

What to WATCH

STARSPORTS1

India v West Indies

Second ODI (D/N)

Live from 3:00pm

SONY SIX

Euro Qualifiers

Romania v Hungary

Live from 10:00pm

France v Portugal

Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

TEN ACTION

Brazil v Argentina

Int'l Friendly

Live from 6:00pm

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## Sneijder's wages unpaid

GOAL.COM

Wesley Sneijder has confirmed that his agent is in talks with Galatasaray over unpaid wages.

Reports in the Netherlands suggest he may have gone three months without being paid, entitling him to leave the club on a free transfer if he chooses to do so.

And the former Inter and Real Madrid playmaker confirmed to De Telegraaf that his representatives are currently in negotiations with the cash-strapped Turkish giants.

"Galatasaray are working hard to sort their financial situation," he said.

"My management is in talks with the club over a solution. Right now I am focused on the Netherlands national team."

Club president Unal Aysal has confirmed that he does not plan to run for re-election as the side's debts continue to increase amidst fears they could soon face further sanctions for breaching Uefa's financial fair play ruling.

## Schwarzer blasts FIFA

AGENCIES

Chelsea goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer believes a player will have to die from the Qatari heat in the summer before FIFA even consider moving the 2022 World Cup, according to ESPN.

Qatar were awarded the tournament under controversial circumstances in December 2010, with allegations of corruption and the country's lack of suitability to host the tournament dominating proceedings.

The temperatures in summer in Qatar often peak about 40 degrees Celsius, and the Australian goalkeeper thinks that the conditions are impossible to play in.

He told the Leaders in Sport conference in London: "People complain about it being too hot. I've played World Cup qualifiers there in June, and it is hot. I played a game in Oman in June one year and it was 43 degrees.

"Something needs to happen to stop games at that time of year."



Spain goalkeeper Iker Casillas (C) misses the ball to concede the opening goal during their Euro 2016 qualifier against Slovakia in Zilina on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Pressure mounts on Iker Slovakia stun Spain

REUTERS, Madrid



Once lauded as a goalkeeper who could do no wrong, Spain captain Iker Casillas's tarnished reputation suffered another blow when his error helped Slovakia claim a shock 2-1 win in Euro 2016 qualifying on Thursday.

Holders Spain had been looking to continue a rebuilding process after their failure at the World Cup finals in Brazil, where Casillas made a series of howlers.

However, they were undone in Zilina by a battling Slovakia side, who patiently waited their chance and struck on the counter attack three minutes from time.

Casillas, who led Spain to continental titles in 2008 and 2012 with a debut World Cup triumph in between, gifted the Eastern Europeans a 17th-minute lead when he flapped at Juraj Kucka's swerving free kick.

Despite dominating possession in customary fashion, Spain did not manage to breach the massed Slovakian lines until the 82nd minute through Paco Alcacer but were ultimately scuppered by Miroslav Stoch's late header.

It was La Roja's first defeat in a qualifier for the European Championship or World Cup since they were beaten by Sweden in October 2006.

It would be harsh to place the blame solely on the shoulders of Spain's most capped player for the defeat, particularly since he pulled off a brilliant one-handed save early on.

However, the captain's problems appear to be part of a wider malaise in a team that swept all before them under coach Vicente del Bosque over the past six years.

They looked toothless and predictable going forward, with Diego Costa, enjoying prolific form for Chelsea, again failing to score. The Brazil-born forward has yet to find the net for his adopted country in six appearances.

Questions may also be asked as to why Spain committed so many players forward after Alcacer's leveller, leaving themselves exposed at the back, rather than settling for the point they probably deserved.

Del Bosque decided to stay on as coach after the humiliation in Brazil and has brought in several new faces but the impression remains that he needs to do more if Spain are to return to the kind of form that made them close to unbeatable.

The former Real Madrid coach predictably defended Casillas but calls will grow for young pretender David De Gea, who has performed well for Manchester United, to be handed the gloves.

"He (Casillas) saved us from a possible Slovakia goal," Del Bosque told a news conference after the Group C defeat.

"I didn't see the goal all that well but the ball definitely did something strange and deceived the keeper."

Slovakia's victory, which prompted wild celebrations among their players and fans, put them top of the group with a maximum six points from two matches, with Spain, Ukraine and Macedonia all on three in joint second.

Spain's next match is in Luxembourg on Sunday and three points would put them back on track as they seek to secure a place in the tournament in France in two years' time.

"We are only at the second matchday and there is nothing decided yet," Del Bosque noted.

AFP, Paris



Defending European champions Spain suffered their first qualifying defeat in eight years Thursday when they slumped to a 2-1 loss against Slovakia while England made it two wins in two.

Spain, who had opened their Euro 2016 campaign with a 5-1 mauling of Macedonia, exhibited all the faults which had led to their World Cup humiliation as Slovakia went top of Group C with a perfect six points.

Former Chelsea midfielder Miroslav Stoch, now plying his trade at Al Ain in the UAE, struck three minutes from time in Zilina to condemn Vicente del Bosque's team to a first qualifying defeat since 2006, a streak lasting 36 matches.

They trailed to a 17th-minute Juraj Kucka free-kick before Paco Alcacer's strike eight minutes from time appeared to salvage a point.

But with just three minutes left Slovakia launched a counter-attack as captain Marek Hamsik played substitute Michal Duris down the inside right to cross for Stoch to head home at the back post.

At a subdued Wembley, England made it two wins from two with a routine 5-0 defeat of whipping boys San Marino.

Wayne Rooney took his international goal tally to 42 and forced Alessandro Della Valle into a late own

## RESULTS

Belarus 0 **Ukraine** 2 (Martynovich 82-og, Syrdorchuk 90+3)  
**Macedonia** 3 (Trajkovski 20, Jahovic 66-pen, Abdurahim 90+2) Luxembourg 2 (Bensi 39, Turpel 44)  
**Slovakia** 2 (Kucka 17, Stoch 87) Spain 1 (Paco Alcacer 82)  
**England** 5 (Jagiella 25, Rooney 43-pen, Welbeck 49, Townsend 72, Della Valle 78-og) San Marino 0  
**Lithuania** 1 (Mikoliusnas 76) Estonia 0  
**Slovenia** 1 (Novakovic 79-pen) Switzerland 0  
Liechtenstein 0 Montenegro 0  
Moldova 1 (Dedov 27-pen) **Austria** 2 (Alaba 12-pen, Janko 51)

goal, while Phil Jagielka, Danny Welbeck and substitute Andros Townsend also found the target.

Having won 2-0 away to Switzerland in their Group E opener, England have now prevailed in what are likely to be their hardest and easiest fixtures of the campaign. They play away to Estonia on Sunday.

Switzerland's campaign went from bad to worse as the team which made the last-16 at the World Cup slumped to a 1-0 defeat in Slovenia.

Millivoje Novakovic grabbed the winner from the penalty spot in Maribor in the 79th minute after Johan Djourou had brought down Kevin Kampl.

The Swiss pressed for a point but were denied by a string of fine saves from Slovenia goalkeeper Samir Handanovic.

Lithuania also made it two wins in

## Villa set for A-League debut

REUTERS, Melbourne

Former Spain striker David Villa will definitely make his A-League debut for Melbourne City this weekend but is not certain to start Saturday's match at Sydney FC, manager John van't Schip said on Friday.

Villa is the highest profile recruit to the A-League this season and there is much excitement about his 10-game guest stint on loan from New York City.

The 32-year-old has not played since Spain's final match of the World Cup against Australia, though, and having arrived in Melbourne on Monday, there was some doubt about whether he would be fit for the season-opener at Sydney Football Stadium.

"Yes, he is going to be part of the game and we will just see which part," Van't Schip told reporters.



Brazil star Neymar (L) laughs with teammates during a training session at the National Stadium in Beijing yesterday on the eve of their international friendly against archrivals Argentina.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Smog-hit Super Clasico 'Away goals rule outdated'

AFP, Beijing



Brazil coach Dunga Friday warned Beijing's choking smog was likely to affect the highly anticipated friendly with Argentina by forcing him to make mass substitutions.

With an "orange" pollution alert in the Chinese capital, and several complaints from his team, Dunga said he would limit players' time on the pitch to reduce their exposure.

The announcement threatens to dampen the spectacle at Saturday's "Super Clasico" featuring Neymar and Lionel Messi as the South American rivals collide.

"The pollution in Beijing is bad for both Brazil and Argentina so both teams have to do their best and deal with it, as we cannot change it ourselves," Dunga told reporters.

"Our plan is to make plenty of substitutions so that the players will not be affected by it."

Visibility has dropped dramatically, shrouding buildings in haze, as pollution soars to 20 times the maximum daily exposure recommended by the World Health Organisation.

Argentina coach Gerardo Martino insisted the pollution was "not a factor" and he dismissed an incident where Messi was seen bent over and coughing on a smoggy training pitch this week.

"There was a small situation with Messi but he is totally fine," Martino said, as his players went through a workout at Beijing's Bird's Nest stadium on Friday.

Brazilian players, who had an hour-long, slow-paced training session at the venue,

appeared taken aback by the pollution.

"It's difficult to breathe. My throat is dry, it's like we're standing next to a bonfire, like hot smoke," striker Robinho told Brazilian media earlier.

Philippe Coutinho said it was sometimes hard to work out whether it was night or day. "The air is a bit strange, sometimes you think it's the middle of the night. It's very dusty," he was quoted as saying.

And defender David Luiz expressed sympathy for the Chinese people, for whom unhealthy air is a common hazard.

"Short-term you don't notice it much, but we hope that this (pollution) can change, because the Chinese people don't deserve to live like this," he told Brazilian media.

The issue has affected the build-up to the friendly, where World Cup hosts Brazil will take on finalists Argentina and bid to erase memories of their 7-1 humiliation by Germany in the semi-finals.

Argentina's Martino said he may deploy Messi on the right wing, and warned he was expecting a much different Brazil under Dunga than the team that flopped at the World Cup.

"After the World Cup, Brazil immediately changed their coach and I saw the (1-0 win) against Ecuador," Martino said.

"They want to play counter-attack and have some very fast players, we are going to be more cautious about that."

He added: "Our squad is almost the same as it was during the World Cup but technically we think Brazil will challenge us with a 4-3-2-1 formation.

"With Neymar playing attacking midfield the whole set-up might change for Brazil."

REUTERS, London



The away goals rule used for settling the outcome of two-legged knockout ties has "fallen behind the times" and needs rethinking according to FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

The method under which the team that scores the most goals away from home wins the tie was introduced in the mid-1960s.

It replaced the coin toss or the drawing of lots to settle ties which were level on aggregate after the second leg.

The system is used in the Champions League and Europa League plus many other domestic cup competitions around the world.

But in Blatter's column in the FIFA Weekly magazine, which is published on Friday, he writes that the rule favours teams playing away from home in the second leg because those games can go to extra time meaning more chance of scoring an away goal.

"It is time to rethink the system," says Blatter. "Football has progressed since the 1960s, so the away goals rule may now be questioned. Does the away goals rule still make sense?"

"The idea dates back to a time when away games were often an adventure, involving journeys that could be long and arduous -- and the playing conditions would vary considerably.

"In reality it favours the club that play away from home in the second leg. Where the scores are tied, that team has 30 minutes more than their opponent to score a valuable away goal. After all, in the first leg there is no extra time.

"Such an imbalance has already been disposed of in various competitions. The away goals rule is no longer used in the semifinals of the promotion playoffs in English football."

Blatter suggests implementing the rule used in the MLS playoffs in the United States and in the CONCACAF Champions League where away goals only count "double" until the end of normal time.

The away team has then done enough to force extra time and away goals do not count double in the additional 30 minutes.