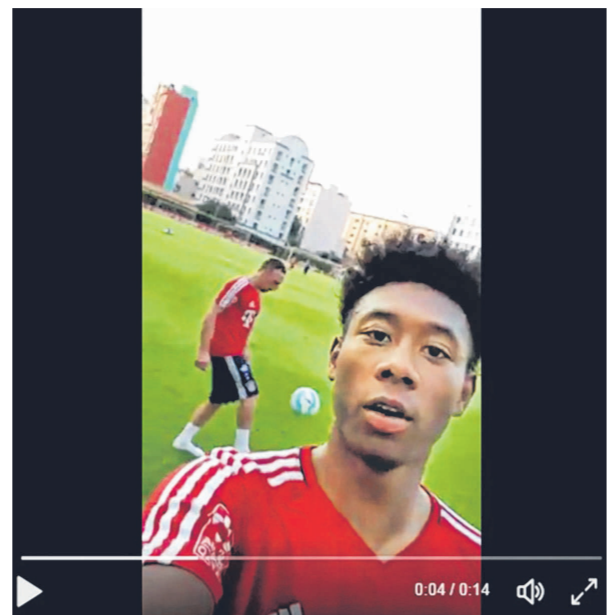


## International Champions Cup Singapore

### CupTweetbits



The Blues chilling out after training. PHOTO: TWITTER/CHELSEAFC



Bayern Munich players David Alaba, Franck Ribery and Mats Hummels "send you their best wishes from Singapore": <http://bit.ly/ZuspTxu>  
PHOTO: TWITTER/FCBAYERNEN



Bayern new boy James Rodriguez does a jig at the adidas Football Freestyle Battle. PHOTO: TWITTER/FCBAYERNEN

## Not here to make up numbers: Tolisso

Chua Zikai

He may be just 22-years-old, but Bayern Munich's record summer signing Corentin Tolisso is eager to stake a starting spot in the German giants' star-studded squad.

The Bavarian side paid a Bundesliga record €41.5 million (\$64 million) to lure the highly-rated midfielder away from France Ligue 1 club Lyon, securing his services ahead of other clubs like Italian Serie A champions Juventus.

Said Tolisso: "I don't really think about the price tag, I just want to concentrate on my football, focus and train hard with my team-mates."

"Of course, I hope to repay the trust (the club) have put in me."

The Frenchman visited German restaurant Paulaner Brauhaus at Millenia Walk yesterday for a meet-and-greet with fans and is enjoying his first pre-season with the Bundesliga champions.

"The French guys like (Franck) Ribery and (Kingsley) Coman have helped me a lot. (Assistant manager) Willy Sagnol and the coaches also speak to me in French, so it's been okay," he said.

Despite the high expectations, he has the faith of many of Bayern's ex-players, including club ambassador Hasan Salihamidzic.

"He's a really good midfielder, a good box-to-box player. He can do everything, score goals and is also a presence in midfield, I think we'll have some fun with him," said the 40-year-old Bosnian.

Fellow ex-Bayern star Giovane Elber echoed his thoughts, saying: "He will be a big and important player for Bayern, I'm sure. He is very talented and very young so he has a long future ahead of him."

"But of course he must work hard and keep his head down to fulfil his potential."

Competition for starting spots will be tough, with established stars such as Arturo Vidal and Thiago Alcantara vying for the same central midfield position as Tolisso, but the young midfielder is unfazed.

"When I signed the (five-year) contract, I was already aware of the strong competition but I will give it my best," he said.

"I didn't come to Bayern to be a bench player, I came to play."

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A fan embracing Bayern Munich midfielder Corentin Tolisso during a meet-and-greet session at German restaurant Paulaner Brauhaus. The French international has a tough task ahead to secure a starting berth. PHOTO: DON WONG FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

New club record signing Alvaro Morata vying with Victor Moses during Chelsea's training session at the National Stadium yesterday. The Spaniard will be their first-choice striker this season.  
ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG



## EPL CHAMPS AWARE OF TARGET ON BACK

TOUGH SLOG AHEAD

As champions, every team we face will want to win more than before, so we know it's going to be harder... it's a big challenge.



CESAR AZPILICUETA, Spanish international defender, believes teams will be gunning for a Chelsea scalp this season.

### Blues intend to make a better fist of their title defence compared to shambles of 2015-16

Lester Wong and Nicholas de Silva

The last time Chelsea opened a new English Premier League (EPL) season as defending champions they ended up stumbling to a 10th-placed finish in 2015-16.

The team are keen to put up a better title defence this time around.

"As champions, every team we face will want to win more than before, so we know it's going to be harder," said Spanish defender Cesar Azpilicueta at a press conference at the National Stadium ahead of this week's International Champions Cup (ICC).

"We are working to get into the best shape because it's a big challenge for us as defending champions and getting back into the Champions League too."

Chelsea coach Antonio Conte also stressed the importance of hard work ahead of a heavier schedule involving European competition.

"I think the only way to know (if we can handle the increased workload) is to work, to work with my players," said the Italian.

"For sure, to play Champions League next season is great for us, is right for the club. We have one

competition more, but we are working very well to prepare in the right way."

Chelsea arrived here on Sunday from China, where they kicked off their pre-season Asia tour by beating Arsenal 3-0 in Beijing.

They take on German giants Bayern Munich in the first ICC game this evening, before facing Italian Serie A side Inter Milan on Saturday.

Inter play Bayern on Thursday. Conte noted that preparing for the upcoming season while on tour overseas has become more of the norm for big football clubs.

The added travelling can be "a bit tough", but the reception from fans makes it worthwhile.

Said Conte, who gamely emerged from the Ritz-Carlton Millenia hotel on Sunday afternoon to mingle and sign autographs for fans here on Sunday: "We found a fantastic atmosphere in China. It was great to see so many fans, to see this kind of passion in a country so far from home."

"I hope to see the same tomorrow here (against Bayern)."

He was less amiable when quizzed about transfer rumours about the club's players, however.

"I don't like to speak about players who are still here with us," was

the Italian's response when asked about Manchester United target Nemanja Matic.

The Serbian midfielder was left behind in London and looks set to reunite with former boss Jose Mourinho at Old Trafford.

Conte's expression then darkened noticeably when one journalist attempted to ask him why he had sent last season's top scorer Diego Costa "packing".

The relationship between the pair soured in January after a training ground bust-up, with Conte telling Costa he would no longer feature in his plans.

After a long, awkward pause, Conte pointedly proceeded to talk only about Alvaro Morata, the Spanish striker signed from Real Madrid to fill Costa's boots for a club record £58 million (\$102 million).

"I speak about Morata... Morata is a young player who has a lot of experience in his career because he played with two big teams in Real and Juventus," said Conte.

"My plan is to give him the possibility to play (against Bayern), but not from the start because he only arrived on Sunday and started to work with us."

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ndesilva@sph.com.sg

CHelsea v BAYERN MUNICH  
National Stadium, 7.30pm.  
Mediacorp okto, 7.20pm.

LOTTERY			
TOTO		Mon, 24 Jul 2017 Draw No. 3286/2017	
		Group 1 Prize \$4,418,860	
Winning Numbers		Add. No.	
02	22	23	32 35 41 07
Prize Group	Share Amount	No. of Winning Shares	
Group 1	\$4,418,860	1	
Group 2	\$85,583	5	
Group 3	\$1,415	208	
Group 4	\$306	526	
Group 5	\$50	8,951	
Group 6	\$25	13,705	
Group 7	\$10	153,630	

Group 1 prize and total share amount for Group 1 may differ due to rounding.

Next Draw Thu, 27 Jul 2017 Draw No. 3287/2017

Group 1 Prize **\$1,000,000** est.

Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS				
Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Tue, 25 Jul 2017				
Club Friendly	Chelsea +	Bayern Munich	7.35pm	LW

+ This match is played on neutral ground. Visit [singaporepools.com](http://singaporepools.com) for the latest 'Live' telecast listing.

No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize.  
LW: LiveWire (MBS) & LiveWire (RWS) (21 years and above)  
LiveWire (Singapore Pools) (21 years and above during 'Live' telecast)  
SB: SportsBuzzer@Kranji (18 years and above)  
Singapore Pools Account Service. Call 6786 6688 for more details.

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