

# What to WATCH

**SONY SIX**  
Australia v England  
3rd Test, Day-3  
Live from 8:30am  
**STAR SPORTS 1**  
English Premier League  
Leicester City v Crystal Palace  
Live from 6:30pm

Chelsea v Southampton  
Live from 9:00pm  
Man City v Tottenham  
Live from 11:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
English Premier League  
Arsenal v New Castle  
Live from 9:00pm

**Bundesliga**  
Dortmund v Hoffenheim  
Live from 11:30pm  
**TEN 1**  
Serie A  
Inter Milan v Udinese  
Live from 8:00pm  
Torino v Napoli

Live from 11:00pm  
Roma v Cagliari  
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)  
**TEN 2**  
La Liga  
Bilbao v Real Sociedad  
Live from 9:15pm  
Eibar v Valencia

Live from 11:30pm  
Atletico Madrid v Alaves  
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)

## Real seek record world crown

REUTERS, Abu Dhabi

Real Madrid can cap their most successful year ever with victory in the Club World Cup final against Brazilian side Gremio on Saturday, which would see them become the first team to successfully defend the trophy and end 2017 with five titles.

Defeat, however, would be the latest of a series of setbacks in a haphazard last few months for Zinedine Zidane's side, who are fourth in La Liga, trailing leaders Barcelona by eight points in the standings.

At times, they have looked a shadow of the team that swept to Champions League and Liga glory last season and crushed Manchester United and Barca to win the European and Spanish Super Cups.

No South American side has managed to beat their European counterparts in the Club World Cup since Gremio's compatriots Corinthians stunned Chelsea with victory in 2012, although an upset is not entirely out of the question in Abu Dhabi.

Real only narrowly avoided a catastrophic defeat to Abu Dhabi side Al Jazira, who took a remarkable 1-0 lead at halftime

in a chaotic, action-packed semi-final which the double European champions eventually won 2-1.

The Spanish side dominated the game but, not for the first time this season, showed remarkable profligacy in front of goal until Cristiano Ronaldo equalized in the second half and Gareth Bale hit a late winner 30 seconds after coming off the bench.

Real are sure to face an even sterner test from Gremio, although the Brazilians also had to battle their way through their semifinal, overcoming Mexicans Pachuca 1-0 after extra-time.

Gremio's coach Renato Portaluppi won the Intercontinental Cup (the forerunner to the Club World Cup) with the club as a player and underlined his reputation for courting controversy by recently proclaiming he was a better player than Real's Ronaldo.

"I don't know the Brazilian league well but I watched their semifinal and they are a good team and we will have to lift our standard of play against them," Zidane said after the nervy win on Wednesday.

"It will be a complicated game because there's no such thing as an easy game, as we proved against Al Jazira."



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (C) will be looking to make a point against Gremio in the Club World Cup final tonight, especially after the Brazilian side's coach Renato Portaluppi claimed that he, in his day, was a better player than the Portuguese has ever been.

PHOTO: REUTERS



MARCO POLO

## Brazil football chief given 90-day ban

AFP, Paris

FIFA handed Brazilian football confederation (CBF) president Marco Polo Del Nero a 90-day provisional ban from all football activities on Friday.

The 76-year-old, a former member of the FIFA Council, is the latest prominent South American official to be banned by the sport's governing body as part of its investigation into a vast corruption scandal.

Del Nero was indicted on corruption charges in the United States in December 2015 and has faced numerous calls, including from Brazilian greats Pele and Zico, to step down.

"Mr Polo Del Nero is banned from all football activities at both national and international level," FIFA said. "The ban comes into force immediately."

FIFA added that Del Nero's ban could be extended by up to 45 days while the ethics committee completes its investigation.

Del Nero has always protested his innocence and told the Brazilian Senate two years ago that he was "unjustly accused".

## Top-four scrap begins in City's shadow

AFP, London



With Pep Guardiola's record-breaking Manchester City team galloping away towards the Premier League title, attention is starting to shift to the jostling for Champions League positions.

Manchester United, 11 points below City in second place, and third-place Chelsea are well placed, but beneath them the picture is more fluid.

Just a point separates fourth-place Tottenham Hotspur and seventh-place Arsenal, while Burnley and Leicester City are both threatening to crash the cabal of the 'Big Six'.

United and defending champions Chelsea find themselves in a strange hinterland, both miles behind City -- 11 and 14 points respectively -- but otherwise enjoying broadly successful seasons.

Jose Mourinho's United had gone 40 home games without defeat prior to last Sunday's stormy 2-1 loss to City in the derby, while Chelsea have taken 22 points from a possible 27.

United drew a line beneath the derby defeat by beating Bournemouth 1-0 on Wednesday and defender Phil Jones says it has restored belief ahead of Sunday's game at West Bromwich Albion.

"We wanted to win the game (against City) and unfortunately it wasn't to be, so it was important that we came out (against Bournemouth), showed a bit of fight and a bit of courage," he told MUTV.

"We had to dig deep and grind it out, but the most important thing was to get three points and get back on track."

Chelsea host Southampton on Saturday after bouncing back from their shock 1-0 loss at West Ham United with a one-sided 3-1 victory at Huddersfield Town.

Having ended a four-game winless run with back-to-back victories over Stoke City and Brighton and Hove Albion, Tottenham appear to have rediscovered form just as Liverpool and Arsenal's has disappeared.

Spurs beat Brighton 2-0 on Wednesday and with Liverpool and Arsenal both drawing 0-0 -- at home

FIXTURES	
<b>Saturday</b> (1500 GMT unless otherwise stated)	Arsenal v Newcastle, Brighton v Burnley, Chelsea v Southampton, Leicester v Crystal Palace (1230 GMT), Man City v Tottenham (1730 GMT), Stoke v West Ham, Watford v Huddersfield
<b>Sunday</b>	Bournemouth v Liverpool (1630 GMT), West Brom v Man United (1415 GMT)
<b>Monday</b>	Everton v Swansea (2000 GMT)

to West Brom and away to West Ham respectively -- it lifted Mauricio Pochettino's men up to fourth.

Jürgen Klopp's Liverpool are without a win in two games, having been pegged back by Wayne Rooney's late penalty in last weekend's 1-1 draw with Everton.

Arsenal, meanwhile, are yet to win a league game in December, their stalemate at West Ham following a 3-1 home defeat against Manchester United and a 1-1 draw at Southampton.

But despite their current difficulties, Arsenal trail Spurs and Liverpool by only a point and they will expect to get back on track on Saturday against free-falling Newcastle United.

"It's not a concern. The manager and the boys have a plan, so we're just trying to get back to winning ways," says 20-year-old winger Ainsley Maitland-Niles, who made his league debut in mid-week.

"We've got our home crowd behind us (on Saturday) and I think that could be what we're missing in terms of getting that finishing touch on a goal," he told the Arsenal website.

High-flying Burnley sit between Liverpool and Arsenal in sixth place and were briefly as high as fourth after beating Stoke 1-0 on Tuesday -- their highest position since March 1975.

Sean Dyche's tightly drilled side have won six of their last eight league games and on Saturday travel to Brighton, who are without a win in six.

Leicester have put last season's post-title turmoil behind them under new manager Claude Puel, who has lost just once in eight league games since succeeding Craig Shakespeare.

They sit four points below Arsenal ahead of Saturday's home game with Crystal Palace.

## Maradona fetes Mbappe

AFP, Madrid



Argentina great Diego Maradona praised Kylian Mbappe on Friday as "the revelation of football" after the French teenage sensation's spectacular rise to stardom.

Mbappe, who only turns 19 on December 20, finished seventh in last week's Ballon d'Or voting -- ahead of the likes of Robert Lewandowski, Harry Kane and Paris Saint-Germain team-mate Edinson Cavani.

"For me Mbappe is the revelation of football, Maradona, the star of Argentina's 1986 World Cup triumph, said in an interview with Spanish daily As. "He seems to me that he can be better than lots of players."

It has been a remarkable 2017 for Mbappe. He helped fire Monaco to a first French league title in 17 years and reached the Champions League semi-finals, before joining PSG in a stunning deal worth 180 million euros.

Maradona named the Frenchman as part of a list of players he believes are worthy of challenging Cristiano Ronaldo



and Lionel Messi's perpetual claim to the Ballon d'Or -- an award both have won five times each since 2008.

"Giving it to Cristiano and giving it to Messi has become boring," said Maradona. "There needs to be others getting involved in the fight, like Cavani, Mbappe, [Zlatan] Ibrahimovic. I don't know, there just needs to be some others."

Maradona also recalled advising Real Madrid president Florentino Perez to sign Mbappe prior to him moving to PSG.

"I said that to Florentino, sign Mbappe. I told him that! It was when we saw each other at FIFA," Maradona recounted. "He told me, 'But you know I have Cristiano already.'"

## Griezmann can leave: Simeone

AGENCIES, Madrid

Antoine Griezmann will be allowed to leave Atlético Madrid if the right opportunity comes along for the France forward, according to head coach Diego Simeone.

Simeone said he would not stand in the way of any of his players if they wanted to leave to develop their careers, and that could open the door for the 26-year-old -- who has reportedly been on the radar of clubs including Manchester United, Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain in recent seasons -- to leave either in January or next summer.

"Of course he can leave at some point, like Diego Costa and Arda Turan did in their day," Simeone told L'Equipe.

"I love watching my players grow, and if one of them tells me that they have the unique opportunity of playing for a certain team, after they did everything they could for me, like Griezmann has done, I'll say it's not a problem. I know that he needs to grow."

A world-record move to United was heavily mooted in the summer but Griezmann said it would be a "dirty move" to leave Atlético then, shortly after a transfer ban was upheld against the La Liga club.

That transfer ban will be lifted in winter transfer window in January, but it is now being widely reported that Griezmann will make the switch to Spanish rivals Barcelona and not Manchester United as initially thought.

## 'Sanchez, Ozil won't be sold in January'

REUTERS, London



Arsenal will not sell Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil during the January transfer window, manager Arsene Wenger has said.

Both players are out of contract at the end of the season and are yet to agree new deals, and there has been speculation that Arsenal could sell the influential pair in January to avoid seeing them leave for free in the summer.

But when asked in a news conference on Friday if Sanchez and Ozil would see out the season at Arsenal, Wenger said: "I can tell you a global answer -- yes. They will all stay."

"I will analyse every case individually and separately, but overall I would say my wish and my desire is that everybody stays."

Jack Wilshere is another player whose Arsenal contract expires at the end of the season and Wenger revealed he will begin talks with the 25-year-old midfielder later this month about the possibility of a new deal.

Wilshere spent last season on loan at Bournemouth and has made eight starts so far this campaign, all but one in cup competitions, with his only Premier League start in the 0-0

draw against West Ham United on Wednesday.

"I was impressed," Wenger said. "It was an encouraging performance. He suffered in the last 20, but we had to attack. He has been patient and worked hard. I will talk to him at the end of December. It is, of course, for him as well, to be happy to be here that is important. I consider him an Arsenal man."

Arsenal lie seventh in the Premier League table, 19 points behind leaders Manchester City, ahead of a home match against an out-of-form Newcastle United on Saturday.

After winning and drawing their opening two fixtures, City have won their next 15 fixtures -- a Premier League record -- and Wenger believes they can emulate his 2003-04 Arsenal side and go through the league season unbeaten.

The Frenchman thinks their financial strength, which he referred to as "petrol" on Friday, will be key to avoiding defeat.

"We had no petrol but ideas; they have petrol and ideas," he said.

"They have everything they need to be to successful. Everyone expects that they will last the season, so why not? Everything goes for them in games, but they have the quality to turn it in their favour."

## 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:

**Beckham's Miami MLS venture gets go-ahead for additional owners**

English football icon David Beckham has a new trio of partners in his bid to bring a Major League Soccer club to Miami.

**Neymar jersey stolen from Emery's home**

Paris Saint-Germain coach Unai Emery's Paris apartment was burgled on Wednesday evening as his side won a cup tie away at Strasbourg. The robbery at the top floor flat of a chic Parisian street was discovered at around 11pm.

একটি বাংলাদেশ  
তুমি জাগ্রত জনতার  
সারা বিশ্বের বিস্ময়..

তুমি জাগ্রত জনতার...

১৬ ডিসেম্বর  
মহান বিজয় দিবস

জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান,  
১৬ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৭১ সালের পতনকার প্রতি পতনকার ও সালমান।

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