

Another blow to Arsenal plan

AFP, London

Arsenal have hit another stumbling block to their plans for a new 60,000-seater stadium with two local residents asking the European Court of Human Rights to block the project.

The Gunners have already seen their Ashburton Grove plans delayed, with the stadium now due to be built in time for the start of the 2006-07 season.

Now two Islington residents have enlisted the help of EarthRights Solicitors to fight Arsenal's planning permission for their new home, having already failed in a similar bid to the High Court in London.

They are alleging the Gunners infringed their rights under the European Convention of Human Rights by allegedly withholding information, which could have altered the outcome of the planning permission request.

Arsenal need to raise about 500 million dollars for their new stadium.

Tann has to serve ban

AFP, Sydney

Australia's most capped female footballer Anissa Tann has lost her appeal against a two-year doping ban, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) confirmed here Wednesday.

The court suspended Tann in May after she tested positive to the steroid nandrolone.

The CAS said Wednesday it had dismissed her appeal after a hearing held on June 12 and 13.

Tann, 35, has played 102 games for Australia, captaining the side from 1991-94.

She represented Australia in the 1995 and 1999 World Cups and the 2000 Sydney Olympics and has held a variety of coaching positions at state and national level.

The suspension is backdated to December 9, 2002.

Boumsong wants to leave Auxerre

AFP, Paris

Jean-Alain Boumsong could force Auxerre to sell him to Liverpool next season by refusing to sign an extension to his contract which expires in June 2004, which would allow the English club to snap up the defender for nothing.

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier, a long-time friend of Auxerre coach Guy Roux, and Marseille coach Alain Perrin have both enquired about the 23-year-old French international.

"The longer it goes on the more it looks like I'll be playing an extra year at Auxerre," Boumsong told l'Equipe sports daily.

"If that's the case I'll go to the end of my contract but I won't extend it," he added.

Boumsong said he had talked to Houllier and Perrin and was impressed by what they had to say but he would take Roux's advice on who to join.

"If I go he'll tell me what's best for me, where I can best establish myself," he said.

"Last season, he wasn't even ready to discuss my departure."

Boumsong's sale would probably bring in around seven million euros.



PHOTO: AFP

Brazil's Luisao (L) looks on as Honduras' Oscar Suazo makes a desperate attempt to stop the ball during their CONCACAF Gold Cup clash at the Azteca Stadium in Mexico City on Tuesday.

Easy for Jamaica, not so for Brazil



AFP, Miami

Onandi Lowe and Andy Williams gave Jamaica a 2-0 victory over Guatemala in the CONCACAF Gold Cup on Wednesday.

The win gave Jamaica three points and a chance to advance to the quarterfinals, depending on the result of Thursday's Colombia-Guatemala game.

Guatemala has zero points and Colombia leads Group B. Both Jamaica and Colombia are plus-1 in goal differential should that come into play.

The tremendous physical pres-

ence of the Jamaican team gave it the edge as Lowe powered home the winner in the 30th minute with a left-footed blast through traffic.

Williams added the icing in the 71st minute when he converted a

penalty kick in unusual fashion.

Williams had been fouled at the top left corner of the box by Everaldo Valencia and stepped up to the spot for the kick. Edgar Estrada saved the initial blast, but a

retake was ordered by the linesman, who ruled the goalkeeper had come off his line.

Williams did not miss with his second chance.

BRAZIL 2; HONDURAS 1

In the second match staged at Mexico City's Azteca, Brazil's late goal preserved a 2-1 victory over Honduras, which got on the board with a penalty kick in injury time.

The result gave Brazil's Olympic side three points and a chance to move into the quarterfinals.

Maicon netted the first goal for the Brazilians in the 15th minute. Diego added the second with five minutes to play.

Julio Leon tallied for Honduras from the spot.

Mexico and Brazil are tied atop Group A with three points each.

Mexico has a plus-1 goal differential, Brazil is even and Honduras is minus-1.

Honduras now has the unenviable task of trying to beat Mexico on Thursday at the Azteca to remain in the tourney.

STANDINGS							
GROUP A (at Mexico City)							
Country	p	w	d	l	pf	pa	pts
Mexico	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Brazil	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Honduras	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
GROUP B (at Miami)							
Country	p	w	d	l	pf	pa	pts
Colombia	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Jamaica	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Guatemala	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
GROUP C (at Foxboro)							
Country	p	w	d	l	pf	pa	pts
USA	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
El Salvador	1	0	0	1	0	2	3
Martinique	1	0	1	0	0	2	0
GROUP D (at Foxboro)							
Country	p	w	d	l	pf	pa	pts
Canada	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Cuba	1	1	0	0	2	0	3

China match may not be a Real-ity



AFP, Beijing

A match between Real Madrid and the Chinese national side in Hong Kong is in doubt after sponsors said the Spanish giants were asking for too much money.

The Hong Kong government announced last week that the game would be played on August 8 but the China Football Association (CFA) said they had received no official request.

"Until now, we have not officially had any request for a match between the Chinese national team and Real Madrid," CFA spokesman Dong Hua told AFP.

He said Futebao Company, who are the promoter of the Chinese national team, had not informed them of such a match.

"The CFA knows nothing about it," he said.

A Futebao official surnamed Jinjian said they had never said the Chinese national team would play in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Secretary for Home Affairs Patrick Ho said on July 8 that Real Madrid, including glamour boy David Beckham, would take on China as part of the territory's package of events to help kickstart its ailing tourism industry.

The Guangzhou-based Nanfang Sports News said Real Madrid had priced themselves out of the market.

Quoting a Futebao official, it said Real were demanding an appearance fee of two million euros and all travel and accommodation expenses.

A similar fee was demanded for an appearance against the Chinese national team in Beijing, the paper said.

This is why the star-studded nine-time European champions are now playing in the capital a makeshift Chinese XI, sponsored by tobacco

giant Hongta and beverage producer Jianliabo, and not the national side.

"We might manage to accept the appearance fee and pay their travel and accommodation, but that is not all. They had other unreasonable conditions that we could not accept," the Futebao official was quoted as saying.

He said Real also wanted 40 percent of gate receipts.

"We had to terminate the talks with Real Madrid."

Real are scheduled to begin an Asian tour on July 25, spending a week training in China's Kunming city before heading to Beijing, Tokyo and Kuala Lumpur. Hong Kong was also on the itinerary.

Beckham, particularly, is a huge draw in Asia. On a recent solo promotional tour he was mobbed by thousands of fans.

The club are looking to prise open the lucrative Asian market where football is growing increasingly popular.

Lyon after Viduka?

AFP, Leeds

Leeds United's Australian striker Mark Viduka is reported to be the target of several clubs, including French champions Lyon.

Leeds chairman John McKenzie has consistently said Viduka is the one player not for sale as the 27-year-old is the spearhead of manager Peter Reid's plans for next season.

But Viduka's representative, Andrea D'Amico, claimed Wednesday Lyon had joined the queue for the Australian who scored 20 goals in the Premiership last season.

D'Amico has claimed Barcelona, Roma, AC Milan and Bayern Munich were also interested.

"I am still talking to interested clubs. Maybe the price will not be so high because I have seen what has happened with the Harry Kewell deal where the transfer fee was not very much," D'Amico told the Yorkshire Post.

Cash-strapped Leeds were forced to sell Kewell, their other Australian star, to Liverpool for just three million pounds (4.7 million dollars) last week.

"Leeds may have to sell Mark to bring in some money," D'Amico added.

"I do not know because I am not the chairman of Leeds United but I do think that this is the right time for important clubs to buy Mark. This is the moment they have been waiting for.

"We have a lot of meetings every week with clubs and I have recently spoken with people from Lyon who are interested in Mark and who could offer Champions League football next season."

Lyon's leading scorer and captain Sonny Anderson left for Spanish side Villarreal last week.

Viduka was signed for six million pounds (10 million dollars) from Scottish side Celtic in 2000 but agreed a new, five-year contract in 2001 which runs to 2006.

Ben puts Perugia thru' their paces

AFP, Rome

Ben Johnson, stripped of his 100 metres gold medal for using drugs at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, has been putting the players of Italian club Perugia through their paces ahead of Saturday's UEFA Intertoto Cup match.

The 42-year-old Canadian appeared at the team's summer training camp in Folgaria on Monday and took the squad through a series of sprint exercises alongside Perugia coach Serse Cosmi.

Jamaican-born Johnson is believed to have been asked to help the club because of his relationship with Perugia's new signing Saadi Kadha.

Saadi, son of Libyan leader Moamer, was trained by Johnson for a three month spell in Tripoli three years ago in order to get him fit enough for the rigours of professional football.

Kadhafi junior, 30, signed a one-year contract with Perugia last month.

A Libyan international, Saadi owns a small stake in Serie A champions Juventus and was linked with a move to buy cash-strapped Rome giants Lazio earlier this year.

Perugia host Finnish side Allianssi on Saturday in the first leg of their InterToto Cup third round match.

Female ref for UEFA match

REUTERS, Nyon

A female referee will take charge of a UEFA Cup match for the first time next month, European soccer's governing body said on Tuesday.

Nicole Petignat of Switzerland has been chosen to referee the UEFA Cup first qualifying round first-leg game between AIK Solna of Sweden and Iceland's Fylkir on August 14.

The 36-year-old Petignat joined the FIFA International List in 1996 and has been refereeing top-flight matches in Switzerland for the past four years. She also took charge of the 1999 Women's World Cup final.

Kewell ready to roll for Reds



AFP, Liverpool

Australian international striker Harry Kewell is to make his debut for his new Premiership side Liverpool against German outfit Cologne on Wednesday the English club's manager Gerard Houllier revealed.

The 24-year-old has only been training for the past four days since completing his controversial 5 million pounds (8 million dollars) move from cash-strapped Leeds United last week.

However Houllier, who will also give a run out to another of his summer signings Ireland defender Steve Finnan, claimed the Aussie was ready.

"Harry is ready to play," Houllier told the Liverpool Echo.

"He has settled very well into training. He looks like he is a very good trainer and you can see how much he enjoys his football.

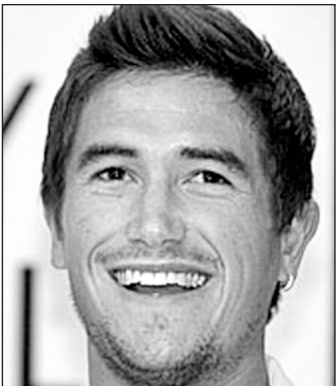
"I will be playing him against Cologne. Everyone here should get a chance at some point. I expect to play a different team in each half but I haven't decided the line-ups yet."

Earlier Kewell's transfer had been referred to FIFA.

Football's world governing

body are to investigate the deal after claims an unlicensed agent, Bernie Mandic, was involved in the deal.

England's Football Association (FA) confirmed they were handing over documents to FIFA relating to the fee, the sum of which had taken people by surprise as Leeds had



HARRY KEWELL

been offered larger amounts by other clubs which had been rejected by Kewell and his agent.

Leeds claimed they received just three million pounds of the transfer fee and were highly critical of the role of Kewell's agent, Bernie Mandic, who they say received a substantial fee from Liverpool - a claim the agent denies.

Juve to have a home



REUTERS, Milan

Italian champions Juventus gained the right to develop a home stadium on Tuesday, ramping up their dream to build a sporting business empire to rival Manchester United and Real Madrid.

Juventus, Italy's most successful club with a clutch of Serie A trophies, wants to capitalise on its brand to build itself into a leisure company, considered a more stable investment than a straight soccer club.

Chief executive Antonio Giraudo said the club had signed a long-awaited 25 million-euro deal with Turin city council for a 99-year lease of the Delle Alpi stadium and the right to revamp it as well as roll-out cinemas, sports centres and offices around it.

"From today the new phase starts," he said in a statement.

Soccer clubs and the empires they build are big businesses.

Spanish champions Real Madrid snatched soccer ace David Beckham from Manchester United this month not only for his ball skills but also for the power his rock-star image has to crack open the wealthy Asia market for merchandise and other sales.

Juventus, which boasts Edgar Davids and Alessandro Del Piero among its ranks, has lagged the leading pack because the stadium in its present form has never won the affection of fans and is often almost empty.

The revamped stadium will hold 30,000-40,000 people, half its current capacity to turn up its exclusivity and bring fans closer to the game. The club also hopes 200 executive boxes, with space for 2,000 guests, will help boost revenue.

Everton to do Rooney no favour



AFP, Liverpool

Wayne Rooney might be rated England's brightest prospect for years but the 17-year-old has been told he will be given no favours at

Everton manager David Moyes fears the striker, England's youngest international, might struggle to live up to expectations this year.

"He played a massive part last season and he might start more games this time around," Moyes told the Liverpool Daily Post.

"But that comes down to a number of factors such as players in-form, players with confidence and which players need a break. There is no guarantee.

"If Wayne Rooney wants a guaranteed starting position, it won't be at Everton," he added.

"I think the second season will be difficult for Wayne, but he is more than able to cope with what it will bring."

Moyes said he would do his best to protect the youngster.

"We need to make sure he's in the right condition physically and mentally and try, once again, not to put too much expectation on him," he said.

Rooney is currently recovering from a groin injury sustained while at the club's Austrian training camp.



WAYNE ROONEY

English Premiership side Everton.

PSG will sell Ronaldinho



AFP, Paris

Paris St Germain were reported Wednesday to be set to agree a 30 million euro (33.4 million dollar) offer from Manchester United for their Brazil World Cup winner Ronaldinho.

The l'Equipe sports daily said

would meet United officials later Wednesday to try to close the deal.

"They came back with an appropriate offer," a club source told the paper.

United manager Alex Ferguson said Tuesday he believed they were within sight of an agreement for a replacement to David Beckham who was sold to Real Madrid last month.

British newspaper reports put the Ronaldinho figure at 19.3 million pounds deal (31 million dollars).

Ferguson also hopes to be able to sign Ronaldinho's Brazil teammate Kleberson from Atletico Paranaense for up to seven million pounds (11 million dollars).

United chief executive Peter Kenyon wants to have the Kleberson and Ronaldinho transfers completed by the time United leave for their tour of the USA on Saturday.

United sold Beckham to Real Madrid for 24.5 million pounds (35 million euros) spread over four years, with 25 million euros guaranteed and another 10 million euros dependent on Real's performance in the European Champions League.



PHOTO: AFP

Onandi Lowe (R) of Jamaica and Nestor Martinez of Guatemala fight for possession during their CONCACAF Gold Cup match at the Orange Bowl in Miami on July 15.