

## Chelsea tracking Roberto Carlos?

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid full back Roberto Carlos has said English champions Chelsea are interested in signing him.

"Nothing has been confirmed but I have been told Chelsea want me," the Brazilian told Spanish sports daily Marca on Wednesday.

"I have told them they have to speak to Real Madrid, that the club is having a presidential election, and that I have a contract.

"I don't know what will happen in the election and I need to know if the new president and new coach will want me. It would be painful to leave Real after so many years."

The 33-year-old Brazil international joined Real from Inter Milan in 1996, and has one year left to run on his contract.

He has been a fixture on the left side of defence for Real and has won three European Cups and three league titles. Spanish media have been speculating over his future throughout the season.

As part of a possible deal, media reports are linking Chelsea leftback Asier del Horno with a move in the opposite direction.

Spain international Del Horno, who moved to Chelsea from Athletic Bilbao last June for 14.50 million dollars, told Marca: "I don't know anything about such a deal you would have to ask Chelsea. It is an honour that a club like Real would be interested in signing me. They are a great club and all of us would like to play there."

## Spurs sign Berbatov

AFP, London

Tottenham Hotspur have signed Bayer Leverkusen's Bulgarian striker Dimitar Berbatov for a fee of 10.9 million pounds (16 million euros).

The signing was announced on the London stock exchange on Wednesday, but the deal is still subject to a work permit.

If that is successful the Bulgarian international will become a Tottenham player on July 1.

The 25-year-old, who was the second highest scorer in the German first division in the recently concluded season with 21 goals in 34 games, has agreed personal terms.

Berbatov also has an impressive record on the international stage scoring 31 goals in 50 senior international matches.

He was voted Bulgarian player of the year in 2002, 2004 and 2005.

"Tottenham are a club that are building something special," he told Tottenham's official website, www.tottenhamhotspur.co.uk

"The squad has some terrific young players, an excellent manager and coaching staff and I am looking forward to playing my part."

Berbatov made his debut for CSKA Sofia as an 18-year-old in the 1998/99 season but he started to make his name in the following year when he scored 14 goals in 27 league games.

A run of nine goals in 11 games in 2000-01 was enough to persuade Leverkusen to sign Berbatov in June 2001 and he appeared in the Champions League final against Real Madrid at the end of that season.

He made his international debut when only 18 in November 1999 and scored with his first touch in a competitive game in a World Cup qualifier against Denmark a year later.

In qualification for Euro 2004 Berbatov scored five goals in six games.



Real Madrid superstar David Beckham celebrates a goal against Sevilla during their Primera Liga match at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium on Tuesday.

## PRIMERA LIGA

# Real finish second

AFP, Madrid

Two goals from England captain David Beckham, and another from Zinedine Zidane in his last official club match couldn't stop Real Madrid from going down 4-3 at UEFA Cup winners Sevilla on Tuesday.

Nevertheless, Real finish the season in second place and get direct qualification into next season's lucrative Champions League group stages as Valencia, their only challengers for the runners up spot, lost 2-1 at Osasuna.

"Sevilla had a great end to the season but I think it shows everyone that the league is not decided until the last third of the year or even until the last 38 games," reflected Real coach Juan Ramon Lopez Caro.

Osasuna's victory meant they remain fourth and qualify for Europe's premier club competition for the first time, just edging out Sevilla on the basis of their head-to-head results.

Real went 2-0 up within 25 minutes thanks to two great goals from Beckham.

His first came after 15 minutes from a stunning 35-metre free-kick, which will serve as a warning to England's World Cup opponents that injured duo Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen are not Sven Goran

Eriksson's only strike threats. Beckham then added a second 10 minutes later, having only got one league goal all season before Tuesday, with an angled shot from the edge of the six yard box after a long pass from Real's own half by Roberto Carlos.

Sevilla wasted no time in starting their fightback, with Jesus Navas replying within two minutes, sending a long looping shot from 30 metres past Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas.

Argentina's World Cup-bound striker Javier Saviola then added two more for Sevilla in four minutes.

Luis Fabiano scored Sevilla's fourth just before the interval, wandering through the midfield unmolested before sending home his right foot shot from just inside the box.

"The first 45 minutes will go down in history," commented Sevilla coach Juan Ramos.

Real tried to respond in the second half and Zidane, who had hit the crossbar in the first half, then got the perfect send-off to his Real career by finding the net after a poor clearance by Sevilla's goalkeeper Andres Palop.

"It's a pity we couldn't finish fourth but the calendar is like that and we have to accept it. But at least we finished with nice spectacle for our supporters," added Ramos.

Despite finishing second, it was a disappointing end to a difficult season for Real after conceding four goals in the league for the first time

since the last game of the 2003-04 campaign.

The Spanish giants have gone through three presidents and two coaches in the past 12 months and Tuesday night's game was likely to be the last at the helm for Lopez Caro.

"In the next few days I'll know whether I am carrying on or not," added Lopez Caro.

Valencia couldn't capitalise on Real's slump at Sevilla.

After an evenly-matched first half with both sides going close, Osasuna came out for the second half with all guns blazing immediately after the break and opened the scoring less than two minutes after the break.

Savo Mileosevic headed home a Ludovic Delporte pass and three minutes later Delporte again provided the service for Pierre Webbo to nod on, and David Lopez got Osasuna's second goal from the edge of the six yard box.

Spanish international striker David Villa scored for Valencia two minutes into injury time for his 25th goal of the season but it was too little, too late for the 2004 champions.

"So let's get him in an Arsenal shirt and we'll make it equal."

The Norwegian Football Association has reprimanded Borgon, who earlier explained that a photographer had asked him to pose with both teams' kits, but he only had Barcelona's to hand.

## Linesman sacked

AFP, Paris

A linesman who was due to officiate at Wednesday's Champions League final has been replaced after admitting 'stupidly' being photographed posing in a Barcelona shirt ahead of their showdown with Arsenal.

Photographs showing Norwegian match official Ole Hermann Borgon smiling and laughing while proudly wearing a Barcelona jersey were published in Denmark's Drammen Tidende newspaper Tuesday.

The embarrassing controversy threatened to cause uproar on the eve of the final although both Arsenal and Barcelona indicated they were not bothered by the incident.

A statement released by European football's governing body UEFA late Tuesday said that Borgon had been relieved of his duties for the match.

Earlier in a statement read out by embarrassed Norwegian match referee Terje Hauge, Borgon said sorry for the stunt.

"He agrees it was a stupid thing to do and on reflection he regrets it," Hauge said. "I can assure you that the official is not a Barcelona supporter."

"It was just something he did out of joy for being picked to officiate in this event. He put the shirt on just to symbolise being picked for the final. It was just a stupid thing for him to do."

Both Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and his Barcelona counterpart Frank Rijkaard were non-plussed by the match official's sartorial faux pas.

"I don't think it's something for us to be too worried about," said Wenger. "I never think about the referees before a match."

"I have no reason to doubt their honesty or the integrity of the referees, and I don't want to contribute to what would be a useless controversy."

Rijkaard shrugged when told of the affair.

"I think that now Arsenal has to give him a shirt and take a photo to make it 1-1," the Dutchman said.

"We can blow it up but I'm not questioning the mentality of the referee. Why is wearing a Barcelona shirt silly? I thought he was on his holiday."

"So let's get him in an Arsenal shirt and we'll make it equal."

The Norwegian Football Association has reprimanded Borgon, who earlier explained that a photographer had asked him to pose with both teams' kits, but he only had Barcelona's to hand.

## Auxerre axe Santini

REUTERS, Paris

Auxerre have dismissed coach Jacques Santini after his failure to get the Ligue 1 side into Europe.

The club said in a brief statement on Wednesday that they had ended their collaboration with the former France and Tottenham Hotspur coach.

Auxerre had a good start to the season but then ran out of steam, finishing sixth and out of the European places after going five matches without a win.

Santini was hoping to rebuild his reputation after a brief, frustrating spell at Tottenham when he joined Auxerre in June last year.

## Villarreal claim Pires victory

INTERNET, undated

Villarreal president Fernando Roig has claimed that the club will unveil Robert Pires as their second summer signing next week.

There has been intense speculation as to what the French midfielder's future holds as he has yet to sign a contract extension with Arsenal.

Gunners boss Arsene Wenger is reticent about handing the 32-year-old a two-year deal, something Villarreal have already offered him.

Pires claimed on Tuesday that he had still to make his mind up about where he would be playing his football next season, but Roig appears confident he has got his man.

Indeed, with a deal for Real Sociedad's striker Nihat Kahveci already completed, Roig is adamant Pires will be signing number two and is excited by the quality of his captures.

"Pires is a player who is going to play in the Champions League final today (Wednesday), and when that match ends he will be free of his commitments and will come to be presented at Villarreal," he stated.

"We don't have to explain the quality of the player we are talking about and believe he is on the same level as Nihat."

"Nihat is done and next week Pires will arrive, these are the first two signings by Villarreal."

Pires continues to insist that no deal has yet been agreed, but it now looks certain he will quit Highbury for Spain.

# The Godfather is trapped

AFP, Rome

Luciano Moggi, the central figure in the Italian match-fixing scandal, was the Godfather of Serie A.

The former general director of Juventus, who resigned on Sunday, resembles an archetypal mafia boss: shadowy, gravely-voiced, cigar always in hand and widely considered to be the biggest wheeler-dealer in the game.

But the seemingly cold-blooded Moggi was reduced to tears on Monday after a five-hour grilling by prosecutors over his suspected collusion in the appointment of referees for Juventus matches last season.

If found guilty of fraud he is likely to receive a lengthy ban, while Juventus could be stripped of last season's and this season's league titles. What's more, Italy's most successful and prestigious club could be thrown out of next season's Champions League and even relegated from Italy's top division.

Juventus have won seven championships since Moggi was hired in 1994 and transformed the club's fortunes almost overnight.

The 68-year-old former railway station master from Tuscany was appointed by Juve at a time when the Turin club were being eclipsed by AC Milan.

Funded by media mogul Silvio Berlusconi, Milan had just won their third straight Scudetto and Juventus were desperate to break their rivals' domination.

Juventus' president at the time, Gianni Agnelli, decided it was time for a boardroom overhaul, and recruited Moggi to oversee the revolution.

Moggi had an excellent track record having been at Napoli when they won the UEFA Cup and the league championship, but nobody could have anticipated such a swift turnaround at Juve.

They ended the 1994-95 season as champions, finishing 10 points clear of Lazio and Parma. It was their first title since 1987.

Agnelli was a hands-on presi-

dent, making it his business to get to know the players. But the decline of the Agnelli-owned FIAT, Italy's largest car manufacturer, meant he was unable to devote as much time as he would have liked to his beloved Juventus.

As a result, Moggi became more and more influential in the day-to-day running of the club.

With an eye for talent and a strong business sense, Moggi built a reputation as a transfer-market guru, and the club's success on the pitch -- including the European

Cup in 1996 -- only increased his standing in the game.

Back-to-back league titles followed in 1997 and 1998, but suspicions started to grow about the legitimacy of the club's domestic success, with so many dubious refereeing decisions going Juve's way.

In 1998, one point separated Juventus Inter Milan from Juventus with four games remaining, when the teams met for a crunch showdown in Turin.

Juventus were winning 1-0 when Inter were denied what was in most people's eyes a certain penalty. So controversial was the decision that the incident was brought up in parliamentary question time the next day.

Juve went on to claim the title.

The growing number of Serie A footballers managed by sports agents GEA has also raised suspicions about Juventus' recent

success.

GEA is run by Moggi's son Alessandro, sparking speculation that Moggi Senior put pressure on the company's clients to under-perform against Juve.

Last month, after five successive draws, Juventus desperately needed a win to stave off a late title challenge from AC Milan when they visited Siena, whose coach Luigi De Canio is on GEA's books, together with several of the club's players.

Juventus scored three times in the first eight minutes and a 3-0 win put their title challenge back on track.

Just a few weeks later, the luck of Serie A's once all-powerful Godfather seems to have well and truly run out.

Villarreal have agreed a five year deal with the Turkish international midfielder Nihat Kahveci, the Spanish first division club announced here Tuesday.

Nihat, 26, has spent the last five years at Real Sociedad where he had been a popular player with the Basque club's fans, both for his inspired playmaking and his ability to regularly find the net.

He played 142 league games for Sociedad and scored 58 goals but his contract formally ends at the end of June and he has not renewed it.

Villarreal said that, subject to him passing the compulsory medical earlier in the day, Nihat would be presented to their fans and the media on Thursday.

They reached this season's Champions League semifinals but only finished seventh in the Spanish first division this season and so have only qualified for the Intertoto Cup this time around.

AFP, Rome

AFP, Villarreal

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

# Big price on Cesc

AFP, Madrid

The agent of Arsenal's dynamic young Spanish midfielder Cesc Fabregas named a price if Spanish giants Real Madrid wanted to sign him on Tuesday.

Real officials have made no secret of the fact that Fabregas is on their 'wish list' of players they will chase during the summer although the Arsenal have made it equally clear that they have little intention of letting the teenager go.

"It would take at least 25 or 30 million euros," Fabregas' agent Joseba Diaz told the radio station Onda Madrid.

"But the hypothetical signing of Cesc by Real Madrid could kill several birds with one shot.

"All of Europe are after him, they would be signing a young player,

they would be signing a player who could be one of the stars of the World Cup and they would be a signing a player which would strike a blow similar to that of (Barcelona striker Samuel) Eto'o."

The comments about Eto'o are likely to strike a chord with Real, especially as Fabregas is Barcelona born-and-bred and a product of their youth system.

Eto'o, the African Player of the Year, notably turned down the chance to return to Real Madrid, the club where he started his professional career, two seasons ago when his contract with Real Mallorca came to an end.

He opted to sign for Barcelona and his goals have been instrumental in Real's bitter rivals taking two successive Primera Liga titles.

Diaz's comments also come one day before this year's Champions League final between Arsenal and Barcelona, in which Fabregas is

expected to feature for the Gunners against his old club.

Fabregas moved to London three years ago at the age of 16.

"I'm happy to have made that decision at such a young age, and the fact that so many people have had faith in me is wonderful," he said recently.

He made his senior international debut for Spain in their 3-2 win over fellow World Cup finalists Ivory Coast in March and on Monday the 19-year-old player was named in Luis Aragonés' 23-man squad for Germany.

Diaz has been talked about in the Spanish media as a possible candidate in Real Madrid's presidential elections, which are scheduled for July 2.

He didn't deny that he may stand and use the signing of Fabregas as a key point in his election campaign.

"If someone wants to use the signing of Cesc as an election pledge it's because he's a great player. Just like, in his day, Figo was used," added Diaz.

Diaz was recalling the way former president Florentino Perez, whose resignation in February provoked the current behind-the-scenes chaos at Real, promised to sign Luis Figo from Barcelona in the summer of 2000.

Perez subsequently won and then paid a world record transfer fee of 60 million euros to buy out the Portuguese international's contract at Barcelona.

AC Milan confirmed the signing on their website on Wednesday.

Favalli was out of contract with Inter after two seasons with the club.

The 34-year-old left-sided defender, who made 47 appearances for Italy, has signed a two-year contract.

He won the Serie A title with Lazio in 2000.

AFP, Rome

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

AFP, London

AFP, Madrid

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15					16			17		
18					19			20		
					21			22		
23	24	25			26			27	28	29
30					31			32		
33					34	35		36	37	
					38			39		
40	41	42			43			44	45	46
47					48			49		
50					51			52		
53					54			55		

CRYPTOQUIP  
J M D I K B L G Z V X U J K Q J  
C Q D O J Z Z I V X O Z C W B D -  
O D G H D U W D O, W C J M D I X Q  
U D G D V J B L O D - W C V H D O .  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A BOY SCOUT  
FIXED THE HORN ON HIS BICYCLE, I GUESS HE  
MIGHT EXCLAIM "BEEP REPAIRED!"  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals T

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

39 On the — live broadly a go  
1 Recedes — vive broadly a go  
5 Bush (alert) 3 Zinger  
league? 40 Expiate 4 Helical  
(Abbr.) 43 Facade 5 Ravine  
8 Lincoln 47 Acceleration  
in-law wind  
12 Bound competi- instru-  
13 Where tion ment  
(Lat.) 49 Rend 7 Brooch  
14 Eternally 50 47- 8 Nonstick  
15 Calcutta Across coaling  
clothing entry 9 Squashed  
16 Expression 51 Tavern circle  
of 52 There-fore 10 1920s art  
sadness 53 Disarray 11 Sketched  
18 Hug 54 Weep 17 Actress  
20 Let 55 Serves Teri  
21 Blond the 19 Request  
shade purpose 22 Enjoy-  
22 To ment  
and — 23 "Casa-  
23 Stem 1 Other- blanca"  
26 Heater wise pianist

**DOWN**

31 Charged bit  
32 Cowboy's sweetie  
33 One option after a date?  
36 Sales staffer  
38 Wall climber

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

P	A	I	R	F	O	B	A	C	H	E
R	U	D	E	I	W	O	T	H	E	A
T	R	O	N	S						