

# What to WATCH



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 England v Australia  
 Third Test, Day 2  
 Live from 4:00pm

**TEN Cricket**  
 Sri Lanka v South Africa  
 First T20I  
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## Roma rout All Stars

REUTERS, Undated

A.S. Roma showed their Serie A class by easing to a comfortable 3-1 victory over Major League Soccer's All Stars in a pre-season friendly in Kansas City on Wednesday.

Dutch midfielder Kevin Strootman needed just four minutes to race clear and put Roma ahead, while Alessandro Florenzi (47th minute) and Junior Tallo (68) took advantage of more slack marking to add second half goals for the three-times Italian champions.

The MLS All Stars struggled to create threatening opportunities despite a roster of attackers that included Italian striker Marco Di Vaio, Frenchman Thierry Henry and United States internationals Landon Donovan and Chris Wondolowski.

Defender Omar Gonzalez, who just returned from helping the United States win the CONCACAF Gold Cup, did finally get the All Stars on the scoreboard with a late headed effort in the 91st minute.

The MLS All Stars defeated English Premier League side Chelsea 3-2 in last year's exhibition but have now lost four of the last five annual matches against European competition.



**Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo throws the ceremonial first pitch before the MLB baseball game between the New York Yankees and the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles on Wednesday.**

## Bavarians dispatch Brazilians

INTERNET, Undated

Bayern Munich continued its fine preseason form with a 2-0 victory over Sao Paulo thanks to second-half strikes from Mario Mandzukic and 19-year-old Mitchell Weiser. With the win, the Bavarians secured their place in Thursday's Audi Cup final.

The majority inside the Allianz Arena on Wednesday evening were left frustrated as the Brazilian visitors defended resolutely during the first period as Pep Guardiola's star-studded side struggled to find its cutting edge in the final third.

However, the introduction of Mandzukic for Claudio Pizarro at halftime spurred the German champions into life as they were in front just 10 minutes into the second period. The Croatian striker volleyed home Arjen Robben's cross before Weiser sealed the win with a late strike.

With the new Bundesliga season a little over a week away, Guardiola opted to make eight changes to the side that was beaten by Borussia Dortmund in last week's German Super Cup, as both Manuel Neuer and Franck Ribery returned from injury.

It wasn't long before the hosts exerted their dominance on the game, just as they did on so many occasions during last year's treble winning campaign.

However, they struggled to break down a well-organized and resolute Sao Paulo rearguard during a first period which lacked any real quality in the final third from either side.

Bayern was largely restricted to long-range efforts on goal but found Rogerio Ceni in inspired form as he produced save

after save to frustrate Arjen Robben and Ribery in particular.

As the half wore on, Bayern increased the tempo and went inches from taking a deserved lead on 38 minutes. Phillip Lahm, operating in midfield, got to the end-line before picking out Claudio Pizarro, but his goal-bound effort was hacked off the line.

Moments later, Ribery slipped in the marauding David Alaba but once again Ceni was equal to the task and pulled off a fine stop with his legs.

The same pattern continued after the interval but the introduction of Mandzukic provided the hosts with a different attacking dimension. The Croatian striker headed Robben's cross narrowly over with his first touch before converting his side's dominance into a deserved lead with a composed finish.

The breakthrough seemed to ignite Guardiola's side and another eye-catching move involving Mandzukic, Ribery and Lahm nearly gifted Robben a goal but the delivery was just out of reach.

The strength in depth at the Allianz Arena was highlighted as Thomas Muller, Xherdan Shaqiri and Jerome Boateng were all sprung from the bench during a fairly low-key and pedestrian paced second period.

And it was two substitutes who combined to double the hosts' advantage. Shaqiri broke free from midfield before he saw his thunderous shot rebound off the post but Weiser was on hand to slot home.

However, that wasn't the end of the action as Boateng's clumsy challenge resulted in the referee pointing to the spot. Ceni, however, couldn't cap a fine personal performance with a goal as Neuer guessed right to parry it to safety.

## Santa Cruz closes in on 100

REUTERS, Asuncion

Roque Santa Cruz, closing in on 100 caps, and promising 17-year-old Antonio Sanabria are at the two extremes of a Paraguay squad named on Wednesday for next month's friendly against Germany.

Paraguay, virtually out of the running for the 2014 World Cup finals, have begun a rebuilding process, promoting their Under-20s coach Victor Genes who will make his debut in charge of the senior side in the match in Kaiserslautern on August 14.

Genes is mixing the experience of Malaga's Santa Cruz, 32 in two weeks' time, and a number of other veterans with youth as represented by Barcelona's Sanabria, who played for Paraguay at the recent Under-20 World Cup in Turkey.

Paraguay, World Cup quarter-finalists in 2010, are bottom of the South American qualifying group, eight points outside the qualifying places with four matches to go. The top four teams go through to the finals and the fifth-placed nation will play off with an Asian side for another berth.

## Spurs sign Soldado

REUTERS, London

Tottenham Hotspur have reached an agreement with Valencia for striker Roberto Soldado and will pay the player's buyout clause of 30 million euros (\$39.84 million), the La Liga club said on Thursday.

"Valencia have reached an agreement with Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, pending the corresponding medical examination, for the transfer of Roberto Soldado for the amount equivalent to that of his release clause," the club said in a statement on their website.

A Valencia spokesman told Reuters the buyout fee was 30 million euros, which will be a record transfer for the north London club.

Spurs spent some 17 million pounds (\$25.94 million) to bring in Brazil midfielder Paulinho from Corinthians last month, a similar amount to the record fee they paid Blackburn Rovers for winger David Bentley in 2008.

Valencia's president, Amadeo Salvo, had said on Wednesday that a deal was in place but the formalities were being held up until a problem with the player's agents had been

resolved.

"The club wishes Roberto the best of luck in this new professional phase and we also wish to point out the professionalism and great performance of the footballer in the matches where he has worn the Valencia shirt," the La Liga side added.

The 28-year-old Soldado, who scored 30 goals in 46 appearances for Valencia last season, is part of a growing number of Spain internationals who are leaving their homeland to play in the Premier League.

Eight of Spain's recent Confederations Cup squad will be plying their trade in England next season, a figure that has gradually increased over the years.

One player who could be heading in the opposite direction is Tottenham forward Gareth Bale, who is strongly linked with a move to Real Madrid.

Media reports say the Spanish giants have offered a world-record fee in excess of 85 million pounds for the 24-year-old Wales midfielder.

Soldado began his career in Real Madrid's B team where he scored 63 goals in 120 league appearances.

He has played 11 times for Spain and scored six goals.

## Sansom left homeless

AFP, London

Former Arsenal and England full-back Kenny Sansom has been left homeless as he struggles with alcohol and gambling problems, it was reported on Thursday.

Sansom, now 54, made 86 appearances for his country between 1979 and 1988 and played at the World Cup twice.

However, he revealed in an interview with The Sun newspaper that his drinking and gambling addictions have now left him penniless and without a roof over his head.

"I have been living homeless for 10 days, that's because I've got no money, I'm a drunk, I'm not feeling very well and I'm a gambler. I've been living on the street," he said.

"I am just a drunk. I drink as much as I can get."

In March, it was reported that Sansom had been taken to hospital after collapsing in a London street.

Recently, he had been staying with his sister before going missing, although both the Professional Footballers' Association and his former club Arsenal have offered him their support.

"I am in a bad way. Arsenal are trying to help me, but I have got to try to help myself," he said.

Sansom made his professional debut for Crystal Palace at the age of 16 and went on to captain the England Under-21s before becoming a permanent fixture in the senior team's defence.



**Barcelona forward Neymar gives the thumbs up during a press conference at the Joan Gamper Sports Centre in Barcelona yesterday.**

## MU ready £40m Fabregas bid

SOCCERNET

Manchester United hope a third bid amounting to around £40 million will finally be enough to swing the transfer of Cesc Fabregas from Barcelona, and break the Catalan club's public resistance to a sale.

Despite having had two previous offers of £26 million and £30 million rejected, the Old Trafford club still see Fabregas as their No. 1 target -- as reported by the Manchester Evening News.

United's persistence comes from repeated positive contact with Fabregas' camp, and the understanding that he would be open to a move in the event of Barcelona accepting a bid.

Old Trafford sources have told ESPN that manager David Moyes had been considering his next move -- including weighing up the possibility of moving on to one of three alternative options, one of whom is Real Madrid's Luka Modric -- and decided to continue the pursuit of Fabregas.

United have now put together a package believed to be worth around £40 million, comprising a £35 million basic fee plus add-ons. That would not just represent the symbolically high offer that could make acceptance more palatable for Barcelona, it would also ensure the Catalans made a significant profit on the fee they paid to Arsenal in 2011.

With Barca also intent on signing a world class centre-back this summer, United hope the Primera Division champions' desire to boost the transfer kitty will further leverage the situation their way.

Thus far, though, Barcelona have adopted a hardline view and insisted the player is not for sale. United also retain an interest in Everton's Marouane Fellaini but it is understood to be seen as separate to the pursuit of an all-round attacking midfielder of Fabregas' ilk.

## Gerrard tells Suarez to snub Arsenal

REUTERS, London

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard has urged Luis Suarez to shun suitors Arsenal, saying a move to their Premier League rivals would not represent a step up for the unsettled Uruguayan.

Suarez has been the subject of two bids from the north London club, the second an eye-catching 40 million and one pounds (\$60.64 million).

Gerrard believes Arsenal are one of three clubs in a tussle for fourth place and a spot in the Champions League alongside Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur.

"I don't think Arsenal is a step up," he said in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday.

"Us, Arsenal and Tottenham are fighting for one of the Champions League places. In an ideal scenario we keep Suarez, make one or two more signings and Tottenham lose (Gareth) Bale.

"Of course, we're slightly behind the big three (Manchester United, Manchester City and Chelsea), who are powerhouses at the moment.

"I don't want to disrespect Arsenal. They're a wonderful club with a manager who I've an awful amount of respect for and they have talented players throughout the team. But so have we. We've got just as good a chance of achieving things as Arsenal have."

Liverpool have rejected both offers for Suarez and their manager Brendan Rodgers

was quoted by British media as saying the player "totally understands the club's point of view".

Gerrard believes Liverpool must keep hold of the striker and strengthen the forward line with a high-profile addition if they are to be move forward.

"We need that one exciting marquee signing who can play in one of the attacking positions [working with Suarez]. That's why we are talking along the lines of keeping Luis because if the club lose Luis we take a step backwards. He's the best footballer I've ever played with.

"Internationally, (Wayne) Rooney, (Paul) Scholes, (Frank) Lampard are all top players. John Terry and Rio Ferdinand at the back, all world-class footballers. Suarez is on a different planet to most footballers."

### Pope to meet teams ahead of friendly

AFP, Vatican City

Pope Francis will meet Italy and Argentina players on the eve of their friendly in Rome but will not attend the August 14 game, a spokesman said on Thursday.

Francis, who is himself from Argentina and is known to be a keen football fan, was elected earlier this year as the first ever Latin American pontiff.

"It will be a purely private meeting," Vatican spokesman Federico Lombardi told AFP.

## Living the dream

REUTERS, Barcelona

Barcelona's new recruit Neymar says he is living a boyhood dream after completing a high-profile move from Santos at the end of May and joining up with his idol Lionel Messi.

The 21-year-old Brazil forward made his Barca debut as a late substitute in a 2-2 friendly draw at Polish side Lechia Gdansk on Tuesday and could make his first appearance at the Nou Camp when the La Liga champions play Santos on Friday for the Joan Gamper invitational trophy.

"When I am training it feels like being in a dream," Neymar, the standout performer for his country in their Confederations Cup triumph in June, told a post-training news conference on Thursday.

"A dream I had when I was a kid and that is coming true now," he added. "I turn my head and there is Messi. Or Xavi, (Andres) Iniesta or (Carles) Puyol. I feel complete, it is like a dream. I am really, really happy."

Neymar is likely to occupy a position wide on the left under new coach Gerardo Martino, with Argentine World Player of the Year Messi in his more central role, and

Barca fans are eager to see how the gifted pair will perform.

Neymar said he saw no reason to change the way he plays and that he and Messi were fully compatible.

"I have to keep on doing my thing and fulfil this dream," he said.

"He is wonderful, Messi. He is always happy, he is a great guy. We talk every day.

"Don't worry, I am sure there is going to be no problem at all. He is my idol. For me, he is the best. I respect him a lot and I hope to be able to help him out."

Neymar is ambitious for success in Europe and said Barca would be aiming to repeat their historic treble of Champions League, La Liga and King's Cup titles from 2009.

"There is always pressure, and especially in a club like Barcelona," he told reporters.

"But I am not worried. We need to stay calm when playing football as well as when training because we are always under pressure. It is a part of football."

Barca begin the defence of their La Liga title, when they will be chasing a fifth triumph in six seasons, at home to Levante in just under three weeks.