

What to WATCH

ESPN
English Premiership
Norwich City v Aston Villa
Live from 5:45pm
Liverpool v Southampton
Live from 8:00pm
Chelsea v Fulham
Live from 10:30pm

STAR Sports
Serie A
Genoa v Livorno
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)
NEO Prime
Bundesliga
Nurnberg v Dortmund
Live from 8:00pm

Schalke v Bayern Munich
Live from 11:00pm

RESULTS

Valencia (ESP) 0 **Swansea City (ENG) 3** (Bony 14, Michu 58, De Guzman 62)
St Gallen (SUI) 2 (Karanovic 56, Mathys 76) **Kuban Krasnodar (RUS) 0**
 Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 1 (Fernandes 43) **Chornomorets Odessa (UKR) 2** (Antonov 62, Dja Djedje 65)
 PSV Eindhoven (NED) 0 **Ludogorets (BUL) 2** (Bezjak 60, Misidjan 74)
Salzburg (AUT) 4 (Alan 36, Jonatan Soriano 44-pen, 69, 79) **Elfsborg (SWE) 0**
 Standard Liege (BEL) 1 (Mujangi Bia 74) **Esbjerg (DEN) 2** (Van Buren 63, Bakenga 90+5)
 Zulte Waregem (BEL) 0 **Wigan Athletic (ENG) 0**
 Maribor (SLO) 2 (Milec 35, Fajic 73) **Rubin Kazan (RUS) 5** (Gokdeniz Karadeniz 23, Marcano 27, R Eremenko 69, Rondon 90, Ryazantsev 90+3)
Fiorentina (ITA) 3 (Gonzalo Rodriguez 30, Ryder Matos 67, Rossi 76) **Pacos Ferreira (POR) 0**
 Pandurii (ROM) 0 **Dnipro (UKR) 1** (Rotan 38)
Eintracht Frankfurt (GER) 3 (Kadlec 4, Russ 16, Djakpa 52) **Bordeaux (FRA) 0**
 Maccabi Tel-Aviv (ISR) 0 **APOEL (CYP) 0**
 Dynamo Kiev (UKR) 0 **Genk (BEL) 1** (Gorius 62)
Thun (SUI) 1 (Schneuwly 35) **Rapid Vienna (AUT) 0**
 Freiburg (GER) 2 (Schuster pen-23, Mehmedi 35) **Liberec (CZE) 2** (Kalitvintsev 67, Rabusic 74)
 Estoril (POR) 1 (Bruno Miguel 61) **Sevilla (ESP) 2** (Machin 59, Gameiro 77)
 Real Betis (ESP) 0 **Lyon (FRA) 0**
Vitoria Guimaraes (POR) 4 (Ba 36, Plange 48, Maazou pen-68, Andre Andre 81)
 Rijeka (CRO) 0
 Apollon Limassol (CYP) 1 (Sangoy pen-18) **Trabzonspor (TUR) 2** (Malouda 20, Yusuf Erdogan 86)
Lazio (ITA) 1 (Hernanes 53) **Legia Warsaw (POL) 0**
 Sheriff Tiraspol (MDA) 0 **Anzhi Makhachkala (RUS) 0**
Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) 3 (Defoe 21, 29, Eriksen 86) **Tromso (NOR) 0**
PAOK (GRE) 2 (Athanasidis 75, Vukic 90+2) **Shakhter Karagandy (KAZ) 1** (Canas pen-50)
 Maccabi Haifa (ISR) 0 **AZ Alkmaar (NED) 1** (Gudmundsson 71)



Swansea striker Wilfried Bony (R) vies with Valencia defender Ricardo Costa during their Europa League encounter at the Mestalla on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Magpies punish Cabaye

AFP, London

Newcastle United midfielder Yohan Cabaye has been punished for refusing to play for the club after learning of interest in him from Arsenal, manager Alan Pardew revealed on Thursday.

The 27-year-old France international missed Newcastle's first three games of the season, after Arsenal had a bid in the region of £10 million (\$15.5 million, 11.7 million euros) rejected on the eve of the campaign.

Cabaye made a public apology for his behaviour earlier this week and Pardew subsequently revealed that he had been disciplined by the club, although he did not go into detail.

"He has also been disciplined for his actions this week and he accepted that in good faith, and therefore we move on now," Pardew said.

"As far as I'm concerned, especially on Saturday, it would be nice if our 51,000, 52,000 (supporters), whatever it is, give him the support he now deserves for at least apologising for that and taking the punishment that came with it.

Swansea stun Valencia

AFP, Paris



Swansea City produced a remarkable performance on their Europa League debut to thump Valencia 3-0 in Spain on Thursday, while Tottenham Hotspur also got their campaign off to a winning start.

Swansea's Group A trip to the Mestalla was, on paper, the standout of all those played in the Europa League on Thursday, but few could have imagined it would be so one-sided.

A Swansea side coached by former Real Madrid and Barcelona star Michael Laudrup and featuring six Spaniards, including captain Angel Rangel, punished opponents who played 80 minutes with 10 men to run out thoroughly deserving winners.

Valencia were already wobbling before French centre-back Adil Rami was sent off with 10 minutes on the clock for hauling back Wilfried Bony as the Ivorian striker headed towards goal.

Soon after, the lively Bony converted a Michu cutback to give Swansea the lead, and Valencia, who have lost their last three matches in La Liga, never looked like recovering.

A section of the Valencia support staged a walkout in protest at their teams' recent form at the start of the second half, before Spanish duo Alejandro Pozuelo and Michu combined for the latter to double Swansea's lead after 58 minutes.

When Jonathan De Guzman beat Vicente Guaita with a stunning free-kick five minutes later, the home supporters could only applaud, and Swansea might even have won by a greater margin.

It was a stunning victory for a club that lost 8-0 to Monaco in their last European tie in the Cup Winners Cup in 1991.

The win was only the second by a Welsh

side against Spanish opponents in European competition, after Cardiff City beat Real Madrid 1-0 in the Cup Winners Cup quarter-final, first leg, in March 1971.

Cardiff lost 2-0 in the return.

Having taken apart the 2004 UEFA Cup winners and two-time Champions League finalists, Swansea will next play host to St Gallen of Switzerland, who beat Kuban Krasnodar of Russia 2-0.

Meanwhile, Tottenham also won by a 3-0 margin, although their victory against Norwegian top-flight strugglers Tromso in Group K was a little less dramatic.

A first-half brace by Jermain Defoe, which took him to within two goals of Spurs' all-time leading European goalscorer Martin Chivers, effectively ended the contest inside half an hour.

However, Danish midfielder Christian Eriksen, a recent signing from Ajax, added a superb third goal late on.

Elsewhere, English FA Cup holders Wigan Athletic took time out from their bid to win promotion back to the Premier League to draw 0-0 away to Zulte Waregem in Belgium in Group D.

In other games, Fiorentina of Italy were too strong for Pacos Ferreira of Portugal, running out 3-0 winners in Florence in Group E with Giuseppe Rossi among the scorers.

Betis and Lyon drew 0-0 in Spain in Group I, while Eintracht Frankfurt of Germany thumped French Cup holders Bordeaux 3-0 in Group F, and Lazio and Sevilla were among the other winners on the night.

However, the 1988 European Cup winners PSV Eindhoven suffered a shock 2-0 defeat at home to Ludogorets Razgrad of Bulgaria in Group B, and an expensively assembled Dynamo Kiev side lost 1-0 at home to Belgian Cup holders Genk.

Chelsea aim to rebound

AFP, London



Jose Mourinho finds himself in the unexpected position of attempting to turn around Chelsea's alarming early dip when Fulham make the short trip to Stamford Bridge on Saturday.

Successive defeats by Everton and Basel have prompted some soul-searching at Chelsea with Mourinho claiming his squad's lack of experience has been exposed.

Having started the campaign positively with the hard-earned point at Manchester United following on from victories over Hull and Aston Villa, Chelsea have since lost the European Super Cup on penalties to Bayern Munich before the latest painful defeats.

Without a win in four games and with goals proving hard to come by, the meeting with west London neighbours Fulham has taken on more significance, particularly given the Cottagers' record of have drawn on their last three visits to Stamford Bridge.

The loss to Basel was particularly frustrating, ending a run of 29 home Champions League games without defeat and coming after Chelsea had secured a first-half lead.

Blues centre back Gary Cahill acknowledged there must be improvements.

"You can always do better, you can always analyse goals," said Cahill. "The back four, goalkeepers, individuals. We'll have a look at that.

"It's not a disaster, but it's not ideal. A club like this wants to win the majority of games it plays. That's the expectation. It's a blow but it's not the be all and end all.

"We need to win our next game now, as simple as that. The manager will stress that. We've got the squad to do it, we need to go on now and get back to winning ways on Saturday."

The defender added: "It's two disappointing results. We lost at Everton and someone was saying it was the worst start in however many years but before then we were bang on track.

"The lads are hurting but we have to move on and go again on Saturday."

Mourinho's side have struggled in front of goal during their last two games, with Samuel Eto'o still acclimatising to his new surroundings following his arrival from Anzhi Makhachkala.

Fernando Torres and Demba Ba,

Mourinho's other strikers, have also failed to make a major impact.

Torres was left out of the squad against Basel but is expected to return while John Terry and Juan Mata could start after being named as substitutes in midweek.

Fulham manager Martin Jol is also attempting to lift his club's fortunes after coming in for criticism following last weekend's draw with West Bromwich Albion.

Jol was the target of jeers from some Fulham supporters following West Brom's added-time equaliser and expressed his frustration at the reaction after the game.

But Jol, speaking before the trip to Chelsea, said: "I think it is better not to talk about it, but I did, and I shouldn't have because they (the fans) are entitled to express themselves.

"They pay us to play football for them and they have got an opinion, and to lose a goal in the 92nd minute was very disappointing -- not only for them, but for me and the club," the Dutchman added.

"I talked about the fact that expectations can make you very unhappy at any club -- Chelsea, even Manchester United, big clubs, smaller clubs, and especially at Fulham as well. "We feel that we have got good players, but five of the seven new players were not even there last week so we still have to find a balance."

Dimitar Berbatov is battling to recover from a hamstring problem but Bryan Ruiz and Aaron Hughes will miss out.

FIXTURES

Saturday

(1400GMT unless otherwise stated):
 Chelsea v Fulham (1630GMT), Liverpool v Southampton, Newcastle United v Hull City, Norwich City v Aston Villa (1145GMT), West Bromwich Albion v Sunderland, West Ham United v Everton

Sunday

(1500GMT unless otherwise stated):
 Arsenal v Stoke City (1230GMT), Cardiff City v Tottenham Hotspur, Crystal Palace v Swansea City (1230GMT), Manchester City v Manchester United

'Messi better than C'Ron'

SOCCERNET



Brazil World Cup-winner Ronaldo has said he believes Lionel Messi is a better player than Cristiano Ronaldo.

Ronaldo, who played for both Barcelona and Real Madrid, told AS it was difficult to choose but, on balance, the Argentine was the more influential and better all-round player.

"I would stick with Messi," he said. "It is difficult. It is like when you are looking to buy a house and they offer you many nice ones, but you need to pick one.

"Messi seems more complete to me, or at least more decisive. In the important moments, he appears and scores goals."

Asked about former Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho's comments about there being only one "real" Ronaldo -- "the Brazilian Ronaldo" -- the three-time FIFA World Player of the Year said: "This is Mourinho up to his tricks... I prefer not to get into polemics.

"You must respect everyone's opinion. Each player writes his own history, and the history of another player does not erase it. I am happy to have finished up with what I did."

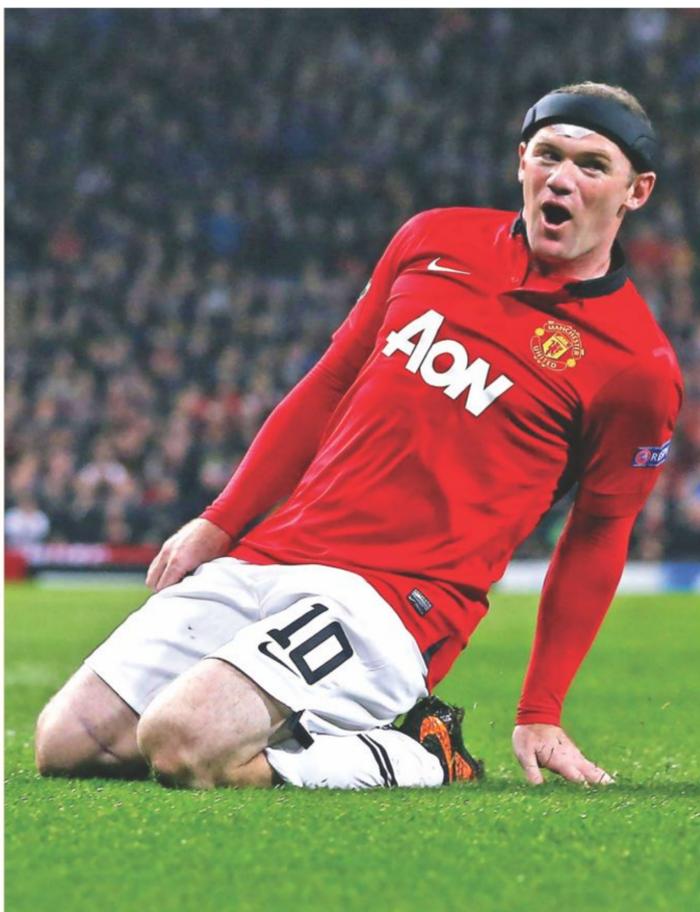
Ronaldo said he believed there had been more great players around when he was playing.

"For me, there is less competition now," he added. "I do not want to be the typical guy saying things were better in my day, but I look around now and I just see those two.

"Maybe Neymar is coming, but he has a long way to go yet. But in my time there were many great players. I competed with [Zinedine] Zidane, Rivaldo, Ronaldinho, [Michael] Owen, [Luis] Figo, [Gabriel] Batistuta... there were many players who made their teams great. Now I just see Cristiano and Messi, although the truth is they are very, very good."

He said that while both he and Real's current Ronaldo were goalscorers, their games were slightly different.

"We do not look alike when we play," he explained. "I was more a centre-forward, and you could say he is a second striker."



WAYNE ROONEY

Ferguson sings Rooney praises

REUTERS



Former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has lavished praise on Wayne Rooney's form in comments that are being interpreted in the British media as the extension of an olive branch to the unsettled player.

Ferguson was critical of the England striker's form last season and the Scot's disclosure in May that Rooney wanted to leave Old Trafford was reported to have fuelled the 27-year-old's desire to seek a new challenge elsewhere.

Although Ferguson handed over the managerial reins to David Moyes in the off-season, he remains a director at the club and is widely perceived to retain considerable influence behind the scenes.

Three bids for Rooney from Premier League rivals Chelsea were rejected in August, though, and his display in the 4-2 Champions League win over Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday, when he scored two goals, had Ferguson purring.

"Wayne's performance was fantastic, I was pleased to see that," the 71-year-old told the club's in-house TV station.

"He's got his energy back - the determination, his purpose to attack players, was all very encouraging to me.

"Being a director, I'm delighted to see that. He's back to what we always remember him as."

The goals against Leverkusen brought Rooney's tally at the club to 200 in 406 appearances, leaving him fourth on United's all-time leading scorers' list behind Bobby Charlton (249), Denis Law (237) and Jack Rowley (211).

Restored to his preferred striker's role after being sometimes deployed by Ferguson in midfield last year, Rooney adds another attacking threat to that of Robin van Persie, who was top scorer in the Premier League last season with 26 goals.

"We will have a fantastic chance [of success] because in Van Persie and Rooney, you have forwards who can win you games," said Ferguson, who led United to their 20th English title last season.

Rooney, who has two years left on his current contract, was non-committal about his future at United after the Leverkusen match, telling reporters he was concentrating on his football.

He did, however, say he was comfortable playing for Moyes, who gave him his debut as a 16-year-old at Everton in 2002 before selling him to United for 25.6 million pounds (\$41.12 million) two years later.

"The training is a bit different under the new manager," Rooney told British media. "I remember it from Everton, it's more intense. But that's helping me. I feel good and am glad to be out playing.

"He a great manager and thoroughly deserves this job, because of what he did at Everton."