

What to WATCH

SONY SIX

Caribbean Premier League
Trinidad Knight Riders v St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots
Live from 9:30pm
Jamaica Tallawahs v St. Lucia Zouks
Live from 2:00am (Monday)

TEN 2

Zimbabwe v New Zealand
1st Test, Day 4
Live from 1:30pm
West Indies v India
2nd Test, Day 2
Live from 9:00pm

MERTESACKER OFFERS STRIKER SOLUTION

Arsenal fans have spent the summer despairing over the club's search for a new striker, with moves for Jamie Vardy, Alvaro Morata and Alexandre Lacazette failing to come to fruition. Arsene Wenger has insisted he is still on the lookout for an experienced goalscorer, but defender Per Mertesacker may have come up with the perfect solution - himself! The former Germany international has been sidelined with a knee injury that will rule him out for a number of months, but that has not stopped him from having a joke with Arsenal supporters. He posted a picture of himself on crutches on Twitter alongside the caption: "Thanks for all the get well soon messages. Doc said he built in a 20 goals guarantee. No striker rumours anymore." Depending on what happens during the remainder of the transfer window, the new club captain may well have to keep his promise if Arsenal are to challenge for silverware this term.

—AGENCIES



Muktis win easy

SPORTS REPORTER



A brace from Nigerian Ahmed Kolo Musa powered Muktijoddha Sangsad to an easy 3-0 win over promoted Arambagh KS in the JB Bangladesh Premier League at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Kolo Musa struck one in each half while substitute Javed Khan secured the other to ensure the All Reds got their first win from two outings after they were held to a 1-1 draw against Team BJMC in their first match.

The win also put Muktijoddha Sangsad on top of the 12-team table along with Sheikh Jamal DC, Abahani, Chittagong Abahani and Rahmatganj MFS as all five teams have an equal four points at the close of the second round of the ninth edition of the professional football league.

BJMC DRAW WITH BROTHERS

In the days other event, Brothers Union came from behind and managed a 1-1 draw against Team BJMC.

A second half stoppage time strike by Nigerian Nkwocha Kingsley canceled out the 14th-minute strike from Mokhlesur Rahman to help Brothers Union secure a valuable point.

Both Brothers Union and Team BJMC came into the match on the back of 1-1 draws against Feni Soccer Club and Muktijoddha Sangsad respectively.

BJMC dominated the the first half of the game however, the second half belonged to

the charges of Nepalese Balgopal Maharjan. BJMC looked to be the more confident side and were energetic from the outset, creating two goal scoring chances before ultimately taking the lead in the 14th minute courtesy of a horrible fumble by Brothers goalkeeper Uttam Barua.

At first Samson Iliasu played a nice forward pass for Mehdi Hasan Tapu who was then one-on-one with Uttam but the former Brothers striker struck straight to the advancing goalkeeper in the 10th minute before striker Sohel Rana drove it narrowly wide inside the box three minutes later.

Next minute, Mokhlesur made no mistake as he tapped one into the open net after Uttam failed to receive a backpass from defender Nazimuddin Mithu.

Brothers then pressed hard for the equalizer with Kingsley rattling the crossbar from the edge of the box on the half-hour mark. Later, young hitman Mannaf Rabbi was assisted by Augustine Walson and then with only the keeper to beat, the lad from Jessore scrapped the easy opportunity to level the margin by taking too much time on the shot.

Balgopal then changed up the right flank by sending in Mohammad Rony and so the winger finally turned into the provider. Rony whipped in a nice low cross for Walson who just needed to tap it into the back of the net, but the Haitian failed to collect it before Kingsley nodded another Rony cross home in the final minute of the four-minute added time of the second half.

BROTHERS UNION	1	-	1	TEAM BJMC
MUKTIJODDHA	3	-	0	ARAMBAGH



Brothers Union's Nigerian striker Nkwocha Kingsley (L) embarks on a celebratory run after scoring the equalising goal against Team BJMC during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Argentina Olympic team robbed

AFP, Puebla

Argentina's Olympic football team complained Friday that cash and electronics were stolen from its players' hotel rooms while they were playing a friendly in Mexico.

Argentina Football Association (AFA) vice president Claudio Tapia said the theft took place when Mexico and the South American team played to a 0-0 draw in the central city of Puebla on Thursday night.

It was the last preparation game before both countries compete in the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, which start next Friday.

"When we returned at 11:40 pm and went up to the rooms, we realized that they had been robbed," Tapia said, without specifying how much money was taken.

The Mexican Football Federation said in a statement late Friday that an agreement was finally reached between the AFA, the Camino Real hotel and an insurance firm to compensate the Argentine delegation.

Monfils sets up Djokovic semis

REUTERS, Toronto



Frenchman Gael Monfils maintained his run of brilliant form when he nullified Milos Raonic's big serve to eliminate the local favourite from the Rogers Cup in Toronto on Friday.

Monfils displayed his renowned athleticism in a high-quality quarter-final, relying on his lightning-fast court coverage to manufacture a 6-4 6-4 victory over the losing Wimbledon finalist.

The 10th seed set up a semi-final against top seed Novak Djokovic, who overcame poor serving and 33 unforced errors to beat Czech Tomas Berdych 7-6(6) 6-4 in an error-riddled match.

Second seed Stan Wawrinka and third seed Kei Nishikori will meet in Saturday's other semi-final.

Five days after ending a drought of more than two years by winning an ATP event in Washington, Monfils took his hot form with him north of the border.

The capacity evening crowd did their best to lift powerful Canadian Raonic, but Monfils, whose attitude has often been questioned, did not buckle against the fourth seed.

Earlier, Djokovic staved off three set points in a first set tiebreak before improving his career record against Berdych to 25-2.

The Serbian admitted he was lucky to

advance after saving seven of eight break points.

"Bit fortunate I must say," he said in an on-court interview. "My serve just wasn't right today. I just completely lost my rhythm, and he was taking over control of my second serve, attacking it."

"On a quick surface like this you need a good serve. Today it wasn't to be but I won in straight sets."

In the afternoon session, Swiss Wawrinka advanced with a comprehensive 6-1 6-3 victory over big-serving South African Kevin Anderson.

"I started really well from the first game," said Wawrinka, a two-times grand slam champion who is seeking his 15th ATP World Tour title. "It showed me that I was ready, aggressive, moving really well."

"It's one of the best matches of the year I played, I think. I was calm. Serving really good. Mixing a lot. I was reading the game well, good in defence and found a way to come back and attack."

Next up for Wawrinka is Nishikori, who battled past unseeded Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 6-3 3-6 6-2.

The Japanese player, who reached the final in Miami and the last four in both Madrid and Rome in ATP Masters 1000 events earlier this season, emerged victorious in a see-sawing encounter that lasted a little more than two hours.

Pogba not a done deal: Raiola

AFP, Paris

No deal has been reached between Juventus and Manchester United concerning the touted transfer of French international Paul Pogba, the player's agent Mino Raiola insisted Friday.

"Journalist = parrots. No deal done between clubs," Raiola wrote on Twitter. "It's a game between Italy press and UK press who announce it first and who is worse."

United have reportedly had an £86 million (\$113 million, 102 million euros) offer turned down by the Italian champions as they try to lure Pogba back to Old Trafford four years after allowing him to leave on a free transfer.

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho all but confirmed United were interested in signing the 23-year-old playmaker last week, stating: "You have smoke, you have fire. I am not going to try to make you naive and believe that we are not trying for one player."

Argentina need Messi: Perez

AFP, Buenos Aires



The acting head of Argentina's FA, Armando Perez, insisted he would do all he could to lure Lionel Messi out of international retirement during an upcoming visit to the Barcelona superstar in Spain.

"We need Messi," Perez stressed to AFP on Friday, with Argentina left in shock after the five-time world player of the year announced his retirement following a penalty shootout defeat to defending champions Chile in last month's Copa America Centenario final.

"I got to Madrid on Saturday. I've spoken with Jorge, his father, who told me he would be available on these days," said Perez, the head of a FIFA-appointed normalisation committee currently in charge of the AFA.

"We'll see what he tells me. I want to know the reasons that drove him to quit the national team and to see if I can do something to get him to come back," he added.

Perez is also due to meet Sevilla coach Jorge Sampaoli, the man who led Chile past Argentina to their maiden Copa America title a year ago and is AFA's "number one candidate" for the vacant manager's role.

"I spoke to him and I know he wants to manage the national team. But we have a huge obstacle in economic terms because he's under contract with Sevilla," said Perez.

Sampaoli, 56, joined Europa League champions Sevilla last month after replacing Unai Emery and the club have ruled out the Argentine's departure or any job-sharing arrangement.

He has a six-million-euro release clause, although Perez conceded the AFA didn't have the funds available to buy Sampaoli out of his contract.

"But we'll try and free it up one way or another," he said, with Perez also due to holds talks with sportswear giant Adidas over a new deal with the Argentine federation.

Fire in Rio Olympic Village

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

The Australian team said they evacuated their building at the Olympic Village in Rio de Janeiro because of a fire in the basement on Friday, one week before the Games open.

The fire, which filled the stairwells of the building with smoke, caused no injuries and the team was back in the building after around half an hour, a team spokesman said.

It was the latest incident in a tense week at the Olympic Village, where Australia and several other teams complained about unfinished and dirty rooms before moving in.

"We are all accounted for," said Mike Tancred, director of media and communications for the Australian Olympic Committee, adding that the fire did not appear to have been serious.

"It was a good drill for us. We cleared all 23 floors of the building," he added.

A spokesman for Rio's fire department declined to comment.

Brazil coach hails Neymar

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Barcelona superstar Neymar was hailed as "a good guy with a huge heart" after being named captain of the Brazil Olympic team on Thursday.

Coach Rogerio Micalle admitted that appointing the international star as skipper was an easy decision to make for a team who have never won football gold at the Olympics.

"Neymar has exceeded my expectations. He is appreciated, he's a good guy with a huge heart especially around the younger players," said Micalle.

"He has shown that he is more than just a great player -- he's a great man admired by everybody."

Micalle said he had no fears that Brazil could become a one-man team.

"I want to be dependent on Neymar. What coach in the world would not want a Neymar in their team?"

At the Olympics, which get under way on August 5, Brazil are in Group A in the first round where they will face South Africa, Iraq and Denmark.



Brazil superstar Neymar (C) takes part in a training session of the Olympic team at the Serra Dourada Stadium in Goiania Goias State on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

'Russian team stands at 266'

AFP, Moscow



Russia's sports minister said Saturday that the national team to compete in the Rio Olympics starting next week so far has 266 competitors, although decisions were still pending on several athletes.

"As of this morning I can say that we will represent 29 disciplines out of 34, with 266 people," minister Vitaly Mutko said in an interview with sports channel Match-TV.

Besides 67 track and field athletes banned by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) over revelations of a state-run doping scheme, dozens more have been told not to compete in Brazil, including swimmers, rowers, and wrestlers.

Mutko said that Russia is still expecting to hear final judgement on its swimming team Saturday.

"In swimming, we announced a team of 35 people, now 26 have passed the selection process," he said, adding that he expected a final decision "today".

The US Anti-Doping Agency said Friday that Olympic medalist Nikita Lobintsev has tested positive for meldonium, the substance banned in the beginning of 2016. He is one of seven swimmers who have been banned from Rio.

The International Weightlifting Federation on Friday banned the eight-strong weightlifting team, saying Russian athletes have to assume collective responsibility following positive results of seven dope tests which have been re-examined from past Olympics.

Mutko slammed the decision, saying the IWF should have let clean athletes compete.

"They should have decided to permit all athletes with spotless reputation (to the Games)" he said, specifically referring to Oleg Chen and David Berdzhanyan.