

What to WATCH

T SPORTS

Bangladesh vs Pakistan
2nd Test, Day 3
Live from 09:30 am
Independence Cup
Saif Sporting Club vs Dhaka

Mohammedan
Live from 06:00 pm
Lankan Premier League
Colombo Stars vs Galle Gladiators
Live from 08:00 pm
La Liga

Getafe vs Athletic Bilbao
Live from 02:00 am (Tuesday)
STAR SPORTS 1
India vs New Zealand
1st Test, Day 4
Live from 10:00 am

Napoli slip from top

REUTERS, Naples

Napoli surrendered the lead to lose 3-2 at home to Atalanta on Saturday, dropping from first to third as the gap between the top four sides in Serie A was squeezed to four points.

Luciano Spalletti's hosts recovered from a goal down and went in front early in the second half, only for the visiting Bergamo club to mount a comeback of their own and inflict a second league defeat of the season on the hosts.

The result saw Napoli, who had led the title race since week four, remain on 36 points, two behind new leaders AC Milan, one behind Inter Milan and two ahead of fourth-placed Atalanta.

Ruslan Malinovskyi blasted a shot into the top corner to put the visitors in front after seven minutes but Piotr Zielinski fired home an equaliser near the end of a high tempo first half.

Dries Mertens then sprang the offside trap and tucked in a composed finish for his fifth goal in four league games early in the second half, but Atalanta responded superbly.

Duvan Zapata powered a header off the post as a warning sign before Merih Demiral raced onto a through ball to smash home an equaliser in the 66th minute and Remo Freuler guided the winner into the bottom corner five minutes later.



Russel emerge group champions

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC came back from behind to play out a 1-1 draw against Sheikh Jamal DC to seal the top spot in their group and also avoid an early clash with holders Bashundhara Kings in the Riviera Independence Cup at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Russel finished on top of Group B with seven points to play the quarterfinals against either Chittagong Abahani or Bangladesh Navy or Bangladesh Police while Jamal go on to face Kings as the group runners-up with five points.

Although Jamal's quarterfinal berth was confirmed following a stalemate between Uttar Baridhara and Bangladesh Air Force in the day's first match, the clash between Russel and Jamal turned into a crucial encounter to avoid title contenders Kings.

Jamal needed an outright victory to avoid Kings and the Dhanmondi-based outfit could have been well

on course in the very second minute had forward Mohammad Jewel not failed to drive a cutback, off Esmail Ruti Tavares, home from inside the box.

With both sides fighting to take control of the midfield afterwards, Russel came close to taking the lead but a volley from Mannaf Rabbi, from Habibur Rahman Shohag cross, missed the target narrowly in the sixth minute before Jamal suddenly silenced big-budget Russel in the 27th minute.

Jamal went ahead when midfielder Rahbar Wahed Khan played Shahin Mia on the right flank and the right-back mustered a left-footer on top of the box to beat goalkeeper Ashraful Islam Rana.

However, the lead lasted only two minutes as Russel hit back with a brilliant strike from Portuguese forward Tavares, who capitalised a through-pass from Brazilian Ailton Machado to dribble past onrushing goalkeeper Mohammad Nayeem to drive home the equaliser.

Four minutes from the break, Machado came close to giving Russel a lead but he drove wide in the open

net despite dribbling past onrushing goalkeeper Nayeem.

After the resumption, it was an even battle and both teams could not create goal-scoring chances and instead, tried their luck from the distance and eventually had to leave the ground sharing points.

In the day's first match, professional outfits continued their struggle against amateur teams as Uttar Baridhara Club came from behind to play out a 1-1 stalemate against Bangladesh Air Force, who finished bottom of the four-team group while Baridhara stood third.

Jewel Mia gave Air Force a surprising lead five minutes into the second half with a clever over-head chip before Uzbek Evgeniy Kochnev levelled the margin in the 82nd minute by converting a penalty.

Alongside Bangladesh Premier League outfit Baridhara Club stumbling against an amateur side, the likes of Air Force, professional outfit Chittagong Abahani also dropped points against Bangladesh Navy while traditional powerhouse Mohammedan lost to Army in the ongoing tournament.

Benitez the fall guy for Everton's long malaise

AFP, Liverpool



If any Everton manager could ill afford the club's worst home defeat to Liverpool for 39 years, it was Rafael Benitez.

The Spaniard was not accepted by many Toffees supporters from the minute he was appointed in June due to his previous role as a Champions League-winning manager with Liverpool.

A bright start briefly quietened the doubters. Everton sat fifth in the Premier League during the October international break having lost just one of their opening seven games.

They have taken just one point from the seven games since to plummet to 14th, just five points clear of the relegation zone ahead of the weekend fixtures.

Benitez heard his name ring around Goodison Park for the first time on Wednesday, but sadly for the 61-year-old it was coming from the small band of Liverpool fans in mocking celebration.

The relentless Reds ran out 4-1 winners, a scoreline that only flattered the home side, who were Liverpool's main domestic rivals in the late 1980s.

Everton's owner Farhad Moshiri took to the airwaves on Thursday to insist Benitez will be given more time.

But he was not present to face the barrage of abuse directed towards chairman Bill Kenwright in the directors' box at full-time.

Chants of "sack the board" reflected the anger aimed at those in charge just for giving Benitez the job in the first place, never mind keeping him in charge as they slide towards a relegation battle.

Both Moshiri and Benitez have used injuries to key players as the shield for a terrible run of results.

England international striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin has not featured since August, while Yerry Mina, Abdoulaye Doucoure and Richarlison have also had extended spells out injured.

"We are talking about key players missing and maybe these key players are also really important for the rest of the group to play

at the level they can play," said Benitez.

"We need to bring players back, and then we will be as strong as we were at the beginning (of the season)."

Benitez also pleaded the excuse of being handed limited resources after spending just £1.7 million (\$2.5 million) in the transfer window on Demarai Gray.

That is unlikely to change come the January window, with Moshiri's hands tied by financial fair play restrictions.

The British-Iranian businessman has poured in more than £500 million on players since taking over in 2016 but the vast majority of that money has been wasted, with tens of millions more spent



on paying off managers.

Roberto Martinez, Ronald Koeman, Sam Allardyce and Marco Silva have all been sacked in the past five years, while Carlo Ancelotti left of his own accord when a second chance at managing Real Madrid came up in June.

Dropping out of the top flight for the first time since 1954 is even more unthinkable with work under way on a new 53,000-capacity stadium at a cost of £500 million.

Benitez has kept his family home on Merseyside since 2004 despite stints in charge of Inter Milan, Chelsea, Napoli, Real Madrid, Newcastle and Dalian Professional since.

But just six months in, he is already on borrowed time at Goodison.

Dortmund left fuming after Bayern defeat

REUTERS, Dortmund



Borussia Dortmund's players and coach were left fuming over the decision to award a 77th minute penalty that handed Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich a 3-2 victory in their top-of-the-table clash on Saturday.

Bayern forward Robert Lewandowski converted the spot kick after a lengthy VAR review of a handball by Dortmund defender Mats Hummels, who had attempted to head a corner away but looked to have touched the ball with his elbow.

"It was an extremely wild game and a great one for the fans and it is two times more bitter to lose like that," said Dortmund captain Marco Reus.

"This was a very hard decision to award a penalty for this," he added after the match as he watched Hummels' handball on the replay screens.

"Mats really tries to get in there with his head and he needs his body to do that."

Dortmund earlier had two claims for a penalty themselves with referee Felix Zwayer refusing both times to review them.

In one of them Reus went down in the box after a challenge with Lucas Hernandez in the 54th minute



and the Dortmund captain said Zwayer should have at least watched it again.

"When you see the replay it looks really bad," Reus said of his penalty claim. "It is a shame that he did not review that one."

When Bayern were given their penalty Dortmund coach Marco Rose lost his cool on the bench, shouting in the direction of the referee and being sent to the stands for a second booking.

He had been shown a yellow card when Reus went down in the box.

Dortmund's first home loss of the season left them in second place on 30 points, four behind leaders Bayern after 14 matches.

"It's a shame that such a crappy penalty decides the game," Dortmund midfielder Emre Can said. "I'm sorry I have to say that."

"I stand here and talk again about a referee's decision. We played a great game today and then this happens."

Russia in Davis Cup final

AFP, MADRID

Daniil Medvedev sealed Russia's place in the Davis Cup final with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Jan-Lennard Struff giving his team an unassailable 2-0 lead over Germany on Saturday.

The world number two backed up Andrey Rublev's straight-sets win over Dominik Koepfer in the first rubber to set up a clash with Croatia on Sunday.

The Russians, like the Croats, will be bidding for a third win in the competition. "Russia is without doubt the strongest team in this Davis Cup," said Croatia's veteran number one Marin Cilic. "It will be a very tough mission for us facing them. But we have our own strengths. It is our third final in five years, which is something exceptional, and does not happen very often," added the 33-year-old 2014 US Open champion.

The Croats task is certainly a formidable one. The Russians strength in depth is unquestionable with the four players all ranked in the top 30 (Rublev is 5th, Aslan Karatsev is 18th and Karen Khachanov 29th). They have lost just one rubber in the whole tournament, Rublev going down to Spanish veteran Feliciano Lopez in their first match.

Croatia are hoping to win one of their singles and leave it down to their unbeaten world number one doubles pairing of Mate Pavic and Nikola Pietrangeli.



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