year.

Rain, as much as New Zealand's lower-order batting, was the biggest obstacle to England recording a thumping win on the final day at Headingley.

But they grabbed the four wickets they needed in the 86 minutes' play that took place either side of delays for bad weather.

New Zealand, 158 for six

overnight, resumed with captain Brendon McCullum nought not out and paceman Tim Southee four not out.

But McCullum was out for one when he chipped a

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND: First innings 354
NEW ZEALAND: First innings 174
ENGLAND: Second innings 287-5 decl (Cook 130, Trott 76; Williamson 3-68)
NEW ZEALAND: Second innings (overnight 158-6)
Fulton c Bell b Broad 5
Rutherford c Root b Swann 42
Williamson lbw b Swann 3
Taylor b Swann 70
Brownlie c Bell b Finn 25
Guptill c Trott b Swann 3
McCullum c and b Broad 1
Southee c Trott b Swann 38
Bracewell c Bell b Swann 19
Wagner not out 0
Boult c Prior b Anderson 0
Extras: (b-2, lb-11, w-1) 14
Total: (All out in 76.3 overs) 220
Result: England won by 247 runs and clinched two-match series 2-0.
Player-of-the-match: Graeme Swann.
Players-of-the-series: Joe Root and Tim Southee.

full toss back to Stuart Broad, the tall fast bowler getting down well to hold the low caught and bowled chance.

That was the cue for an eighth-wicket stand of 56 between Southee and Doug Bracewell.

Southee defiantly hooked fast bowler Steven Finn for six. But on 24 he was dropped by Jonathan Trott at slip off Swann. Next ball Southee hoicked Swann for six.

Bracewell joined in by cover-driving Finn for four and pulling him for six to bring up a fifty partnership with Southee in just 35 balls.

But Swann had his fifth wicket of the innings, and ninth of the match, when Southee, on 38, edged to slip and this time Trott held the catch.

Bracewell was out soon afterwards, well caught at silly point by Ian Bell off Swann to leave New Zealand on the brink of defeat.

Number 11 Trent Boult gamely made a 26-minute nought before he was last man out, caught behind off paceman James Anderson's third ball Tuesday.

Zidane to lead Real project

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez has said the club's search for new recruits will not start until they have a new manager in place.

Perez confirmed that whoever the new boss is, he will work alongside Zinedine Zidane whose current advisory role at the club will be stepped up should Perez's re-election as president for the next four years be confirmed next week.

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"If there are no other candidates (for the presidency), on Tuesday we will take possession and start with the subject of the coach," he told radio station Cadena Ser in an interview on Monday night.

"First we will speak with the coach, because although people don't believe it, we have still not spoken with anybody. We want this to be led by Zidane. I would also like it if he was Madrid coach some day."

"Once the coach arrives, he and Zidane will look at what we can do to take a step up in quality. Zidane will be the one entrusted to make the new signings with the coach."

Perez also touched on Mourinho's time in charge and was broadly defensive of the Portuguese coach, although he did admit that he didn't agree with the former Chelsea boss' decision to drop captain Iker Casillas.

"Although the club thinks that Casillas is the best in the world, you can't enter into a technical decision."

And the man that in the past signed the likes of Zidane, Luis Figo, David Beckham and Ronaldo as players reflected on his failure to lure Neymar to the club after the Brazilian agreed to join Barcelona over the weekend.

"Three years ago there was a chance to sign him and we wanted to take advantage of it, but then the club wouldn't let him leave and they renewed his contract," he said.

Eng tackle old rivals

AFP, London

Everton defender Phil Jagielka says England's players will all have points to prove when they tackle old rivals the Republic of Ireland in an end-of-season friendly at Wembley Stadium on Wednesday.

England travel to Rio de Janeiro after the game for a glamour fixture with Brazil, and the two matches represent opportunities for players to convince manager Roy Hodgson that they can play key roles in the weightier games to come.

Following another friendly with neighbours Scotland in August, England will resume their 2014 World Cup qualifying campaign with a double-header against Moldova and Ukraine in early September.

With only three games scheduled before Moldova come to Wembley on September 6, Jagielka is hoping to prove he deserves a chance to become one of England's first-choice centre-backs.

"We don't really know what the starting XI will be, so it's all about putting down a marker this week," said the 30-year-old.

PCB chief suspended

AFP, Islamabad

A court Tuesday ordered the suspension of the head of Pakistan's cricket board over what it called the "dubious" and "polluted" process to elect him.

Earlier this month Zaka Ashraf became the first-ever elected chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) under a new constitution demanded by the sport's world governing body to reduce political interference.

The 60-year-old was originally appointed by President Asif Ali Zardari, the board's patron, for an undisclosed tenure in October 2011 under a system deemed unacceptable by the International Cricket Council.

For the election, Zardari nominated Ashraf and one other person as candidates, and the process has been hit by numerous legal challenges.

On Tuesday the Islamabad High Court ordered Ashraf to halt work as chairman following a challenge filed by Ahmed Nadeem Sadal, a former player and coach of the army side.