

**SONY ESPN**  
Indian Premier League  
Bangalore v Gujarat  
Live from 4:30pm  
Kolkata v Pune

Live from 8:30pm  
Rome Open  
Semifinal  
Live from 12:30am (Sunday)  
**STAR SPORTS 1**

Bundesliga  
Bayern Munich v Hannover  
Live from 7:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS 2**  
Bundesliga

Borussia Dortmund v FC Koln  
Live from 7:30pm  
**STAR Sports 4**  
Bundesliga  
Leverkusen v FC Ingolstadt

Live from 7:30pm  
**SONY SIX**  
Serie A  
AC Milan v Roma  
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

**SONY SIX HD**  
Serie A  
Napoli v Frosinone  
Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

**Dhaka Premier Cricket League**  
Time: 9:00am  
Venue: Fatullah  
Sk Jamal v Kalabagan KC

Venue: SBNS  
Brothers Union v Cricket Coaching School  
Venue: BKSP-3  
Kalabagan CA v Gazi Group

# Valbuena, Ben Arfa miss the cut

AFP, Paris

France coach Didier Deschamps named his 23-man squad for Euro 2016 on Thursday, with both Mathieu Valbuena and Hatem Ben Arfa missing the cut.

Valbuena's season has been overshadowed by the sextape blackmail affair in which he has been a victim and which has seen star striker Karim Benzema of Real Madrid dropped by his country.

The Lyon midfielder has struggled for form and has unsurprisingly been left out of the hosts' squad for the finals.

"Mathieu has had a very difficult season with injuries and his level of performance has been below what he is capable of doing," said Deschamps, who announced his squad live on television station TF1's evening news bulletin.

Ben Arfa had been hopeful of making the squad after relaunching his career at Nice but instead has to settle for a place on the standby list of eight.

Liverpool defender Mamadou Sakho was also omitted after being suspended for 30 days by UEFA for failing a drugs test.

He tested positive for a fat burner after Liverpool's Europa League game against Manchester United in March and was given

a provisional ban at the end of April. Despite the absence of Benzema, who has scored 27 goals in 81 caps, France have great strength in depth in attack.

Arsenal's Olivier Giroud could lead the line while Antoine Griezmann is enjoying a superb season with Atletico Madrid.

Anthony Martial and Dimitri Payet have also enjoyed fine campaigns since moving to the English Premier League.

## SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Hugo Lloris (Tottenham Hotspur/ENG), Steve Mandanda (Marseille), Benoit Costil (Rennes)

**Defenders:** Raphael Varane (Real Madrid/ESP), Laurent Koscielny (Arsenal/ENG), Eliaquim Mangala (Manchester City/ENG), Jeremy Mathieu (Barcelona/ESP), Patrice Evra (Juventus/ITA), Bacary Sagna (Manchester City/ENG), Lucas Digne (Roma/ITA - on loan from Paris Saint-Germain), Christophe Jallet (Lyon)

**Midfielders:** Paul Pogba (Juventus/ITA), Blaise Matuidi (Paris Saint-Germain), Lassana Diarra (Marseille), N'Golo Kante (Leicester City/ENG), Yohan Cabaye (Crystal Palace/ENG), Moussa Sissoko (Newcastle United/ENG)

**Forwards:** Antoine Griezmann (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Dimitri Payet (West Ham United/ENG), Anthony Martial (Manchester United/ENG), Kingsley Coman (Bayern Munich/GER - on loan from Juventus/ITA), Olivier Giroud (Arsenal), Andre-Pierre Gignac (Tigres UANL/MEX)



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (C) sprints during a training session at Real Madrid sport city yesterday. Real are one point behind Barcelona heading into the final game of the season.

PHOTO: AFP

# Vallecano deny match-fixing

AFP, Madrid

Players of La Liga strugglers Rayo Vallecano vehemently denied any wrongdoing on Friday amid an investigation from the Spanish league into suspicious betting patterns before their 2-1 defeat to Real Sociedad last weekend.

Rayo now need to win against Levante on Sunday and hope other results go their way to avoid relegation.

All members of the playing squad attended a press conference along with coach Paco Jemez and president Raul Martin Presa to refute allegations made by Spanish newspaper El Mundo that the league are investigating if Rayo players deliberately lost the match in question.

"In no instance will we allow the honour, integrity and professionalism of all members of our squad to be doubted, nor will we allow these reports to stain the good name of the club, the players or the fans," the club said in a statement.

President of La Liga, Javier Tebas, confirmed an investigation into the match had begun as is routine when there is a significant fluctuation in odds before or during a match.

"The match between Real Sociedad and Rayo Vallecano had an unusual betting pattern, but that doesn't mean anything," he told Spanish radio station Cadena SER.

"When there are suspicions in any case we investigate and that is what we are doing."

El Mundo reported that the odds on Sociedad to win varied wildly throughout the week before the game.

However, the newspaper's claim that a meeting between the Rayo squad and fans' groups on Thursday was arranged to allay their suspicions was rejected by both the players and the supporters' clubs.

"The rumours that have appeared related to bonuses are totally false and were not discussed in said meeting (with the players) which was to show support," the association of Rayo supporters' clubs said via Twitter.

# Germany set Italy date

AFP, Berlin

Germany will play Italy in a friendly in their final game of 2016, the World Cup holders announced on Friday.

The game will be played in Italy at an as yet unknown venue on November 15 and will be their second friendly meeting of the year -- Germany beat Italy 4-1 in Munich in March.

"We always want to come up against the best teams in the world. It is the best way to continue our development," Germany team manager Olivier Bierhoff said.

Before that, and after Euro 2016 in France, the two nations will begin their 2018 World Cup qualifying campaigns in September.

Germany are in qualifying Group C for the finals in Russia and will begin their bid away to Norway on September 4 before hosting the Czech Republic and Northern Ireland in October and then going to San Marino on November 11.

Italy are in Group G and will go to Israel in September before hosting Spain and visiting Macedonia in October and then travelling to Liechtenstein on November 12.

# Barca have upper hand

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona have the upper hand in a final day showdown with Real Madrid for the Spanish title on Saturday as they know a victory at Granada will ensure them a 24th La Liga crown.

Madrid are a point behind and have to stretch their winning La Liga run to 12 games at Deportivo la Coruna and hope for a Barca slip up to land the title.

The battle between the two richest clubs in the world has come down to the final day thanks to Barca's incredible slump of three consecutive league defeats in April, the first time in 13 years they had gone on such a run.

However, the world champions have bounced back in style with four straight victories by a combined 21-0 scoreline to take them to the brink of a sixth Spanish title in eight seasons.

"It is essential for us to keep a clean sheet because we know from middle to front we can make the difference," Barca striker Luis Suarez said on Thursday.

"Mentally we have to be very strong and be aware of the fact that it is in our own hands."

"We have 93 or 94 minutes to win one match and we have already won a lot this season."

Suarez has come up big when Barca most needed him with 11 goals in his last four games to get the Catalan

giants back on track. Moreover, the Uruguayan is now well set to become the first player other than teammate Lionel Messi and Madrid rival Cristiano Ronaldo to win the Pichichi award for La Liga's top scorer in seven seasons.

Suarez's 37 La Liga goals as part of a tally of 56 in all competitions this season is four more than Ronaldo.

However, the former Liverpool striker claimed that individual glory will mean nothing if it is not accompanied by his second La Liga title.

"I am happy to help the team, but I don't care about the Pichichi or the

## FIXTURES

(all times GMT)  
**Saturday**  
Deportivo la Coruna v Real Madrid, Granada v Barcelona (1500), Atletico Madrid v Celta Vigo, Athletic Bilbao v Sevilla (1730)  
**Sunday**  
Malaga v Las Palmas (1000), Espanyol v Eibar (1700), Rayo Vallecano v Levante, Real Betis v Getafe, Sporting Gijon v Villarreal (1730)

golden boot if we are not champions and not able to achieve our objectives as a group."

Crucially, Barca are facing a Granada side with nothing left to play for after they sealed their survival with a 4-1 win at Sevilla last weekend.

"If I were a Barcelona player I would say the opponent doesn't matter. They have the team to be able to beat anyone, but we won't roll over," insisted Granada goalkeeper Andres Fernandez.

However, build-up to the final games has as ever in the final weeks of La Liga been dominated by whether teams going for the title or battling relegation should be allowed to pay bonuses to their rivals' opponents to win.

"I am a player that always goes out on the pitch motivated and to enjoy myself," added Fernandez.

"For me the subject of bonuses is difficult. The league ought to take action."

Despite a looming Champions League final against Atletico Madrid, Real are set to recall Gareth Bale and goalkeeper Keylor Navas from injury in A Coruna against a Deportivo side also with nothing to play for.

"I don't think they will go out on the pitch relaxed," said Madrid defender Marcelo.

"Teams always play their best against Madrid and I am sure Deportivo will want to win."

The situation at the bottom is just as tight with Getafe, Sporting Gijon and Rayo Vallecano battling to avoid joining Levante in being relegated.

Getafe have matters in their own hands as victory at Real Betis on Sunday will secure their place in the top flight for a 13th consecutive season.

Sporting are level on points with Getafe but are in the relegation zone due to their inferior head-to-head record and need to better the Madrid side's result when they host Villarreal.

Rayo can only be saved by bettering both Getafe and Sporting's results at home to Levante.

# Ibrahimovic leaving PSG

AFP, Paris

Zlatan Ibrahimovic said Friday he was leaving French champions Paris Saint-Germain at the end of this season, in a message on the Swedish striker's Twitter account.

"My last game tomorrow at Parc des Princes. I came like a king, left like a legend," wrote Ibrahimovic, who has been crowned France's player of the year for a record third time.

Ibrahimovic, whose final match will be against Nantes on Saturday, has scored 34 goals in the league this season, leading PSG to a fourth consecutive Ligue 1 title, but his contract expires at the end of the season.

There have been rumours that the 34-year-old wants to play next season in the English Premier League but his agent has suggested he could return to one of his former clubs, Italian side AC Milan.

Despite his superb form in the domestic league, Ibrahimovic performed poorly in PSG's Champions League quarter-final exit at the hands of Manchester City.

# Czech FA suspends drunk refs

AFP, Prague

The Czech Football Association (FAČR) on Thursday banned two referees who appeared drunk on the pitch during a top-flight game between FK Pribram and Slavia Prague the day before.

The FAČR said fourth official Marek Pilny and additional assistant referee Jiri Jech would lose their licences and face disciplinary action.

"Pilny was visibly drunk from the beginning of the game," the association said in a statement.

"He struggled for balance by the touchline, he fell, at times he ran with the linesman copying his movements."

"After 10 minutes he had to be guarded by a bodyguard, and at halftime Pilny left for the changing rooms and never came back," the association said.

It added additional assistant Jech was "also under the influence of alcohol and allegedly even peed during the game."

FA head Miroslav Pelta said the game's referee and two linesmen would be suspended until the end of the season because they failed to prevent the situation.

# Terry ponders new one-year deal

AFP, London

Chelsea captain John Terry has been offered a new one-year deal, the English Premier League club said Friday.

The 35-year-old centre-half, who has spent his entire senior club career with the west London side, is out of contract at the end of the season.

In January, Terry -- who has made more than 700 Chelsea appearances since his debut in October 1998 -- said he would not be extending his time at Stamford Bridge.

However, Chelsea countered that a new offer was possible.

And on Friday a Chelsea spokesperson said: "(Director) Marina Granovskaia and (chairman) Bruce Buck met with John and his agent this week and offered him a one-year contract extension."

"With it coming so late in the season, this is a big decision for John and his family and it is something that they are now considering."

There had been speculation that last week's loss at Sunderland, where former England defender Terry was sent off, marked the end of his Blues' career as he is now banned from Sunday's final game of the

season at home to Leicester City -- Chelsea's successors as Premier League champions.

The timing of Chelsea's statement also appeared to reflect a desire on the part of club officials to avoid interim manager Guus Hiddink's final pre-match press conference on Friday being dominated by questions over Terry's future.

Antonio Conte will replace veteran Dutch boss Hiddink once his time in charge of Italy at the European Championship in France is finished.

"It's good to have big players in a club who are big personalities," Hiddink said.

"I'm always in favour, generally, that players, ex-players -- I'm not talking about John now -- are having a lot of influence in the culture of the club."

"Maybe, I don't know when, in the future, it's also for John."

Terry first became involved in Chelsea's youth set-up as a 14-year-old and Hiddink added: "Twenty, 21 years at the club is huge."

"That's why they become legends. You must cherish those legends for the future as well."

Meanwhile, Claudio Ranieri believes Leicester City's shock title triumph has restored his reputation in the minds of his critics ahead of an emotional return to former club Chelsea this Sunday.

# Novak staves off Rafa threat

Murray also thru' to semis

REUTERS, Rome



World number one Novak Djokovic fended off a resurgent Rafael Nadal 7-5 7-6 (4) in a pulsating battle on Friday to reach the semi-finals of the Italian Open.

Nadal led 4-2 in the first set and had five set points on serve at 5-4 in the second but Djokovic held firm for a bruising clay-court victory which took two hours 24 minutes.

In the first set, Nadal broke to lead 3-2 but Djokovic recovered to level at 4-4 and then won the first set on his fourth set point. In the second set Nadal broke in the opening game and despite calling the physio because of pain in his left foot, he held his advantage to 5-4. Serving for the set he held five set points but Djokovic saved the lot and broke back, eventually sealing the match on a tiebreak.

Djokovic next meets Kei Nishikori of Japan or Dominic Thiem of Austria.

Earlier, Andy Murray held off a strong fightback from David Goffin to beat the Belgian 6-1 7-5.

In the women's event, last year's Wimbledon runner-up Garbine Muguruza of Spain beat Swiss Timea Bacsinszky 7-5 6-2 to reach the last four.

She plays American Madison Keys who overcame Czech Barbora Strycova 6-4 4-6 6-3.

Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu saw off Misaki Doi of Japan 6-2 7-6 (3) and next faces world number one Serena Williams or Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova.

