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TEN SPORTS

UEFA Champions League

Chelsea v NK Maribor

Live from 12:45am (Wednesday)

TEN ACTION

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AS Roma v Bayern Munich

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Mueller expects knife-edge clash

AFP, Berlin



Germany midfielder Thomas Mueller expects Tuesday's Champions League clash at AS Roma to be a tight affair as Pep Guardiola's Bayern Munich travel to face his former club.

"It won't be decided quickly, but will be the sort of game which hangs in the balance," said the Bayern star after training in Munich on Sunday ahead of the Group E showdown in Rome.

"The main thing is to take at least a point, so that we stay top in the group."

With two wins to their credit, Bayern can secure their place in the knock-out phase with away and home wins over Roma -- the return-leg in Munich follows next month.

Rudi Garcia's Roma are second in the table on four points having routed CSKA Moscow 5-1 in September and drawn 1-1 at Manchester City.

Guardiola made four Serie A appearances and one in the Champions League for Roma in 2002/03 during a brief stint in Italy towards the end of his career.

"We played well, the dress rehearsal for Rome was a success," said Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who has gone 748 minutes and eight games without conceding a goal and did not have to save a single shot against Bremen.

"It'll be difficult to win in Rome, we'll need a strong defensive performance."

Having beaten Manchester City 1-0 at home and earned a victory at CSKA Moscow by the same margin, the 2013 Champions League winners are taking nothing for granted at Rome's Olympic Stadium.

"We've had a great starting point and we certainly don't want to give that away in Rome," said Bayern captain Philipp Lahm.



Roma captain Francesco Totti (C) runs with teammates prior to a training session at the Trigoria ground in Rome yesterday on the eve of their Champions League clash against Bayern Munich.

PHOTO: AFP

Jose furious with Spain

AFP, London

Jose Mourinho has criticised the treatment of some of his Chelsea players on international duty after the manager revealed Diego Costa will miss Tuesday's Champions League clash with Maribor.

Mourinho confirmed Costa - who also missed the 2-1 weekend victory at Crystal Palace - aggravated an existing hamstring problem during the last international break with Spain when he faced Slovakia and Luxembourg in the space of four days.

The Chelsea manager insists he had no contact with Spain coach Vicente del Bosque or the national team's medical staff about Costa's condition before the player joined up with the Spanish squad.

And speaking ahead of the visit of Maribor to Stamford Bridge, he said: "It's the same problem that he is having but now an injury, not an almost injury."

"It's simple and he is not training because he is not in condition to do it."

Hernanes rescues Inter

AFP, Milan



Brazilian Hernanes levelled with a bullet header in injury-time to secure a share of the points for Inter Milan in a dramatic 2-2 draw with Napoli that could help decide the fate of Nerazzurri coach Walter Mazzarri.

Following two consecutive heavy defeats to Cagliari (4-1) and Fiorentina (3-0), Mazzarri was under pressure from club president Erick Thohir to start producing results.

Inter looked to be heading for their third defeat on the trot when Napoli forward Jose Callejon struck a brace, including what appeared to be 90th minute winner, eight minutes after Fredy Guarin had come off the bench to level for the hosts in the 82nd minute.

But cheers from the Napoli end of the sparsely-attended San Siro had barely died down when Hernanes rose above the Napoli defence to meet Dodo's cross from the left with a powerful header that left Rafael Cabral with no chance.

Inter spurned the opportunity to claim all three points when late substitute Ibrahima Mbaye fired just wide in the dying seconds.

While Mazzarri failed to show for the post-match press conference, Hernanes told Sky Sport: "We've earned a very precious point. For us, the season starts now."

Rafael Benitez's Napoli now sit seventh, eight points behind leaders Juventus. Inter moved up one place to ninth but are 10 points off the pace.

In a match noted for the lack of Italian players -- only Andrea Ranocchia and Lorenzo Insigne started for Inter and Napoli

respectively -- Inter shaded a largely insipid opening half.

Nigerian Joel Obi had Inter's first shot on target with a speculative angled strike but the hosts then went on to miss three great chances for the opener.

Mauro Icardi fired over while under pressure from Raul Albiol as he pivoted on Hernanes' pass down the right.

When Mateo Kovacic's intended lob for Rodrigo Palacio went awry, Hernanes pounced but fired well over from 18 metres out.

A Marek Hamsik shot from a tight angle at the other end forced Samir Handanovic down low at his near post.

Just before the interval, Hernanes chested the ball down on the edge of the area only to see his low strike come off the foot of Cabral's upright.

Inter defender Nemanja Vidic headed over from a corner while Inter's claims for a penalty were waved away after Hernanes fell under a challenge from Kalidou Koulibaly.

Napoli finally showed some threat and after testing Handanovic with a low drive the Spaniard finally hit the target when Vidic, who has been notable for several howlers since joining from Manchester United, nodded a throw-in into the Spaniard's path.

Callejon had no trouble finding the net with a fierce strike from just inside the area.

Napoli's joy lasted just three minutes, Guarin firing past Cabral at the back post after Icardi had flicked on Dodo's corner.

Benitez's men took a 90th minute lead when Callejon volleyed a smart David Lopez lob past Handanovic, but again Inter pulled level when Hernanes rose to fire a powerful header past Cabral from Dodo's cross on the left.

City searching first win

AFP, Paris



Manchester City continue their search for a first Champions League win this season when they face CSKA Moscow on Tuesday, while Chelsea, Bayern Munich, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain are among the sides in action elsewhere.

CSKA MOSCOW V MAN CITY

After taking just one point from their opening two matches, Premier League champions City go to Russia to face CSKA still looking for their first win. Manuel Pellegrini's men are fresh from a 4-1 win against Tottenham Hotspur at the weekend thanks to four Sergio Aguero goals, although a thigh injury suffered by Frank Lampard in that game means he is set to miss the trip.

Misbehaviour from CSKA fans in their defeat at Roma last month saw them punished by UEFA and this game will be played behind closed doors as a result.

ROMA V BAYERN MUNICH

The match at the Stadio Olimpico has the makings of being the stand-out fixture on Tuesday evening. Pep Guardiola takes his Bayern side to the stadium where he led Barcelona to victory in the Champions League

final in 2009, and the German champions will be looking to extend their unbeaten start to the season.

Bayern defender Mehdi Benatia could come up against the club he left in the summer, and Roma have enjoyed a superb start to the campaign since selling the Moroccan. The Giallorossi have taken four points from a possible six so far and drew 1-1 at Manchester City in their last outing.

APOEL V PSG

French champions PSG have yet to lose in this campaign despite rarely performing anywhere near their free-flowing best from last season. However, they were outstanding in defeating Barcelona 3-2 three weeks ago and are fresh from a 3-1 win against Lens in Ligue 1 on Friday.

Coach Laurent Blanc is still without Marquinhos, Ezequiel Lavezzi and talisman Zlatan Ibrahimovic but skipper Thiago Silva returns to the squad for the first time since suffering a thigh injury more than two months ago.

BARCELONA V AJAX

These clubs are meeting for the second consecutive season in the Champions League, with Barcelona hoping for a repeat of their 4-0 win over Ajax at the Camp Nou in September last year. The Catalans have won seven out of eight games

in La Liga this season and are yet to concede a goal domestically, but they lost 3-2 at PSG in their last Group F outing and may have one eye on Saturday's trip to face eternal rivals Real Madrid.

Ajax drew 1-1 at APOEL three weeks ago and have not won any of their last eight away matches in the Champions League.

SCHALKE 04 V SPORTING

Roberto di Matteo, who won the Champions League with Chelsea as coach in 2012, leads his new club Schalke in the competition for the first time. The Italian got off to a winning start with the Gelsenkirchen side, leading them to a 2-0 win over Hertha Berlin in the Bundesliga on Saturday. And now they could desperately do with another victory after drawing their opening two matches in Group G.

Sporting head to Germany still chasing their first win in the section.

CHELSEA V MARIBOR

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho has said that striker Diego Costa will miss the visit of Slovenian champions Maribor to Stamford Bridge with the hamstring problem that kept him out of the 2-1 win at Crystal Palace at the weekend.

The London club have recorded

nine wins and two draws in 11 games this season, although they were held 1-1 by Schalke in their only previous home outing in Group G. Maribor, who lost 3-1 at Wigan Athletic in the Europa League last season, have held both Sporting and Schalke so far.

BATE BORISOV V SHAKHTAR DONETSK

This encounter at the Borisov Arena is likely to be pivotal to both teams' chances of progressing from Group H, with BATE second on three points from two games and Shakhtar a point behind. BATE, who have won eight consecutive Belarusian titles, are unbeaten at their recently-opened new stadium.

Unsettled by the conflict in eastern Ukraine, Shakhtar are not quite the fearsome proposition they once were, but they come into this game off the back of a 6-2 win against Volyn Lutsk in their domestic league on Friday.

PORTO V ATHLETIC BILBAO

Athletic make the short trip to northern Portugal in urgent need of a positive result after taking just one point from their opening two matches. And they will hope that history repeats itself, having won 2-1 away to Porto in their first ever European match in the European Cup preliminary round in 1956.



Inter Milan midfielder Hernanes (R) exults after scoring the equaliser against Napoli during their Serie A encounter at the San Siro on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

Neymar relishing firepower

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona forward Neymar is looking forward to welcoming Luis Suarez into his and Lionel Messi's star-studded strike partnership when the Uruguayan returns from a four-month ban this weekend.

Suarez looks set to make his debut for the Catalans on the biggest stage of all as Barca face Real Madrid for the first time this season at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday.

Neymar and Messi have already combined for 17 goals in 10 games so far this season and the Brazilian is convinced last season's Premier League Player of the Year will only add to their firepower.

"For me Messi is the best player in the world and I am happy to be able to play alongside him," said the 22-year-old.

"But Luis Suarez is among the best too and I am sure he will bring many good things to our team."

Before concentrating on the Clasico, Barca welcome Ajax to the Camp Nou on Tuesday.

Stoke rally to beat Swansea

AFP, Stoke-on-Trent



Stoke came from behind to beat Swansea 2-1 at the Britannia Stadium on Sunday as they climbed to 10th in the English Premier League table.

Victory left Mark Hughes's men level on points with Manchester United, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur.

It was a tale of two penalties as the first half ended all square at 1-1.

Referee Michael Oliver first pointed to the spot after Stoke defender Ryan Shawcross grappled Wilfried Bony to the ground as the pair waited for a Swansea corner to come in.

Shawcross was booked while the decision was met with disbelieving jeers from Stoke fans who, in common with many English football-watchers, had grown used to seeing such incidents go unpunished.

However, Oliver had issued a warning before the corner.

Ivory Coast striker Bony then got up to send Stoke goalkeeper Asmir Begovic the wrong way as Swansea went 1-0 up in the 34th minute.

But shortly before the interval Stoke were level when Oliver awarded a penalty at the other end.

Swansea's Angel Rangel made minimal contact with Victor Moses, who then appeared to dive in the box.

Nevertheless, Oliver signalled a penalty and Charlie Adam's spot-kick beat the dive of Swansea keeper Lukasz Fabianski.

The 67th minute saw Swansea's South Korea midfielder Ki Sung-yueng twice denied as he tried to restore the Welsh club's lead but his first shot from 12 yards out was blocked and the follow-up saved by Begovic.

Instead it was Stoke who went 2-1 up nine minutes later when Jonathan Walters planted a header beyond Fabianski following a good cross by Oussama Assaidi for his first league goal of the season.

Fatal goal celebration

AFP, New Delhi

A young footballer lost his life in India's north-east over the weekend after injuring his spinal cord while celebrating a goal he had scored, newspapers reported on Monday.

Peter Biaksangzuala, 23, fell backwards on his head as he took a series of somersaults after scoring the equaliser for his team in a local match in Khawzawl town close to India's eastern border with Myanmar last Tuesday, the Times of India said.

As he lay on the ground in pain, unsuspecting teammates jumped on him to celebrate before they realised the extent of the injury and summoned a stretcher to rush him to hospital.

Biaksangzuala died on Sunday after his condition deteriorated in hospital as doctors attempted to repair his damaged spine, the newspaper quoted hospital staff as saying.

Lal Hmar, a football official in Mizoram state, told reporters in capital Aizawl that the young footballer had donated his eyes before his death.