

# What to WATCH

## STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

**Bundesliga**  
Bayern Munich v Frankfurt  
Live from 7:30pm  
**SONY SIX**  
La Liga

## Getafe v Villarreal

Live from 8:15pm  
**TEN 1**  
La Liga  
Sevilla v Athletic Bilbao  
Live from 8:15pm

## Serie A

Sassuolo v Roma  
Live from 12:30am (Sunday)  
**TEN 2**  
Serie A  
Udinese v SPAL

## Live from 7:00pm

**FA Cup**  
Man City v Watford  
Live from 10:00pm

## DAY'S EVENT

**Bangladesh Premier League** Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium  
Time: 7:00pm  
Mohammedan v Arambagh



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi (C) waves after receiving the Creu de Sant Jordi (Saint George's Cross) award from Catalan regional president Quim Torra (L) during a ceremony at the International Convention Centre in Barcelona on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

# Allegri, Juventus in surprise split

AFP, Rome

Coach Massimiliano Allegri will leave Serie A champions Juventus at the end of the season after guiding them to five straight Italian titles, the club said on Friday.

"Massimiliano Allegri will not be on the Juventus bench for the 2019/2020 season," the club announced in a surprise development.

Allegri, 55, held meetings with the club's hierarchy earlier in the week during which a clear disagreement between the two parties emerged.

He had rejected reports saying he was about to be dismissed last Saturday adding he had already been making plans for the side's future for the past six months.

Juventus have already wrapped up their record eighth consecutive title, and Allegri's fifth in as many years and he lifted the Coppa Italia on four occasions since replacing Antonio Conte in 2014.

The club's former midfielder Conte along with France boss and ex-defender

and boss Didier Deschamps, Champions League finalist Mauricio Pochettino of Tottenham and Lazio's Simone Inzaghi have been linked with taking over from Allegri in the Italian press in recent weeks.

Allegri's name shot up the bookmaker's list of favourites to be the next permanent coach at Inter Milan and Chelsea despite both sides already having men in place.

Despite signing Cristiano Ronaldo from Real Madrid last summer the Bianconeri failed to make it past the quarterfinals of the European football's top competition for the second successive season.

They were humiliated by modest-spending Ajax in the last eight in April despite a star-studded side including Ronaldo, Argentina's Paulo Dybala and

France World Cup winner Blaise Matuidi. Allegri guided Juve to two European finals losing to Barcelona in 2015 before being hammered by Real Madrid two years later.

Wales midfielder Aaron Ramsey has already signed for the Italian club on a free transfer from Arsenal for next seas



# Nail-biting finale grips Germany

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich coach Niko Kovac and his Borussia Dortmund counterpart Lucien Favre both face a trip down memory lane on Saturday as the Bundesliga braces itself for the most nail-biting season finale in years.

Both Kovac and Favre will face their former clubs on a much-anticipated final day, as the title race goes down to the last weekend of the season for the first time since 2010.

Bayern currently sit two points ahead of Dortmund, and can claim a seventh straight league crown if they avoid defeat at home by Kovac's old club Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday.

Dortmund, meanwhile, travel to Favre's old hunting ground at Borussia Moenchengladbach, knowing that they can only be crowned champions if they win and Bayern lose.

"We need to focus on our game," said Favre on Thursday, adding that Dortmund needed to be prepared for all eventualities against Gladbach, whom he coached between 2011 and 2015.

"They play well on the counter-attack, but they can also press high up the pitch, and they need to win too," he said.

There is more than the title at stake on Saturday, with both Gladbach and Frankfurt still in the running for Champions League qualification.

Dortmund sporting director Michael Zorc joked on Thursday that he would not send Frankfurt a crate of beer if they beat Bayern.

"They have something to play for, so they don't need any extra motivation," he said.

Zorc admitted that Bayern were in "pole position", but confirmed that the club were making plans for a potential title celebration in the Dortmund town centre.

"We are hugely looking forward to the game, and the excitement will rise when we are on the way to the stadium, those are nice moments," he said.

Bayern coach Kovac said on Thursday that he was proud to be on the verge of the title, having trailed Dortmund by nine points in December.

"In winter, we just hoped we would have any chance at all on the final day, and now we are in the comfortable situation of having it in our own hands," he said.

The Croatian said he was expecting an emotional afternoon on Saturday, when his old club Frankfurt come to Munich.

Bayern have not won the title in front of their own fans since 2000, and are preparing to bid farewell to club icons Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery.

"There hasn't been a situation like this in Munich for a while, and we want to bring the fans with us on Saturday," he said.

Kovac, who steered Frankfurt away from relegation in 2016 before leading them to glory in the German Cup last season, said that the pressure to win the title was nothing compared to a relegation fight.

"When you are fighting for your existence, that is something different," he said.

Yet the under-fire coach knows that Saturday's meeting with his Frankfurt past could yet define his Bayern future

# Kane will get time to prove his fitness

AFP, London

Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane could miss the Champions League final but still captain England in their bid to win the Nations League, said national coach Gareth Southgate.

The 25-year-old talisman has not played since injuring ankle ligaments in the first leg of Spurs' Champions League quarter-final win over Manchester City.

Kane, who won the Golden Boot at last summer's World Cup, missed the end of the Premier League season with Tottenham but is hoping to be fit for their European showpiece final with Liverpool.

That game takes place in Madrid on June 1, just five days before England face Holland in their Nations League semi-final.

Kane was included in an initial 27-man squad for the tournament named by Southgate on Thursday, with the final group of 23 to be confirmed on May 27.

"Frankly, we will know a lot more about that if he is in Tottenham's team," he said of Kane's current fitness level.

Asked if Kane needs to play in the

Champions League final to be considered for international duty, Southgate replied: "Not necessarily, because they might take a view that (Lucas) Moura scored a hat-trick (in the semifinal) and Son (Heung-min) played well so they keep Harry as an impact player."

"So without talking to Mauricio (Pochettino), I don't know what his thinking on that will be. I guess that depends on how Harry trains in the build-up to the game."

Southgate said he was prepared to make a special case for his captain.

"Where there are one or two others we need to know a lot more about in the next week, he is one I will make an exception for in that I will see how it goes in the final week," he said.

Kane is one of nine players from Tottenham and Liverpool who could potentially be involved in the Champions League final and go on to link up with the England squad in Portugal for the Nations League.

Southgate admitted the all-English final presents a rare challenge.

"That's a test of our management skills and our collective spirit as a team," he told BBC Radio 5.



# Federer limps out of Italian Open

AFP, Rome

World number three Roger Federer pulled out of the Italian Open before his quarterfinal match on Friday with a right leg injury.

Federer, a four-time Rome finalist, had been due to meet Greek eighth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas for a place in the semifinals.

The Swiss 20-time Grand Slam winner was playing in Rome to prepare for his return to the French Open for the first time since 2015.

"I am disappointed that I will not be able to compete today," said Federer.

"I am not 100 percent physically and after consultation with my team, it was determined that I not play."

"Rome has always been one of my favourite cities to visit and I hope to be back next year."

Federer had been on court nearly four hours on Thursday as competitors played two matches after rain delays midweek.

## SHORT CORNER

### Wilmots leaves Iran without signing deal

Former Ivory Coast and Belgium manager Marc Wilmots has left Iran without signing the anticipated contract to coach the Islamic republic's national team, semi-official news agency ISNA reported on Friday.

The former Belgian striker had arrived in Iran on Wednesday and was expected to sign a \$1.2 million (1 million euros) a year deal until the end of the 2022 World Cup.

The 50-year-old who was capped 70 times for his country "reviewed Iran's football facilities and had talks with Mehdi Taj", Iran's football federation president, according to ISNA.

"If the two sides reach an agreement, Wilmots will return to Tehran to sign the contract and start his work," ISNA said. --AFP

### Loftus-Cheek to miss Europa League final

Chelsea midfielder Ruben Loftus-Cheek will undergo Achilles tendon surgery which will rule him out of the Europa League final, the Premier League club said Thursday.

The 23-year-old England international suffered the injury during the 3-0 friendly win over New England Revolution in Boston on Wednesday.

"Ruben has seen a specialist today and will have surgery on his ruptured Achilles tendon this evening," the club said in a statement.

Loftus-Cheek will miss the May 29 Europa League final against Arsenal in Baku as well as England's international commitments this summer. --AFP

### Cazorla makes Spain return

Santi Cazorla returned to the Spain squad for the first time in four years on Friday as the Villarreal midfielder's remarkable comeback from injury continues.

Cazorla required numerous operations on knee, foot and ankle injuries that began in 2013, while an aggressive infection in his heel needed a skin graft, extracted from his left forearm.

The 34-year-old's call-up comes after he has been one of Villarreal's stand-out players this season, helping them avoid relegation with four goals and 10 assists in 34 appearances.

Cazorla will now hope to feature in Spain's upcoming European Championship qualifiers against the Faroe Islands on June 7 and Sweden on June 10. --AFP



### Bayern deny reports that Kovac to be sacked

Bayern Munich denied reports on Friday that coach Niko Kovac is to be sacked regardless of whether he wins the Bundesliga title, and that Mark van Bommel is being lined up as his successor.

Despite being on course to win a league and cup double in the next week, Kovac has been under growing pressure amid widespread speculation that he will not be in charge next season.

On Friday morning, websites Spox.com and Goal.com claimed to have "exclusive information" that Kovac would be sacked regardless of whether he won the title on Saturday and the German Cup final seven days later. --AFP

## Storm spoils MSC-Arambogh encounter

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Premier League fixture between hosts Mohammedan SC and visitors Arambogh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday was postponed three minutes after the kick-off due to inclement weather.

"The ground was ready for the game to resume, but the weather was not in favour due to lightning, so the match has been postponed," informed match commissioner Haji Ibrahim Nesar.

Competition manager Zaber Bin Taher Ansari informed that the match would be bodily shifted and is likely to start today from where it stopped.

The two neighbouring sides had locked horns in their second meeting of the season, but the sudden storm forced the players and match officials off the pitch four minutes into the match as the dugouts and billboards were blown away by strong wind. A couple of players were even lucky not to get hurt as they took shelter behind the dugouts.

In the first meeting between the two sides, Arambogh handed struggling Mohammedan SC a 4-1 defeat, their first-ever victory over the Black and Whites in 17 meetings of the professional football league.

# I am not a role model: Sterling

AFP, London

Manchester City star Raheem Sterling says despite his mother being proud of him for tackling racism in football he does not see himself as a role model.

The 49-times capped England forward, who can help City seal a unique domestic treble if they beat Watford in the FA Cup final, told Friday's Daily Mirror his speaking out over racism has not altered anything but it has opened up a debate which could yield results.

Sterling, who is delivering a speech in New York next week on racism, was subject to racist taunts in a match with Chelsea and he and other black players were racially abused by Montenegro supporters in a Euro 2020 qualifier.

"People keep saying that," the 24-year-old said in reference to being an inspiration.

"I don't want to say role model because I don't see myself as one.

"It gives my mum pride, I'll tell you that.

"I don't think I've changed anything, but I've opened up a door for work to be done.

"I adore this country because the people here are so loving and so willing to listen to try and do things for the better.

"I'm giving a speech in New York next week... I'm dreading it! No, I'm really looking forward to it, bit nervous, but..."

On the pitch Sterling enjoyed his best ever season for City scoring 23 goals in all competitions -- and was used in almost every game even with such talents as Leroy Sane and Riyad Mahrez in reserve.

Sterling, who has set up his own YouTube channel which aside from addressing serious issues also presents him in a more light-hearted manner, says it was another of Pep Guardiola's signings -- Bernardo Silva from Monaco in 2017 -- that sparked him into proving himself.

"That was a massive turning point when the wingers came in to push me. It was a good thing," he said.

For Sterling the worst moment of the season, in terms of what happened on the pitch, was his goal in stoppage time in the Champions League quarter-final second leg clash with Tottenham Hotspur which was ruled out due to Sergio Agüero being ruled offside.

"In the last seconds I'm thinking I've scored that goal, the World Cup final goal. I celebrated like that," he told the Mirror.

"Then I remember seeing the VAR and remember thinking: 'Yeah, I think Sergio could have been offside...'

"I remember going home that night and my son was in the car. He's only two now but absolutely loves football.

"He was kind of sleepy, then he woke up as I was bringing him upstairs and he goes: 'Daddy score, Daddy win.' And I went: 'No, Daddy scored but we didn't win today.'

"That was horrible, absolutely horrible."



# Cricket loses 'Pipe Man'

AGENCIES, London

Cricket West Indies on Thursday announced the passing of West Indies super fan Keith van Anderson, also affectionately known as "Pipe Man". He was 67.

Van Anderson had been a prominent face around the cricket circuit for over four decades, particularly the "spiritual home" of the game at Lord's, where he was a long-standing member of the Marylebone Cricket Club.

"MCC are saddened to announce that member and well-recognised figure of Lord's, Keith van Anderson, has passed away," the club's website said. "Keith was in attendance at every Lord's Test since 1973 and he will be missed by everyone at the club. Our thoughts are with his family and friends."

CWI President Ricky Skerritt said: "World cricket has lost a major friend and the West Indies team has lost one of its biggest fans. 'Pipe Man' was beloved and will be fondly remembered by all who knew him."

Van Anderson has lived in London since arriving in Britain on October 30, 1964, as a 13-year-old. He was as much a fixture at Lord's as its distinctive old pavilion, spaceship-designed media centre and Old Father Time wind vane.