



## Dinesh axed, Lasith made T20 captain

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket selectors on Wednesday sacked Dinesh Chandimal as Twenty20 captain and replaced him with Lasith Malinga, while Angelo Mathews was retained as the Test and one-day skipper.

Chandimal, 24, opted out of the last three matches, including the semifinal and final, of the recent World Twenty20 in Bangladesh due to poor batting form, leaving Malinga in charge.

Sri Lanka went on to beat the West Indies in the semifinal and India in the final to win their first major title since 1996 when they bagged the 50-over World Cup.

All-rounder Mathews was retained as the Test and one-day captain till the end of next year's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, a release from Sri Lanka Cricket said.

Lahiru Thirimanne, a 24-year-old left-hand batsman, was promoted to vice-captain in all three formats, the release added.

Sri Lanka have yet to appoint a new coach after Englishman Paul Farbrace resigned on Tuesday to take up a possible assignment with England.

Farbrace, 46, has been linked to the post of assistant coach to Peter Moores, who was named England's chief coach last week replacing Zimbabwean Andy Flower.

Sri Lanka are due to play two one-day matches against Ireland in Dublin early next month ahead of a tour of England that comprises one T20 International, five one-dayers and two Tests.

## Double blow for Chelsea

AFP, Madrid

Czech goalkeeper Petr Cech will miss the rest of the season delivering a huge blow to Chelsea's Premier League and Champions League title winning aspirations after he was injured during his club's 0-0 draw with Atletico Madrid in their Champions League semifinal first leg match on Tuesday.

In a double injury blow it was also revealed by Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho that captain John Terry will miss the rest of the Premier League season because of a foot injury he suffered in the second-half of the match.

Unlike Cech, though, he could be fit for Chelsea to reach the Champions League final on May 24.

Cech, 31, landed awkwardly when he clashed with Raul Garcia when defending an Atletico corner in the 17th minute.

"Petr Cech's season is over. Don't ask me technically, but season over," said Mourinho.

"And John - we have to play in the final for him to play with us."

## Nuremberg sack Verbeek

AFP, Berlin

Bundesliga strugglers Nuremberg announced on Wednesday they had sacked coach Gertjan Verbeek after just 184 days in charge.

The decision to fire the 51-year-old Dutchman follows Sunday's 4-1 home to defeat to Bayer Leverkusen that kept the club second bottom of the league and set to be relegated.

Under-23s coach Roger Prinzen will take over as coach on an interim basis and will be Nuremberg's third trainer this season.



Atletico Madrid's Diego Costa (C) rises above Chelsea defender Cesar Azpilicueta (R) to head the ball during their Champions League semifinal at Vicente Calderon on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

AFP, Madrid



Atletico Madrid and Chelsea will have it all to play for when they meet in the second leg of their Champions League semifinal in London next Wednesday after a 0-0 draw in the first leg at the Vicente Calderon on Tuesday.

Chances were far and few between as Chelsea set up to stifle the hosts with two late headers from Raul Garcia the closest Atletico came to breaking the deadlock.

The English side did suffer two significant injuries, however, as both goalkeeper Petr Cech and captain John Terry had to be replaced either side of half-time putting their participation for the second leg in doubt.

Chelsea's Frank Lampard and John Obi Mikel and Atletico captain Gabi will definitely miss the game at Stamford Bridge as they all got yellow cards that will lead to a suspension.

Fernando Torres started on his first game back at the Calderon as a visiting player since leaving to join Liverpool in 2007, but he cut an isolated figure as Chelsea were happy to stick 10 men behind the ball.

The visitors suffered a big blow after just 17 minutes, though, when Garcia upended Cech in his attempt to reach an Atletico corner from the left and the Czech goalkeeper was unable to continue.

Veteran Australian 'keeper Mark Schwarzer was forced into action to replace Cech, becoming the oldest player to appear in the knockout stages of the Champions

League in doing so at the age of 41.

Mario Suarez shot just wide and Diego Costa had an effort brilliantly blocked by Cesar Azpilicueta as Atletico began to build up some semblance of pressure towards the end of the half.

However, Diego Ribas' tame low effort that was easily gathered by Schwarzer was their only effort on target before the break.

Chelsea finally registered a shot on target three minutes after the restart when Lampard's volley was well held by Courtois.

Schwarzer then nearly gifted Atletico the opener as his poor punch landed at the feet of the Diego, but the Brazilian delayed his shot and the Chelsea stopper got back to make a comfortable save.

Diego went close again moments later

with a dipping volley that flew just wide before he was replaced by Arda Turan.

Chelsea suffered another injury blow when Terry was forced off 18 minutes from time and his absence allowed Atletico to have more joy with balls into the box in the closing stages.

A low free-kick from Gabi nearly caught out Schwarzer as he scrambled across goal to make a low save to his right.

Atletico's aerial onslaught then arrived as Garcia sent two headers sailing just over the bar, whilst Turan also saw a headed effort sneak past the post.

Chelsea had a late chance to snaffle a vital away goal when Torres was felled on the edge of the area by Miranda, but David Luiz sent the resulting free-kick over the bar.



Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech (C) leaves the pitch due to an injury during their Champions League semifinal against Atletico Madrid at the Vicente Calderon Stadium on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Moyes proud of MU tenure

AFP, London



David Moyes declared on Wednesday that he was "proud" to have managed Manchester United, but said that he understood the "frustration" that had led to his dismissal.

Moyes, 50, was sacked by United on Tuesday after a dismal 10-month tenure in which the reigning champions slumped to seventh place in the Premier League, denying them a place in next season's Champions League.

"During this period of transition, performances and results have not been what Manchester United and its fans are used to or expect, and I both understand and share their frustration," Moyes said in a statement

released by the League Managers' Association (LMA).

"I have always believed that a manager never stops learning during his career, and I know I will take invaluable experience from my time as United's manager.

"I remain proud to have led the team to the quarterfinals of this year's Champions League and I remain grateful to Sir Alex Ferguson (his predecessor) for believing in my ability and giving me the chance to manage Manchester United."

The LMA, the trade union for managers working professionally in England, criticised United for the "unprofessional manner" in which Moyes was dismissed.

Chief executive Richard Bevan said the organisation was "very disap-

pointed" that "extensive reports in the press" had announced Moyes's sacking before he "had been spoken to officially by the club".

British newspaper reports on Wednesday claimed that Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti has been identified as a potential candidate for the United job.

Several papers said that Ancelotti was being considered for the vacancy, along with Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal, who emerged as the early favourite for the post.

However, whereas Ancelotti, the former Chelsea manager, is less than a year into a three-year contract at Madrid, Van Gaal is scheduled to step down from his position with Holland after this year's World Cup in Brazil.

## Champs League Jose's priority

AFP, Madrid



Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho hinted he will rest a number of key players for his side's crucial Premier League game away to Liverpool on Sunday to concentrate his squad's efforts on the Champions League.

Mourinho's men hung on for a 0-0 draw away to Atletico Madrid in the first leg of their semifinal on Tuesday night to make them favourites to reach a third final in six years.

However, a clean sheet came at a cost as Mourinho confirmed goalkeeper Petr Cech and captain John Terry will miss the second leg due to injuries that forced them to be replaced at the Vicente Calderon.

Chelsea trail leaders Liverpool by five points with three games to go in the Premier League and Mourinho said he would name a weakened side should he be given permission by his superiors at the club.

"My priority is the Champions League," said the Portuguese.

"I can't decide by myself. I think that is a decision where I have to listen to the club. I am just a piece, the manager, no more than that and I have to listen to the club."

"I know what I would do. I would play the players that are not going to play Wednesday."

"I am not the most important person at the club. I work for the people who are above me and I have to follow the decision of the club."

Mourinho also launched an attack on the Premier League's decision makers for forcing his side to play on Sunday, just four days before the return leg.

"I think the fact the match is on Sunday puts the problem not in my hands but in the hands in people who decided the game is not on Friday or Saturday but on Sunday."

"We are representing English football. Unfortunately we have only one English team in European competition. Spain has four and they still gave Atletico all the conditions to allow them to succeed."

Mourinho set out with a very defensive looking line-up at the Calderon as Ramires and Willian played wide to prevent Atletico's full-backs rampaging forward, whilst John Obi Mikel and David Luiz added extra muscle in midfield.

However, the former Real Madrid boss insisted he did not set his side out solely with the intention of keeping the scoreline blank.

"Nobody starts a game thinking about a 0-0, but sometimes the game goes in a certain direction where you feel you have to be safe, not concede and try to score in one of the few chances you have."

"We had four corners and a few dangerous free-kicks and if you score in one of those chances the result is very good."

## FIFA suspends transfer ban on Barca

AFP, Zurich

FIFA on Wednesday suspended a ban on Barcelona signing players while the club makes an appeal against a 14-month transfer ban.

World football's governing body, which imposed the sanction this month for breaching rules on the registration of minors, announced in a statement that the ban would be temporarily suspended allowing Barca to sign players during the summer transfer window which opens on July 1.

The club welcomed the move.

"FC Barcelona sees the decision announced today by the FIFA Appeal Committee to provisionally allow the cautionary measures requested in the club's appeal against the sanction imposed by FIFA's Disciplinary Committee as a positive step," the club said in a statement.

The Spanish champions are in desperate need of an overhaul in the summer transfer window after a difficult season which is likely to see them miss out on a major trophy for the first time in six years.

Replacements are primarily needed for goalkeeper Victor Valdes and club captain Carles Puyol who have both announced their intention to leave the club at the end of the current campaign.

Barcelona has appealed against what would be a dramatic restriction on its operations and asked for the sanction to be suspended.

FIFA Appeal Committee chairman Larry Mussenenden agreed that the appeal meant the ban should be suspended.

Mussenenden "took into consideration the sanctions imposed against the club, the complexity of the matter, the start date of the next registration period - 1 July 2014 - and the fact that the FIFA Appeal Committee does not seem in a position to take a decision on the main issue early enough so that an eventual appeal of the club against its decision before the Court of Arbitration for Sport would still be decided before the beginning of the next registration period," said FIFA.

## Scholes back to help Giggs

REUTERS, London

Former Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes returned to the club's training ground on Wednesday to help caretaker manager Ryan Giggs prepare for this weekend's Premier League match at home to Norwich City.

Giggs, with whom Scholes shared many title triumphs, was put in charge of the first team for the final four games of the season following the sacking of David Moyes on Tuesday.

With last season's champions in a state of disarray following the abrupt end to Moyes's disappointing 10-month stint in charge, the sight of some of the club's golden generation together again helped lift the mood.

As well as Scholes, Giggs was also joined by Nicky Butt and Phil Neville, who was assistant coach under Moyes, on Wednesday, United said on their website.

Between them the quartet made 2,453 appearances for United with Giggs still available, should he be selected, for the final four league games of the season.

Former England midfielder Scholes retired for good at the end of last term, having come out of retirement in January 2012.

Seventh-placed United, who have missed out on qualifying for next season's Champions League, face relegation-threatened Norwich at Old Trafford on Saturday.