

What to WATCH	SET Max Indian Premier League Bangalore v Mumbai Live from 4:30pm KKR v Delhi	Live from 8:30pm STAR Sports1 Serie A Udinese v Napoli Live from 7:00pm	Juventus v Bologna Live from 10:30 STAR Sports2 Primera Liga Osasuna v Valencia	Live from 8:00pm Levante v Getafe Live from 10:00pm Real Sociedad v Espanyol Live from 12:00am (Sunday)	STAR Sports 4 English Premiership Tottenham v Fulham Live from 5:45pm Cardiff City v Stoke City	Live from 8:00pm Chelsea v Sunderland Live from 10:30pm
	DAY'S EVENT	Nat'l Cricket League (Four-Day Match, Day 1) Khulna v Dhaka Venue: Cox's Bazar	Dhaka Metro v Rajshahi Venue: Chittagong	Sylhet v Chittagong Venue: BKSP-3	Rangpur v Barisal Venue: Fatullah Stadium	

Bolt hails Bale's stunner

REUTERS, Madrid

Olympic champion Usain Bolt has hailed Gareth Bale's brilliant winner for Real Madrid in Wednesday's King's Cup final against Barcelona, saying it was the kind of goal any sprinter would be proud of.

Wales winger Bale picked up the ball wide on the left on the halfway line five minutes from time and galloped away from Barca centre back Marc Bartra before slipping the ball between the legs of goalkeeper Jose Manuel Pinto to secure a 2-1 victory.

"It was a great goal," the Jamaican was quoted as saying in Spanish sports daily Marca on Friday.

"He showed the fantastic speed he has to leave the defender behind and then incredible calm to put the ball between the keeper's legs," added the keen Manchester United supporter. "It's the kind of goal any sprinter in the world would want to score one day."

Juve edge closer

AFP, Milan



Juventus will look to a possible slip-up by closest challengers Roma at Fiorentina as the Turin giants begin the countdown to claiming a third consecutive Serie A title.

Roma's faint hopes of a first scudetto since 2001 were kept in check on Monday when Juve restored their eight-point lead at the top with a comfortable 2-0 win away at Udinese.

Antonio Conte's Juve side would be forgiven for hoping Roma, who on Thursday failed in their bid to reduce a three-match ban handed down to top scorer Mattia Destro, concede defeat away at a Fiorentina side which still has a mathematical chance of challenging third-placed Napoli for the league's final Champions League place.

Such a scenario would put Juve, who host Bologna, 11 points ahead with four games remaining, and allow the title party preparations to begin.

Roma coach Rudi Garcia, however, has refused to throw in the towel: "We're playing in Florence and on paper it's a difficult match, while Juve look like they have it easier."

"But you never know... just when it seems there can be no more surprises, that's when they happen. As long as there is life, there is hope."

All of this weekend's fixtures will be

played on the Saturday of Easter weekend and with Juve and Roma all but certain of keeping the two automatic qualifying places for the Champions League, Napoli have two major concerns.

One is keeping Fiorentina, fourth at nine points adrift, at bay while hoping Gonzalo Higuain, who sits third in the league scoring charts, two behind the 19-goal tally of Torino's Ciro Immobile, recovers from a training ground knock.

Higuain is one of two Argentinians vying for the top scorer award along with second placed Carlos Tevez of Juventus (18), but he is a doubt for Saturday's visit to Udinese after he left training early on Thursday due to a left leg injury.

The former Real Madrid striker is set to undergo tests on Friday, a day ahead of a potentially tricky away fixture.

Napoli's last away match ended with a shock 1-0 defeat at Parma, while Udinese put up only scant resistance during a 2-0 capitulation at home to Juventus on Monday.

FIXTURES

Saturday

Atalanta v Verona, Catania v Sampdoria, Chievo v Sassuolo, Genoa v Cagliari, Lazio v Torino, Milan v Livorno, Parma v Inter, Udinese v Napoli (all 1300 GMT), Juventus v Bologna (1630), Fiorentina v Roma



Reds aim to retain focus

AFP, London



Liverpool visit Norwich City this weekend, determined to maintain focus on the task in hand despite growing national excitement about their bid to be crowned Premier League champions.

Last weekend's pulsating 3-2 defeat of title rivals Manchester City left Brendan Rodgers's side two points above Chelsea at the summit and needing four wins to guarantee a first league title since 1990.

It was Liverpool's 10th successive win and the thrilling nature of their late-season burst, coupled with the emotion generated by the 25th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster, has seen them cast as the neutrals' favourites.

While a potential title decider at home to Chelsea awaits on April 27, the first obstacle that Steven Gerrard and his team-mates must overcome is Sunday's trip to Carrow Road.

Following the win over City, Gerrard was emphatic in his insistence that Liverpool must not underestimate Norwich, but their recent record against Paul Lambert's men augurs well.

Liverpool have scored 18 times in the last four meetings between the

FIXTURES

(1400 GMT unless otherwise stated)

Saturday

Aston Villa v Southampton, Cardiff City v Stoke City, Chelsea v Sunderland (1630 GMT), Newcastle United v Swansea City, Tottenham Hotspur v Fulham (1145 GMT), West Ham United v Crystal Palace

Sunday

Everton v Manchester United (1510 GMT), Hull City v Arsenal (1305 GMT), Norwich City v Liverpool (1100 GMT)

Monday

Manchester City v West Bromwich Albion (1900

teams, with Luis Suarez helping himself to four goals in a 5-1 win when the teams last met in December.

Norwich are in desperate need of points, however, as they are only two points above the relegation places and play Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal in their final three fixtures.

While Suarez is aware of the clamour to see Liverpool return to the summit of the English game after 24 years, he says that his team-mates cannot afford to be distracted by speculation about the destination of the title.

"It's normal for the supporters to get excited and be discussing our chances," he told the Liverpool website.

"When I'm out shopping or out with my family, I bump into fans who mention it to me. I've told them to stay calm and not to worry. We'll be trying our best."

"For the players it's probably best if we don't get involved in that kind of talk. Winning the title would be very special,

Wins for Punjab and Rajasthan

AGENCIES, Undated

Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI Punjab won their respective IPL games against Sunrisers Hyderabad and Chennai Super Kings in Sharjah yesterday.

After Rajasthan skipper Shane Watson elected to field first under lights, Dhawan Kulkarni, Kane Richardson and Rajat Bhatia restricted Hyderabad to 133 for six. In reply, Rajasthan were reduced to 31 for three by Dale Steyn, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Ishant Sharma. But a 77-run fourth-wicket partnership between Ajinkya Rahane (53-ball 59) and Stuart Binny steadied the ship. Binny remained unbeaten on a 32-ball 48 but it was James Faulkner who drove them home, when needing eight off the last over from Bhuvneshwar Kumar, he hammered two consecutive boundaries.

In the day's first match, a blazing 115-run stand between David Miller and Maxwell helped Punjab pull off a sensational six-wicket win over formidable Chennai. Maxwell hammered 95 off 43 balls while Miller made an unbeaten 54 off 37 to propel their team past Chennai's 205 with seven balls to spare.

Virender Sehwag (19 off 10) and Cheteshwar Pujara (13 off 10) started Punjab's chase aggressively before departing in quick succession.

SCORES IN BRIEF
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 205 for 4 (Smith 66, B McCullum 67; Balaji 2-43). **KINGS XI PUNJAB:** 206 for 4 in 18.5 overs (Maxwell 95, Miller 54 not out; Ashwin 2-41). **Result:** Kings XI Punjab won by six wickets. **Player-of-the-match:** Glenn Maxwell.

SUN RISERS HYDERABAD: 133 for 6 (Dhawan 38, Warner 32; Bhatia 2-22, Kulkarni 2-23). **RAJASTHAN ROYALS:** 135 for 6 in 19.3 overs (Rahane 59, Binny 48 not out; Mishra 2-26, Steyn 2-29). **Result:** Rajasthan Royals won by four wickets. **Player-of-the-match:**

Destro appeal fails

REUTERS, Rome



Striker Mattia Destro will miss AS Roma's game at Fiorentina on Saturday after the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) dismissed an appeal against his three-match ban for punching Cagliari defender Davide Astori.

Destro was banned by a Serie A disciplinary panel after being caught on camera lashing out at Astori during Roma's 3-0 win in Sardinia on April 6.

Retroactive bans via video evidence can take place in Italy only if the referee did not see the incident.

The initial ruling enraged Roma, who are second in the league. They claimed that the referee had seen the incident because Astori was booked for his reaction.

However, the match officials told the tribunal that they had taken no action against Destro because they had not seen the original foul.

"The appeal placed as a matter of urgency by Roma against the three-match suspension imposed on the player Mattia Destro

has been dismissed," FIGC said on Thursday.

The 23-year-old will miss a fourth game after being booked later in the same match and picking up an automatic one-match suspension for accumulated yellow cards.

He will return to action on May 9 when Roma host league leaders Juventus.

Destro has scored 13 goals in 18 appearances since returning from a knee injury in December and his form had put him in the frame for a place in Italy's World Cup squad.

However, Italy coach Cesare Prandelli said this week that players guilty of bad behaviour would be denied a seat on the plane to Brazil.

"Anyone who messes around will stay at home because it will mean that they can't handle the pressure of a World Cup," he said.

"I'm sick and tired of seeing certain types of behaviour. National team players should have the strength to avoid reacting to provocation."

"In one of my first team talks, I asked whether a player who elbows another deserves to play for the national team and the players said no."

Neymar out for 4 weeks

AFP, Madrid

Brazilian star Neymar could miss the rest of the club season after being ruled out for four weeks with an injured left foot, dealing Barcelona a worrying blow to their La Liga hopes.

The club confirmed on Thursday that the 22-year-old picked up the injury in Barca's 2-1 defeat to Real Madrid in the Copa del Rey final on Wednesday.

He will now miss La Liga games against Athletic Bilbao, Villarreal and Getafe.

However he has an outside chance of facing Atletico Madrid in what could be a title decider on the last day of the season.

The news will also be a concern for Brazil boss Luiz Felipe Scolari with Neymar set to lead his country's hopes for a sixth World Cup title on home soil in June.

There was further bad news on the injury front for Barca as Spanish international Jordi Alba will also be out for at least three weeks due to a hamstring injury.

Pressure on PSG

AFP, Paris



If they had their way, France's leading clubs would have done away with the League Cup a long time ago, but Paris Saint-Germain and Lyon both need the boost of winning Saturday's final.

The sides meet at the Stade de France in the final of the country's secondary knockout competition just six days after Lyon beat the capital club 1-0 at the Stade de Gerland in Ligue 1.

Under normal circumstances, PSG would be the heavy favourites, but a difficult last 10 days have considerably increased the pressure on Laurent Blanc's side.

Following the agony of their Champions League elimination at the quarterfinal stage on away goals to Chelsea, Paris saw their run of eight consecutive league wins ended in Lyon, a result that means they will have to wait until next Wednesday's meeting with Evian at the earliest before retaining the title.

But if another Ligue 1 crown is inevitable, Blanc knows his team must win the off-derided League Cup -- a trophy the club have won three times before -- if they are to improve on their record last season under Carlo Ancelotti.

"The last week has been difficult. That's the way it is. We have to move on," says midfielder Yohan Cabaye.

"We have the chance to play for a title. It's a different competition and there is no

doubt that the players are ready and determined."

Failure could have serious consequences for the coach himself, who has said he will not give a definitive answer to the offer of a contract extension until after the final.

The former France coach has another year remaining but the recent run of back-to-back defeats, something the club had not experienced since 2011, has led to speculation that he could be sacked and forced president Nasser Al-Khelaifi to give him the dreaded vote of confidence this week.

"He is our coach today and I insist that I want him to stay. I was very clear about that before the second leg of the Champions League tie against Chelsea and my opinion did not change after that match," Al-Khelaifi told daily Le Parisien.

"Laurent Blanc has my unconditional support and nothing that happens on the field can change that."

Despite beating PSG last Sunday, Lyon are currently in fifth place in Ligue 1 and are at risk of finishing beneath their bitter rivals Saint-Etienne as well as missing out on Champions League qualification once again.

Knocked out of the Europa League by Juventus last week, this could still go down as a successful season for OL if they can secure the League Cup, a trophy they have only won once before.

PSG are still without 40-goal top scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who is in Sweden recovering from the thigh injury suffered against Chelsea.

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