

Maresca needs time to succeed after ‘big changes’ at Man City



Enzo Maresca looks on during a training session (file photo)

AFP | London

Enzo Maresca insists he can replicate Manchester City’s success under Pep Guardiola if he is given time to handle the “big changes” at the club.

Maresca takes charge of his first Premier League game as City boss when Bournemouth visit the Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

The Italian has been hired to replace Guardiola after City’s legendary manager resigned at the end of last season.

Guardiola won 20 trophies, including six Premier League titles, during a glorious decade at the Etihad Stadium.

Filling the void left by the Spaniard is a daunting task for former Chelsea boss Maresca, who has arrived in Manchester at a time of change on the pitch as well.

Rodri, John Stones and Bernardo Silva have all left, while Savinho is on the verge of joining Tottenham.

City haven’t won the title since 2024 and last season finished seven points behind champions Arsenal, who thrashed them 3-0 in the Community Shield last weekend to underline the size of the challenge facing Maresca.

“When you make many changes, not only the manager, Rodri was here, John (Stones) was here, Bernardo (Silva) was here. It’s a big change, but it doesn’t mean that we won’t be ready to compete,” Maresca told reporters yesterday.

“It’s a context, it’s not an excuse. We need to be ready, I want to compete. The reason I’m here is because I want to try and win titles, and carry on what this club stands for in the last 15 years.

U23 women reach back-to-back finals

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Bahrain’s women reached a second final in as many days at the FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League in Singapore, only for Australia to shut the door again with a 21-6 win.

The Under-23 side had powered through their group, brushing aside Qatar 21-4 before handing Saudi Arabia the same beating to finish top and book another shot at the title.

Australia were a different test. Bahrain could not match the tournament leaders in the final and had to settle for second place once again.

The two runs have put Bahrain second in the women’s overall standings with 160 points after the first two rounds. Australia lead, with Singapore third, Saudi Arabia fourth, Turkmenistan fifth and Qatar sixth.

The men are still hunting a first final.

Bahrain began their second-round campaign by beating Qatar 14-8, then lost to Saudi Arabia after a game that stayed close deep into the closing stages before their Gulf rivals pulled away.

That left Bahrain fourth in the men’s overall table. Australia sit first, Singapore sec-



Bayan Salman battles for the ball against Qatar

ond and Saudi Arabia third, followed by Bahrain, Turkmenistan and Qatar.

Round three is played on Saturday, when Bahrain’s men face Singapore at 9.45am and

Australia at 1.25pm.

The women meet Qatar at 10.20am before another clash with Australia at 12.10pm, with a third straight final within reach.

Spurs agree deal to sign Man City’s Savinho: reports



Savinho

AFP | London

Tottenham have agreed a deal to sign Manchester City winger Savinho for an initial fee of around £75 million (\$102 million), according to reports yesterday.

Savinho has been a long-term target for Tottenham, who failed in their attempt to sign the Brazil international during the 2025-26 campaign.

The 22-year-old Brazilian appears set to finally move to the north London club, who will pay an extra £10 million in potential add-ons.

Tottenham are also interested in signing Savinho’s City team-mate Omar Marmoush after the Egypt forward’s underwhelming spell in Manchester.

Savinho’s arrival will take Tottenham’s close-season spending beyond £300 million as boss Roberto De Zerbi rebuilds a squad that narrowly avoided relegation last season.

Real Madrid star players are compatible: Mourinho

AFP | Madrid

New Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho yesterday insisted his team’s star players could fit together ahead of Los Blancos’ opening La Liga game at Espanyol.

Mourinho’s predecessors Carlo Ancelotti, Xabi Alonso and Alvaro Arbeloa struggled to strike a balance between attack and defence while lining up with Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham.

Madrid won the Champions League in 2024 with England international Bellingham and Brazilian winger Vinicius playing key roles, but since French superstar Mbappe arrived that summer, the club have not lifted a major trophy.

“They are incredible players and incredible players want to play with incredible players,” Mourinho told reporters.

“Tactically, it could be tricky. Ancelotti has found a set-up with Brazil perfect for Vini, (Didier) Deschamps has found one with France perfect for Kylian, (Thomas) Tuchel one perfect for Jude, it’s harder for Mourinho to do it for the three of them.



Jose Mourinho looks on during a training session (file photo)

“We’re on it. I want the three, when all three play, to feel comfortable on the pitch... they are three players of great quality.

“They don’t play in incompatible positions. We will have a great season with them.”

However Madrid’s stars can consider themselves warned -- they must contribute in defence this season.

“We have to defend with 11 players,” said Mourinho.

“If a team is pushing us back and giving us problems in our fi-

nal third, we all have to defend.”

Mourinho said in his second spell at Real Madrid, after previously coaching the team between 2010-2013, he hopes his players make life hard for him in terms of team selection.

“There will be moments of frustration, because of results -- or personal frustration,” said the 63-year-old coach.

“I told the players tomorrow there will come a moment of frustration for many of them because it will be the first time that

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I told the players tomorrow there will come a moment of frustration for many of them because it will be the first time that I have to pick one as a starter and the other goes to the bench and feels frustrated, they have to digest that individually and as a group

JOSE MOURINHO

I have to pick one as a starter and the other goes to the bench and feels frustrated, they have to digest that individually and as a group.

“I’m here to help them, but I can’t start a game with 15 players, only 11 can play. I hope each game is difficult for me, because they keep working in the way they are working.

“The day that one lowers his level because of frustration, decisions will be easy for me. I want hard decisions... the team needs to know how to navigate moments of frustration.”

Bayern knew about Musiala’s condition ‘a long time ago’ says Kompany

AFP | Munich

Bayern Munich coach Vincent Kompany said yesterday the club were aware of midfielder Jamal Musiala’s neurological disorder long before it was made public this week.

Hours after fainting on the pitch for the second time in four days, the 23-year-old issued a statement Tuesday saying he is suffering from a “neurological disorder” which can lead to “temporary but treatable seizures”.

Confirming Musiala would not play in Saturday’s season-opening Supercup clash away at Borussia Dortmund, Kompany

said Bayern were aware of the condition.

The coach revealed the seizures were a result of a change in treatment.

“He made a slight change to his treatment, which caused some side effects. It’s perfectly normal to make changes to a treatment plan.

“Now we want to get things back to how it was before.”

Bayern sporting director Max Eberl said the club knew about the condition for over a year and said it was Musiala’s decision to go public.

Kompany said the Bayern bench and support staff were “calm” when Musiala collapsed.

Bangladesh coach Simmons wary of Australia backlash in second Test

AFP | Mackay

Bangladesh coach Phil Simmons has warned his players that Australia will come at them “harder” in the second Test at Mackay on Saturday after his side’s shock win in the opening match.

Visitors Bangladesh stunned

the world’s top-ranked team in Darwin last week by nine wickets for what captain Najmul Hossain Shanto called the biggest win in the nation’s history.

Veteran coach Simmons, who has also been in charge of Ireland, Zimbabwe, the West Indies (twice) and Afghanistan, agreed it was a huge achieve-

ment.

But he cautioned his players not to get carried away in the second Test.

“The only thing I had to say to them is that Australia is going to come harder,” the Trinidadian former all-rounder told reporters late Thursday.

“So we have to either keep

that level of performance or get a little bit better.

“Even if we get one percent better in some areas, then we will have to make sure that that’s there.

“But we know that they are going to change their game. They are going to come harder at us.”

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