

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

Bundesliga

Bayern Munich v Hertha Berlin

Live from 12:30am (Saturday)

SONY SIX

The Ashes

England v Australia

Second Test, Day Three

Live from 4:00pm

SONY ESPN

Sri Lanka v New Zealand

First Test, Day Three

Live from 10:30am

BALOTELLI MOVING BACK TO ITALY

Mario Balotelli is poised for a return to Italy with newly-promoted home town team Brescia, according to multiple reports on Wednesday. Balotelli, who was born in Sicily but adopted and raised just outside the northern city, is set to sign a three-year deal with the Serie B champions after being released by Marseille in June, Gazzetta della Sport and Sky Sport Italia reported. Gazzetta said the deal was worth roughly of three million euros (\$3.3 million) including bonuses a season to the Italian international. The 29-year-old has reportedly rejected a move to Brazilian club Flamengo as he pushes for a place in the national team as Euro 2020 approaches.



--AFP



Liverpool players celebrate with the UEFA Super Cup trophy after winning the final against Chelsea at the Besiktas Park Stadium in Istanbul on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

L’pool win Super Cup on penalties

AFP, Istanbul

Stand-in goalkeeper Adrian capped a “crazy week” as his save from Tammy Abraham allowed Liverpool to beat Chelsea 5-4 on penalties and win the UEFA Super Cup on Wednesday after a richly entertaining match in Istanbul finished 2-2 at the end of extra time.

Every penalty in the shoot-out had been successful before Mohamed Salah converted Liverpool’s fifth kick at the home of Besiktas. Substitute Abraham then had his effort saved by Adrian, the new signing only playing in the absence of the injured Allison Becker.

“Welcome to Liverpool! It’s been a crazy week. I’m really happy for the team, I’m happy to play for Liverpool and happy for the fans,” Adrian, who signed 10 days ago, told BT Sport.

It was Liverpool’s fourth Super Cup victory, with their last coming in 2005 on the back of their memorable Champions League triumph in Istanbul.

They have now won 13 European trophies overall, and how their supporters would love to come back to the banks of the Bosphorus for the final of this season’s Champions League.

“It was a very difficult game for both teams. It was all about winning it and we did that in the end,” admitted manager Jurgen Klopp.

Sadio Mane had earlier been Liverpool’s star, cancelling out Olivier Giroud’s first-half strike to ensure the match ended 1-1 in 90 minutes, and then putting Klopp’s team in front on 95 minutes.

PAST WINNER	
YEAR	CHAMPIONS
2019:	Liverpool
2018:	Atletico Madrid
2017:	Real Madrid
2016:	Real Madrid
2015:	Barcelona
2014:	Real Madrid

But it was perhaps inevitable that French referee Stephanie Frappart would play a role in the outcome of the game.

The first woman to take charge of a major men’s match in European competition, Frappart gave Chelsea a penalty when Abraham went down under contact from Adrian. Jorginho netted the spot-kick.

He also scored in the shoot-out, but there would be no first trophy as Chelsea coach for Frank Lampard, who lost the Super Cup twice with the club as a player. “To lose the game was

disappointing but if it means Chelsea’s season can be something like how we played today, we’ll be ok,” he insisted.

Lampard has stated a willingness to give youth a chance this season, although here he left Mason Mount and Abraham -- aged just 20 and 21 respectively -- on the bench.

N’Golo Kante played after a summer plagued by injury problems, while Giroud started and Christian Pulisic made his full debut.

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain made his first start for Liverpool in 16 months after injury. The England midfielder released Salah for an early chance only for the Egyptian’s effort to be saved by Kepa Arrizabalaga. However, he generally struggled to make an impact and was replaced at half-time by Roberto Firmino.

Chelsea had enjoyed the better of the opening 45 minutes, with Pedro Rodriguez striking the bar midway through the first half before Adrian saved from Mateo Kovacic.

The opener arrived in the 36th minute, with Kante finding Pulisic and the American drawing several red shirts towards him before releasing Giroud to score.

Shortly after, Pulisic thought he had made it 2-0, but his fine finish was disallowed for offside.

The introduction of Firmino helped change things at the start of the second half, though, with Liverpool needing little more than two minutes to draw level.

The Brazilian knocked the ball into the path of Mane, who scrambled home from close range despite Kepa getting a glove to it.

Kepa fared far better in the 75th minute, blocking a Salah shot and then reacting brilliantly to turn Virgil van Dijk’s follow-up onto the woodwork.

Brought on from the bench along with Abraham, Mount briefly thought he had restored Chelsea’s lead late on but his crisp low strike was disallowed.

On into extra time they went and, to the delight of the crowd, who were mostly supporting the European champions, Liverpool went 2-1 up thanks to that same combination.

Mane found Firmino and then latched onto the Brazilian’s cutback and fired home off the underside of the bar.

But, in the 101st minute, Jorginho converted from the spot to bring back the possibility of a penalty shoot-out.

Having conceded that spot-kick, Adrian later produced a firm hand to deny Mount and was at it again as he denied Abraham to secure the trophy.

City aim to banish memories of exit

REUTERS, Manchester



Tottenham Hotspur ended Manchester City’s European ambitions last season and they will be looking to dent Pep Guardiola’s side’s hopes of winning a third successive Premier League title when they meet at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

A rare setback in a near impeccable season from City came in April with a dramatic exit to Spurs in the Champions League quarterfinal.

City won the second-leg 4-3 but went out on away goals after a late goal from Raheem Sterling, which would have sent City through, was dramatically ruled out for offside following a VAR video review.

Just three days later the pair met again in the league as Guardiola’s side kept their title run on track with a 1-0 victory.

Both teams began their Premier League campaigns in winning fashion with City sweeping aside West Ham United with a 5-0 win at London Stadium while Spurs struggled before emerging as 3-1 victors at home to promoted Aston Villa.

City will be relieved that Spurs’ South Korean winger Son Heung-min will miss the game while he serves a three-game

suspension.

Son scored the only goal of the Champions League first leg and struck twice in the second-leg but Harry Kane, who missed the last two meetings, has begun the season in form with a double against Villa.

Liverpool will need to recover quickly from their penalty shootout win over Chelsea in the Super Cup in Istanbul on Wednesday as they face a trip to Southampton on Saturday.

Juergen Klopp’s side began the season well with a 4-1 win over Norwich City but are without their first choice keeper Alisson Becker who picked up a calf injury in that opener.

Frank Lampard’s Chelsea suffered a 4-0 loss at Manchester United in their first outing but showed plenty of promise in Istanbul and have an extra day to recover before taking on Leicester City at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

Manchester United have a tricky trip to Wolverhampton Wanderers on Monday, returning to the venue where they were beaten 2-1 in the FA Cup quarterfinal in March.

Arsenal will look to follow-up their win at Newcastle United with another three points against Sean Dyche’s Burnley at the Emirates on Saturday.



Juventus forward Paulo Dybala (R) celebrates one of his two goals with teammate Miralem Pjanic during their friendly match against Juventus B in Villar Perosa on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kyrgios loses his cool

AFP, Cincinnati



Nick Kyrgios stepped off court to smash two racquets and toss his shoes to spectators Wednesday in a meltdown during a second-round ATP Cincinnati Masters loss to Russia’s Karen Khachanov.

Eighth-seeded Khachanov rallied for a 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4) 6-2 victory over the volatile Australian, but the final set was close to farce, with Kyrgios engaged in a running dialogue with Irish chair umpire Fergus Murphy.

“He has a really great talent but sometimes the head not in the right place,” Khachanov said.

“It was a really difficult match for me -- I had to really work it out, how to get the win.

“It’s really tough (playing Kyrgios), not only for me but for everybody. You have to try and handle it, then you can have chances to win the match. Always try to stay in there.”

Kyrgios, who won his sixth career ATP singles crown two weeks ago in Washington, also complained last week in Toronto in an apparent dispute as to why he could not have a white towel during a match.

World number 27 Kyrgios, rarely far from controversy, was defaulted three months ago after throwing a chair as he quit a match in Rome.

The latest iteration of the Kyrgios saga erupted after he lost the second set to Khachanov.

Sitting in his chair at the pause, Kyrgios suddenly announced he was going on a bathroom break, with Murphy telling him there was no time.



The Aussie walked anyway, carrying two racquets with him. Television showed him going through a stadium door partly made of glass and smashing his racquets before collecting them and walking back onto court.

All the while, he was nagging and occasionally cursing at Murphy.

Kyrgios calmly held his own at the start of the final set, producing a hold which featured three aces.

But it was the ice-calm Khachanov who took advantage, breaking for 4-2 and running out to a 5-2 margin.

Kyrgios, by now hardly in the match, double-faulted to hand over two match points and served up another double after saving a first match point.

He refused to shake Murphy’s hand on the way off court and tossed his shoes and other soft articles into the crowd and handing his broken racquets to young fans before walking off.

At one point in the drama, Kyrgios stood at the back of the court, wrapping his racquet grip, which Murphy kept telling him he was not ready.

Kyrgios told Khachanov to go ahead and serve, but the Russian declined until all was in place on the Kyrgios side of the net.

Tournament supervisor Gerry Armstrong sat near the court, observing, but was not called upon to make any ruling during the bizarre closing stages of the evening.

UEFA PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Van Dijk, Messi, CR7 in shortlist

REUTERS, Nyon

Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Virgil Van Dijk have been shortlisted for the UEFA Player of the Year award, the sport’s European governing body said on Thursday.

While Ronaldo, a three-time winner, has been ever-present in the final three since the award was created in 2011, centre back Van Dijk makes his first appearance after helping Liverpool win the Champions League title last season.

Van Dijk was voted both the Premier League Player of the Season and the Players’ Player of the Year, and was instrumental in the Merseyside club’s sixth European Cup triumph.

Two-time award winner Messi was the leading scorer in both La Liga (36 goals) and the Champions League (12 goals) last season but his Barcelona side fell in the semifinal stage to Liverpool, who overcame a three-goal deficit in the second leg to advance.

Ronaldo did not fare too well in Europe in his debut season with Juventus, the Italian side losing in the quarterfinals to Ajax.

Dybala stars in alpine opener

AFP, Villar Perosa



Paulo Dybala brushed aside speculation over his future with a double for Juventus as Cristiano Ronaldo and new signings Aaron Ramsey and Matthijs de Ligt sat out the club’s traditional alpine curtain raiser on Wednesday.

Nearly 5,000 fans crammed into the “Gaetano Scirea” stadium in Villar Perosa at the foot of the Italian Alps, for the annual friendly between the Juventus first team and youth B side, won 3-1 by the senior players.

Dybala has been linked with a move to Manchester United, Tottenham Hotspur and Paris Saint-Germain, but with banners saying “Stay with us Paolo” the 25-year-old slotted in the first goal from the penalty spot after 14 minutes.

The youth team drew level in the 38th minute when Juventus’s newly-signed Turkish defender Merih Demiral turned into his own net.

But Dybala added his second with the game approaching half-time and Juan Cuadrado scored third from close range before the game ended in the 51st minute with a traditional pitch invasion by fans.

“He is a Juve player, he is a great Juventus player,” sporting director Fabio Paratici said of Dybala.

“What is happening with Dybala is what happens with all the players during a transfer window.

“There are rumours, there are discussions, there are negotiations ... The market is open and there is interest, but there are no names who are closer to sale.”

Gianluigi Buffon returned to the Juve goal after his underwhelming season at Paris Saint-Germain, with Gonzalo Higuain also back after his loan to Chelsea last season and coach Maurizio Sarri on the bench after also arriving from London.

Ronaldo was sidelined with a slight thigh problem, along with De Ligt and Welsh international Ramsey.

Five-time Ballon d’Or winner Ronaldo happily signed autographs amid a party atmosphere on what was also captain Giorgio Chiellini’s 35th birthday.

On the sidelines were club president Andrea Agnelli and his cousin John Elkann, chairman of Fiat Chrysler.

Angry Korean fan confronts Ronaldo

AFP, Seoul

An angry South Korean fan flew to Sweden to confront Juventus superstar Cristiano Ronaldo for sitting out a friendly in Seoul, the latest in a bizarre row that has prompted a police investigation.

In an 11-minute clip posted on his Youtube channel, which has racked up nearly 3,000,000 views, Kwak Ji-hyuk approaches the Portuguese striker at a hotel in Stockholm.

As Ronaldo appears in the lobby of the hotel, Kwak shouts in English, “Why didn’t you play in Korea?” only to be ignored.

Ronaldo remained on the bench throughout last month’s exhibition game in the Korean capital, enraging fans who threatened a class action lawsuit and prompting a police probe into alleged fraud.

Kwak films himself making several more attempts to grab the star’s attention, including waving a sign written in Portuguese.

“Even when I put the sign right in front of his eyes, I was utterly ignored,” Kwak says in the video.

“You are so nice to your fans here but why did you do that to us?” he adds bitterly.