

STAR Cricket
England v Australia
Second Test, Day 3
Live from 4:15pm
TEN Action
Tour de France
Stage 20
Live from 6:30pm

TEN Cricket
Sri Lanka v South Africa
First ODI
Live from 3:00pm

Bayern set to be tested

AFP, Berlin
New-look Bayern Munich face their first real tests under coach Pep Guardiola this weekend as the European champions play a tournament of Bundesliga teams, then face Spanish giants Barcelona on Wednesday.

Having won all six of their low-key pre-season friendlies so far, Bayern face tougher tests at this weekend's Telekom Cup at Borussia Moenchengladbach's ground where the hosts, Hamburg and main Bundesliga rivals Borussia Dortmund are involved.

Bayern could meet Dortmund in Sunday's final in a repeat of the Champions League showpiece at Wembley in May when the Bavarians ran out 2-1 winners, before welcoming Barcelona in a friendly at Munich's Allianz Arena next Wednesday.

"It will be two important test matches for us and we want to win the competition, that is always the same for us," said midfielder Toni Kroos ahead of the Telekom Cup.

Following an extended post-Confederations Cup break, Bayern welcomed back their trio of Spain's Javi Martinez, plus Brazil's Dante and Luis Gustavo, who has been linked to a move to VfL Wolfsburg, to training this week.

The next seven days will be a big test for Guardiola's new system, while new-signing Thiago Alcantara is set to make his debut since joining from Barcelona.

The 42-year-old Guardiola took charge on June 24, insisting he would adapt "100 percent" to the players and promising to change "only a few little things" before whisking the team away to their pre-season training camp in north Italy.

Four weeks later and Guardiola has switched up key positions and introduced a new 4-1-4-1 system.

Captain Philipp Lahm, a Bayern institute at right-back, now finds himself in a midfield role while France winger Franck Ribery has been moved up front into the 'false nine' role Lionel Messi occupies at Barcelona.

"A little weird" is how Ribery described the new system and although Lahm said Guardiola "has not reinvented football", the ex-Barcelona boss, who won 14 titles in four years at the Camp Nou, has certainly reinvented Bayern.

Guardiola has hinted at breaking up the defensive midfield partnership which pitted Martinez alongside Germany's Bastian Schweinsteiger as Bayern became the first German team to win the treble of European, league and cup titles last season.

Martinez could play at centre-back and Schweinsteiger in an attacking midfield role, Guardiola has said, while striker Mario Mandzukic has all the attributes of a defender, according to the Spaniard.

"When the coach wants something done a certain way, we can't turn around and say 'yes, but we want to play like we did last year'," said midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri.

In training, Guardiola is frequently in the middle of the action, moving players around like pieces on a chessboard, often by inches, and the Spaniard is a perfectionist when it comes down to details.

"Pep Guardiola has his own ideas and he expects a few things from us, for example, when you move or pass and our positional play," said Lahm.

Moyes hopes for good news

AFP, Sydney



Manager David Moyes said Friday he hopes to have some good news about the possibility of Barcelona's Cesc Fabregas joining Manchester United in the "next day or so".

Moyes is looking to bring some new players into the squad in his first season in charge at Old Trafford and has been linked with the Spanish international midfielder, while Wayne Rooney's future remains unresolved.

The English Premier League champions are in Sydney as part of their pre-season tour and are taking on the A-League All Stars on Saturday.

But all interest has been on Moyes' behind-the-scenes transfer manoeuvres, with the British press reporting the club has lodged a 26-million-pound (\$39 million) bid for

midfielder Fabregas, which has yet to be rejected by Spanish champions Barcelona.

"I'm in contact with the chief executive who has been dealing with it and hopefully I'll know a bit more in the next day or so," Moyes told a press conference when asked how the Fabregas negotiations were progressing.

"It's the middle of the night back home in England so I might have a bit more info in the next day or so about how it is going."

Club chief executive Ed Woodward left the pre-season tour earlier this week to attend what he said was "urgent transfer business".

Moyes, who has been tight-lipped over the Rooney situation this week, gave little away when he said Friday "the club's position hasn't changed on Wayne Rooney, there's no change to that".

"Besides that... we're trying very hard to make some additions to the squad and hopefully there will be some good news in the not too distant future," he added.

Spicing up the Rooney situation

is an offer from new Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho for the England international striker for a reported 10 million pounds (\$15.1 million).

United has repeatedly said he is not for sale.

With the new English Premier League season fast approaching, former Everton boss Moyes said the enormity of his new job has sunk in since Manchester United have been feted on their pre-season tour in Asia and Australia.

"It has sunk in because the amount of supporters we have in Australia, where we have been so far, it is incredible," he said.

"The enormity of the job sunk in even more yesterday when I was fortunate enough to see an incredible video on Manchester United under Matt Busby, followed by Sir Alex Ferguson.

"So if I didn't know the enormity before I certainly do now after seeing what those two gentlemen did in the job before me.

"It's a great job, a fantastic football club, a club that every person in the world knows the name of. I'm very fortunate and privileged that I was given the opportunity to manage and I hope I can come as close as I can to the success of the two gentlemen before me."

Moyes' reign at Manchester United began with an embarrassing 1-0 defeat against Thailand's Singha All-Star XI in Bangkok last Saturday. His team have been training hard this week for their next match against the A-League All Stars.

"I want to see us step up from where we were in Thailand," Moyes said.



Manchester United midfielder Michael Carrick kicks the ball during a training session in Sydney yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BOA to train athletes

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has decided to provide training facilities to sprinters Ashik Kumar Halder and Irin Akter for the Asian Youth Games after the Bangladesh Athletic Federation (BAF) showed reluctance to prepare the athletes.

The BAF was also reluctant to provide training facilities to the athletes who took part in the Asian Track and Field in Pune earlier this month where the Bangladeshi athletes showed dismal performance.

Following their disappointing performance, the BOA training and development committee asked the BAF to provide proper training facilities to those athletes set to take part in the Asian Youth Games which will be held in Nanjing, China from August 16 to 26. However, the governing body of athletics hardly paid heed to BOA's advice.

"We have been providing financial assistance to provide training for the young athletes but we have been informed that the federation did not allocate daily allowance to those two sprinters. So we are thinking of providing training facilities on our own arrangement," said Wing Commander Rafiqul Islam, member secretary of BOA training and development committee, yesterday.

Bangladesh will take part in eight disciplines - athletics, badminton, taekwondo, golf, basketball, swimming, shooting and weightlifting in the Asian Youth Games.

City slump again

AFP, Durban



Manchester City suffered another setback on their pre-season tour as Carlington Nyadombo's late penalty earned AmaZulu a 2-1 victory in Durban on Thursday.

With manager Manuel Pellegrini absent after returning to Chile due to a family issue, City, beaten 2-0 by Supersport United in their opening friendly, fell behind when Bongani Ndulula made the most of Aleksandar Kolarov's mistake to put the home side ahead.

England midfielder James Milner pulled the visitors level with a fine cross-shot, only for Nyadombo to score from the spot in the final seconds.

City midfielder Gareth Barry felt that the team's fitness had let them down against Supersport United in Pretoria on Sunday.

The English outfit began with far greater intensity this time and were

unlucky not to take the lead when a dipping free-kick from Nasri was pushed just past the post by AmaZulu goalkeeper Kapini Tapuwa.

But in the 20th minute at the Moses Mabhida Stadium, City gifted the home side the lead with some poor defending.

Kolarov's poorly struck pass gave Matija Nastasic no chance and after Ndulula beat goalkeeper Joe Hart to the ball he was left with an easy finish into an empty net.

City replied five minutes later with an impressive finish from Milner.

Scott Sinclair found space down the left flank and sent over a cross that was met with a weak connection by Yaya Toure but Milner made sure with a firm drive across goal.

Milner was involved again just before the hour when his low cross was missed by Dzeko. Micah Richards also went close with a header from a deep corner from Nasri shortly before half-time.

The visitors almost pulled ahead when Dzeko's cross-shot was pushed away by goalkeeper Aubrey Mathib.



Manchester City midfielder Scott Sinclair (R) is tackled by AmaZulu defender Tamsanqa Teyise during their exhibition match at the Moses Mabhida Stadium on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Fiorentina agree to sell Jovetic

AFP, Rome

Fiorentina on Thursday confirmed that they have reached an agreement with Manchester City to sell striker Stevan Jovetic.

"We have reached an agreement with Manchester City Football Club for the permanent transfer of the player Stevan Jovetic," said a statement by the Serie A side on their Twitter feed.

The 23-year-old Montenegrin international will cost City a reported 30 million euros.

Tito to leave Barcelona

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona coach Tito Vilanova is to step down due to ill health, Spanish media reported on Friday, without identifying the source of their information.

Vilanova, 44, has been battling throat cancer for the past couple of years and spent two months having treatment in New York last season.

Barca vice president Javier Faus said he was unable to confirm the reports when contacted by telephone. A Barca spokesman could not immediately be reached for comment.

Club president Sandro Rosell and sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta are due to hold a news conference at 1830 GMT on Friday.

Sport reported that Joan Frances Ferrer, known as "Rubi", may be in line to take over.

EPL slams Sepp's plan

AFP, London



Premier League chiefs have slammed FIFA president Sepp Blatter's plan to move the 2022 World Cup in Qatar to the winter.

There has been widespread concern over the health dangers posed by staging the tournament in the Gulf in June and July where temperatures rocket to 50 degrees (122 degrees Fahrenheit).

And Blatter this week confronted the issue by stating he believed the tournament could not take place in the summer, and that position has been backed up by the international players' union FIFPro.

Blatter insisted he would push to have the World Cup moved despite the effects it could have on domestic leagues when the FIFA Executive Committee meets on October 3 and 4.

"The Executive Committee will certainly follow me," he was quoted as saying.

"It is clear that you cannot play in this heat in the summer and we have to consider the players."

But the Premier League have been vocal opponents of the winter idea on the grounds it will cause major disruption to three domestic seasons, the 2021-22 season and the ones either side, as well as impacting on broadcasting contracts.

And Blatter's latest comments drew a scathing response from the organisation on Thursday.

"The Premier League position remains unchanged. The prospect of a winter World Cup is neither workable nor desirable for European domestic football," a Premier League spokesman said.

Qatar plans to spend around £65 billion (\$101 billion, 76 billion euros) on infrastructure projects, including building new high-tech stadiums, which the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee said would likely cost \$4-5 billion.

But average temperatures in Qatar are markedly cooler in December, with highs of 24C and lows of 15C.

And UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino recently added his weight to calls for the 2022 World Cup to be staged later in the year.

"I fully share the view that you have to play in the best period for football; that is not June or July in Qatar. This is an issue that FIFA has to sort out," he said.

Qatar, who won their World Cup hosting bid three years ago, has already said it was ready to stage the tournament in summer or winter.

"Various figures from the world of football have raised preferences for hosting in the winter," the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee said in a statement earlier this year.

"We are ready to host the World Cup in summer or winter. Our planning isn't affected either way."

City seal Negredo deal

AFP, London

Manchester City have completed the signing of Spanish striker Alvaro Negredo from Sevilla, the club confirmed on Friday.

Negredo, 27, follows former team-mate Jesus Navas to the Ethiad stadium for a reported initial fee of £16.4 million (\$25 million, 19 million euros), which could rise to £20 million with add-ons.

"City are delighted to announce the signing of Alvaro Negredo, who becomes the club's third new recruit of the summer," the club's website announced.

The club are also close to securing another striker, Montenegro's Stevan Jovetic, from Fiorentina.

The Italian Serie A club announced they had reached an agreement to sell Jovetic, 23, for £22.4 million.

Negredo, capped 14 times by Spain, said earlier this week: "I have spoken to Navas, he's an important player in anyone's squad and I'm very happy to be playing with him again."

"Manuel Pellegrini completely convinced me to join Manchester City. It's a big club and a new challenge for me."

His arrival follows those of Navas and Brazilian midfielder Fernandinho, who joined from Ukrainian champions Shakhtar Donetsk for around £30 million.