# Chelsea Gears Up for Hectic Schedule in Conference League While Major League Cricket Expands



**Chelsea Prepares for Busy Season After Dropping to Conference League**

Chelsea FC is set to experience a demanding season following their relegation to the UEFA Conference League. Initially poised to compete in the Europa League, their plans changed after Manchester United's FA Cup victory over Manchester City, which resulted in Chelsea's demotion and Newcastle's exit from European competitions.

The Blues, who recently parted ways with manager Mauricio Pochettino, face the challenge of navigating a potentially hefty fixture list. Chelsea's new manager will manage up to 74 matches across different competitions, amounting to 330 days of active play in the upcoming calendar year.

Chelsea’s pre-season tour will take them to the United States for five matches against Wrexham, Celtic, Club America, Manchester City, and Real Madrid, from July 24 to August 6, before the Premier League's commencement on August 17-18. They will also play a Conference League play-off round on August 22 and 29 to secure a group stage spot.

Moreover, Chelsea’s domestic cup commitments could add up to 12 matches if they reach the finals of both the FA Cup and Carabao Cup. Should they advance to the latter stages of the Conference League, an additional 17 matches are possible. Chelsea will also participate in the Club World Cup next summer, potentially adding seven more matches to their schedule.

The club’s extensive fixture list is further complicated by the involvement of several Chelsea players in Euro 2024, which ends just ten days before their first pre-season game. Chelsea is currently searching for their fourth manager since Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali’s 2022 takeover, with candidates like Kieran McKenna, Roberto De Zerbi, and Enzo Maresca in the running. Former Chelsea player Eden Hazard suggested Cesc Fabregas, despite his lack of managerial experience, as a potential candidate.

**Expansion of Major League Cricket Poses New Challenges for English Competitions**

Major League Cricket (MLC) in the United States is set for significant expansion, stirring potential competition with existing English cricket tournaments. Following its recent acquisition of List A status from the International Cricket Council, MLC will increase its match count from 19 games in its inaugural season to 34 by 2025. The league currently consists of six franchises, with plans to grow to ten teams.

MLC aims to start its season earlier, ideally in early June, to capitalize on the US school holidays, overlapping with England's T20 Blast but avoiding the Hundred. This expansion could impact English players, exemplified by Jason Roy forfeiting his England contract to join the LA Knight Riders and Sunil Narine missing key domestic matches.

Invested by notable IPL franchises and business figures like Microsoft’s CEO, Satya Nadella, MLC plans to establish infrastructure across the US, including academies and List A venues. The long-term vision involves creating a robust domestic system, enhancing the pool of players, and strengthening the US national team.

These developments present a transformative phase for US cricket, potentially reshaping the global cricket landscape over the next decade.