

Lampard set to sign new deal

INTERNET, undated

Chelsea's England midfielder Frank Lampard looks set to pledge his future to the Barclays Premiership champions despite admitting it would be a dream to play in Spain. Lampard is on a long-term deal at Stamford Bridge and coach Jose Mourinho wants to the former West Ham player to negotiate a new contract this summer. Lampard's partner hails from Catalunya and the 27-year-old, who has often been linked with a move to Barcelona, has admitted it would be a dream to play at the Nou Camp. Lampard told El Mundo Deportivo: 'It would be a dream to come to Barca. But Chelsea has offered me a renewal, and I am very proud of that and it shows they have confidence in me. 'In addition the team is being reinforced and will be even more competitive and will be able to aspire to everything.' Mourinho's former club FC Porto have denied receiving a bid from Chelsea for winger Ricardo Quaresma. Mourinho has already signed Michael Ballack on a free transfer from Bayern Munich and looks set to complete the £34million transfer of Andriy Shevchenko from AC Milan in the next 48 hours. The continuing speculation over the futures of Damien Duff and Shaun Wright-Phillips have prompted Chelsea to look for another wide man. But Porto president Pinto Sa Silva has denied any contact with Chelsea about Quaresma and insisted it would take a massive bid to lure the Portugal Under-21 captain away from the club. Sa Silva said: 'Officially, we have not received any proposition and it does not enter into our plans to sell this player in the summer. 'I know some rumours in the press but these are not serious. If those are confirmed the club will study the subject but only a big offer, because Quaresma is a key player in our project.'



Spain's Fernando Torres (L) fights for the ball with teammate Antonio Lopez during a training session at the Sport City in Valencia on Tuesday. PHOTO: AFP

Time running out for Sven



REUTERS, Manchester

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has given himself less than a week to find a World Cup winning formula that does not involve Wayne Rooney.

Eriksson remains publicly optimistic that Rooney could recover from a broken foot in time to play some part in the finals and says that as a coach he would be "stupid" not to wait and see. However, the medical evidence is clearly pointing to a bleak verdict.

The Swede's initiative to bring forward Rooney's scan by a week to June 7 - two days before a FIFA deadline for replacing him in the squad -- suggests his optimism has some very real limits.

Add a statement from Manchester United on Monday that their striker's metatarsal injury now involves the joint, thereby taking longer to heal, and it is easy to understand why hopes of Rooney going to Germany are fading fast.

His absence will be a double blow to England and the full extent could be brought sharply into focus in the

friendlies against Hungary on Tuesday and Jamaica on Saturday.

Firstly, Rooney's surging runs and eye for the target which brought him four goals at Euro 2004 are, as Eriksson admits, irreplaceable. "There is only one Wayne Rooney," says the Swede.

Secondly, a dearth of top-quality strikers is set to lead to a last-ditch reshuffle of England's midfield on the eve of a tournament which they start on June 10 against Paraguay.

All eyes will be on the team sheet against Hungary as Eriksson has said: "When we start the game it will be the team who we think today might start against Paraguay."

Eriksson, who has admitted taking one gamble already by naming untried 17-year-old Theo Walcott in his squad, is expected to take another by moving central defender Jamie Carragher into a midfield holding role.

The task, allotted to Ledley King before he also broke a metatarsal, would allow Carragher's Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard to move up to support striker and former Anfield team mate Michael Owen.

With two goals in Liverpool's FA Cup final triumph over West Ham United being only his latest goal feat, Gerrard would certainly provide a real threat going forward.

The years spent playing with Owen at Liverpool means the two men already have the rapport needed to deliver.

Carragher's inclusion would also allow goal-happy Frank Lampard, who scored 20 times from midfield for Chelsea last season, to push into the danger zone.

The gamble comes in the fact that Carragher is a defender and not a midfielder -- and that he has less than a week to learn the job in match conditions.

Towering striker Peter Crouch, previously tipped to partner Owen, could still make an appearance from the bench, while Walcott could become England's youngest player in history if he comes on at Old Trafford.

Given that Eriksson said he would try different alternatives to replacing Rooney against Hungary and Jamaica, he should fly out on Monday to the finals with a clear idea of his starting XI. He should perhaps also take a good luck charm.

An injury scare from Owen, who suffered a tight thigh muscle in training on Monday but should still face Hungary, was further proof that fortune has yet to smile on his team.

Fake merchandise could be costly



AP, Brussels

The sale of fake World Cup merchandise could cost legitimate business millions of dollars, according to officials at a special seminar on fighting pirated goods.

"I would guess we are at a seven-digit figure with illegal activities and we also have to see that many activities do not only happen in Europe, but happen in countries like Brazil or Argentina, in those countries which are soccer crazy," said Jochem Schaefer, legal counsel of the Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry.

The counterfeit goods include team shirts, soccer balls and other items being sold to fans for this year's tournament in Germany, which runs from June 9-July 9.

About 230,000 jobs in Europe alone were put at risk because of lost business, Schaefer told The Associated Press. The group represents companies like Adidas, Nike and Puma, all of which are involved in providing uniforms to World Cup participants.

More than 2,000 seizures of fake goods linked to the World Cup have already been made before the tournament, according to Michel Danet, secretary general of the 169-nation World Customs Organization. "This is a worldwide plague that is ever increasing," Danet said. "We have

sharply in recent years within the 25-nation European Union, senior EU customs official John Pulford said.

"The fakes are exceedingly difficult to spot now," Pulford said. "Customs are pressure points where we can do something."

At the seminar, experts were considering adding new computer chips to goods, including soccer shirts, to assure consumers they were buying official products.

sharply in recent years within the 25-nation European Union, senior EU customs official John Pulford said.

"The fakes are exceedingly difficult to spot now," Pulford said. "Customs are pressure points where we can do something."

At the seminar, experts were considering adding new computer chips to goods, including soccer shirts, to assure consumers they were buying official products.

Kalou moves to Chelsea

REUTERS, London

English champions Chelsea have reached agreement with Feyenoord for the purchase of striker Salomon Kalou.

The 20-year-old, the younger brother of Ivory Coast captain Bonaventure Kalou, has still to undergo a medical and agree personal terms, Chelsea said on their website on Tuesday.

Kalou recently had his application for Dutch citizenship turned down and told Dutch magazine Sportweek that he wanted to play for Ivory Coast after the World Cup finals.

Kalou joins Michael Ballack at Stamford Bridge after the Germany midfielder arrived on a free transfer from Bayern Munich on May 15.

Chelsea are also poised to sign Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko who announced last week he was leaving AC Milan.

Real targeting Wenger

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid presidential candidate Juan Miguel Villar Mir is attempting to lure Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger to the Bernabeu.

Villar Mir is running with former world rally champion Carlos Sainz as his sidekick, and the plan to secure Wenger as the club's new manager is integral to their plans.

The problem Villar Mir and Sainz face is persuading Wenger, 56, to talk to them about the opportunity.

But Sainz said: 'We are in the process of doing that.'

Wenger has previously insisted he will not break his contract which runs until 2008 at Arsenal.

Another likely candidate, Ramon Calderon, has targeted Juventus boss Fabio Capello to become Madrid's new manager, with the focus during the upcoming elections apparently on the coaching front rather than team strengthening.

Previous elections have seen squad building play a part, with Luis Figo recruited from Barcelona by Florentino Perez upon his election in 2000.

Perez resigned in February this year, midway through a second term, and was replaced by interim president Luis Gomez-Montejano.

Elections take place on July 2.

Saviola leaving Sevilla

REUTERS, Madrid

Argentina striker Javier Saviola is not staying at Sevilla after the end of his one-year loan from Barcelona, his agent Alfredo Cabrera Brizuela said.

The UEFA Cup winners had an option to buy Saviola. He moved to Sevilla on loan last August and finished last season as the side's top scorer in the league with nine goals.

"Sevilla have said they will make us an offer before Friday but I have said Saviola will not stay at Sevilla, even though he was keen to do so," Cabrera Brizuela told sports daily Marca on Tuesday.

"They had promised they would make a big effort to sign him, but they have now told me we would probably see the offer as being not good enough for the player."

The agent also said the poor relationship between Saviola and coach Juande Ramos was behind the decision.

"Ramos has shown a lack of respect towards the player during the season and now they have decided to put the coach first."

The 24-year-old international joined Barcelona from River Plate for \$28 million on a six year contract in 2001 but dropped down the pecking order under coach Frank Rijkaard.

Asia buzzing with World Cup fever

AFP, Singapore

Asia is buzzing with World Cup fever and nowhere more than in pubs and clubs, which are poised for a bonanza from hordes of football fans watching the games, drink in hand, on big screen TVs.

The excitement has not escaped staid Singapore, where nightlife venues in the tiny island-state are extending opening hours and ramping up promotions to ensure punters stay around to watch all the goals throughout the night.

"We are showing all the games at Penny Black's and Muddy Murphy's and we definitely expect quite a crowd," said Amy Williams, marketing manager for Gaelic Inns which runs several European-style watering holes here.

"We upgraded our TVs to plasmas to get the best possible sound and best possible viewing," she added.

Popular dance club Devils Bar will up the ante by enticing fans with "3 for 1" drink promotions while employing cheerleaders to keep the party going, said marketing manager Daryl Teo.

Across the region, similar preparations are under way, with matches in Asia broadcast live in the late evening or early hours of the morning.

At the last World Cup, joint hosted by South Korea and Japan, street parties erupted in both countries, with giant TV screens set up in strategic locations.

Up to one million Red Devils fans gathered to watch the home team play in the centre of Seoul and pubs and clubs were jammed.

Numbers will be down this year, but police still expect large crowds.

Seoul city government officials said about 100,000 fans are expected to turn out in three big-screen TV locations in Seoul for the three South Korean group games. Numbers could swell if Korea reaches the second round.

"Due to late night games, many people will watch at home. But we think the number of people in the streets will surge quickly if South Korea qualifies for the round of 16," said one official.

Sheva explains reasons



INTERNET, undated

Andriy Shevchenko has attempted to appease his many AC Milan fans by publishing an open letter on his personal website to emphasise how he struggled to reach his decision to leave Italian football.

The Ukrainian striker confirmed on Friday he wanted to leave Milan and the club's vice-president Adriano Galliani announced the Rossoneri would begin talks with Premiership champions Chelsea.

In his letter, Shevchenko paid tribute to Milan owner and former Italy Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi.

Sheva wrote: 'Yesterday it was a very difficult day for me and before taking this decision, I thought about it for a long time.'

'It has been a hard decision but I

feel this is the right moment to think about my family and my children as



ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO

they are the most important thing in my life.

'Some days ago I explained my feelings to Silvio Berlusconi; he is a special person for me, he is Godfather

to my son.

'He listened to me and understood my feelings. 'Do what is best for your life', he told me, and I will always be grateful to him for this and for what he has done for me and my family.

'I also would like to thank the club and Mr Galliani for everything he has done to keep me. But most of all this is a message to my fans to whom I ask to accept my decision.

'I have read your messages in the last few days and a lot of them have made me very emotional.

'I understand your disappointment and your sadness but I ask you to accept my choice as a man. What you have given to me in the last few years is something special, I have always felt at home with you.

'You will always stay in my heart.'

Shevchenko scored 173 goals for Milan, the second most their history behind Gunnar Nordahl with 221, after joining the club in 1999.

Nakata urges teammates on



AFP, Tokyo

Japan midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata is telling his teammates to get serious ahead of a pre-World Cup friendly with hosts Germany.

Nakata said Tuesday that he was concerned that the atmosphere in the Japan camp was too relaxed with the start of the tournament just days away.

"I think the atmosphere is the main problem at the moment," the Bolton midfielder said after a training session on Monday before Japan left for Leverkusen.

"I could be wrong but the atmosphere in the team seems to be a little bit too friendly still," the veteran of two World Cups told Japan's Kyodo news agency.

He said the friendly would "show whether we are ready or not."

Japan will test their first-choice line-up against Germany, expected to be without midfield superstar Michael Ballack and defender Robert Huth through ankle injuries.

Then they will play minnows Malta in Dusseldorf on Sunday in their final warm-up before clashing with Guus Hiddink's Australia in Kaiserslautern on June 12 in the opener of Group F, which also includes Croatia and holders Brazil.

Nakata, 29, attributed the relaxed attitude of his team to a lack of experience at the top level of international football.

Although 11 members of Japan's 23-strong squad were veterans of the 2002 World Cup finals on home soil, Nakata said only four struggled through France 1998 when Japan made a winless, one-goal debut on the big stage.

"Do you think we can improve our technique or tactics over the next two weeks? If you are playing at

the highest level, strong mentality is the most important thing," Nakata told Kyodo.

"If you have that then you will play a better game."

Germany whitewashed Japan 3-0 away in Yokohama in December 2004, in the only previous meeting between the two sides.

Nakata said that a loss to Germany by four or five goals could be a perfect wake-up call for the three-time Asian champions.

"The point of the game is to find out where we are at and what we can do because Germany are obviously high quality opposition," he said.

"It doesn't matter if we lose like that but if we do then maybe we can improve mentally. At the end of the day it is the mental things that make the difference."

Japan, coached by Brazilian legend Zico, aim to do better than the last time when French firebrand Philippe Troussier piloted them to the round of 16.



Japan's midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata traps a ball during a rainy training session at the North Sport Park in Bonn on Monday. PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
 1 Hot tub
 4 KFC additive
 8 Cal or Georgia
 12 Pouter's protrusion
 13 Lotion add-in
 14 Wan
 15 "Monty Python" opener
 16 Complain
 17 Incurison
 18 Trump show
 21 "Goshi"
 22 Part of UNLV
 23 Cavalry sword
 26 Wrigley product
 27 Intent
 30 Dull sound
 31 TV network
 32 Grow weary
 33 Sweet potato
 34 Foundation
 35 Shake-speare's Katherine

DOWN
 1 Skirt feature
 2 Heart of the matter
 3 Basilica area
 4 Impede
 5 Choose ya!
 6 Bellow
 7 Low Countries' union
 8 Knave of Hearts' booty
 9 Actor Morales
 10 Stylish
 11 Stevenson villain
 19 On in years

Solution time: 27 mins.

T	R	A	V	A	L	A	P	S	E		
W	O	O	L	O	L	E	V	I	S		
A	D	D	A	R	T	I	F	A	C	T	S
N	E	E	S	T	A	R	T				
G	O	L	F	E	R	A	E	A	S	T	
	L	O	X	S	E	X	T	I	O	N	
A	D	I	E	U	G	U	E	S	T		
R	I	C	H	E	R	S	S	O	D		
K	E	Y	S	E	A	T	E	Z	R	A	
A	R	T	I	C	H	O	K	E	P	I	A
G	U	A	V	A	S	E	E	R	I	A	
O	T	T	E	R	E	S	P	A	S	I	S

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		

CRYPTOQUIP

N Y V Y V M Z U U Y O W W R
 N Y V J F V B P Z D X M F H U W J D H B
 Y V U Y E U Z W P Y B G H X G
 J H D X , E Y J R W H U ' L L H O W !
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN PROSPECTORS WENT CROSS-COUNTRY DURING THE GOLD RUSH, WERE THEY ON GILT TRIPS?
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals U

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.