

# FINAL WHISTLE



A unique service from KVH Media Group

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

## MOURINHO: MANCHESTER 'WILL PULL TOGETHER'

Jose Mourinho says the "hearts and minds" of everyone at Manchester United are with those affected by the horrific attack that killed 22 people and injured many more. An explosion rocked the city on Monday evening when a bomb was let off at the end of a concert by pop star Ariana Grande at the Manchester Arena.

Greater Manchester Police has confirmed 22 people were killed and 59 injured in an attack that has shocked the world.

In the wake of the incident, UEFA accepted United's formal request to cancel their press conference ahead of the Europa League final, while the team held a minute's silence at training before flying to Sweden.

The Islamic State terror group has claimed responsibility for a bombing that United manager Mourinho says dominates their thoughts ahead of facing Ajax in Stockholm.

"We are all very sad about the tragic events last night; we cannot take out of our minds and our hearts the victims and their families," the Portuguese said.

"We have a job to do and we will fly to Sweden to do that job. It is a pity we cannot fly with the happiness that we always have before a big game.

"I know, even during my short time here, that the people of Manchester will pull together as one."

## Tianjin Quanjian play down Costa reports

Tianjin Quanjian have distanced themselves from reports a deal to sign Chelsea striker Diego Costa is near. The Chinese Super League club have been linked with a mega-money move for the 28-year-old striker, who has two more years remaining on his Chelsea contract.

Costa scored 20 goals on his way to winning a second Premier League title with Chelsea since joining from Atletico Madrid for £32million in July 2014.

He has also been linked with a return to Atletico. He admitted previously to agitating for a return to Madrid before saying he was happy at Chelsea.

A statement on Tianjin's official website said: "During the past six months the club has not communicated with Diego Costa or his agent regarding his transfer to Tianjin Quanjian."

## Allardyce resigns as Palace boss

Sam Allardyce has left his job as Crystal Palace manager.

The 62-year-old, who only took charge at Selhurst Park on December 23, guided the Eagles to safety on May 14 following a 4-0 defeat of Hull, who were relegated as a result.

However, the former England manager has now decided to walk away from his two-and-a-half-year deal with the south-London club following a meeting with chairman Steve Parish earlier on Tuesday.

"In some ways, this has been a very difficult decision to make, but in others it has been a simple one," Allardyce said in a statement.

"I will always be grateful to Crystal Palace and Steve Parish for giving me the opportunity to go out with my head held high having helped keep the club in the Premier League."

The departure appears on amicable terms, with Allardyce's stock once again on a high following an impressive end to the domestic campaign.

"More than that (keeping Palace up), they

gave me a chance of rebuilding my reputation after what happened with England. I felt I needed another shot at being a Premier League manager and showing that I still had the ability to achieve something significant. As I said last weekend, Palace gave me the chance of rehabilitation," Allardyce added.

"That's why it's hard walking away now. I believe the club are heading in the right direction with a hugely supportive board of directors, a great squad of players and some of the most passionate fans I've ever met. It's been a privilege to have worked for them for the past five months.

"But there comes a time when you have to take stock of what direction you want your life to take - and that's been the simple part for me."

There is reported to have been a break clause in his Palace contract which could be initiated following six months at the helm, and Allardyce is said to have been due a bonus in the region of some £2million for helping retain the Eagles' top-flight status.

## Koscielny to miss cup final

Arsenal's Laurent Koscielny is to serve a three-match suspension after his appeal against his sending-off in Sunday's win over Everton was dismissed by the Football Association.

The 31-year-old received a straight red card for his reckless first-half challenge on Enner Valencia and will therefore miss Saturday's FA Cup final against Chelsea and the first two domestic fixtures of next season.

Arsenal beat Everton 3-1 despite his dismissal, but his confirmed absence is a further disappointment for manager Arsene Wenger, who also has fitness concerns over fellow defenders Gabriel Paulista and Shkodran Mustafi.

"Laurent Koscielny will serve a three-match suspension with immediate effect after a claim of wrongful dismissal was unsuccessful," an FA statement read.

"The Arsenal defender was sent off for serious foul play during the game against Everton on Sunday (21 May 2017).

"An independent regulatory commission heard the case today (Tuesday 23 May 2017)."

## Downing hints at unrest in dressing room

Stewart Downing has admitted some of his Middlesbrough team-mates may not have wanted to be at the club as they scrapped in vain to secure their Premier League status.

The 32-year-old former England midfielder is the latest player to suggest there was a fracture in the dressing room at the Riverside Stadium at the time interim head coach Steve Agnew was attempting to drag Boro to safety.

Downing knows that cannot be repeated next season if they are to secure promotion from the Sky Bet Championship for the second time in three years, and has promised chairman Steve Gibson the full backing of the players as he decides who should lead the promotion fight.

He told the club's official website, [www.mfc.co.uk](http://www.mfc.co.uk): "Where we'll be competing next season is a difficult league - maybe it's getting harder each season - and you have to fight and scrap for everything.

"But we have a good core here and I'm sure that when we start next season, we'll have everyone in that changing room who wants to be here."

A unique service from KVH Media Group

Wednesday, May 24, 2017

## NOKIA, APPLE BURY HATCHET IN PATENT DISPUTE

HELSINKI - Nokia and Apple said Tuesday they were burying the hatchet in a bitter patent dispute with a cooperation agreement and an undisclosed cash payment by the US tech giant to the Finnish group. By settling their ongoing intellectual property dispute, the two companies would "move the relationship... from being adversaries in court to business partners," Nokia's chief legal officer Maria Varsellona said.

Following years of clashes, Nokia and Apple originally signed a licensing agreement in 2011. But last December, the Finnish group, once the world's top mobile phone maker, complained that Apple was using Nokia technology in many products without paying for it. And it filed lawsuits in Germany and in the United States.

Concretely, the dispute concerned 32 patents for innovations related to displays, user interface, software, antennae, chipsets and video coding.

The deal reached on Tuesday would put the two companies' relationship back on an even keel, with Nokia providing "certain network infrastructure products and services to Apple," the statement said.

## Brazil graft scandal puts economy reforms at risk

RIO DE JANEIRO - Economic austerity reforms meant to put Brazil's recession-damaged economy back on the rails are in danger now that President Michel Temer is on the verge of being ousted in a corruption scandal, analysts say.

Standard & Poors, the rating agency, reflected the concern on Tuesday by warning it could further lower Brazil's credit rating due to political uncertainty.

"The economy will be very much affected by the crisis," said Gesner Oliveira at GO Associados consultants. "It could be the third consecutive year of recession."

For Temer - accused of corruption and obstruction of justice just as macro-economic signs are improving - last week was simultaneously the "best and worst moment" for his government.

Inflation is steadily dropping and growth is believed to be at the start of a modest recovery, even if unemployment remains dire at nearly 14 percent. After the economy contracted 7.2 percent in 2015-16, there are hopes for a renaissance.

## Moody's cuts China's rating

BEIJING - Moody's on Wednesday slashed China's credit rating for the first time in almost three decades citing concerns about the country's rising debt and slowing growth, but Beijing rejected the downgrade as "inappropriate".

The move comes as China tries to clean up a toxic brew of unregulated and risky lending that for years has fuelled the economy's spectacular growth, though some analysts doubt Beijing's willingness to quit its debt addiction.

"The downgrade reflects Moody's expectation that China's financial strength will erode somewhat over the coming years, with economy-wide debt continuing to rise as potential growth slows," the agency said.

China's total outstanding credit surged to 260 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of 2016 and the International Monetary Fund has warned that a debt crisis in the country could "imperil global financial stability".

The government has trimmed its 2017

growth target to around 6.5 percent after it expanded 6.7 percent in 2016, the slowest growth rate since 1990.

China's 13th Five-Year-Plan released in 2016 announced an average annual growth rate of above 6.5 percent for 2016-2020.

But Moody's said it expects China's growth potential to decline to close to five percent over the next five years, citing diminishing investment, an accelerated fall in the working age population and a continuing dip in productivity.

The finance ministry rejected the assessment, saying Moody's had used an "inappropriate" method to assess the risks facing the economy.

"It over-estimated the difficulties that the Chinese economy is facing," the ministry said in a statement.

It added that the government's debt ratio in 2016 was 36.7 percent, lower than major market economies, and that the "expansion of the scale of government debt has been effectively controlled".

## Trump budget proposes deep cut to US oil stockpile

NEW YORK - President Donald Trump's budget released Tuesday proposed radically downsizing the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve, arguing that America's shale boom has lessened the need for an emergency stockpile.

Trump's proposal would sell off half the oil in the SPR, an emergency storage facility created amid the energy shocks of the 1970s.

Slashing the reserve would raise an estimated \$16.6 billion through 2027, part of a budget plan that slashes social spending programs and many government departments, while boosting defense spending and border security.

The budget proposal said US oil production has risen and the share of US oil imported from OPEC countries has fallen sharply compared with the 1970s, so cutting the SPR in half "would very likely provide sufficient protection in the event of an energy crisis."

## PPG boss: Akzo takeover remains friendly

AMSTERDAM - US-based coatings firm PPG said Tuesday it preferred negotiating a multi-billion-euro takeover of AkzoNobel, the world's leading paintmaker, as disgruntled shareholders seek to push the Dutch firm to consider the buyout offer.

"PPG remains very interested in pursuing a consensual, privately negotiated, substantive deal with AkzoNobel," PPG's chief executive Michael McGarry told journalists in Amsterdam.

"That has always been our desire and that remains our current desire," McGarry said, a day after a group of disgruntled AkzoNobel shareholders, including activist fund manager Elliott Advisors, clashed with Akzo managers in an Amsterdam business court.

If PPG doesn't agree a deal soon it could be forced to decide whether to mount a hostile takeover or wait months to make a new offer for AkzoNobel, which has so far refused to enter into negotiations.

## IN FOCUS

### THOMPSON HEADLINES PARIS DIAMOND LEAGUE

PARIS - Jamaica's double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson will headline the Paris Diamond League meet on July 1, organisers said on Monday.

Renaud Lavillenie, Kevin Mayer, Christophe Lemaitre and Dimitri Bascou, who won medals for France at the Rio Olympics last year, will all be present at Stade Charlety, chosen this year to host the event in place of the Stade de France.

Falling a little more than a month ahead of the August 4-13 World Athletics Championships in London, there will be a run out in the men's 110m hurdles for Jamaica's Olympic champion Omar McLeod while two-time Olympic gold medalist Christian Taylor is set for the triple jump.

Canada's Derek Drouin will take on Qatari rival Mutaz Essa Barshim in the men's high jump, and Ethiopian world champion Genzebe Dibaba will race Kenya's Olympic champion Faith Kipyegon in what promises to be a keenly-fought women's 1500m.

An innovative triathlon will also be held, comprising a 110m hurdles, long jump and javelin. (AFP)

### DIAMONDBACKS BEAT WHITE SOX 5-1

PHOENIX - Zack Greinke was dominant again, looking a lot like the pitcher who went 19-3 with a 1.66 ERA two years ago. His reaction: "It's nice."

Greinke struck out a season-high 12 and came within one out of a complete game as the Arizona Diamondbacks beat the Chicago White Sox 5-1 on Monday, AP reported.

The ace right-hander gave up four hits and improved to 5-0 in his last six starts.

"It was another Zack moment for us," Manager Torey Lovullo said.

The crowd booed loudly when Lovullo walked to the mound to pull Greinke (6-2) after Jose Abreu's two-out double in the ninth. Lovullo understood.

"Sometimes you've got to sit in the seat and not make popular decisions," he said, "but I made a deal with Zack."

Basically, it was three up and three down or he was not finishing the game.

Greinke wasn't surprised to see Lovullo come to the mound.

"Torey told me I had to get everyone out and I didn't," he said.

Greinke threw 104 pitches and everything was working for him. He was asked to compare the way he's pitching now to that masterful 2015 season with the Los Angeles Dodgers that helped earn him a \$206.5 million, six-year contract in Arizona.

## Curry, Durant shine as Warriors sweep into NBA Finals

LOS ANGELES - Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant led the way as the Golden State Warriors sealed a clean sweep of the San Antonio Spurs to reach their third consecutive NBA Finals berth on Monday.

Curry scored 36 points and Durant weighed in with 29 as the Warriors powered to a 129-115 win to complete a 4-0 victory in the best-of-seven Western Conference finals series.

It was the third consecutive series sweep of the 2017 post season for the Warriors, who are now 12-0 in the play-offs heading into the finals.

Durant, who attracted controversy after his blockbuster move from Oklahoma City Thunder last year to the Warriors, was delighted to be back in the NBA Finals once again.

The 28-year-old forward, who also pulled down 12 rebounds and contributed four assists, admitted he and Curry had rediscovered their understanding following the mid-season injury that sidelined him for around 20 games.

"Our chemistry is getting better and better and we're going to need it even more whoever we play in the finals," Durant told an interviewer.

"It's great to be one of the last two teams standing - we'll see what happens," he said.

### Predators reach 1st Stanley Cup Final, oust Ducks in 6 games

NASHVILLE - Different players just keep stepping up for the Nashville Predators, and now their magical post season run has an even bigger destination: the franchise's first trip to the Stanley Cup Final.

Colton Sissons scored his third goal with 6:00 left, and the Predators eliminated the Anaheim Ducks with a 6-3 win in Game 6 on Monday in the Western Conference finals.

"In the back of your head, you've been thinking about the Finals and then when the buzzer goes off, it's an amazing feeling," Nashville goalie Pekka Rinne said.

The Predators, who've never won even a division title in their 19-year history, came in with the fewest points of any team in these play-offs. They lost their top center, Ryan Johansen, for the play-offs after Game 4 because of emergency surgery on his left thigh. Captain Mike Fisher has missed two games with an upper-body injury.

Curry meanwhile admitted he was relishing his partnership with Durant.

"It makes the game fun," Durant said.

"The way we play the game and move the ball. Watching him do what he does. It's a fun way to play and we want to keep that up. I'm having fun, enjoying what I do," Durant added.

"Things are flowing. It's a part of our identity to get that mojo going. I think we're prepared for pretty much anything. We're going to be confident and ready to go."

Spurs fans meanwhile bade what looked like a farewell to 39-year-old Argentinian legend Manu Ginobili, who was given a rousing ovation as he left the court.

"He's somebody I grew up watching," Durant said. "An amazing competitor. I got nothing but love and respect for him."

Spurs Coach Gregg Popovich meanwhile spoke admiringly of the Warriors.

"They were fantastic. To all of them. From ownership, to the coaches, the players. They play a great brand of basketball. Hats off to them. Great job," said Popovich, who also saluted Ginobili in what might have been his final game. (AFP)

"We went through a tremendous amount of adversity the last 72 hours losing two key guys in our lineup," Nashville defenceman PK Subban said. "I mean, I said it before earlier in the playoffs that this team's got tremendous amount of composure. There is so much confidence in this dressing room what we can accomplish together if we play the right way."

They've swept the West's No 1 seed in Chicago, downed St Louis in six in the second round and now the Pacific Division champs. Peter Laviolette is the fourth coach to take three different teams to the Final, and the first since the play-offs split into conference play in 1994.

The Predators will play either defending champion Pittsburgh or Ottawa for the Stanley Cup. Game 1 is Monday.

Anaheim lost in the conference finals for the second time in three years. (AP)