

# What to WATCH

**STAR SPORTS SELECT 1**  
Premier League  
Sheffield Utd v Liverpool  
Live from 5:30pm  
Chelsea v Brighton  
Live from 8:00pm

Everton v Man City  
Live from 10:30pm  
**STAR SPORTS SELECT 2**  
Premier League  
Tottenham v Southampton  
Live from 8:00pm

Bundesliga  
Dortmund v Bremen  
Live from 10:00pm  
**TEN 2**  
Serie A  
Juventus v SPAL

Live from 7:00pm  
Sampdoria v Inter Milan  
Live from 10:00pm



Cristiano Ronaldo is set to return for Juventus at home against SPAL today after having missed last weekend's game against Brescia with a muscular problem.

PHOTO: JUVENTUS

## Neymar and Barca battle in court

AFP, Barcelona

Lawyers for Brazilian footballer Neymar and Spanish champions Barcelona went head-to-head in court on Friday after failing to avert a multi-million-dollar battle over a tangled contract dispute.

The hearing opened in the early afternoon at a court in the Barcelona suburbs, but the star striker was not present. He had arrived in the city on Thursday but returned to Paris a day later where he was seen training with Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) during the afternoon.

Lawyers for the two sides had tried to reach an agreement during closed-door reconciliation talks in the morning, but without success.

"It is going to court," Barcelona lawyer Josep Vives said outside the court.

After several hours of wrangling in court, the two sides were told to present their conclusions in writing on October 21 after which the judge will issue his ruling at a date which has yet to be set.

The case revolves around a decision by Neymar, the world's most expensive footballer, to quit Barcelona in 2017 and join PSG in a stunning coup for the French club. The move angered the Spanish giants who filed a complaint for breach of contract against the 27-year-old superstar.

Neymar's shock transfer to PSG for a world record 222 million euros (\$250 million at the time) came less than a year after he signed a contract that would have kept him at the Spanish club until 2021.

As well as filing a lawsuit, Barcelona refused to pay him the remainder of his contract renewal bonus, which he was to have received in instalments.

The young Brazilian quickly hit back with a lawsuit demanding payment of the bonus in full.

Until now, the full value of the bonus has never been made public, but according to figures cited during the hearing, the

gross sum was 64.4 million euros, of which Neymar received a first tranche of 20.75 million.

After his transfer, Barcelona refused to pay him the remaining 43.65 million, which after tax amounted to a sum of 26 million euros.

The Spanish club demanded he return the part of the bonus already received as well as 8.5 million euros plus interest in compensation for breach of contract.

Neymar promptly countersued, demanding payment of the 26 million euros with interest.

Addressing the court, Barca lawyer Carles McCragh said the money was "a loyalty bonus" linked to the length of the contract but the club had made an early payment at the request of Neymar's family "who were having financial problems in Brazil".

Neymar's legal team challenged that narrative, with German Martinez saying the initial payment was linked to "the signing of the contract" and completely unrelated to "remuneration for services rendered" on the pitch.

According to El Mundo daily, the case is being closely watched by the Spanish authorities who are keen to know whether Neymar, who was a tax resident in 2017, paid his taxes on both the bonus and his transfer to PSG.

The striker has been beset by legal problems since his arrival at Barcelona in 2013 from Brazil's Santos.

Barca valued the transfer at 57.1 million euros but Spanish prosecutors believe the amount paid was at least 83.3 million euros, triggering a string of legal cases in both countries, some of which remain unresolved.

Since transferring to PSG, things have not been any easier. In the last few months, the superstar faced a rape allegation, which was dropped in August, and an assault charge for hitting a fan after PSG's shock defeat in April's French Cup final.

## Pogba injury heaps pressure on Ole

AFP, Manchester

Paul Pogba is a doubt for Manchester United's match against Arsenal, giving beleaguered manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer a fresh headache as he juggles his scant attacking resources.

The France midfielder hurt his ankle again in the League Cup match with Rochdale in midweek on his return to the side after not playing since late August.

Pogba played the whole game as United edged past the League One team on penalties after a 1-1 draw but he did not take a penalty and did not attend a team bonding dinner at Juan Mata's restaurant after the game.

Solskjaer revealed on Friday that his ankle knock was the reason he did not join his teammates.

"The situation is Paul finished the game, 90 minutes fantastically, but he got a knock to his ankle which is very swollen," said Solskjaer. "So it was better for him not to go there with the team and he's in a race for Monday. He is a doubt, but that is the way it is." Forwards Anthony Martial and Marcus Rashford are also facing a battle to be fit for Monday's game at Old Trafford, with Solskjaer short of attacking options.

Martial is still trying to recover from a thigh injury sustained last month while Rashford limped off with a groin problem in the 2-0 defeat at West Ham on Sunday.

If neither of those two makes it, Mason Greenwood will be in line to start his first Premier League game.

The 17-year-old has scored in each



of United's past two home games so his manager would have no qualms about throwing him in against the Gunners.

"Mason has proven that when he is in the box, he's dangerous," said the Norwegian. "What has pleased me about him is that he doesn't turn down chances to finish. We have managed him as you can't just throw him in the deep end all the time. But he has proven in those games he is ready for it."

United are currently eighth in the Premier League with eight points from six matches and only one win in the past five.

But Solskjaer said the team were making progress. "I never said it was going to be easy this season," he said. "There are going to be bumps in the road, highs and lows. But when we lose a game, we have to trust ourselves and what we are doing."

"We have to keep our eyes on the prize and the principles we believe in. It is a team that is evolving and improving."

## Saif SC crush Abahani on way to U-18 final

SPORTS REPORTER



Saif Sporting Club advanced to the final of the Walton U-18 tournament after crushing defending champions Abahani 5-0 in the second semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

They will now face NoFeL SC in the final on Tuesday. Saif SC dominated the show from the outset to take a lead in the 38th minute through Sakib before Mahat doubled the margin in the 41st minute.

They came out strongly in the second half too, adding three more goals with Sakib completing his hatrick by scoring in the 67th and 86th minutes after Mahat notched a brace by scoring the team's third goal in the 61st minute.

## Hamid wins 20th nat'l chess crown

SPORTS REPORTER



Woman International Master Rani Hamid retained the title of the 39th National Women's Chess Championship by beating Woman Fide Master Nazrana Khan Eva in the ninth and final round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Hamid secured 8.5 points out of nine to become unbeaten champion. It was the 20th title for the famous chess player, who had before become champion from 1979 to 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011 and 2018.

WIM Sharmin Sultana finished runner-up with eight points while Ahmed Walijah, Eva, Woman Candidate Master Noshin Anjum finished third, fourth and fifth respectively through tie-breaks after seven players ended on seven points.



PSG superstar Neymar is pictured arriving in Barcelona on Thursday ahead of the legal battle with his former employers. However, the Brazilian left for Paris before proceedings began.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

BFF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

## Councillors don't want responsibility

SPORTS REPORTER



Councillors will not take responsibility for financial irregularities of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), president of Bangladesh District and Divisional Football Associations (BDDEFA) Ruhul Amin Tarafder said yesterday.

The announcement was made at a BDDEFA meeting at a city hotel, where the high-ups of different District Football Associations were present to discuss the current situation

after two BFF vice-presidents, Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi and Badal Roy, alleged that there have been irregularities in income and expenditure in BFF's three-year financial statement worth Tk 17 crore.

"We do not want to take responsibility for the irregularities. We want the BFF financial statements to be approved by the AGM but the financial reports haven't been sent to the councillors yet. We want to see whether the allegation of financial anomalies is right by auditing reports through a professional audit firm," said Tarafder, who is also the owner of Saif SC.

## Sher-e-Bangla, Gono march on

SPORTS REPORTER

Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University registered a 1-0 win over Sonargaon University in the United Group Faraaz Inter-University Gold Cup Football Tournament at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Abdul Kaiyum separated the sides in the second half of the match.

In the day's other match, Gono University blanked Bangladesh University 2-0 with Shakhawat Hossain and Arafat Mia netting one goal apiece.



A shot of the action at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in yesterday in the Faraaz Inter-University Gold Cup. A Bangladesh University player stretches to clear the ball against Gono University.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Hazard will come good, says Zidane

AFP, Madrid



Zinedine Zidane insists Eden Hazard will fulfil his potential at Real Madrid despite a slow start since his 100 million euros move from Chelsea in the summer.

Hazard picked up a thigh injury the day before Real's opening La Liga game against Celta Vigo and missed their first three matches of the season.

He has since come off the bench against Levante and started against Paris Saint-Germain and Sevilla, but the Belgian is yet to register a goal or an assist for his new team, who face capital city rivals Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

"Listen we know the quality of player we have and we know he is going to deliver," Zidane said Friday.

"Everyone expects a lot from him and he knows that. But we support

him and he is with us. As the games go by I am sure he is going to be the player we want him to be in this Real Madrid team."

Madrid play Atletico in a battle of first against third at the Wanda Metropolitan, despite both clubs suffering from inconsistency so far this term.

Zidane's team are looking to sustain momentum after bouncing back from their 3-0 defeat by PSG in the Champions League with back-to-back victories over Sevilla and Osasuna.

Atletico, meanwhile, beat newly-promoted Real Mallorca on Wednesday after previously stumbling themselves, with a loss to Real Sociedad and draw at home to Celta.

"We are going to give everything," Zidane said. "Our ideas haven't changed, we know how tough it will be tomorrow against a difficult

opponent but they are going to find it tough as well."

Atletico thrashed Madrid 7-3 in a pre-season game in July, a match Zidane said his team played like a friendly and their opponents treated like a competitive fixture.

Zidane's response was brief when asked about whether that result had any significance on the upcoming derby. "No it has nothing to do with this game," he said.

Marcelo, Luka Modric and Isco have all recovered from injury and trained with the rest of the squad on Friday.

But Rodrygo, the 18-year-old Brazilian who scored on his debut against Osasuna, one minute after coming on, will return to Madrid's reserve team, Castilla, this weekend. "He knows we're going to go bit by bit with him," Zidane said.