

**MURDERER GETS RED CARD**

A Michigan man who fatally punched a soccer referee before he could be ejected from an adult-league game was sentenced to 15 years Friday, after the referee's widow boldly addressed her husband's killer and served him a penalty card. Kris Bieniewicz, in her closing statement, held up a crimson plastic card, like the ones used by referees to eject players. "I would like to serve Mr. Saad with the red card that he was entitled to," she said.

—INTERNET



**LVG: Di Maria won't move**

INTERNET

Louis Van Gaal has insisted that he expects Angel Di Maria to remain at Manchester United next season but would not stand in his way if he wanted to leave.

"As a manager, you can never say no or yes because the player at the end shall always decide but I don't think he shall move," he said.

Asked whether he would let Di Maria go if he wanted to go Van Gaal added: "I'm always like that. When you see my history - that's part of my philosophy.

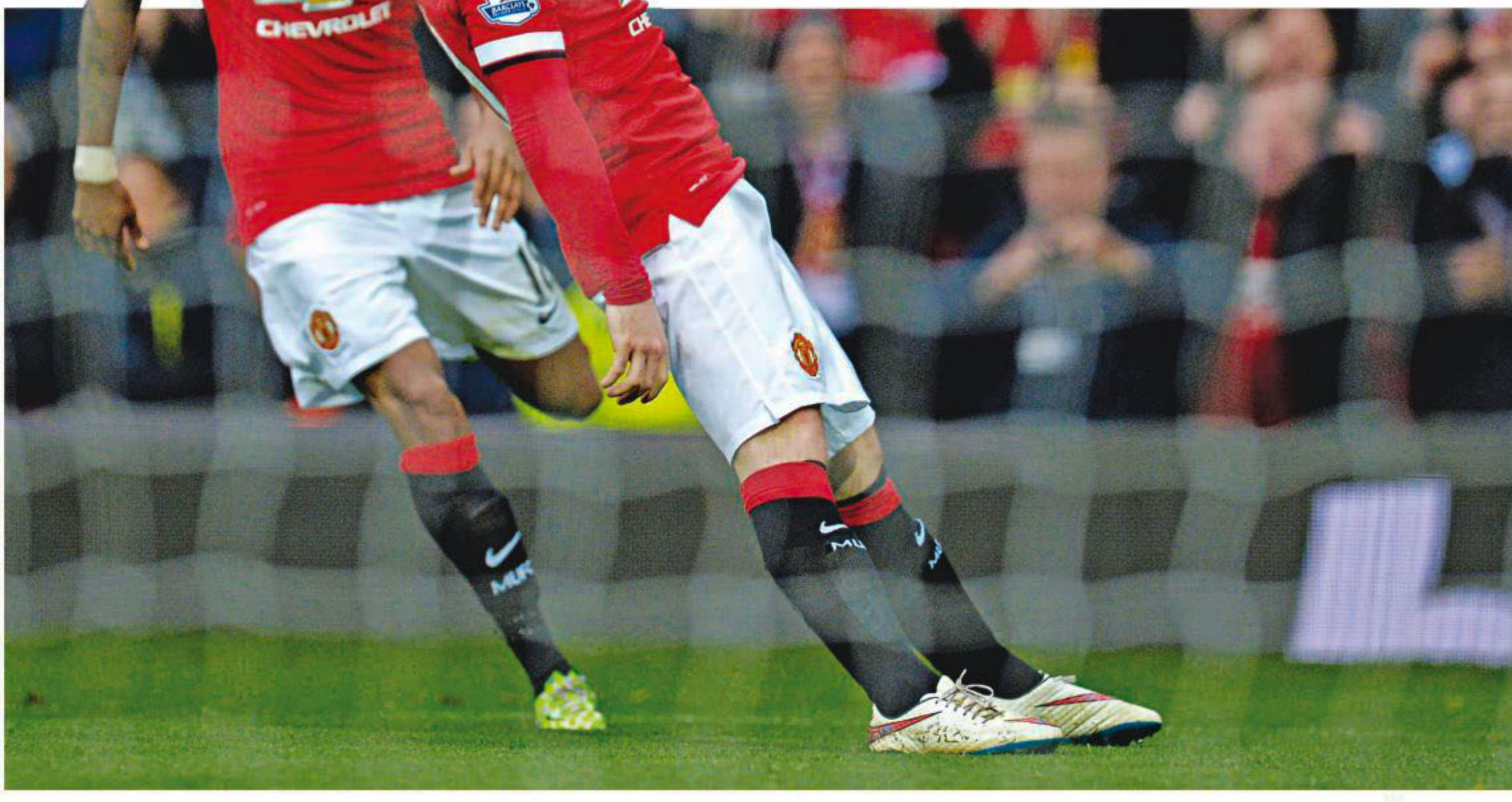
"So, I shall always be open for that conversation but I know also the commercial interests of the club and we have to respect that. I think that he shall stay because what I have seen in his reaction, after the defeat and after his red card, is very good and I like his attitude."

**Ishtiaq to play ITF Div-2 C'ship**

SPORTS REPORTER

Promising Bangladeshi tennis player Mohammad Ishtiaq will participate in the Division-1 competition of the ITF Asian Under-14 Development Championship beginning in Bangkok today.

Players from India, China, Chinese Taipei, South Korea, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Kazakhstan and hosts Thailand will compete in the 11-day tournament. Ishtiaq, now in Bangkok, was included in the ITF team for his good showing in Division-2 competition held in Vietnam in February this year.



Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney has certainly not got another punch at Old Trafford yesterday. He was actually mimicking it after scoring his team's third goal against Tottenham.

PHOTO: AFP

**Rooney packs a punch**

AFP, Manchester

Wayne Rooney ensured Manchester United packed a punch as they tightened their grip on a top-four place with an impressive 3-0 victory over Tottenham on Sunday.

After going out of the FA Cup against Arsenal last Monday, the sole remaining target for Louis van Gaal's first season in charge is to finish at least fourth in the Premier League to seal a return to the Champions League.

Fellaini gave the home side a 9th minute lead before Carrick, who had not scored since February 2014 and managed only one all of last season, doubled the margin 10 minutes later.

Tottenham looked anything but the side that had won five of their previous seven league games and watching England coach Roy Hodgson barely saw Harry Kane, aiming to score for a seventh successive away game, get a meaningful touch as he seeks to win a place in the full England squad to be named this coming week.

Rooney will definitely be in that squad and he underlined his well-being with his 19th goal of the season 11 minutes before the break to make victory a formality.

Taking possession off Nabil Bentaleb, the United captain ran unchecked through Tottenham's defence before slotting the ball home and celebrating with a flurry of punches and a collapse to the floor to mimic the morning newspaper report which claimed he had been knocked out in an impromptu boxing bout in his kitchen with Stoke defender Phil Bardsley.

Earlier, Diego Costa ended his seven-game drought but the Chelsea striker's 18th Premier League goal of the season was not enough to secure victory as the leaders were held to a 1-1 draw by Southampton at Stamford Bridge.

Jose Mourinho's side were desperate to bounce back from their midweek Champions League exit against Paris Saint Germain and take advantage of Manchester City's surprise defeat against Burnley on Saturday.

But Dusan Tadic's 19th penalty cancelled out Costa's 11th minute opener and denied the

**RESULTS**

Chelsea 1 (Costa 11) Southampton 1 (Tadic 19-pen)  
Everton 3 (McCarthy 20, Lukaku 56-pen, Barkley 90) Newcastle 0  
Manchester United 3 (Fellaini 9, Carrick 19, Rooney 34)  
Tottenham 0

Blues the chance to establish an even more commanding lead over the chasing pack.

While a point extended Chelsea's lead at the head of the table to six points, having played a game less than second-placed City, it was a disappointing end to a frustrating week for Mourinho and company.

The draw also frustrated Southampton who were unable to force their way back into contention for a top four finish.

Mourinho had responded to the Champions League exit by rounding on his team's critics - Jamie Carragher and Graeme Souness, the former Liverpool players turned TV pundits, came in for particular attention for their comments about the Chelsea players behaviour towards the referee - and bullishly insisting his team would make up for that set-back by winning the title.



**ROONEY knocked out!**

AFP, London

Manchester United star Wayne Rooney has found himself embroiled in a bizarre incident after footage emerged of him being knocked out by former team-mate Phil Bardsley in an impromptu boxing match in his kitchen, apparently on February 22.

Rooney was sent sprawling after Bardsley jabbed him with his left hand as they indulged in a friendly sparring bout.

The 29-year-old England skipper is seen falling to the floor and appears to hit his head on the ground.

He was left apparently out cold, arms splayed to the side and his head partially under a dining room chair. As he lay unconscious, shocked friends rushed over before filming came to an end.

The footage could see Rooney find himself in hot water both with his club and with England manager Roy Hodgson.

The tussle could have left Rooney with serious injuries and many medical experts have advised Rooney to get an MRI done for his own health and well-being.

**Hamilton wins Australian GP**

AFP, Melbourne

Lewis Hamilton held off team-mate Nico Rosberg to give Mercedes a dominant victory as the season-opening Australian Grand Prix was hit by a series of withdrawals on Sunday.

Reigning world champion Hamilton led from the start to the chequered flag, beating last year's winner Rosberg by 1.3 seconds, with Sebastian Vettel third in his Ferrari debut.

Only 11 cars finished the race after mechanical problems left just 15 on the starting grid -- the lowest number for a year-opener since 1963.

Max Verstappen's record-breaking debut at the age of 17 years and 166 days ended on a sour note when his Toro Rosso suffered a power unit failure on the 34th lap.

At the front, Mercedes were in ominous form with Hamilton finishing a whopping 34 seconds in front of Vettel, indicating a tough year ahead for him.

Hollywood star Arnold Schwarzenegger awarded the trophies at the podium ceremony.



Raihan Hasan (R) and Wahed Ahmed (2nd from R), along with their teammates, set off for the Savar BKSP yesterday for the remainder of the under-23 camp for the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers to be held in Dhaka from March 27 to 31.

PHOTO: COURTESY

**No Singapore fixtures**

**Trimmed U-23 squad moves to BKSP**

SPORTS REPORTER

The planned fixtures of the national under-23 team in Singapore have been cancelled due to official complications as the camp moved to BKSP in Savar with a trimmed contingent of 26 players.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) had planned two practice matches for the under-23 team against their Singaporean counterparts in Singapore, ahead of the AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers after getting an invitation from the Football Association of Singapore. But due to some official complications, the plan has been shelved and replaced by a couple of practice matches against local premier league outfits, claimed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

"They (Singapore Football Association) had told us that we would get on-arrival visa so we were looking to play the first match on the 18th of March. But now they have realised that on-arrival visa cannot be attained and it would take at least four days to complete the visa procedures, which we thought would hamper the team's preparations. That is why we had to cancel the planned

tour," Shohag told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the 37-member initial squad was trimmed to 26 members yesterday as the players travelled to Savar BKSP to continue with the rest of the camp. Head coach Lodewijk de Kruif informed that he omitted 10 players - Omar Faruk and Ahsanul Haque of Abahani; Rakibul Islam, Sohel Rana and Fazle Rabbi of Sheikh Russel; Mohammad Ibrahim of Mohammedan SC; Javed Khan, Naimur Rahman and Bishwajit Ghosh of Muktijoddha Sangsad; Rafi Rahman of Farashganj MFS - due to their performances after having watched them play. Krishna Mali of Rahmatganj, who has been suffering from chicken pox, did not join the camp.

The AFC U-23 Championship Qualifiers begin on March 27 when hosts Bangladesh take on Syria. Bangladesh, pitted in group E, will play against Uzbekistan on March 29 and India on March 31.

**SQUAD**

Raihan, Yeasin, Sohel, Rubel, Toklish, Nahid, Fahad, Shahed, Shajib, Shakil, Badsha, Babu, Wahed, Liton, Tapu, Hemanta, Yusuf, Faisal, Jewel, Sujan, Anis, Mezbah, Rabbi, Nayeem, Absar, Masud.



Professor Khaleda Ekram, vice-chancellor of BUET, handing over the winners' trophy of annual athletics competition to the Titumir Hall team at the BUET playground on Friday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

**Ronaldo most 'liked' player**

GOAL.COM

Despite going through a rough patch on the field at Real Madrid, Cristiano Ronaldo has become the most 'liked' person on Facebook.

The attacker surpassed 100 million Facebook likes in October, but his stature on the social network site has grown since then as he currently has over 107 million fans.

Unsurprisingly, Lionel Messi is the second-most popular footballer in the world on Facebook, with 78 million likes.

Real Madrid themselves have gathered over 82.9 million fans - marginally less than Barca's 83.6 million.

David Beckham comes third in the list of most popular current and former football players with just over 52 million, though Neymar is fast approaching the same figure.

**A day away...**

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The confidence level is high after their win against England and a close contest against New Zealand. They will however, apart from battling the Indian team on the field, have to play against a huge wave of Indian fans at the MCG who will be expected to fill more than half the stadium.

The mighty South Africans buckled under the pressure stirred from the thousands of tri-coloured flags in the venue. The question remains as to whether Bangladesh can be any different.

Sure enough, yesterday the players spent one of the more tensed-free days of the tour. But as soon as they hit training at the MCG today, all that is going to change.

**'We can reach...**

FROM PAGE S1

the opening aspect, an area where the Tigers have failed in throughout the competition.

"Our performance in the first round was decent but it could have been much better had we won the last match against New Zealand. We were in a position to win the match. But what has happened has happened.

"I know for the openers it's quite difficult to survive against the new balls from both ends. But still if we get a start the total scenario will change as our middle order has so far done a decent job. Our batting has been fantastic, I can bet that nobody expected such a performance from us with the bat. But it will be more effective if our openers play well," explained the captain.

He further hoped that his bowlers could restrict India below a total of 300.

"Teams like Australia, South Africa and India have all conceded huge scores, so the scenario is difficult. But we have to try to restrict our opponents below 300 runs. I think in the next three days we will be able to fine tune our bowling," he hoped, adding that every team in the knock out stage had an equal chance to reach the semi-final.

Mashrafe had a few special words reserved for Mahmudullah Riyad as well.

"We promoted him to number four because we were confident about him. But honestly speaking nobody expected him to do what he did. I am looking for a bigger achievement from him after seeing the way he batted in the tournament."

**Ireland deserve more**

FROM PAGE S1

games against top-ranked nations. The Irish have battled like champions in this World Cup. From Porterfield becoming the first non-full member captain to score a century in the mega event to Alex Cusack's full-length diving catch to take them past Zimbabwe, there was plenty of hunger in their performance.

So much so that it took a rejuvenated Pakistan side which had beaten South Africa in the previous game -- to end their World Cup dreams. Towards the end, it all came down to their ability to handle pressure and Ireland, unfortunately, lost their way from the batting Powerplay onwards.

However, that did not, by any means, take the gleam off their main aim in the tournament; that was to prove to the ICC that hosting a World Cup with only 10 teams in 2019 was the wrong way to go.

They repeatedly enforced their point in almost every pre-match press conference. Their last, the one before the match against Pakistan, was perhaps the most vocal.

It wouldn't matter whether they qualified or not, they had already proved their point, a confident Porterfield had said. UAE could have gone over the line against Zimbabwe and Afghanistan should have beaten Sri Lanka, he added. He didn't just speak for Ireland, but the unprivileged group as a whole.

Ireland's departure has, in a way, brought an end to an era of their cricketers. The likes of Ed Joyce or Niall O'Brien are unlikely to represent them in the next mega event; if Ireland play at all.

And with that the question has been passed down to the younger generation; to the likes of George Dockrell and Andy Balbirnie; when will it ever be enough for Ireland?

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