

# Racism mars London Derby

Unruly spectators target Chelsea's Rudiger with monkey chants as Lampard's team beats Mourinho's Tottenham

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LONDON, DECEMBER 23

CHELSEA DEFENDER Antonio Rudiger reported being targeted with monkey noises during a London derby at Tottenham on Sunday, forcing the stadium announcer to issue three warnings in an unprecedented move at a Premier League game.

The latest high-profile incident of racism at an English stadium led to calls from the players' union for a government inquiry to "accelerate solutions" along with the police and officials across soccer.

"We will not allow this to continue," the Professional Footballers' Association said in a statement. "Now more than ever we must unite and stand strong and together to confront, challenge and eradicate racist abuse in our stadiums and in our country."

The announcements at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium were made at 10-minute intervals, starting around the 63rd minute of the game with Chelsea leading 2-0.

"Racist behavior among spectators is interfering with the game, the announcer announced in a warning to the crowd of 61,104. Please remember that racism has no place in football."

The abuse reported by Rudiger came after he was kicked in the chest by Tottenham forward Son Heung-min, who was sent off as a result. Rudiger, who is black, was seen putting his hands under his armpits - seemingly mimicking a monkey gesture - in the 63rd minute.

Rudiger later tweeted hashtags which stated "No to racism" and "Please get some basic education."

Chelsea captain Cesar Azpilicueta had been informed of the racism by Rudiger. That led to referee Anthony Taylor ordering the stadium announcements, implementing a procedure initially formed by FIFA to deal with discrimination in games.

Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said he would support his players walking off the field in future.

"It would depend what the players were feeling and saying," Lampard said. "I'm sure it would be a group decision. But we're not there yet, so it's hypothetical to a degree."

Repeated announcements warning against racism in stadiums would typically indicate multiple incidents and require the players to be taken off. But Tottenham and the Premier League said there had been only one reported incident.

"I hate racism in society, I hate racism in football," Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho said. "I'm disappointed that things like that still can happen, but the referee stopped the game, he spoke with the players, spoke with the captains, spoke with the coaches. "I was losing, I don't want the game to be stopped, but immediately when I knew the reason why the game was stopped I obviously understood and accepted it."



Chelsea manager Frank Lampard celebrates his team's 2-0 victory against Tottenham on Sunday. Reuters

Tottenham said it had launched an investigation and would be liaising with Chelsea and its players.

"Any form of racism is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our stadium," Tottenham said. "We take any such allegations extremely seriously and shall take the strongest possible action against any individual found to be behaving in such a way, including stadium bans."

If the English Football Association followed sanctions used by UEFA and FIFA, part of Tottenham's stadium could be ordered to be closed to fans as a punishment.

"Everyone is doing as much as they can to make a stop for it," Chelsea forward Tammy Abraham said. "But there are going to be one or two people who will always remain the same."

"For us it is about staying together. As you could see, the Spurs players came to comfort Toni as well."

The Manchester derby two weeks ago was also marred by a high-profile incident of racism when United players were targeted with abuse at City.

The England national team experienced a European Championship qualifier being stopped twice in Bulgaria in October when home fans made Nazi salutes and targeted monkey noises at the visiting black players.

"Racist abuse in football is not just an issue for black and ethnic minority players, it is an issue for everyone who loves the game," the English players' union said.

## Pep ready to back players who walk off if abused

PEP GUARDIOLA has said he would back his players if they ever found themselves compelled to walk off during a game in protest against racist abuse. The Manchester City manager was talking following the scenes that marred Chelsea's 1-0 win away to Tottenham Hotspur in the London derby on Sunday.

Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger reported he was subjected to racist abuse by home supporters which resulted in the Premier League's anti-racist protocol being initiated for the first time. Those measures could have seen players leaving the field -- a stance Guardiola insisted Monday he would support should it happen in a game involving reigning English champions City. "Of course. I support my players, I support the initiative," Guardiola told a news conference.

### 'Day-by-day battle'

"What happened, you have to battle day by day. It's not about one club or one person or anything specific that happened. I said many times, in the football world it is more in vision

because every game, every week, every day, a lot of actions happen." The Catalan added: "It is a battle we have to fight it every day, in schools especially, in the families at home to try to make a better society in the future for the next generation."

"It is a battle day-by-day. Of course, all the initiatives, it happened for the players and the federation, we are going to support."

Guardiola has been an outspoken anti-racism advocate in his time in the English game but believes the issue extends far beyond football and may never be fully defeated. "I don't think it will be completely eradicated. We have to fight but we will need a lot of time to eradicate it," he said. "It was a problem that's happened for decades, centuries. Now you can visualise it more because the media is closer and more up front about the problem."

"It has happened for a long time. We have to fight, again and again, especially for the little kids, in the schools. Of course, if it happens be strict to avoid these kinds of persons to avoid it happening."



## IPL second-best paymasters

The IPL ranks as the second-best employers in sport, according to the 2019 survey by sportingintelligence.com. The 10th edition, compiled by the Global Sports Salaries study, placed Barcelona on top with an average basic salary of a first-team player of \$12.8 m. But when it comes to leagues, IPL is only behind NBA.

LEAGUES		
LEAGUE	TOTAL	ANNUAL AVG SALARY PER PLAYER
NBA	\$3.6bn (₹26,089 cr)	\$8.3mn (₹59 cr)
IPL	\$90mn (₹ 647.6 cr)	\$5.3mn (₹37cr*)
MLB	\$3.4bn (₹24,586 cr)	\$4mn (₹ 28.7 cr)
EPL	\$1.9bn (₹14,016 cr)	\$3.9mn (₹ 28.2 cr)
NFL	\$5.5bn (₹39,359 cr)	\$3.2mn (₹ 23.2 cr)

\* Weekly 72lakh, pro-rated for a year

**THE INDIAN** Premier League ranked no. 2 in terms of average salary paid. In 2019, IPL shelled out \$90,893,850 (₹647.6cr) in salaries, which makes the average salary of a player ₹ 72lakh per week. NBA tops the list at ₹ 1.14cr paid per player per week, while MLB is third at Rs55lakh.

**THERE ARE** caveats to the IPL numbers. Unlike other almost year-round leagues, IPL runs for seven weeks. And unlike players in other leagues, most IPL

cricketers can ply their trade in other leagues around the world. The total and average salary amounts also have to be pro-rated for a year i.e. weekly numbers multiplied by 52 to get comparative numbers.

**NBA AND** MLB also feature 30 teams each, employing 440 and 856 players respectively. NFL (5th), has 1,696 players in 32 teams. IPL has 128 signed players across 8 teams. Fewer players mean fewer outliers to affect the average.

TEAMS		
RANK (LAST YEAR)	TEAM	AVG WEEKLY PAY
1 (1)	Barcelona	\$236,241 (₹1.68cr)
2 (2)	Real Madrid	\$214,513 (₹1.5cr)
3 (9)	Juventus	\$194,359 (₹ 1.38cr)
4 (14)	Portland Trail Blazers	\$193,074 (₹ 1.37cr)
5 (4)	Golden State Warriors	\$190,806 (₹ 1.35cr)
47 (56)	Mumbai Indians	\$105,187 (₹ 74 lakh)



**MUMBAI INDIANS** come in at number 47, up from 56 in the last year, with an average weekly pay of \$5,469,739

(\$105,187). La Liga powerhouses Barcelona and Real Madrid continue to occupy the top two spots, while Cristiano Ronaldo's move to Juventus helped the Italian champions rank third.

**RANK 47** to 52 are occupied by IPL

### FANS, FOLLOWERS

**ATTENDANCE-WISE**, IPL matches are the eighth most attended, with 25,714 spectators present for each match, but it's only a 'guesstimate'. GSSS notes: "The IPL has been consistently poor in measuring and publishing accurate crowd levels." NFL is the most-attended, with a match drawing 67,100.

**IPL THOUGH** ranks only behind EPL and La Liga when it comes to fan engagement on social media. India has the secondmost smartphone users behind China at 1.17bn. Cheap phones and cheaper data further means IPL ranks third in terms of average social media clout of each club in the league.

## Ibrahimovic's statue in Malmo vandalised

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MALMO, DECEMBER 23

THE STATUE of Swedish soccer star Zlatan Ibrahimovic has been the target of more vandalism. This time, its nose has been chopped off. Ibrahimovic angered fans of his boyhood club, Malmo, last month when he bought a stake in one of its title rivals, Hammarby, and outlined his desire to make the Stockholm-based team "the best in Scandinavia."

Hours after that was announced, a statue of Ibrahimovic that is located outside Malmo's stadium was attacked, with vandals attempting to set it on fire and writing racist graffiti next to it.

On Dec. 12, there was an attempt to saw off the statue's legs. Now, its nose has been cut off and the bronze statue has been sprayed silver.

A petition has been set up to remove the statue, with more than 8,000 people signing it. Ibrahimovic has said he will not play in Sweden again — he started his career at Malmo, where he was born, in 1999 — and is still weighing up where to play next.

He recently left the Los Angeles Galaxy in Major League Soccer, having previously played for Ajax, Barcelona, AC Milan, Inter Milan, Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester United in a trophy-laden career.

Carlo Ancelotti, who was hired as manager of English club Everton at the weekend, suggested Ibrahimovic could be one of his first signings.

Speaking at his presentation at Everton on Monday, Ancelotti said: "Zlatan Ibrahimovic is a good friend of mine. He was my player (at PSG). Fortunately I have trained a lot of fantastic players. But Ibrahimovic has finished his period in the United States and I don't know what his idea. I have to call him."



## Real enter winter break two points behind leaders Barca

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BARCELONA, DECEMBER 23

REAL MADRID finished 2019 with growing concerns over its attack and trailing Barcelona by two points as the Spanish league starts its winter break. Zinedine Zidane will face questions about Madrid's scoring slump after it was held 0-0 at home by a tame Athletic Bilbao on Sunday. The slip at the Santiago Bernabeu came after drawing 1-1 at Valencia and 0-0 at Barcelona over the past week.

One goal in three matches is a paltry return for one of the richest clubs in the world.

"Having had so many chances, we are a bit angry at ourselves, but this is football," Zidane said. "In the last three games we have had many scoring chances but few goals. I don't think it is bad luck or a lack of killer instinct. The important thing is that we are creating chances. We will keep that up and the goals will come."

The league resumes in the first week of January. Madrid dominated possession but the goalkeeping of Unai Simón, the woodwork, and the lack of a scoring touch saved Bilbao. Toni Kroos, Nacho Fernández, and Luka Jovic all sent shots off the goal-frame for the hosts.

Simón stopped Vinicius Junior in front of his goal after the young Brazilian had cut back around the final defender in the game's first scoring opportunity in the 12th minute. Vinicius squandered two more opportunities, not clearly connecting with Luka Modric's cross before he failed to control a loose ball in the goalmouth.

Simón deflected Kroos' point-blank effort in the 19th onto the crossbar after Bilbao's passive back line had let him advance through the box. Simón also saved shots on goal from Karim Benzema. Bilbao's attack consisted in the rare long ball won by Iñaki Williams or a quick counterattack. Williams had Bilbao's only threat saved by Thibaut Courtois in the 20th.

Fernández smashed a header off the crossbar in the 59th shortly after replacing Eder Militao, who injured his right eye. Late substitute Jovic headed off the base of the post with four minutes remaining.

"It was a hard-earned point," Simón said.

"We were helped by the woodwork, but we did a good job and I think we did enough to



Zinedine Zidane's Real were held 0-0 at home by Athletic Bilbao. Reuters

deserve the draw."

Bilbao is in seventh place, immediately above Valencia. Ángel Correa again proved to be Atlético Madrid's ideal substitute when he went on in the second half to score one goal and set up another in a 2-1 win at Real Betis. Atlético's first victory in six league games on the road left it in fourth place and seven points behind Barcelona. Sevilla is third.

Correa's first touch of the ball intercepted a pass from Alex Moreno and left him alone to round Betis goalkeeper Joel Robles and net the 58th-minute opener.

The Argentina forward then passed for Álvaro Morata who used the inside of his right boot to redirect Correa's low cross past Robles with six minutes to play.

Marc Bartra scored for Betis in injury time.

Atlético coach Diego Simeone praised Correa for his ability to come off the bench and revitalize the team. "I don't like the word 'supersub,' since he is an important player for us and has started matches, but when he comes off the bench he knows what to do. He has something special," Simeone said.

### Staying close

Real Sociedad withstood an attempted comeback by 10-man Osasuna to earn a 4-3 away victory that kept it one point behind Atlético in fifth place. Sociedad led by three goals after Mikel Oyarzabal, Cristian "Portu" Portugués, and Martin Odegaard all scored in the opening half hour.

## Ferrari extend Leclerc's contract until 2024

REUTERS  
DECEMBER 23

FERRARI PUT their long-term faith in Charles Leclerc on Monday by extending the 22-year-old's contract for five more years until the end of 2024.

The Monaco-born Formula One driver won two of the 21 grands prix in 2019, making him the Italian team's youngest winner, while his seven pole positions were more than anyone else managed.

He also ended the campaign fourth overall and above his 32-year-old team mate Sebastian Vettel, a four times world champion whose contract expires at the end of 2020, in the drivers' standings.

"I am very happy to be staying on with Scuderia Ferrari. This past season, driving for the most illustrious team in Formula One has been a dream year for me," Leclerc said in a statement.

"I cannot wait to enjoy an even deeper relationship with the team after what has been an intense and exciting 2019. I'm keen to see what the future holds and I can't wait to get going again next season."

The decision ensures Leclerc will be with Ferrari when the sport enters a new era in 2021, with Vettel's future far from certain. It also means the youngster could be an eventual team mate to six-times world champion Lewis Hamilton, the subject of plenty of speculation about his plans after Mercedes.

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