

What to WATCH

Maasranga TV & STAR Cricket

ICC Champions Trophy

India v West Indies

Live from 3:30pm

STAR Sports

FIFA WC Qualifiers

Australia v Jordan

Live from 3:30pm

Korea Republic v Uzbekistan

Live from 6:00pm

Iraq v Japan

Live from 8:30pm

ESPN

FIFA WC Qualifiers

Iran v Lebanon

Live from 10:30pm

King Rafa VIII

AFP, Madrid

Rafael Nadal smiled back from the front pages of Spanish newspapers on Monday, after he lifted his record eighth French Open title with a 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 win over compatriot David Ferrer.

The 27-year-old Spaniard's triumph made him the first man to ever win the same Grand Slam title on eight different occasions.

"The emotion of a country," said Madrid sports daily Marca, as Nadal also moved into joint-third in the all-time list of Grand Slam winners alongside Australian Roy Emerson on 12.

"Nadal's figures on the red dust in general and particularly at Roland Garros are scary," the paper assessed.

"Between the four walls of the French tournament his numbers have reached 59 matches won, more than anyone, and just one defeat to Robin Soderling in the quarterfinals in 2009."

The other Madrid sports daily AS led with "Nadal breaks the limits".

One columnist said "this tournament, this city, form part of the axis of his monumental career, which has many more things besides, but he is really special thanks to Paris and its emblematic tournament".

Nadal even led the news in the mainstream press, with El Pais hailing his remarkable comeback from a seven-month injury lay-off.

Since returning in February, Nadal has reached nine consecutive finals and gone on to win a remarkable seven titles.

"Above the medals that adorn his curriculum, there is the heroic odyssey of a champion like no other, capable of triumphing in June despite being suffering an injury in his left knee in January," the newspaper considered.

The Catalan press also dedicated its front pages to the Majorcan's triumph, with El Mundo Deportivo lauding him "Rafa VIII" on their front page, whilst Sport hailed him simply "the greatest".

'I damaged La Liga by beating Barca'

INTERNET, Undated

Jose Mourinho has hit back at claims that he 'damaged' La Liga during his three year spell at Real Madrid.

Barcelona midfielder Andres Iniesta admitted he was not sorry to see the 'Special One' depart Spain and said he felt the Portuguese manager's time at the Bernabeu had been damaging.

Mourinho's time at the Bernabeu was at times overshadowed by his fractious relationships with his rivals, as well as his own players and Real Madrid fans. But addressing the media today in his first press conference since being re-appointed at Chelsea, Mourinho had his own explanation for the ill-feeling towards him

"I damaged Spanish football by being the manager who broke Barcelona dominance," he said.

"It looked like a dominance without an end but Real Madrid won the cup final against Barcelona, won the Super Cup against Barcelona, won in Barcelona and won the championship, and that is the historic championship - which is 100 points and 101 goals. I hurt it."



Brazil win, unflatteringly

REUTERS, Porto Alegre



Brazil scrapped their way to a flattering 3-0 friendly win over France on Sunday in an ugly, disjointed match against opponents who are even worse off than themselves.

Second-half goals from Oscar, Hernanes and Lucas gave the under-fire Confederations Cup hosts a timely pre-tournament tonic in the city where coach Luiz Felipe Scolari built his reputation.

Brazil, who ended a six-match, 21-year winless run against France, had gone into the game under enormous pressure after only one win in six outings since Scolari returned for a second stint in the job last November.

While the result, if not the performance, will give Brazil some relief, France were left to face the long flight back from their brief South American tour reflecting on their fourth defeat in five matches this year and their fifth in 11 outings under Didier Deschamps.

Having rested Bayern Munich's Franck Ribery, the toothless French, beaten 1-0 by Uruguay on Wednesday, barely tested Julio Cesar as they completed their trip without scoring.

"We didn't have the head nor the legs," Deschamps told TF1 television. "We played well for 20 minutes against Uruguay and for a short period against Brazil. Even in adversity, against superior teams, we should be able to do better."

Brazil's win placated a restless 51,000 crowd at the Arena Gremio, which is not among the 2014 World Cup stadiums, after they had jeered forwards Neymar and Hulk during the game.

But, with only Oscar showing any real invention and Neymar once again struggling against a European defence, it was still a far from memorable display

"The team is still being put together," Scolari, fondly remembered at Gremio where he won several trophies during the mid-1990s, told reporters. "We are working to have

a competitive team that will win matches."

The teams belied their reputations as two of international soccer's most graceful exponents, instead setting out to concentrate on nullifying each other, producing a soporific and undignified first half.

Brazil often had four players - two central defenders plus two defensive midfielders - behind the halfway line even when they were attacking, severely limiting their creative options.

The 2014 World Cup hosts' chances mainly came from crosses into the area, which the French defence dealt with comfortably, and the occasional long-range shot which invariably went high and wide.

France occasionally looked threatening when they came forward, yet never really tested Julio Cesar.

Brazil defender David Luiz showed his wild side as he escaped a yellow card for hacking at Karim Benzema's leg near the halfway line, and was booked shortly afterwards for a needless high challenge in midfield.

The five-times world champions, who had not scored in their last three meetings against France, finally broke the deadlock in the 54th minute when Oscar produced a virtuoso finish after Fred's low cross found him in the middle of the penalty area.

France had their best chance shortly afterwards though it came from a Brazilian player when David Luiz diverted a Mathieu Valbuena cross towards his own goal, forcing an excellent save from Julio Cesar.

Scolari was jeered by the crowd when he took off Oscar in the 65th minute, yet two of his substitutes ended up on the scoresheet.

Hernanes made it 2-0 in the 85th minute with a left-foot shot from outside the penalty area which went in off the post after the ball had been teed up to him by Neymar, who was generally disappointing.

Lucas, who replaced Oscar, converted a penalty in stoppage time after a foul on Marcelo as he burst into the penalty area, completing Brazil's first win over France since 1992.

Madrid's eyes on Ancelotti

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid president Florentino Perez indicated in an interview published on Monday that Paris Saint-Germain boss Carlo Ancelotti remained his prime target to take over as coach.

The Spanish giants are still searching for a successor to Jose Mourinho after the Portuguese's three-year reign in the Spanish capital came to an end last week.

But PSG have so far refused to allow Ancelotti to speak with Madrid as the Italian has a year remaining on his contract in France.

"He is a coach that currently has a contract with another club," was quoted as saying to newspaper Marca on Monday.

"If you ask me is Ancelotti a coach that is liked within the club, I would say that everyone knows that on two occasions he was on the brink of becoming the coach of Real Madrid.

"We are talking about a coach that has won two European Cups, he has managed important squads, he is used to the pressure and he knows how to manage it.

"It would be like a curse for him to miss

out on becoming Real Madrid coach for a third time."

Perez has been famed throughout his two spells as president of Real for his tendency to buy some of the world football's biggest stars.

But he also hinted at a change of attitude this close season by saying that competition for places does not always breed the best results.

Strikers Karim Benzema and Gonzalo Higuain both struggled to find their best form consistently last season and Perez believes neither being an automatic first choice could have affected their confidence.

"My opinion is that at Madrid, two top players in the same position could produce the opposite effect and this year we have seen this in one position," he added.

Madrid's only signing so far this close season has been 21-year-old Dani Carvajal on a buy-back option from Bayer Leverkusen.

Perez said he would like to see more of the club's academy products graduate to the senior side.

"If it were up to me, there are three players that ought to be in the first team: Jese (Rodriguez), (Alvaro) Morata and Nacho," he said.

BvB hardball on Lewandowski

REUTERS, Berlin



Borussia Dortmund's prized striker Robert Lewandowski will not be making his anticipated move to Champions League winners and Bundesliga rivals Bayern Munich in this transfer window, the club's CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke said on Monday.

Bayern, who completed a treble-winning season earlier this month, were fully expected to poach Lewandowski from the Champions League runners-up after they already persuaded talented Dortmund midfielder Mario Goetze to join them for next season.

"Robert Lewandowski will definitely not transfer to Bayern Munich in 2013," Watzke told Bild newspaper. "This is final. We have informed Robert and his advisors. The Bayern case is closed because there was no written offer."

Dortmund, who won consecutive league

titles from 2011 with Lewandowski but lost 2-1 to Bayern in the Champions League final in May, appeared to have little choice but to sell the player after he refused to extend a contract that ends next year.

Last week, the Poland international said he expected to transfer to his "club of choice" in a few days but Watzke said Bayern never made a formal offer.

"It is absolutely legitimate for a player to express such a wish," Watzke added.

"There were two phone calls in the past four weeks with Bayern. We told Bayern that due to stock exchange rules (as Dortmund are a listed company), we need a written offer for Lewandowski. But until today, no offer has come in. "If Robert wants to go to Munich he will have another chance next year." Watzke, however, did not rule out the prospect of Lewandowski leaving Dortmund for another club.

"I am not saying he will definitely stay but he will certainly not be playing for Bayern in 2013."