

What to WATCH

TEN Cricket
Sri Lanka v Pakistan
Second Test, Day 4
Live from 10:30am

STAR Sports1
England v India
Fifth Test, Day 3

Live from 4:00pm
STAR SPORTS 4
English Premier League
Liverpool v Southampton
Live from 6:00pm
Newcastle v Man City
Live from 9:00pm

TEN ACTION
First ODI
Zimbabwe v South Africa
Live from 1:30pm

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Life's Good

Federer ousts Murray

AFP, Cincinnati

Roger Federer calmly worked through a second-set deficit to defeat Andy Murray 6-3, 7-5 on Friday for a place in the semifinals of the ATP Tour's Cincinnati Masters.

The 33-year-old Swiss, a five-time champion here, will play for a spot in his second Masters 1000 final in as many weeks on Saturday against Canadian fifth seed Milos Raonic, a winner over Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-1, 6-0.

Second seed Federer took 93 minutes to storm to victory after trailing 4-1 in the second set.

Federer is bidding for the 80th title of his career. The Wimbledon finalist has now won 16 of his last 18 matches after playing last week's Toronto final.

Federer owns a 5-0 record over Raonic, with their last meeting coming at Wimbledon.

Murray, still without a title since his emotional Wimbledon triumph of 2013, is now level 11-11 with Federer as he lost seven five times to the Swiss.

Raonic will be playing his fourth Masters semifinal of the season when he meets Federer. He beat Fognini with a modest seven aces but broke the quirky Italian six times.

At the top of the draw, France's Julien Benneteau won 12 of the last 15 games to stun Australian Open champion Stan Wawrinka 1-6, 6-1, 6-2 to reach the first Masters semifinal of his career.

Benneteau made a quick recovery after losing the first set, completely turning the match around. He finished off the victory with an ace on the first of two match points.

The Frenchman will play Spanish sixth seed David Ferrer, who beat countryman Tommy Robredo 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, a day after the 16th seed beat sluggish Novak Djokovic.



Swansea City midfielder Ki Sung-Yueng (L) celebrates his opening goal with teammates during their Premier League encounter against Manchester United at Old Trafford yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Swansea ruin van Gaal's bow

AFP, London



Swansea City condemned Louis van Gaal to defeat in his first Premier League game as Manchester United manager on Saturday, while Aaron Ramsey scored a stoppage-time winner for Arsenal.

Van Gaal was taking charge of his first competitive match at United, but his new side exhibited many of the same failings from last season -- when they finished seventh -- as they slumped to a 2-1 loss.

It was Swansea's second consecutive win at Old Trafford, after an FA Cup third-round success in January, and dealt United their first home defeat on the season's opening day since 1972.

"It is very disappointing that we have lost our first home match," said Van Gaal, who handed competitive debuts to 20-year-old Tyler Blackett and 21-year-old Jesse Lingard.

"We were very nervous in the first half, made

RESULTS

Arsenal 2 (Koscielny 45, Ramsey 90+1) **Crystal Palace 1** (Hangeland 35)
Leicester 2 (Ulloa 22, Wood 86) **Everton 2** (McGeady 20, Naismith 45)
Man United 1 (Rooney 53) **Swansea 2** (Ki 28, Sigurdsson 72)
QPR 0 Hull 1 (Chester 52)
Stoke 0 Aston Villa 1 (Weimann 50)
West Brom 2 (Berahino 42-pen, 74) **Sunderland 2** (Cattermole 5, Larsson 85)

the wrong choices, and that is a pity. In the second half, we never played as a team. Therefore, I'm responsible."

Gylfi Sigurdsson, back at Swansea after two years at Tottenham Hotspur, gave his side victory by squeezing a shot past United goalkeeper David de Gea in the 72nd minute after Wayne Routledge miscued a volley.

Sigurdsson had earlier teed up South Korea midfielder Ki Sung-yueng to stroke home a 28th-minute opener, before new United captain

Wayne Rooney hooked in an equaliser for the injury-ravaged hosts.

FA Cup winners Arsenal opened their campaign with victory after Ramsey gave them a last-gasp 2-1 success at home to Crystal Palace, who are without a manager following Tony Pulis's shock departure on Friday.

New signing Brede Hangeland gave Palace a 35th-minute lead, shrugging off the attentions of Arsenal star signing Alexis Sanchez to meet Jason Puncheon's in-swinging corner with a glancing header.

Laurent Koscielny was caught napping by Hangeland's dart to the near post, but the Arsenal centre-back atoned in first-half injury time by ghosting in to head home a teasing free-kick from Sanchez.

Palace had Jason Puncheon sent off for two bookable offences and Arsenal capitalised in the 91st minute when Ramsey notched from close range after Julian Speroni had saved from Mathieu Debuchy.

Sharapova in semis

AFP, Cincinnati



Maria Sharapova won a re-match of her French Open title victory over Simona Halep, rallying for a 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 win to reach the semifinals of the Cincinnati Masters.

The reigning Roland Garros holder will play Ana Ivanovic after the Serb ninth seed defeated Ukrainian teenager Elina Svitolina 6-2, 6-3 in less than an hour on Friday night.

Sharapova, a five-time Grand Slam champion, has won eight of 11 meetings with her former world number one opponent. Ivanovic claimed their last meeting in the third round at Rome in May.

Sharapova had to make a great escape against world number two Halep, who has burst into WTA prominence over the past year. Sharapova won her fifth match against Halep without a loss.

Sharapova also claimed her 13th match at the pre-US Open event and took the title in 2011.

The Russian, who tends to play well under pressure, recovered after a tight opening set to finally secure the victory -- her 38th of 2014 -- after two and a half hours.

Top-seeded Serena Williams cruised into the final four with a 6-1, 6-3 win over Jelena Jankovic.

"She's beaten me several times, so I knew today I just had to be focused and do the best I could," said Williams, a 17-time Grand Slam champion who has never lifted the trophy in Cincinnati.

"She played some great points. I was just trying to not make many errors, stay focused and do the best that I could."

Williams will face former world number one Caroline Wozniacki, who beat fourth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland 6-4, 7-6 (7/5). Williams completed her win over Jankovic in less than an hour as she reached the last four without the loss of a set. The American fired seven aces and broke five times against the former number one.

Williams won 10 of 14 career matches against Jankovic, last losing to her in 2010. She has beaten the Serb five times in the past two seasons.

"I definitely felt pretty good about today, I felt better," said Williams. "My unforced errors are lower than they've been this year, so it's definitely going the right way."

"I don't think she played her best today and still she fought well. I was glad to have an opportunity to just get through that."

"I don't think I played great last week [a semifinal loss in Montreal]. I was just fighting to be in the tournament. I was mentally fighting really hard. I definitely feel like I'm playing better this week."

Drogba gets his No 11 shirt back

REUTERS, London

Didier Drogba praised an Oscar performance on Friday when the returning Chelsea great was handed the number 11 shirt he made famous during his first spell at Stamford Bridge.

Drogba displaces the Brazil international who instead took the number eight jersey vacated by Manchester City loan signing Frank Lampard after the London club released their squad numbers for the new season.

"I am very pleased to be able to return to the number 11 shirt and I am very grateful to Oscar for allowing me to make this change," the influential Ivorian told the club website.

Drogba last donned the jersey when he scored the winning penalty in the Champions League final against Bayern Munich in May 2012.

He wore the number 15 during pre-season, the shirt he originally had when he first signed for Chelsea from Olympique de Marseille in 2004.

"Didier is a Chelsea legend and a senior player. I am happy for him to take the 11 and for me to take the eight," Oscar said. "Lamps is another legend at this club and I hope I will be as successful in the shirt as he was."

Goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois has been given the 13 shirt while new signings Cesc Fabregas, Diego Costa and Filipe Luis will wear numbers four, 19 and three respectively.

Mertesacker quits int'l stage

REUTERS, Berlin



Germany centre half Per Mertesacker, a member of the World Cup-winning squad in Brazil last month, has quit the international arena in order to focus on club football.

The 29-year-old Arsenal player becomes the third squad member to retire since the end of the World Cup following captain Philipp Lahm and record goalscorer Miroslav Klose.

"I am proud to have had 10 years in the team, five big tournaments, 104 caps and to have won the World Cup," Mertesacker said in a statement on Friday.

"That is a magnificent end and for me it is the right time to leave the national team and make way for the new generation."

Mertesacker, who came on in the last minute of extra-time in Germany's 1-0 final win over Argentina, also told the Sueddeutsche newspaper he wanted to determine when his international career finished.

"First and foremost it was about me...being able to say when the chapter ended," he said.

Tall and powerful, the defender was Germany's first choice centre back for a decade after winning his first cap in 2004.

Mertesacker lost his place when coach Joachim Loew opted for Jerome

Boateng and Mats Hummels in the middle of the back four when they crushed hosts Brazil 7-1 in the semifinals of the World Cup.

Loew started with the same pair in the final as well.

"That tournament was a golden finale," Mertesacker said. "Now I want to be Premier League champions with Arsenal and also attack the Champions League."

Mertesacker played in three World Cups and also featured at the 2008 and 2012 European Championships.

"Per personifies dependability and I could always rely on him," said Loew. "In Brazil he was one of our most important players who inspired the team and set the direction."



Juventus plamaker Andrea Pirlo scores a penalty against the Singapore Selection side at the National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

City ready to roll again

AFP, Newcastle



Manchester City manager Manuel Pellegrini thinks he has a stronger squad than last season as the champions prepare to begin their Premier League title defence at Newcastle on Sunday.

City start their campaign with a trip to St James' Park having added a number of new faces to their ranks since last season's Premier League and League Cup triumphs.

Pellegrini signed French defender Eliaquim Mangala and Brazilian midfielder Fernando from Porto, Argentine goalkeeper Willy Caballero from Malaga and French right-back Bacary Sagna on a free transfer from Arsenal.

City have also loaned veteran midfielder Frank Lampard, released by Chelsea during the close season, from their sister club New York City FC.

Pellegrini believes those acquisitions put City in a strong position to retain the title and make a sustained challenge in the Champions League as well.

"Last season we had a very good squad and a very successful year," Pellegrini said.

"But that is the past and that is history. Now we must try this season to have a strong squad and I think that players such as Willy, Bacary, as Mangala, Fernando, Frank Lampard will make us a strong squad. We try to have a stronger squad this year."

"I think this Premier League will be exactly the same as the last title, we will have five or six teams with a very strong squad."

"All of them want to win the title. We also want to retain it. So we will see during the year who works better."

City will be without Mangala while he builds up his match fitness, so Martin Demichelis will partner captain Vincent Kompany at the heart of defence this weekend.

Argentine forward Sergio Aguero, who signed a new five-year contract this week, may also be rested after struggles with injuries during the World Cup, while Spain striker Alvaro Negredo has been ruled out until September with a broken foot.

"Mangala needs to work more with the team to be able to play. It will not be this weekend," Pellegrini added.

"I think that always this team needs Sergio Aguero, but it is also important for him to make a good pre-season. He has so many months without playing normally."

"I think we are ready to start. Maybe some players need some more days to be 100 percent but the squad is ready to start the season."

Newcastle have been among the busiest Premier League clubs during the close-season transfer market, with nine new arrivals at a cost of almost £40 million.

Of those, French duo Remy Cabella and Emmanuel Riviere, former Sunderland midfielder Jack Colback and Dutch defender Daryl Janmaat are set to make their league debuts against City.

Another of those recent signings, former Ajax midfielder Siem de Jong is ruled out by a calf problem.

Ivory Coast international Cheick Tiote, who has been linked with an £8 million move to Arsenal, is sidelined with a hamstring injury.

Pirlo leads Juventus

AFP, Singapore

Andrea Pirlo's coolly taken first-half double led Juventus to a 5-0 win over Singapore Selection as the Italian champions completed their summer tour with a third straight win Saturday.

The elegant player-maker's free-kick and penalty sent Juventus on their way in front of 27,000 fans in what was the first football match at Singapore's new National Stadium.

France midfielder Paul Pogba and Sebastian Giovinco both headed against the crossbar and Pirlo had a free-kick saved in the opening minutes as Juventus took immediate control.

Their opener came courtesy of some typically quick thinking from Pirlo, who slid another free-kick low and under the leaping wall on 17 minutes.

A minute before half-time, Pirlo doubled Juventus's lead from the penalty spot after Shakir Hamzah's tug on Roberto Pereyra.

Pogba had frequently been a threat and he got on the scoresheet on 48 minutes when he rifled Juve's third past busy Singapore goalkeeper Hassan Sunny.

After Sunny's point-blank save from Pereyra, Giovinco hit the visitors' fourth from the resulting corner when he lashed home a fierce shot from the edge of the box.

Half-time substitute Kwadwo Asamoah volleyed the fifth on 72 minutes after good work down the right by Jose Martin Caceres.