

What to WATCH

STAR Cricket
England v Australia
Third Test, Day 4
Live from 4:00pm
TEN Cricket
South Africa v Sri Lanka
2nd T20
Live from 7:15pm

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Barca destroy Santos

AFP, Barcelona

Brazilian international Neymar and new manager Gerardo Martino got their first taste of the Camp Nou on Friday as Barcelona destroyed Santos 8-0 to lift the Joan Gamper trophy.

The Brazilians were confirmed for the annual glamour friendly as part of the transfer agreement that saw Neymar move to the Catalan giants in June.

But they were hopelessly exposed by a strong Barca side as two goals from Cesc Fabregas, allied to further strikes from Lionel Messi, Alexis Sanchez, Pedro, Adriano, Jean Marie Dongou and an own goal from Leo made it a comfortable evening for the hosts.

However, the biggest cheer of the night was reserved for Neymar when he made his bow at half-time and the 21-year-old made a positive impression despite failing to get on the scoresheet himself as he teed up Fabregas' second and Barca's sixth of the night 20 minutes from time.

"I am not too worried about not scoring," Neymar told Catalan TV station TV3.

"It is just great to be here playing for Barcelona and to play with players like Xavi, Cesc and Messi."

Martino, who has succeeded cancer-stricken Tito Vilanova, named a strong side on his own first home outing as the club's new boss with the likes of Xavi, Andres Iniesta, Serio Busquets and Dani Alves starting for the first time in pre-season following their participation in the Confederations Cup.

It didn't take the hosts long to get into their stride though as Pedro fed Messi to fire home the opener from a tight angle after just eight minutes.

Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi scores the opening goal against Santos during their Joan Gamper Trophy match at the Nou Camp on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bale on his way to Real

AFP, London

Tottenham take on Monaco on Saturday without Gareth Bale, who misses the pre-season friendly in the Principality through injury ahead of a likely defining week for his forecast world record transfer to Real Madrid.

The Wales superstar bid "an emotional farewell" to his teammates in London on Friday, autographing their shirts before they left for Monte Carlo, according to a report in The Sun.

The Spurs forward sits out Saturday evening's match, and may also miss Wales' friendly against Ireland in Cardiff on August 14, with a minor hamstring problem.

As Bale works on his fitness, Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy will sit down for his first face-to-face talks with Real Madrid president Florentino Perez in Miami next week, possibly on Wednesday, The Times suggested.

Real are in Florida, where Levy has a holiday home, for a pre-season warm-up. They are keen to see Bale at the Bernabeu ahead of their opening league game against Real Betis on August 18.

The 24-year-old is set to become the most expensive player of all time, an honour currently held by Cristiano Ronaldo, who moved from Manchester United to Real for 94 million euros (\$125 million, £82 million) in 2009.

Levy is reportedly holding out for a transfer fee in excess of £105 million while Real are looking to strike a deal

at around £85 million with a make-weight, possibly Fabio Coentrao, thrown in.

On Friday, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger claimed Bale's proposed mega transfer made a mockery of UEFA's Financial Fair Play rules.

"It makes a joke of it. It's quite amazing that in the year where the Financial Fair Play comes in, the football world has gone completely crazy," the Frenchman said.

"You wonder what kind of impact and effect it has on the football world. It looks like it has made everybody worse than before."

Meanwhile, Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has revealed he told Real to sign Bale when he was still in charge at the Bernabeu last season.

Gerrard wants CL return

AFP, London

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard admits his club desperately need to regain their Champions League status to avoid missing out on the world's top stars.

Gerrard knows Liverpool's four-year absence from Europe's elite club competition has been a major blow to their status.

Reds striker Luis Suarez is keen to leave Anfield for a club competing regularly in the Champions League, while Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers was unable to sign top transfer target Henrikh Mkhitaryan from Shakhtar Donetsk last month when the Armenian opted to join Borussia Dortmund instead.

Gerrard goes into his testimonial against

Olympiakos on Saturday with Suarez's desire to quit overshadowing his big occasion.

The England midfielder has told Suarez he wants him to stay despite two bids from Arsenal, but admits until Liverpool regain their top-four place they will struggle to convince the world's best to come to Merseyside.

"I think the only person who knows what's happening is Luis himself," Gerrard said on Friday.

"He has a huge decision to make and, as his team-mate, I have to show him respect and give him space to make whatever decision he wants to make."

"But I think everyone knows how highly I rate him and how much I want him to stay, and what we can achieve this season basically depends on whether he stays or goes, I believe."

Keenan's visit uncertain

SPORTS REPORTER

International Hockey Federation's (IHF's) high-profile coach Michael Keenan's arrival has become uncertain due to a problem with visa availability and conflict of schedule. The Belgian, who trained the national team for one week in February ahead of their participation in the World Hockey League as the first stint of his assignment by the IHF, was scheduled to arrive for the second stint on July 31 to train the U-18 and U-21 hockey teams for seven days as well as work with the national team ahead of Bangladesh's participation in the Asia Cup. But due to visa procedural problems, the date had to be deferred and since the national camp will go on a four day-break from August 7, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) has decided not to bring him at the moment.

"Keenan could not come in due time as he could not get the visa in time. His eventual availability clashes with the overall schedule of the national team camp. Now we are waiting for him to make a schedule and inform us, and at the moment cannot say whether he will be available before the Asia Cup," said Khaza Rahmatullah, general secretary of BHF yesterday.

It makes a joke of it. It's quite amazing that in the year where the Financial Fair Play comes in, the football world has gone completely crazy.

Le Clos crashes Lochte party

AFP, Barcelona

South Africa's Chad le Clos was delighted to claim his second gold in Saturday's 100m butterfly final, but there was disappointment for birthday boy Ryan Lochte at swimming's world championships.

The 21-year-old Le Clos, the Olympic and world 200m champion, clocked 51.06sec with Hungary's Laszlo Cseh at 0.39 back and Poland's Konrad Czerniak 0.40 adrift in the 100m final.

But Lochte, who has won three

golds in Barcelona, finished sixth on his 29th birthday.

Having won the 200m final on Monday, the same night compatriot Cameron van der Burgh won the men's 50m breaststroke final, Le Clos was delighted at his second world title.

"This morning I was really nervous and I was really excited before the race," he said.

"Now I am extremely happy because this medal is really special for me."

Le Clos admitted he glanced across to check where he was during the race, a bad habit his coach has told him not to do.

"I know I shouldn't, but I wanted

to make sure I was in the race," he admitted.

There was disappointment for Lochte, who failed to add to the 15 world titles he has won in his career, but has a chance of a 16th gold in Sunday's 4x100 medley relay final after the morning's heats.

"I felt really good in the water, but I couldn't get a medal," said the USA star, whose haul is second only to Michael Phelps' total of 26 world titles.

"It's my first international 100m 'fly and I'm still learning how to swim it well."

"My goal now is just to get ready for the medley relay on Sunday, I'll celebrate my birthday after that."

Mishra's record in India's 5-0 sweep

AFP, Bulawayo

Leg-spinner Amit Mishra's six-wicket haul took India to a comprehensive one-day series whitewash in Zimbabwe as they beat the hosts by seven wickets in Saturday's fifth one-day international in Bulawayo.

Mishra's figures of six for 48 saw Zimbabwe bowled out for just 163, and also took his wicket tally in the series to 18 -- a new record for a five-match series.

As they had for much of a one-sided series, India made light work of the Zimbabwean target, knocking off the runs in 34 overs to record their first whitewash away from home in a five-match contest.

Although fast bowler Kyle Jarvis returned to the Zimbabwean line-up to claim two wickets in the first 11 overs of the Indian innings, Ajinkya Rahane made 50 after coming in for his first game of the tour and Ravindra Jadeja hit 48 not out to see India to another crushing win.

Rahane batted steadily in his 66-ball knock before he was bowled by part-timer Malcolm Waller, while Jadeja started slowly before opening up to hit two sixes in the

second half of his innings.

Mishra was the clear star of the show though, as he struck with his very first delivery and then ran through the Zimbabwean lower order with embarrassing ease.

Sean Williams was the only batsman to put up resistance for Zimbabwe, hitting 51 from 63 balls as he provided a partial recovery from 45 for four.

With the hosts once again struggling with the lateral movement on offer to the bowlers up front, seamers Mohit Sharma, Jaydev Unadkat and Shami Ahmed claimed a wicket apiece before left-arm spinner Jadeja forced Hamilton Masakadza to play on for 32.

Although Williams gained reward for some sensible batting through the middle overs, he continued to lose partners at regular intervals as Malcolm Waller pulled Mishra's first ball to mid-on.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ZIMBABWE: 163 all out in 39.5 overs (Williams 51, Masakadza 32; Mishra 6-48)
INDIA: 167 for 3 in 34 overs (Rahane 50, Jadeja 48 not out, Dhawan 41; Jarvis 2-18)
Result: India won by seven wickets and clinched the 5-ODI series 5-0.
Player-of-the-match: Amit Mishra.

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