

Soccer News Digest

Thomas HindleJosh Sargent's strikes, Gio Reyna's dilemma, and the top five USMNT storylines to watch this weekendAnalysisF. BalogunJ. SargentB. AaronsonUSACHampionshipFEATURESGOAL US looks at the trending topics to follow for Americans Abroad in this weekend's European matchesAnother week, another opportunity for Americans abroad to impress. It's been a mixed start to the season for USMNT's finest. Some, such as Christian Pulisic, have run hot and cold. Others, such as Brendan Aaronson have burned brightly. While a few are yet to see their seasons take off.This week could be pivotal. A few big names are involved in key fixtures early on, while some proper striking talent will look to impress ahead of the first international break of the season.Although not confirmed to be the new USMNT manager for the friendlies next week, Mauricio Pochettino would presumably have a role in picking this squad. Those on the fringes would do well to impress over the weekend.GOAL US takes a look at some of the biggest storylines to follow among USMNT regulars and hopefuls in major European competitions.Article continues belowRyan TolmichChristian Pulisic, Weston McKennie and the top 10 USMNT stars in Europe, rankedPower rankingsUSAC. PulisicW. McKenniePremier LeagueSerie AAC MilanJuventusFEATURESThe September friendlies are almost here. This is a look at the top 10 USMNT players heading into the break. The international break is just around the corner, and the anticipation is rising when it comes to the U.S. men's national team.A new coach, Mauricio Pochettino, is reportedly on the way to the USMNT, but what will he see as he watches? European seasons have just begun, but you can already see some storylines taking shape. Several players, like Josh Sargent, are making a case for themselves. Others, like Matt Turner or Gio Reyna, are struggling for minutes. For some players like Turner, good fortune could be coming in the form of a transfer with Friday's deadline approaching.Who should Pochettino be keeping his eye on? GOAL breaks down the top 10 Americans Abroad.Last updated: August 30, 2024Article continues belowRyan TolmichClint Dempsey to Liverpool, Weston McKennie to Cincinnati, Antonee Robinson to Milan: Wildest failed USMNT transfer sagasAnalysisUSATransfersT. AdamsC. PulisicW.

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McKennieA. RobinsonD. McGuireFEATURESGOAL takes a look at some of the wildest American transfer rollercoaster rides, deals that never came to beThe summer transfer window closes this week, which - if history is any guide - can also mean chaos could ensue, something American soccer fans know all too well.When it comes to the transfer window, nothing is ever straightforward. There are so many moving parts, and deals can fall apart at any time. No matter how concrete plans seem, much can change in just a day or two - and those changes can ultimately alter the trajectory of a player's career.Several of the USMNT's top stars have been at the center of those epic adventures. From failed medicals to longstanding courtships gone wrong, there have been countless transfer rollercoaster rides that have left fans and players alike scratching their heads wondering what the hell actually happened.With that in mind, GOAL takes a look at some of the craziest "what-ifs" and wildest USMNT transfer sagas over the years.Article continues belowMark DoyleHarry Kane and Arsenal earn easy pathways, but PSG face a gauntlet: Winners and losers from the Champions League league-phase drawWinners & LosersChampions LeagueFEATURESReal MadridBarcelonaManchester CityArsenalLiverpoolBayern MunichParis Saint-GermainInterAC MilanH. KaneA. SlotB. RodgersThere are eye-catching fixtures everywhere you look following Thursday's ceremony in Monaco as the competition's new format was laid outThe Champions League has returned - and with a brand new format. The tournament has been expanded to 36 teams and instead of a group stage, there'll be a league phase in which all of the participants play eight games against eight different teams (four at home, and four away).The eight teams with the most points will progress directly to the last 16, while the teams ranked ninth to 24th will progress to a play-off round, with the remaining sides eliminated from Europe completely. The new format is, by its mere design, more egalitarian than ever before as every team, irrespective of their UEFA coefficient, must face two teams from every pool.However, there's no denying that the draw went better for some clubs than others. Below, GOAL runs through all the big winners and losers from Thursday's ceremony in Monaco...Article continues belowMark DoyleChampions

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League 2024-25 Power Rankings: Liverpool and PSG slide after league-phase draw
Opinion Champions League Real Madrid Manchester City Arsenal Liverpool Bayern Munich Barcelona Paris Saint-Germain Aston Villa Atletico Madrid Juventus Inter AC Milan Bayer Leverkusen Atalanta Bologna Borussia Dortmund RB Leipzig PSV Eindhoven VfB Stuttgart Brest Monaco Girona Feyenoord

FEATURES After Thursday's draw, GOAL breaks down the strengths and weaknesses of all 36 participants in this season's expanded tournament. The Champions League proper is about to get under way - but it'll be unlike anything we've seen before. The group stage has been replaced by a league phase that will see 36 teams (up from 32) play eight games against eight different teams (four at home, four away) to see who progresses directly to the last 16, who ends up in the play-off round, and who ends being eliminated from continental competition completely. Tournament organisers UEFA believe that the 'Swiss Model' will provide more excitement and meaningful matches than ever before, and while such claims have provoked scepticism among some supporters, what we do know for certain is that this year's competition is stacked with heavyweight contenders and potential surprise packages. So, how are all of the participants shaping up after Thursday's draw? Below, GOAL ranks all 36 teams, from familiar faces such as Real Madrid, Manchester City and Bayern Munich to newcomers Bologna, Brest and Girona... Previous update: August 29, 2024 (8am BST). Article continues below

There is a 'Vinicius case'. What yesterday seemed to be just another market rumor (although extremely eye-catching due to the spectacular figures), is taking shape as the hours go by. According to MARCA, Al Ahli has already approached Real Madrid to sound out a possible exit of the Brazilian footballer to the Middle East. The response of the white club has been clear and direct: his termination clause is 1,000 million euros - one billion euros. Sources close to the operation do not see the Saudi club as likely to reach that figure, which would be by far the highest amount paid in an operation in the history of world sport. In any case, Al Ahli have already offered Real Madrid a higher amount for Vini than his theoretical market valuation, which is around 200 million euros, and it is

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expected that in the next few days they will present a formal proposal to the entity presided over by Florentino Perez. What is known is the salary that Vini would receive in Saudi Arabia for a five-year contract: around 1 billion euros. A figure that certainly deserves to be taken into account and considered by the Brazilian international, as it would place him, at just 24 years of age, as the highest paid footballer of all time. At Real Madrid, Vini's annual salary is around 20 million euros gross per season. In any case, the matter is only in the early stages of a plot that is expected to be intense in the coming days. Vinicius and his entourage are only officially handling the presentation of a "brutal project", according to sources close to the player. A huge proposal from the economic point of view, which "must be well thought out", according to the same interlocutors. In the next few days, therefore, new contact should arrive between Al Ahli and Real Madrid, with what is expected to be an improved proposal from Saudi Arabia. The Spanish club will again refer to the clause, which in theory should settle the issue. However, the Saudis' strong interest in the winger may have a direct effect on Real Madrid's plan, which could be tempted to revise Vinicius' contract upwards to avoid temptations such as this one that could cause the player to hesitate again in the future.

LYON, France (AP) — Nigerian striker Gift Orban scored a second-half double to give Lyon a thrilling 4-3 come-from-behind win over Strasbourg in the French league on Friday. The victory was Lyon's first points of the season after two consecutive defeats and a particular triumph for substitute Orban. He struggled during his first six months at Lyon, scoring just once in 17 league appearances. But he doubled that tally in a dramatic second-half comeback in front of his own fans at Groupama Stadium. Lyon had already come back from behind after losing a goal to sluggish defending in the third minute. Corentin Tolisso equalized seconds before halftime but the host was behind again early in the second half when first Andrey Santos and then Emanuel Emegha struck within 10 minutes of the restart. English defender Ashley Maitland-Niles gave Lyon a lifeline when he made it 3-2 after an hour and then Orban appeared with two goals in nine minutes, his second a perfectly placed header. The result lifted Lyon to 11th place, four behind Strasbourg. — AP soccer:

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<https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>MANCHESTER, England (AP) ? Manchester United signed Uruguay defensive midfielder Manuel Ugarte from Paris Saint-Germain for an an initial 50 million euros (\$55.7 million) on Friday, with the transfer announced only in the final hour of the summer transfer window.Ugarte is United?s fifth signing of the window ? after striker Joshua Zirkzee, center backs Leny Yoro and Matthijs de Ligt, and full back Noussair Mazraoui ? and takes the club?s summer spending on new players to around \$240 million.The 23-year-old Ugarte, who has signed a contract until 2029, has been a target of United throughout the summer and looks set to be the long-term replacement for Casemiro, who is 32.?Signing Manuel was another of our primary targets for this summer. He is among the very best ball-winning midfield players in the world,? United sporting director Dan Ashworth said. United manager Erik ten Hag said Ugarte will bring ?controlled aggression? to the team.?I will sacrifice and give everything for my teammates,? Ugarte said. ?Together we will fight to win trophies and reach the level where this club needs to be.? RELATED COVERAGE Lyon off the mark as Orban double caps thrilling comeback in 4-3 win over Strasbourg McTominay joined Man United at age 5 and leaving for Napoli 22 years later Thuram double helps Inter rout Atalanta and Torino maintains strong start with win at Venezia The deal for Ugarte includes the potential for 10 million euros (\$11 million) in bonuses, subject to performance and success.Ugarte spent just one year at PSG after joining from Portuguese team Sporting.Earlier Friday, United sold Scotland midfielder Scott McTominay to Napoli for 30 million euros (\$33 million), a transfer which created space in the squad for Ugarte.Mali youth international Sekou Kone also joined United from Guidars FC in his homeland and will initially play in the academy.____AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>NAPLES, Italy (AP) ? After more than two decades at Manchester United ? having joined the youth program at age five ? midfielder Scott McTominay transferred to Napoli in a 30 million euros (\$33 million) deadline deal on Friday.The Scotland international was one of United?s most successful academy graduates, registering 253 appearances over seven years in the first team, with 29 goals.United coach Erik ten Hag expressed dismay over English Premier

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League rules that he said encourage the sale of homegrown players. "I wouldn't prefer to lose him because he's Manchester United in everything," Ten Hag said. "He was so important for our team, for Manchester United, but unfortunately it's the rules." We have to discuss the rules. When you have to sell and obviously homegrown and academy players bring more value, that's not the right thing to do. But I think for everyone, for all parts it's a good deal. " He's happy with it. "At Napoli, McTominay will play under Antonio Conte, who was instrumental in signing Romelu Lukaku from Chelsea on Thursday. Napoli also signed another Scotland midfielder, reaching a deal to acquire the diminutive Billy Gilmour from Brighton. ____AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>MILAN (AP) ?

Marcus Thuram scored twice and played a starring role as reigning champion Inter Milan went to the top of Serie A after a 4-0 win over Atalanta on Friday. The result extended Inter's unbeaten start to the season and tied it at the top with Torino, which beat Venezia 1-0 earlier in the day. Both teams have seven points from three games. Inter started the match in devastating style with two goals in the first 10 minutes. The opener was a disaster for Atalanta defender Berat Djimsiti. He stretched to stop Thuram's cross but succeeded only in deflecting the ball past his own goalkeeper. There was no luck about the second seven minutes later. Nicolò Barella volleyed home a cracker from the edge of the box to give Inter a commanding early lead. Thuram hit the woodwork before halftime but he deservedly got his name on the scoresheet two minutes into the second half when he seized on a loose ball in the box and poked it home. Nine minutes later, he got his second with another opportunist goal inside the penalty area. Earlier, Saul Coco scored with five minutes remaining to give Torino a 1-0 win at Venezia and extend its unbeaten start to the season. RELATED COVERAGE Lyon off the mark as Orban double caps thrilling comeback in 4-3 win over Strasbourg Man United signs Uruguay midfielder Ugarte from PSG for \$55M to take summer spending to \$240M McTominay joined Man United at age 5 and leaving for Napoli 22 years later Coco's glancing header came at the end of a tepid game in which neither side created many clear-cut chances. It was the central defender's first Serie A goal since joining Torino from Las Palmas this

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summer.Venezia has one point from its first three matches and is second to last on the table.

Atalanta is eighth.____AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/hub/soccer>