

# What to WATCH

**SONY SIX**  
 England v India  
 Second Test, Day-3  
 Live from 4:00pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
 English Premier League  
 Newcastle v Tottenham  
 Live from 5:30pm

Huddersfield v Chelsea  
 Live from 8:00pm  
 Wolves v Everton  
 Live from 10:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
 English Premier League  
 Fulham v Crystal Palace  
 Live from 8:00pm

## 'We are still Rocky Balboa'

Klopp urges Reds to aim for glory

AFP, London



Jürgen Klopp says he has high expectations for Liverpool's ability to challenge for the Premier League title after spending the most of any of his rivals in the close season.

Liverpool spent a reported £176million bringing in, among others, Brazilians goalkeeper Alisson and midfielder Fabinho and Klopp hopes to deliver Liverpool's first league title in the Premier League era, with the last of their 18 champions crowns coming in 1990.

In his pre-match press conference on Friday, ahead of Liverpool's season opener against West Ham on Sunday, Klopp said Liverpool spent so much to build a squad with the depth necessary to be genuine title contender.

"It was pretty normal there would be one season when we would spend more money," Klopp said. "We had to create a

squad which is strong enough and wide enough to cope with the Premier League."

Klopp, who took over at Liverpool job in 2015 after guiding Borussia Dortmund to two Bundesliga titles, says he expects his players to fight to the last breath for the league title.

"We have to be in the championship mode," he said. "Let's go for it until we have no more air or oxygen, really go for it."

Klopp fell back on one of his favourite analogies saying Liverpool were Sylvester Stallone's fictional boxer Rocky Balboa rather than his Soviet opponent Ivan Drago.

"The champions are Manchester City, they did not lose any players and brought in Riyad Mahrez, that does not make them weaker, we saw the Chelsea game and saw and they were impressive," he said.

"We are still Rocky Balboa and not Ivan Drago, we are the ones who have to do more and fight more, that must be our attitude. We did not reach anything yet, we have been in finals and if we get there again we should try to win it. The league is exactly the same."



Although he will only be at Chelsea for a year before his loan expires, Mateo Kovacic will reportedly have a significant role to play alongside N'Golo Kante and Jorginho in Maurizio Sarri's 4-3-3 system.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Chelsea ready to start Sarri era

Blues take on Huddersfield today

AFP, Huddersfield



A frantic 48 hours in the transfer market provided Chelsea with a timely lift after last weekend's

Community Shield defeat to Manchester City.

The 2-0 loss left new Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri to rue the difference between the two teams, with Pep Guardiola's champions looking sharper and fitter than the Italian's side.

Sarri has been in post for less than four weeks and the last thing he needed was to go into the first game of the new season at Huddersfield on Saturday against the backdrop of a protracted stand-off between the club and keeper Thibaut Courtois.

Courtois's decision to stay away from the club this week in a bid to force a move to Real Madrid could have had a negative impact at Stamford Bridge. But Chelsea moved quickly to sign Kepa Arrizabalaga from Athletic Bilbao for £71.6 million -- a world record for a keeper -- on a seven-year contract, triggering Courtois's exit to Real.

As part of the deal for the Belgian, Croatia midfielder Mateo Kovacic moved in the opposite direction on a season-long loan.

For a club desperate to progress after a fractious campaign that was marred by a rift between

coach Antonio Conte and the club and ended with a disappointing fifth placed finish, it was good business all round.

Now, Sarri must do all he can to prevent Eden Hazard following his international teammate to Madrid, although the current signs are the Belgium star has been convinced to stay.

Sarri can continue his efforts to introduce the 4-3-3 system he used so successfully in Serie A after two seasons of 3-4-3 under Conte.

In midfield, Kovacic is likely to join Jorginho and N'Golo Kante to strengthen an area that was overrun by the champions.

This weekend, though, the main focus will be on Arrizabalaga if the 23-year-old takes his first steps in English football. The speed with which Kepa settles in will be just one of the factors that determine how Chelsea progress under Sarri's new regime.

### POCH FACES ACID TEST AFTER QUIET WINDOW

Meanwhile, Mauricio Pochettino insists he is not unhappy at Tottenham's inaction during the transfer window, but the true test of his club's decision not to make a single signing will come as the new Premier League season unfolds.

The north London club have often done things differently when it comes to buying and selling players, with chairman Daniel Levy earn-

ing a reputation as a hard negotiator who is unafraid to leave things until late in the day.

This time, however, Thursday's transfer deadline passed without any additions being made by Tottenham -- the first time a Premier League club has failed to sign at least one new player during the summer window.

Now Tottenham boss Pochettino will be expected to build on last season's performances with the same group of players that took the club to a third placed finish.

Saturday's visit to Newcastle for their opening game will therefore offer few surprises but anything less than a convincing victory will stir debate about Levy's failure to deliver new players for his manager at the start of a campaign that will see the club move into the rebuilt White Hart Lane stadium after a year at Wembley.

Speaking ahead of the trip to St James' Park, Pochettino maintained he was not overly concerned at the inaction.

"Of course, it's difficult to understand for people that Tottenham didn't sign or sell players, but sometimes in football you need to behave differently," he said.

"If we are happy with our squad and cannot improve our squad, sometimes it's better to keep our squad together."



Liverpool have added plenty of talent in the summer, but superstar Mohamed Salah must at least live up to his performances from the previous season if the Reds are to mount a serious title challenge against Manchester City.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Messi named Barcelona captain

AGENCIES, Madrid



Lionel Messi has been confirmed as the new Barcelona captain, replacing departed club icon Andres Iniesta in the role.

Iniesta ended a career-long association with the Catalan giants at the end of the 2017-18 season, joining Japanese side Visel Kobe.

The Spain midfielder appeared to symbolically hand over the captain's armband to Messi towards the end of his final Clasico appearance against Real Madrid in May.

And Barcelona announced on Friday that Messi will be the first of four captains for the new campaign,

along with Sergio Busquets, Gerard Pique and Sergi Roberto.

Messi was named Barcelona's second captain in 2015 and, having also skippered Argentina, was the obvious choice to take over from Iniesta.

Pique will also be making his first appearance on this list after spending nearly 10 years at the club.

Roberto takes over as the fourth captain, filling the gap left by Messi's international teammate Javier Mascherano following his move to Hebei China Fortune in January.

The appointment of the new quartet means all four Barcelona captains are products of the famed La Masia academy for the first time since the 2014-15 season, when Xavi, Iniesta, Messi and

Busquets made up the foursome.

Messi's elevation to captain comes 14 years after he made his senior debut for the club, as a 17-year-old in 2004.

And 637 appearances later he has become one of the most iconic players in their history with 552 goals, nine La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues.

Messi will wear the armband for the first time when Barca face Sevilla in the Spanish Super Cup on Sunday.

Unlike at Real Madrid -- where the longest-serving player is awarded the armband -- the process at Barcelona is not based on seniority alone. All the players also have a say in picking the new captain.

Villarreal have taken the tradition of presenting new signings to another level after Santi Cazorla magically appeared from a plume of smoke in the centre of the pitch. The bizarre presentation started off with an empty capsule on a platform inside the Estadio de la Ceramica before it began to fill up with white smoke on Thursday evening. As the anticipation built, the 4,500 supporters waited with bated breath as the announcer unveiled the main attraction - the return of Cazorla. As the thick white smoke dispersed, the 33-year-old midfielder magician was stood inside the tube with his arms folded and a grin on his face.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Rafael Nadal is exuberant after his hard-fought 7-5, 7-6 win over Stanislas Wawrinka in their Rogers Cup round of 16 match on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Nadal battles past Wawrinka

AFP, Toronto



A 45-minute rain interruption did little to stop the progress of Rafael Nadal on Thursday at the Toronto Masters as he defeated Stan Wawrinka 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) to reach the quarterfinals.

The halt in proceedings came 63 minutes into the opening set, after Wawrinka saved a Nadal set point for 5-all, with the Spaniard then holding serve for 6-5.

When the weather passed, the pair returned, with Nadal wrapping up the set on his second chance.

The second set was a battle as the Swiss, a three-time Grand Slam champion, fought back from an early break down, took a 2-1 lead, with the pair again trading breaks in the fifth and tenth games.

Nadal came from a mini-break down in the tiebreaker and secured victory on his second match point.

"It was a good match, a very positive victory for me over a tough opponent," Nadal said. "I'm happy to see Stan playing well again. We had a good quality of tennis."

"I'm very pleased, I needed a match like this. It does much for the confidence."

Second seed Alexander Zverev, the holder, lined up a re-run of last week's Washington semifinal as he again takes on Stefanos Tsitsipas.

The Greek who turns 20 on Sunday knocked out his second seed in as many matches, stunning Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 to reach the quarterfinals.

Zverev rolled over Russian Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 6-2 in 52 minutes while never facing a break point.

Tsitsipas called his knockout of Djokovic, "the best match of my career. I knew I was playing pretty good today."

"He played very well and deserved to win without a doubt," Djokovic said. "I just played not that great. I didn't return well."

### 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:

#### Pogba 'happy and proud' at Manchester United

Jose Mourinho insisted that Paul Pogba is happy to be back at

Manchester United even as media reports had earlier claimed that he wanted a move away from Old Trafford.

#### Agreement reached to reduce Ronaldo's tax fine

After ordering football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo to pay 18.8 million euros to settle a tax fraud claim, Spanish authorities have reduced the sum by two million euros, the *El Mundo* daily reported Friday.

#### How the EPL's top six stand after the transfer window

With the Premier League's transfer window closing on Thursday, we take a look at how the top six Premier League Club from last season stand before the season starts.

#### Pele backing Liverpool for glory

Brazil legend Pele has said that he believes it is finally Liverpool's year to lift the Premier League title. "It's the start of the @PremierLeague today. Who do you think will win? I think it's the year of Liverpool, Alisson and Firmino!" Pele tweeted.

