

UEFA charges Evra

AFP, Marseille



EUROPA LEAGUE

Marseille's Patrice Evra was handed an initial one-match ban by UEFA Friday prior to a disciplinary hearing following his sending-off for launching a karate-style kick at a fan's head before a Europa League match against Vitoria Guimaraes.

Marseille announced they had opened an inquiry after the 36-year-old full-back was handed a red-card on Thursday following the heated altercation with a group of the French club's fans on the touchline before kick-off in Portugal.

European football governing body UEFA said Evra was banned for "violent conduct" and indicated that the former French international faced further sanctions at a disciplinary hearing next week.

"Following his dismissal, the player is suspended for at least one match. The UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body will decide on this case at its next meeting on 10 November," UEFA said in a statement.

Both Marseille and Guimaraes, who went on the win the tie 1-0, were also charged over their fans invading the pitch.

Announcing their probe, Marseille said in a statement: "No matter what happens, a professional player must maintain self-control despite provocations and insults, no matter how unjustified they may be."

Evra was confronted by a group of supporters who had managed to get out of an

area in the Afonso Henriques ground reserved for around 500 Marseille fans.

Stewards at the ground quickly intervened to break up the trouble, with Evra, who was originally listed as a substitute, ordered to return to the dressing room by the referee.

"Pat has experience, and he must not react, it's obvious," said Marseille coach Rudi Garcia whose side lost the game 1-0 and also had Boubacar Kamara sent off three minutes from time.

"Patrice is more than just an experienced player. You can't respond, of course, to insults, as bad as they are and as incredible as they might be because they come from one of our supporters.

"He must learn to keep his cool. That's all I can say."

Garcia, however, blasted the fan who taunted the 81-times capped Evra at the compact Portuguese stadium.

"He's not a supporter of Marseille, because you can't insult your own players, you have to be behind all of us."

The incident immediately brought back memories of another act of kung-fu kick madness by a French footballer.

In January 1995, Eric Cantona, playing for Manchester United, launched a flying studs-first kick at a Crystal Palace supporter at Selhurst Park who had jeered him after he was sent off for kicking Eagles defender Richard Shaw.

As he was walking towards the tunnel, Cantona launched himself feet first at Palace fan Matthew Simmons, who was shouting abuse at the enigmatic striker.



Teammates try to calm down Marseille defender Patrice Evra as he attempts to kick a supporter before the start of their Europa League Group I match against Vitoria SC in Guimaraes on Thursday. Marseille lost the match 1-0.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Junior athletics from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The 33rd National Junior Athletics Championships get underway today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, with some 600 boys and girls expected to participate in the two-day meet.

Boys and girls from under-17 and under-19 age groups from 64 districts, divisions, educational boards and BKSP will be competing in 33 events, which will be held without an electronic timer.

After the 2010 SA Games, the Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BHF) held only a couple of national meets with the newly-installed electronic timer before it was removed ahead of the 2011 ICC World Cup. Since then the facilities have been devoid of the electronic devices, compelling the BAF to hold national meets with hand timers.

The BAF officials claimed the National Sports Council (NSC) has not responded to their repeated appeals to repair the electronic timers. One of the NSC officials, however, declined to comment on the issue as he felt he needed to go through documents to check the validity of the claim.

Meanwhile, the BAF is considering this junior meet as a stage for talent hunting.

"We are arranging the junior championships to hunt talents because we want to pick some 30 to 40 athletes apart from the BKSP ones for long-term training," BAF president ASM Ali Kabir said at a press conference yesterday.

The federation and its officials will bear the expenditure of the meet as the federation turned down an offer from sponsors, who wanted to nominate the guests for the opening and closing ceremonies.

The BAF president also informed that they are planning to bring International Association of Athletics Federations' (IAAF) vice-president and Ukrainian pole vault legend Sergei Bubka in December during the National Athletic Championships. IAAF president Sebastian Coe is also expected to visit Bangladesh in 2019 after visiting Nepal during the South Asian Games, Ali added.

Arsenal thru, Everton out

AFP, Paris

Arsenal reached the Europa League last 32 Thursday as Everton crashed out and Patrice Evra was red-carded for a karate kick at one of his own Marseille fans -- before the match had even started.

Arsene Wenger's Arsenal fought out a drab 0-0 draw with Red Star Belgrade at the Emirates but the point was enough to make sure of qualifying for the knockout round with two games to spare in Group H.

The result allowed the Gunners to stretch their unbeaten home run in all competitions to 16 games.

Veteran Marseille defender Evra was sent off after launching a karate-style kick at one of his team's own supporters before the match against Vitoria Guimaraes in Portugal.

Struggling Everton crashed out after a 3-0 defeat in Lyon.

Languishing in the relegation zone in the Premier League and without a permanent manager since the sacking of Ronald Koeman last week, Everton succumbed to three second-half goals.

Bertrand Traore rounded Jordan Pickford to break the deadlock on 68 minutes in the Group E clash.

Memphis Depay then set up 19-year-old Houssein Aouar to steer in a slick second goal for the hosts on 76 minutes. The former Manchester United winger completed the scoring himself late on after another ex-United player, Morgan Schneiderlin, was sent off for a second booking.

BHF wants to focus on domestic front

SPORTS REPORTER



Having hosted three international tournaments -- Hockey World League Round-2, Under-18 Asia Cup and Men's Asia Cup this year, the Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is now mulling to transfer attention to top-tier domestic competitions.

Even though the BHF held the national hockey championship and youth national championship this year, but it totally ignored top-tier club competitions such as the cup and the premier division league which are the source of bread and butter for the hockey players.

Due to the irregularity of club competitions, most of the national team players previously joined different services teams, but the rest of the players are in dire straits as regards to earning a living. The premier league was last held one-and-a-half year ago following players' transfers in February, 2016.

There was demand from the players to complete this season's transfers before the start of the Asia Cup, but most of the premier league clubs did not respond to the players' demands. The clubs, however, agreed in principle to take part in the transfers after the completion of the Asia Cup, which ended on October 22.

The BHF has already called a meeting with the premier league clubs on November 7 to discuss the issue with an eye on holding the club cup next month. However, things are a bit complicated as some of the organisers want to be sure about the fate of the BHF polls, which were postponed on August 17 due to the country's flood situation.

"If we continue to hold international tournaments one after another, then it will not be possible to

develop domestic hockey," BHF general secretary Abdus Sadeque said. "We have called all premier league clubs for a meeting on Tuesday to for their views on domestic competitions."

"Our intention is to start the club cup in December after completing the players' transfer this month and begin the premier league in January, keeping February for preparation of the national team for March's Asian Games Qualifiers," Sadeque said. "But everything depends on the view of the clubs and I am optimistic if four big clubs -- Abahani, Mohammedan SC, Dhaka Mariner Youngs and Usha KC -- agree to participate in transfers, then it will be possible to complete the league before February next year."

The former national player informed that the BHF president met with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently to talk about the current situation of the federation and that the BHF president would take care of clubs' participation in the players' transfers.

However, vice president Abdur Rashid Shikdar questioned the fate of the postponed BHF polls in which he was a general secretary candidate.

"First I want to know whether the BHF polls will be held," Shikdar said. "If every federation including the Bangladesh Cricket Board can hold the polls, then why not BHF? If there is no elected committee at BHF, the real organisers will disappear gradually."

Veteran organiser Abdus Sadeque, however, has made a new proposal to appoint a paid general secretary to keep all the aspirants away in a bid to take hockey forward.

"Over the last 10 years there was conflict among the organisers over the general secretary post. Such differences among the organisers have only taken the game backward. So I have proposed the BHF president to appoint a paid general secretary through proper initiatives," said Sadeque.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Sarfaraz dispels claim that witchcraft helped SL win

Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed rejects claim from Sri Lanka captain that 'witchcraft' made Sri Lanka win. Chandimal had told reporters that he had received a special blessing from a meyni, or sorcerer, ahead of the two-match series in the United Arab Emirates.



Written-off Real will rebel, says Ramos

Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos warned those writing off the European champions will be "put in their place" despite an alarming slump in form that has left them eight points off Barcelona at the top of La Liga after just 10 games.



Messi fulfills promise to Doctors Without Borders

Barcelona star playmaker Lionel Messi donates 72,000 Euros to Doctors Without Borders, an organization that helps out with endemic diseases in war torn countries.



Nadal pulls out of Paris

AFP, Paris



World number one Rafael Nadal pulled out of the Paris Masters on Friday before his quarterfinal with a knee injury.

The Spaniard, who had his right knee strapped during his third-round win on Thursday, said he wanted to try and be ready to face Filip Krajinovic in the last eight but that "it wasn't possible to play".

He did not say if he would be fit to play at the World Tour Finals in London later this month.

"Yesterday (Thursday), the pain was very strong but it was not the moment to stop," Nadal told a press conference.

"I had treatment last night to try and be able to play today... But unfortunately it was impossible for me to return to the court in the same condition as last night. It is a sad day for me."

The 31-year-old became the oldest man to secure top spot in the end of season rankings when he beat Hyeon Chung in his opening match on Wednesday.

Nadal has fought back this year from a series of injuries, winning the French and US Open titles.

He missed the end of the 2012 season and the start of the following year with a left knee injury, and struggled with a wrist problem as he failed to



World No 1 Rafael Nadal withdrew from the Paris Masters yesterday due to a knee injury which may also keep him out of the World Tour Finals. PHOTO: AFP

reach a Grand Slam semifinal in 2015 and 2016.

But he allayed fears this fresh setback would lead to another lengthy spell on the sidelines.

"I had a long year, a lot of matches. I pushed the body," Nadal added. "We are at the end of the season. It's normal that these kind of things happen. The knee is always, you know, bothering a little bit, but sometimes it's worse, and now is a little bit worse."

If Nadal pulls out of the Tour Finals, it would leave Federer as the only mem-

ber of the 'Big Four' in the year-ending event for the first time since 2005.

"I'm going to do my treatment, do my best to be playing in London, but I cannot talk about that now because (it) is a day that is tough enough for me to pull out from here," he said.

"For me it's not about London. For me it's about longer term. And longer term I'm going to do the treatment I believe that (is) going to be more safe and more important to keep playing tennis as long as possible."

Jose clears tax fraud allegations

AFP, Madrid

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho was grilled by a judge in Spain on Friday over accusations of a 3.3 million euro tax fraud during his time in charge of Real Madrid in 2011 and 2012.

After leaving the brief closed-door hearing, the 54-year-old told reporters he had paid everything he owed to the Spanish tax office.

"I left Spain in 2013 with the conviction that my fiscal situation was perfectly legal," he said outside the court in Pozuelo de Alarcon.

"Two years later I was told that an investigation had been opened and that to regularise my situation I had to pay a certain amount. I did not debate it, did not appeal it, I paid and I signed an agreement of compliance with the state," he added.

"Everything was settled. This is why I was here for just five minutes to say the same things I am telling you. I have nothing more to say."

All roads lead to Bridge

AFP, London



Chelsea and Manchester United go head to head this weekend in a match neither club dare lose as Manchester City entertain Arsenal eyeing a chance to stretch their lead at the top of the Premier League.

Pep Guardiola's unbeaten City are smashing records with impunity and are already five points clear of Jose Mourinho's United after nine wins in 10 games.

Elsewhere, Tottenham will look to build on their impressive 3-1 win against European champions Real Madrid in mid-week and Liverpool will attempt to stay on the coattails of the Premier League pacesetters at West Ham.

Chelsea turned last season's Premier League race into a procession but it's been a different story this time around, with three defeats already -- they only lost five matches in the whole of last season.

Manager Antonio Conte criticised his side after they crashed 3-0 in Rome this week, saying they "lacked everything", though they are still likely to qualify for the Champions League knockout stages.

Chelsea are already nine points behind leaders Manchester City and defeat against United at Stamford Bridge on Sunday would leave them with an impossible-looking task.

Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho was lambasted for his cautious tactics in a 0-0 bore draw at Anfield last month, with critics saying he had missed a trick by failing to test Liverpool's suspect defence.

Since then they have laboured to a couple of wins against Benfica in the Champions League and beaten Spurs 1-0 on home turf in the Premier League, as well as losing to Huddersfield.

Sergio Aguero, who this week became Manchester City's all-time record goalscorer with 178 strikes, would be the stand-out star at many Premier League clubs.

Aguero is some way down the goalscoring charts, at 12th on the Premier League list, well behind Alan Shearer at the top on 260 goals.

But it is his strike rate that catches the eye. The Argentine, who arrived at City from Atletico Madrid in 2011, averages 0.69 goals per match, well ahead of Shearer (0.59) and just ahead of Arsenal legend Thierry Henry (0.68).

FIXTURES

(kick-offs 1500 GMT unless stated)

Saturday
Huddersfield v West Brom, Newcastle v Bournemouth, Southampton v Burnley, Stoke v Leicester (1230), Swansea v Brighton, West Ham v Liverpool (1730)

Sunday
Chelsea v Man Utd (1630), Manchester City v Arsenal (1415), Tottenham v Crystal Palace (1200), Everton v Watford (1630)