

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

BTV World Federation Cup
Soccer Club, Feni v Abahani
Live from 5:00pm
STAR Sports 4
English Premiership

Cardiff City v Arsenal
Live from 9:00pm
Primera Liga
Celta de Vigo v Almeria
Live from 11:00pm
Real Madrid v Real Valladolid

Live from 1:00am (Sunday)
Espanyol v Real Sociedad
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)
STAR Sports HD1
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Real Valladolid

Live from 9:00pm
English Premiership
Newcastle v West Bromwich
Live from 11:30pm
Serie A
Elche v Atletico Madrid

Live from 1:45am (Sunday)
STAR Sports HD2
Serie A
Parma v Bologna
Live from 11:00pm
Genoa v Torino

NEO Prime Bundesliga
Bayern Munich v Eintracht
Live from 8:30pm
Schalke v Stuttgart
Live from 11:30pm

Federation Cup
(Second Quarterfinal)

Soccer Club, Feni v Abahani
Time: 5:00pm; Venue: BNS

'Fixing disastrous'

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said on Friday he feared match-fixing would never be eradicated completely, as English football was forced to confront the issue head-on.

Two men with Singaporean nationality suspected of fixing matches in lower-league English football were remanded in custody by magistrates on Friday.

The men, alleged to be members of a Singapore-based betting syndicate, were among seven people arrested this week in an investigation by the National Crime Agency (NCA).

Wenger saw at close quarters the damage match-fixing can do during his time in charge of Monaco when French champions and 1993 European Cup winners Marseille were found guilty of corruption, relegated and banned from European competition by UEFA.

"Can it (fixing) be eradicated completely? I am not sure. It is not only a concern for me, it is a shame," Wenger said.

"Once you don't know if everyone is genuine out there any more, that is something absolutely disastrous," the Frenchman added.

"I think we absolutely have to fight against that with the strongest severity to get that out of the game."

Wenger was confident the huge wages on offer to players in the Premier League were a deterrent to fixing, although he accepted there could be a problem in English football's lower divisions.

Sony fires Sk Jamal into semis

SPORTS REPORTER



Last year's beaten finalists Sheikh Jamal DC rode on a brilliant brace from their Haitian marksman Sony Norde to ease to a 3-1 win over Mohammedan SC, thereby earning a semi-final berth in the Walton Federation Cup, in the first quarterfinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Sony, the key architect in Sheikh Russel's treble-winning campaign last season, has been in terrific form in this tournament as he scored all the three goals for Sheikh Jamal till yesterday. And it was his skill, dribbling and pace, together with his two goals last night that delighted some 7,000 spectators and knocked the 10-time champions Mohammedan out of the campaign.

Despite Sony's goals, Sheikh Jamal were less than impressive in their previous matches, but the big boys justified their name with an attacking display of football last night, adopting a 4-3-3 formation where the three forwards -- Sony, Haitian Wedson Anselme and Nigerian Darlington -- tearing the Mohammedan backline apart. Sheikh Jamal's captain-cum-playmaker Mamunul Islam also played a pivotal role behind the forwards as he set up both the goals for Sony and scored the third one himself.

The Dhamondi outfit threatened to take the lead quite a few times before Sony opened the scoring in the 35th minute with a clinical finish. Set up by Mamunul, Sony dribbled past defenders Tapu Barman, Mintu Sheikh and Baybeck before firing in at the back of the net.

Mohammedan were on the backfoot right from the start and their Egyptian striker Mostafa Saddik hardly got any support fellow forwards Zahid Hasan Emily and Zahid Hossain.

Sheikh Jamal, on the other hand, continued in the same vein and Sony doubled the margin in the 54th minute with a sudden shot from outside the box between Mohammedan defenders Ariful Islam and Mintu Sheikh, giving keeper Mamun Khan little time to react.

The way Sony was creating havoc at the Mohammedan backline, he looked very likely to add to his tally, but a cynical challenge from Mohammedan's Nigerian midfield Seasan Idowu cut short his stay on the pitch. The Nigerian got away with only a yellow card for



Sheikh Jamal striker Sony Norde celebrates his opening goal against Mohammedan SC during the Federation Cup quarterfinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

stamping on Sony's knee while the Haitian had to be stretchered off the field and taken to hospital.

Despite the absence of Sony, Sheikh Jamal never looked short of spirit in the remaining half an hour and created more chances. One of those chances resulted in the third goal when Mamun unleashed a powerful left-footer from outside the box to beat Mamun Khan and put the side on course for the semifinal.

Mohammedan did get a consolation goal though when Chuka Charles scored in the 84th minute, but that was too little to reverse the

outcome of the match.

"I am very happy with the victory, but I apologise to all for my attitude at the dugout," said Sheikh Jamal coach Joseph Afusi, who saw marching order for vehemently reacting on the foul on Sony while asking for a straight red card to Sesan.

Mohammedan's assistant coach Jewel Rana felt that the quality of the foreign players between the two sides made the difference while his defenders did not learn from the mistakes they made in the previous matches.

Spurs seal top spot

AFP, Paris

Tottenham Hotspur won 2-0 against Tromso in the bitter chill of Norway on Thursday to seal first place in Europa League Group K and ease a little of the pressure on manager Andre Villas-Boas.

Reports in England in recent days suggest that the Portuguese is hanging on to his job after last Sunday's 6-0 hammering by Manchester City in the Premier League, and another substandard performance on the trip north of the Arctic Circle would have done him few favours, even if Spurs were already through to the last 32 before this game.

Michael Dawson and Roberto Soldado were the only two players to keep their place in the team from the Manchester City debacle, and the much-changed Spurs side had to wait until the second half before finally breaking down a team who were recently relegated to the Norwegian second tier.

The opener on the artificial pitch at the Alfeheim Stadion did not come until the 63rd minute, when Adnan Causevic turned the ball into his own net under pressure from Vlad Chiriches, and the London club doubled their advantage when Gylfi Sigurdsson set up Mousa Dembele to fire home from 12 yards with 14 minutes remaining.

Dembele struck the post soon after but the 2-0 scoreline was enough to maintain Tottenham's perfect record in Group K and boost confidence ahead of Sunday's Premier League clash with Manchester United.

Meanwhile, Swansea City were unable to get the point that would have clinched their qualification from Group A as they lost 1-0 at home to already-qualified Valencia, Dani Parejo scoring the only goal of the game in the first half.

However, Swansea were left to rue an erroneous decision by the officials to disallow an Alvaro Vazquez effort before the break that would have brought the Welsh side back level.

Kuban Krasnodar beat St Gallen 4-0 earlier in the day, with the Paraguayan Lorenzo Melgarejo scoring twice, and the Russians could yet overhaul Swansea on the final day.

There was agony for England's other representative Wigan Athletic, who saw their chances of qualification taken out of their hands in a 2-1 home loss to Belgium's Zulte Waregem in Group D.

However, a total of 18 clubs have now qualified for the last 32, including Eintracht Frankfurt, who secured top spot in Group F with a 1-0 victory at Bordeaux.

French side Olympique Lyonnais are through after recording a narrow 1-0 win at home to Spanish top-flight strugglers Real Betis with Bafetimbi Gomis coming off the bench to score the only goal of the game in the second half at the Stade de Gerland.

'Ozil's best still to come'

AFP, London



Arsenal defender Per Mertesacker has warned his side's Premier League title rivals the best is still to come from star midfielder Mesut Ozil.

Arsene Wenger's side head to Cardiff on Saturday looking to extend their lead at the top of the table before the rest of the title challengers play on Sunday.

A win would move the Gunners seven points clear of second placed Liverpool, who face Hull 24 hours later, and Mertesacker is confident they will do just that if Ozil is at his best in Arsenal's first league fixture at Cardiff since 1961.

After a brilliant start to life in England following his club record £42 million move from Real Madrid on transfer deadline day, Ozil has produced a few underwhelming displays of late.

He missed a penalty in Tuesday's Champions League win over Marseille, but rebounded to provide an assist for Jack Wilshere to score Arsenal's second goal and Mertesacker believes Ozil will quickly silence any critics.

"Mesut has made good progress,"

FIXTURES

(1500GMT unless stated)

Saturday

Aston Villa v Sunderland, Cardiff v Arsenal, Everton v Stoke, Newcastle v West Brom (1730GMT), Norwich v Crystal Palace, West Ham v Fulham

Sunday

Chelsea v Southampton (1610GMT), Hull v Liverpool (1405GMT) Manchester City v Swansea (1610GMT), Tottenham v Manchester United (1200GMT)

On Sunday, Liverpool will look to keep pace with Arsenal when they visit the KC Stadium and Reds midfielder Jordan Henderson knows his team are under pressure to take advantage of a relatively easy run of fixtures.

After facing Hull, Brendan Rodgers' team play Norwich and West Ham and Henderson said: "We are second in the league and we have to make sure we continue in the way we have started the season.

"We have had a couple of difficult away games. I think we're doing okay but we can still improve and keep pushing on."

Third placed Chelsea, behind Liverpool on goals scored, host Southampton, with Spanish defender Cesar Azpilicueta admitting Jose Mourinho's team need to bounce back from a lacklustre display in their midweek loss at Basel in the Champions League.

"Sometimes it happens," Azpilicueta added. "One day you play really well, three days later really bad."

"We don't want to have this kind of movement in our performance because it's important to keep your balance, to play well every day."

Barca aim to rebound

AFP, Madrid



Midfielder Xavi Hernandez believes Barcelona have to recover the intensity in their play if they are to avoid a first league defeat of the season when they travel to Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

The Catalans were beaten for the first time in 21 games since Gerardo Martino took charge in July on Tuesday as they produced an insipid display in going down 2-1 to Ajax in Amsterdam in the Champions League.

Defeat was the first sign that Barca could be missing the influence of the injured Lionel Messi and Victor Valdes, but Xavi insisted those that are available have to show the right attitude when they face Athletic.

"They are important players and you are going to miss them, but that wasn't the principal reason for the defeat. We didn't do enough to win."

"We need to have intensity from the start and in San Mames it will be another test."

"We need to turn it around and go for the off with that intensity that we lacked (against Ajax)."

FIXTURES

(all kick-offs GMT)

Saturday

Elche v Atletico Madrid (1500), Celta Vigo v Almeria (1700), Real Madrid v Valladolid (1900), Espanyol v Real Sociedad (2100)

Sunday

Real Betis v Rayo Vallecano (1100), Granada v Sevilla (1600), Valencia v Osasuna (1800), Athletic Bilbao v Barcelona (2000)

C'Ron misses Valladolid tie

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid's Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo has not recovered sufficiently from a muscle strain and will miss Saturday's La Liga game at home to Real Valladolid, coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Friday.

Ronaldo, who has netted 14 goals in his last seven appearances for club and country, limped off at the start of the second half of last weekend's win at Almeria and a scan on Monday confirmed he had damaged a hamstring.

He missed Wednesday's Champions League victory at home to Galatasaray.

Ancelotti said the 28-year-old was not in shape to feature at the Bernabeu.

"No, tomorrow Cristiano won't play because he is not comfortable and doesn't feel good," the Italian told a news conference.

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