

A BECKHAM EXCLUSIVE

Adidas clearly want to make as much noise about Manchester United's new kit as possible, and so they have sent some kits to David Beckham, who has modelled the shirt on Instagram. Interestingly, the Manchester Evening News reports that while Becks was able to wear a 'Beckham 7' 2015-16 shirt, fans are prohibited from buying it at the club megastore. The megastore is unable to print the names of either Beckham, Eric Cantona or Cristiano Ronaldo on the back of United's new Adidas shirts due to image rights, so don't expect to get one... not from the official store at least.

—INTERNET



CHAMPS LEAGUE PLAY-OFF Man United face Brugge

AFP, Switzerland

Manchester United were given a kind draw in the Champions League play-offs as they were paired with Belgians Club Brugge on Friday.

The three-time former winners, making their return to Europe's premier club competition after a one-year hiatus, will play the first leg at their Old Trafford home.

"We're absolutely delighted to be back in the competition. We're back where we want to be," said United club secretary John Alexander.

"We'd like to think we can win the competition."

In other pairings in the League Route, Spaniards Valencia, finalists in 2000 and 2001, drew 2004 finalists Monaco of France while the clash of the round sees Italians Lazio up against Germany's Bayer Leverkusen, beaten finalists in 2002.

DRAW

Astana (KAZ) v APOEL (CYP)
 Skenderbeu (ALB) v Dinamo Zagreb (CRO)
 Celtic (SCO) v Malmo (SWE)
 Basel (SUI) v Maccabi Tel-Aviv (ISR)
 BATE (BLR) v Partizan Belgrade (SRB)
 Lazio (ITA) v Bayer Leverkusen (GER)
 Manchester United (ENG) v Club Brugge (BEL)
 Sporting Lisbon (POR) v CSKA Moscow (RUS)
 Rapid Vienna (AUT) v Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR)
 Valencia (ESP) v Monaco (FRA)
 First legs to be played August 18/19, second legs on August 25/26

MU launch bid to usurp Chelsea Sheikh Russel widen gap

AFP, London



Manchester United open the new Premier League season at home to Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday looking for signs that they are ready to mount a sustained assault on Chelsea's title.

Last season's equivalent fixture, a 3-0 home win on March 15, proved the belated catalyst for a run of form that ensured Louis van Gaal ended his first season as manager with United back in the Champions League places.

But with some £77 million (\$120 million, 110 million euros) having been spent on new players including Memphis Depay, Morgan Schneiderlin and Bastian Schweinsteiger, United have set their sights a little higher.

"(Last season) we could see that we were getting better gradually, but we just needed that consistency in our performances and then, obviously, in results," captain Wayne Rooney told ESPN this week.

"But we could see in each game we were getting better. I feel this season for the first time, rather than the last two seasons, we're ready to challenge again."

Saturday's lunchtime game at Old Trafford will give United's fans a clearer idea of how their team will line up this season, with Rooney expected to lead the line as a lone striker in a 4-3-3 formation.

Tottenham finished fifth last term, six points below fourth-place United, and will hope to make a more convincing case for Champions League qualification despite a relatively quiet transfer window.

Spurs' defence has been bolstered by the arrivals of Toby Alderweireld, Kevin Wimmer and Kieran Trippier, but in attack, Harry Kane is under pressure to repeat the feats of his stunning 31-goal breakthrough season.

Chelsea begin their title defence



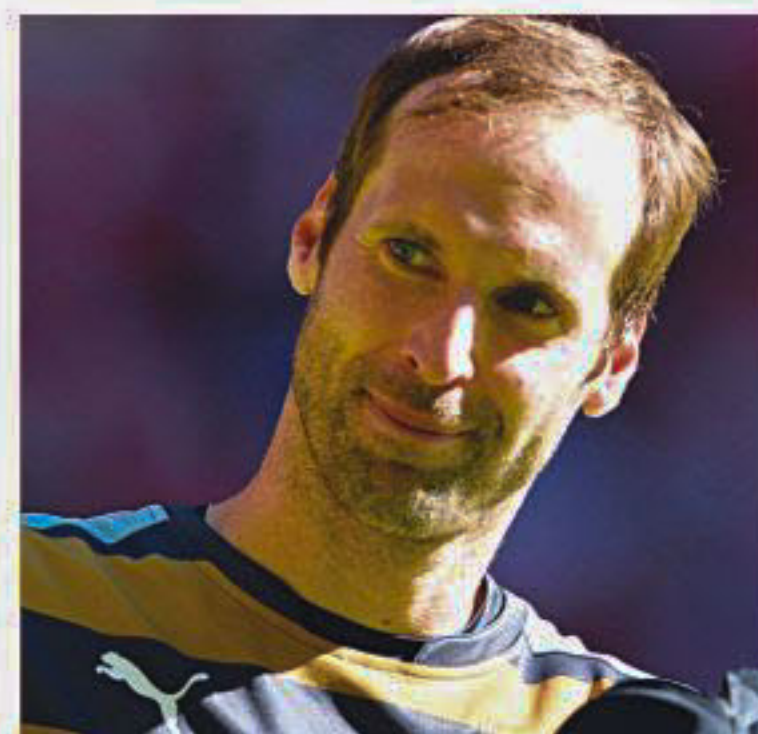
BASTIAN SCHWEINSTEIGER



MEMPHIS DEPAY



RADAMEL FALCAO



PETR CECH



RAHEEM STERLING



ROBERTO FIRMINO

at home to Swansea City, who will be looking to repeat their sensational opening-day exploits from last season, when they won 2-1 against United at Old Trafford.

The champions have spluttered in pre-season, failing to win any of their five games and losing 1-0 to Arsenal in the Community Shield, and could be without last season's top scorer Diego Costa due to a hamstring injury.

Chelsea finished eight points above second-place Manchester City, the outgoing champions, in May, but manager Jose Mourinho believes this season's title race will be a much tighter affair.

"Maybe I'm wrong, but I think fewer points will win the title," he said. "You have a minimum of five title contenders and the other teams

get stronger and stronger.

"Every club has very good players so I think it's difficult for the top teams in England because of the competitive nature."

FIXTURES

Saturday
 (1400 GMT unless otherwise stated):
 Bournemouth v Aston Villa, Chelsea v Swansea City (1630 GMT), Everton v Watford, Leicester City v Sunderland, Manchester United v Tottenham Hotspur (1145 GMT), Norwich City v Crystal Palace

Sunday
 (1230 GMT unless otherwise stated):
 Arsenal v West Ham United, Newcastle United v Southampton, Stoke City v Liverpool (1500 GMT)

Monday (1900 GMT):
 West Bromwich Albion v Manchester City

Arsenal, bolstered by the arrival from Chelsea of goalkeeper Petr Cech, begin their season with a home fixture against London rivals West Ham United, who now have their former defender Slaven Bilic at the helm.

City travel to West Bromwich Albion on Monday, while Liverpool, sixth last season, start out at Stoke City, where they were dealt a humiliating 6-1 defeat on the campaign's final day.

"We didn't end the last season particularly well and I think we owe it to the fans to make amends," said Liverpool's German midfielder Emre Can.

Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers is expected to hand competitive debuts to a number of new signings, including James Milner, Roberto Firmino and Christian Benteke.

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC consolidated their second position Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League table with a thrilling 4-3 win over Feni Soccer Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The former champions had to dig deep and needed an injury time strike from Kingsley Chigozie to see them over the line.

The 12th win in 18 matches means Sheikh Russel take their tally to 38 points from 18 outings, four ahead of joint third-placed Mohammedan SC and Abahani, with only two games against Chittagong Abahani and Rahmatganj MFS to go.

The 2012-13 league champions fell behind in the 10th minute when Feni Soccer forward Sohel Mia danced past centre-back Atiqur Rahman Meshu to drive home.

However the Blue Tigers hit back 14 minutes later, Mithun Chowdhury slamming home after darting into the box on a long ball from the deep.

CTG ABAHANI	0 - 0	TEAM BJMC
BROTHERS	1 - 0	RAHMATGANJ
FENI SOCCER	3 - 4	SHEIKH RUSSEL

Paul Emile headed in to give Sheikh Russel the lead in the 51st minute before Zahid Hossain Emily made it 3-1 just two minutes later.

Sheikh Russel's horrible defending paved the way for a Feni fightback, with Ali Hossain reducing the arrears in the 58th minute before Abdullah Al Mamun equalised in the 61st minute.

However, Chigozie made sure all three points were in Sheikh Russel's coffers finishing his solo move with a clinical finish two minutes into stoppage time.

Meanwhile, Brothers Union notched up their ninth victory with a 1-0 win over Rahmatganj MFS at the same venue earlier in the day. Mohammad Rony struck the decisive goal in the 15th minute to help the Gopibagh outfit stay in fifth position, with 32 points while Rahmatganj remained in ninth position with 14 points.

Away at the MA Aziz Stadium, hosts Chittagong Abahani held Team BJMC to a goalless draw to stay ahead of suspended Farashganj SC with 12 points. Team BJMC were in eighth position with 16 points.

CONGRATULATIONS SYLHET DIVISION SPELLERS!

Hello participants from Sylhet Division! Those who have qualified for the Divisional Round, be at the **Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium, Rekabi Bazar, Sylhet** on **Saturday, August 08, 2015** at **11:00 AM** sharp.

SEE YOU TODAY!



Title Sponsor

The Daily Star

Enlightened by



Brought to you by



Telecast Partner



Associate Partner

