

# Isak out months after fracturing leg

Liverpool forward faces two months out as Slot blames “reckless” Tottenham challenge

● Isak suffers fractured fibula

● Slot brands tackle reckless

● Injury occurred while scoring

AFP | London

Alexander Isak is expected to be out of action for two months after fracturing his leg against Tottenham, with Liverpool manager Arne Slot accusing Tottenham’s Micky van de Ven of making a “reckless challenge”.

The Sweden striker was injured in a tackle from the defender in the act of scoring the opening goal in Saturday’s 2-1 victory and limped off the pitch.

Liverpool said in a statement on Monday that the forward had had an operation on an ankle injury that included a fibula fracture.

“It’s going to be a long injury, for a couple of months,” Slot told reporters yesterday, “So, yeah, that’s a big, big, big disappointment for him. And as a result also of course for us.”

Slot described Van de Ven’s tackle as “reckless”.

“I think I said a lot about the tackle of Xavi Simons (sent off earlier in the game for Spurs),



Liverpool’s Swedish striker #09 Alexander Isak (C) is helped off the field by medical staff after picking up an injury

which for me was completely unintentional, and I don’t think you will ever get an injury out of a tackle like that.

“The tackle of Van de Ven, if you make that tackle 10 times, I think 10 times there’s a serious chance that a player gets a serious injury.”

Isak’s injury is the latest set-

back for the forward after he signed from Newcastle for a British record £125 million (\$168 million) in September.

A dispute with Newcastle meant he did not have a proper pre-season programme and arrived at Liverpool well behind his team-mates in terms of fitness.

His season was then interrupted by a groin injury.

The 26-year-old has scored just three goals in 16 appearances since completing his protracted move to Anfield.

Isak’s absence will be a major blow for Reds boss Slot, with Mohamed Salah at the Africa Cup of Nations and Cody Ga-

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Isak’s £125 million move has been plagued by misfortune: a disrupted pre-season, a prior groin injury, and now this fracture. He has scored only three goals since his British-record transfer

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I think I said a lot about the tackle of Xavi Simons (sent off earlier in the game for Spurs), which for me was completely unintentional, and I don’t think you will ever get an injury out of a tackle like that. The tackle of Van de Ven, if you make that tackle 10 times, I think 10 times there’s a serious chance that a player gets a serious injury

ARNE SLOT

kpo not ready to return from a muscle injury until early in the new year.

It leaves Slot with Hugo Ekitike, who has five goals in his past four games, and the little-used Federico Chiesa as his only senior forwards.

Liverpool, whose Premier League title defence collapsed after a shocking run of results, have climbed to fifth in the table after extending their unbeaten league run to five games.

Isak’s injury raises the prospect of Liverpool moving to boost their attack in the January transfer window, with Bournemouth winger Antoine Semenyo linked with a move to Anfield.

It may also change the conver-

sation around Salah, who had been linked with a move to Saudi Arabia following his recent claim that he had been thrown under the bus by the club and no longer had a relationship with Slot.

Salah’s rant, which came after he was left on the bench for three successive matches, prompted Liverpool to leave him out of the squad for a Champions League match at Inter Milan.

But he returned to action as a substitute against Brighton before leaving for international duty.

Liverpool host bottom side Wolves on Saturday.

## Australia captain Cummins out of rest of Ashes, Lyon to have surgery

AFP | Melbourne

Australia skipper Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon were yesterday ruled out of the final two Ashes Tests against England with the veteran spinner facing surgery and an extended period on the sidelines.

Quick bowler Jhye Richardson and spinner Todd Murphy were named as codd in a 15-man squad for the fourth Test starting on Friday at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Australia have already retained the famous urn with eight-wicket wins in Perth and Brisbane and an 82-run victory in Adelaide.

Cummins “won’t play any part in the rest of the series”, coach Andrew McDonald told cricket.com.au.

He returned from a lower back injury to lead Australia to victory in Adelaide in his first Test since July, taking six wickets in the match.

“That was a discussion that we had a long time out around his return. Yeah, we were taking on some risk. We’ve now won the series, and that was the goal,” said McDonald.

Cummins will now target full fitness for the month-long Twenty20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, starting in early



Australia’s Nathan Lyon (R) catches a throw next to Pat Cummins (file photo)

February.

“To position him for further risk and jeopardise him long term is not something that we want to do,” said McDonald.

“Pat’s really comfortable with that. If he had any setback in the build-in as well, we would have shut him down straight away.”

Steve Smith, who captained the team in Cummins’ absence during the first two Tests, will lead the side again in Melbourne after missing Adelaide with vertigo symptoms.

‘Amazing’ Starc

His return means there will

be at least three changes.

Usman Khawaja replaced Smith at four in Adelaide scoring 82 and 40 and should he be retained then Josh Inglis is shaping as the fall guy.

Lyon, 38, damaged his right hamstring saving a boundary on day five in Adelaide fielding and hobbled off.

He claimed his 564th wicket in the match to move clear of fellow Australian great Glenn McGrath and into sixth on the all-time Test bowling list.

“Nathan Lyon will have surgery on a torn right hamstring which will sideline him for an

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To position him (Pat Cummins) for further risk and jeopardise him long term is not something that we want to do. Pat’s really comfortable with that. If he had any setback in the build-in as well, we would have shut him down straight away

COACH ANDREW MCDONALD

extended period,” Cricket Australia said.

Lyon’s replacement, Murphy, is in line to play his first home Test.

His seven previous appearances for Australia all came overseas. His last was in Sri Lanka earlier this year.

Richardson was included after a four-year Test absence, during which he underwent three shoulder surgeries.

Scott Boland and Mitchell Starc are likely to lead the seam attack after recovering well from Adelaide, with Michael Neser, Brendan Doggett and Richardson battling to join them.

## REHC to conclude 2025 racing year with Alba Cup Series



TDT | Manama

The Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club will host the final horse racing meeting of 2025 on Friday, December 26, as part of the 2025–2026 racing season, organisers said. The 11th race meeting will be held under the patronage of Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) and is expected to deliver strong competition as owners, trainers and jockeys seek to end the year on a winning note.

The meeting is regarded as one of the standout fixtures of the season, marking the last races of the calendar year and featuring eight contests all run for Alba Cups. Final declarations have confirmed a strong turnout of horses across the programme, raising expecta-

tions of closely matched and competitive racing throughout the afternoon.

Races will cover a range of classes and distances, including events for Bahraini-bred and imported horses, purebred Arabian horses, maidens and experienced runners. Distances range from 1,000 to 2,000 metres, with sprint races on the straight track and longer tactical contests expected to test stamina and race management.

Officials at the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club said the meeting reflects Alba’s continued support for Bahraini horse racing and promises an exciting finale to 2025, with competitive fields across all eight races and strong interest from racing fans and connections alike.