



TEN Cricket  
Sri Lanka v New Zealand  
Second ODI (D/N)  
Live from 3:00pm

## Messi tears his hamstring

AFP, Barcelona



Barcelona's Argentine star Lionel Messi will be sidelined for 6-8 weeks due to a muscle tear in his left hamstring muscle, the Spanish giants said Monday.

The 26-year-old limped off after just 20 minutes of Barcelona's 4-1 win over Real Betis on Sunday, the third time this season that he has been forced off with a muscular problem following hamstring and thigh injuries in his right leg earlier in the campaign.

"The club's medical services confirmed after tests this Monday morning that Leo Messi has a torn hamstring muscle in his left thigh and is expected to miss the next 6 to 8 weeks," Barcelona said in a statement.

"The first phase of Messi's recovery will be covered in Barcelona and he will then travel to Buenos Aires," it added.

After Sunday's match Barcelona boss

Gerardo Martino said Messi's injury troubles were not related and the absence of the four-time World Player of the Year could never be used as an excuse for the team to not perform.

"We have the best player in the world, but we also have four or five of the next six or seven best players in the world. Therefore, as a coach, the absence of Messi should never be used as an excuse for not winning.

"The injury to Messi doesn't have anything to do with the previous ones because it is in the other leg," he added.

There was more worrying news for Barca on the injury front as Fabregas also limped off after appearing to injure his knee whilst scoring his second of the night.

However, the midfielder is still hopeful that he will be fit to travel with Spain for their upcoming friendlies away to Equatorial Guinea and South Africa.

"It won't be serious, it was just a little problem that was bothering me."

## Barca crush Betis

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona shrugged off the loss of Lionel Messi to another hamstring injury to beat Real Betis 4-1 on Sunday and move three points clear at the top of La Liga.

Messi limped off with an injury for the third time this season after pulling up with a hamstring problem as he tried to accelerate just 20 minutes in.

However, any worries Barca could struggle without their star man were extinguished by two goals in as many minutes when Neymar rolled home Cesc Fabregas's pass before Pedro Rodriguez's wonderful individual effort doubled the advantage.

Fabregas added the third from Martin Montoya's cut-back and the former Arsenal captain doubled his tally when he headed home 11 minutes from time before Jorge Molina's stoppage time penalty pulled a goal back for Betis.

Barca boss Gerardo Martino once again took the opportunity to rotate his squad as he made six changes from the side that beat AC Milan in midweek.

However, despite lying bottom of the table, it was Betis who started the brighter as Barca were thankful to Victor Valdes for making fine saves from Molina and Juan Carlos.

Messi was then replaced by Andres Iniesta but even in his absence Barca began to exploit Betis's high defensive line and both Neymar and Pedro should have scored but their weak efforts were held by goal-keeper Guillermo Sara.

The opener arrived on 35 minutes as Fabregas sprung the Betis offside trap from Alex Song's pass and squared for Neymar to roll home his fifth Barcelona goal.

### RESULTS

Espanyol 1 (Sergio Garcia 24) **Sevilla 3** (Fazio 3, Vitolo 10, Bacca 59)  
Valencia 2 (Pabon 29, Feghouli 76) Valladolid 2 (Javi Guerra 9, Alcatraz 50)  
Villarreal 1 (Juanfran 79-og) Atletico Madrid 1 (Mario 2-og)  
Real Betis 1 (Jorge Molina 90+2-pen) **Barcelona 4** (Neymar 35, Pedro 37, Fabregas 63, 79)

Moments later Pedro ran from inside his own half before curling a fine finish high past the helpless Sara.

Betis also started the second period strongly and Nono rattled the post with a drive from distance.

However, Barca were still getting in behind the Betis defence at will and after Neymar twice failed to beat Sara when one-on-one with the keeper, Montoya squared for Fabregas to tap home the third on 63 minutes.

Fabregas also had his fifth goal of the campaign when his downward header from Dani Alves's cross crept in off the inside of the post.

Molina converted from the spot after Dani Alves had brought down Javier Matilla at the death, but it was scant consolation for Betis who remain rooted to the foot of the table.

Barcelona now have their biggest lead of the campaign at the top of the table as Atletico Madrid dropped points for just the second time this season with a 1-1 draw at fourth-placed Villarreal.

Mario's own goal less than two minutes in gave Atletico the perfect start but Villarreal went on to dominate the game and were rewarded 12 minutes from time when Juanfran also turned into his own net under pressure from Ikechukwu Uche.

## Juventus close the gap

AFP, Turin



Juventus pounced on a costly blunder by Roma earlier Sunday to close the gap on the Serie A leaders to just one point after turning

ing on the style to rout fellow title challengers Napoli 3-0 in Turin.

League newcomers Sassuolo stunned Roma at the Olympic Stadium by levelling in second-half injury time for a 1-1 draw to leave Rudi Garcia's leaders with just a four-point lead ahead of the top-of-the-table clash in Turin.

It gave both sides incentive, but Juve seized on home advantage to produce a dominant display and claim their 10th win of the campaign.

Spain striker Fernando Llorente tapped home for Juve in the second minute in somewhat controversial fashion and from then on Napoli struggled to find any rhythm.

Juve missed several clear chances but made the difference in six second-half minutes when Andrea Pirlo curled a free kick past Pepe Reina and Paul Pogba beat the keeper with a stunning volley from at least 20 metres out 10 minutes from the whistle.

Roma, who set a Serie A record of 10 successive opening wins two weeks ago, now lead Juve by just one point with Napoli dropping one place to third a further three points off the pace.

In Turin, Reina was made to work throughout, but especially in a first half completely bossed by Juve, the keeper clawing away a Pogba effort after just 40 seconds.

Juve were in front barely a minute later when Llorente tapped home a loose ball following Carlos Tevez's backheel flick although replays suggested he was marginally offside.

Reina then produced a spectacular diving save to keep out a header from Leonardo Bonucci, while Napoli spurned their best chance until then

when Gonzalo Higuain collected Pablo Armero's cross from the left and held off Angelo Ogbonna to turn and send his drive just wide of Gianluigi Buffon's upright.

Tevez was given time and space just outside the area to hit a strike that Reina parried without too much trouble and Reina was then relieved when Kwadwo Asamoah ran on to Pogba's pass to skew his effort into the side netting.

Lorenzo Insigne grabbed a rare opportunity for Napoli but saw his dipping drive sail just over the hands of Buffon after he turned inside from the left flank.

Napoli started the second half positively but failed to really threaten Buffon.

Insigne won a free kick on the corner of the area after Bonucci's late challenge and the diminutive winger's curling effort forced the Juve 'keeper to dive smartly to his right and parry.



Juventus midfielder Andrea Pirlo (C) celebrates his goal with teammates during their Serie A match against Napoli in Turin on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Armstrong wants fair treatment

AFP, London

Disgraced cycling champion Lance Armstrong has said he will co-operate in a bid to discover the extent of doping in the sport so long as he's treated the same as his fellow drug cheats.

"If everyone gets the 'death penalty', then I'll take the 'death penalty'," said Armstrong in an interview with the BBC World Service.

"If everyone gets a free pass, I'm happy to take a free pass. If everyone gets six months, then I'll take my six months," added the 42-year-old.

After years of denials, cancer-survivor Armstrong - who has been stripped of his record seven Tour de France titles won between 1999-to-2005 -- finally admitted in January he'd used performance-enhancing drugs in an interview with US television personality Oprah Winfrey.

He said the fall-out had been "tough" both emotionally and in terms of the damage to his estimated \$125 million (£78 million) fortune from those seeking legal redress as a result of the lies he told about his drug-taking.

"It's been tough," he told the BBC. "It's been real tough. I've paid a high price in terms of my standing within the sport, my reputation, certainly financially because the lawsuits have continued to pile up."

AFC'S CHILD NUTRITION CAMPAIGN

## Bangladesh included

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been included in the Child Nutrition Campaign of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in a bid to make the country's under-privileged children aware of the benefits of nutrition, said a Bangladesh Football Federation official yesterday.

"The AFC included Bangladesh earlier this month as we showed our interest to be part of the campaign which will be conducted by the World Vision International in countries where the AFC stages their tournaments," said BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

Shohag informed that AFC would complete the ten-year long campaign in four to five phases in four zones of AFC and Bangladesh were drafted in the first phase. The details of the campaign will be informed later, added Shohag.

SAMSUNG AD CAMPAIGN

## Leo to captain Galaxy XI

INTERNET



The Mysterious Circles in Rio de Janeiro, New York City and on the pitches at London's Hackney Marshes followed by the Mysterious Guys wearing black robes in attendance at Stamford Bridge, Juventus Stadium and the Allianz Arena have drawn international attention over the last few weeks.

Bayern Munich and New York Cosmos legend Franz Beckenbauer eventually explained these bizarre and elaborate happenings by calmly revealing that the fate of the world would depend on athletic prowess and not military might as aliens have challenge mankind to a football match with the winner taking earth.

At this point, it should be pointed out that this is a part of an ambitious Samsung campaign and Beckenbauer has not completely lost his mind. Nonetheless, Beckenbauer was tasked with assembling "a team of the world's finest" and we can reveal that the captain and first member of the Galaxy XI is four-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi.

Messi was approached for this mission in dramatic fashion. He was minding his own business, dribbling a ball through the streets of Barcelona, when a fleet of black vehicles surrounded him. He then evaded his pursuers with a series of hardcore parkour moves that included running on top of a car and navigating his way through a Chinese restaurant, all while keeping the ball at his feet just like a well trained stunt man.

Finally, he lost his ball and he was surrounded once again, with Beckenbauer finally able to offer him the captain's armband before Messi looked up to the sky to see a massive UFO.

"Football will save the planet," the opening chapter of this ongoing saga concluded.



## CONGRATULATIONS

### SIDDIKUR RAHMAN

Winner of the Asian Tour  
Hero Indian Open 2013



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