

Nedved staying at Juventus

AFP, Prague

Czech international Pavel Nedved has pledged his future to scandal-plagued Italian giants Juventus, vowing to stay with the club next season despite their relegation to Serie B.

The 34-year-old midfielder star has decided against following Juve teammates Emerson, Fabio Cannavaro, Lilian Thuram and Gianluca Zambrotta out of the Stadio delle Alpi and is preparing for life in the second division.

"Pavel will be a Juventus player next season," Nedved's agent David Nehoda was quoted as saying by the Czech news agency CTK.

Several top European clubs had expressed an interest in signing Nedved, the 2003 European Footballer of the Year and recognised as one of the most skilful midfielders in the world.

Among those believed to be chasing Nedved were French side Lyon and English Premiership outfit Tottenham.



Flamengo players are ecstatic in celebration after capturing the Copa Brasil crown by beating Vasco da Gama in Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday.

Copa Brasil Flamengo's

Football

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Flamengo beat 10-man Vasco da Gama 1-0 in the second leg of the final to win the Copa Brasil 3-0 on aggregate on Wednesday.

Vasco, trailing 2-0 from last week's first leg, were in further trouble when striker Valdir Papel was sent off for a crunching tackle from behind in the 17th minute. He had been booked in the third minute for a similar foul.

As he left the field, he was pushed down the touchline by his furious coach Renato Portaluppi.

"It's unacceptable that you give a player a chance like that and he gets sent off for doing the same thing twice," said Renato.

Flamengo had the better of a cynical game between the bitter rivals which was marred by more than 50 fouls, play-acting, gamesmanship and unsavoury tackles.

Full-back Juan scored in the 28th minute with a low shot from the edge of the area after Leonardo Moura's shot had deflected off a defender.

It was Flamengo's first national title since 1992 when they won the Brazilian championship and qualified for the next year's South American Libertadores Cup.

The club claim to be Brazil's most popular but in recent years have suffered from chaotic administration and chronic financial problems.

This year alone, they have employed three different coaches with Ney Franco currently in charge.

Flamengo previously won the Copa Brasil, a knockout competition which in the early stages features teams from the remotest corners of the vast country, in 1990.

They were beaten finalists in 1997, 2003 and 2004. Cruzeiro are the most successful club since the competition began in 1989 with four titles.

Marseille to hold talks with Ribery

AFP, Marseille

Marseille boss Pape Diouf vowed Wednesday to hold clear-the-air talks with unsettled star Franck Ribery in order to secure the French international's future at the club.

Ribery has been the subject of intense transfer speculation since sparking for France during their run to the World Cup final earlier this month, with Arsenal, Manchester United, Bayern Munich and Lyon all chasing his signature.

Mourinho eyeing dynasty

Football

THE GUARDIAN

Jose Mourinho has set a target for Chelsea to win three or four Premiership titles in the next five years to confirm their standing as the Premiership's most powerful force. The manager has won the championship in his first two seasons at Stamford Bridge and has no intention of letting up.

Mourinho revealed in yesterday's Guardian, in exclusive extracts from Chelsea FC: The Official Biography, his desire to establish a legacy at Chelsea that will be remembered for decades. He was conscious last season of the need to build on the success of his debut campaign, and for his team to press home the advantage they established at the top of the table rather than joining sides who

were overhauled under pressure by Manchester United.

"In England, people go a lot for the history and they remember Newcastle when Man United did it, and they remember Man United when they are second in December, they finish first," he said. "But history is to be changed, and I think Chelsea in these two years have proved that. Because of the second title, we are not a Blackburn that was champion once, isolated, and after that is miles and miles away from it. Chelsea is not any more an isolated situation. It's back-to-back. And if, in the next five years, we can be three or four times champion, that's an era where Chelsea has become very powerful."

It would also confirm Mourinho's excellence as a coach. "I always think about the future, you know," he said. "I mean I'm in the history,

I'm very proud to be in that history, but I want more things: more things for me, more things for Chelsea... I hope in 60 years' time -- so I hope I go to 100 -- when I'm dead, Chelsea supporters will remember this guy was the coach."

Chelsea endured an indifferent period midway through last season, and Mourinho acknowledged a loss of focus. "Not so committed, not the same level of motivation and I'm in that group," he said. "I'm not saying I was the perfect professional and they were not good. I'm in the same group. We all felt it's over, but it was not over." Yet the team responded when it mattered. "When people tried to put pressure on us in that period where Man United was winning consecutive matches, I'm very happy with the answer, the personality, with the power," Mourinho said.

Austria the place to be

Football

INTERNET, undated

David Beckham, Roberto Carlos and other World Cup stars were on Thursday due to join their Real Madrid teammates at a pre-season training camp in southern Austria.

The arrival of the superstars is the latest footballing highlight for the alpine nation two years before it hosts the 'Euro 2008' tournament together with Switzerland.

'Euro 2008' will be the biggest sports events ever held in the country, which traditionally mainly prides itself on winter sport.

But clever marketing, a perfect training and accommodation infrastructure and the sheer natural beauty of the alpine region has prompted an unprecedented number of football clubs to set up

their tune-up camps in the country.

'World Cup stars in your backyard,' rejoiced the local Kurier daily, listing on one full page the 'million-dollar legs from Beckham to (Arsenal star Thierry) Henry.'

Real arrived last week, English giants Arsenal and Italy's Lazio are there, almost half of the German Bundesliga have also set up camp in the neighbouring country, and so have the likes of Persepolis Tehran, Red Star Belgrade and Maccabi Haifa.

The APA news agency reported that, in total, more than 50 clubs will train and play warm up games in Austria, that after the country already welcomed eight World Cup teams earlier this year ahead of the World Cup finals in Germany.

'They are making a huge effort because of Euro 2008,' said Martin Bader, the general manager of

German Bundesliga club Nuremberg.

Tune-up games against local outfits and other international teams have drawn large crowds and the presence of the big teams generates huge media attention as well.

Local businesses naturally profit from the visitors and there are also hopes that the presence of Beckham and company will have a positive effect on the local footballing youth sector.

'Of course we want to do something for our image,' said Nickolaus Pichler from the International Football Camp Styria (IFCS).

'All the camps I've seen here offer good football pitches, good training conditions and good indoor facilities,' said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

Thuram's kids delighted with Barca move

Football

AFP, Barcelona

While France defender Lilian Thuram is overjoyed with his move from Juventus to Barcelona, it is his children who are most pleased, the 34-year-old said Wednesday.

That is because they will now get to watch their heroes Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o at first hand week in, week out.

"They are happy I am playing for Barcelona because they will be able to watch Ronaldinho and Eto'o," Thuram told the Barcelona website.

It will not be the first time the children have seen the stars,

beginning of my career, to realise the highest expectations."

Thuram has had a good opinion of the Catalan club ever since his first competitive brush with Barca as a player for Monaco in the 1993-94 Champions League.

"I was a kid. I was 20 or 21 years old. The Barca coach was (Johan) Cruyff and I had to mark (Brazilian legend) Romario," said the Guadeloupe-born centre-back.

"I also remember (Michael) Laudrup, (Pep) Guardiola and (Ronald) Koeman, and at the end of the match I said to myself that we were not playing the same game. They were playing football and me, I was playing another sport."

Striker Francisco Fonseca has joined Portugal's Benfica, continuing the exodus of Mexican players following the World Cup in Germany.

The Cruz Azul player, who has scored 20 goals in 33 games for his country, is the fourth member of Mexico's squad to move to Europe since the World Cup which ended on July 9.

"We've reached an agreement between the Benfica representative and Francisco and the deal has been completed," Cruz Azul vice-president Alfredo Alvarez said in a radio interview on Wednesday.

In other moves, defender Ricardo Osorio and captain Pavel Pardo have joined Bundesliga club VfB Stuttgart and Carlos Salcido, another defender, has moved to PSV Eindhoven in the Netherlands.

Mexico has traditionally exported only a handful of players abroad.

McBride quits int'l football

AFP, Chicago

Brian McBride, the only US footballer to score in more than one World Cup, Wednesday announced his retirement from international football.

McBride's decision brought an end to a 13-year international career that included appearances in the World Cup in 1998, 2002 and 2006. He produced 30 goals in 95 matches for the United States to become the second-leading scorer in team history.

"This is a special day in that I have the opportunity to thank US Soccer for all it has done for me and my family," McBride said. "I will truly miss being part of the team."

McBride scored the USA's only goal of the 1998 World Cup in France, and netted the game winners against Portugal and Mexico in 2002.

"It was an honour to have a player like Brian McBride at the core of the national team during my tenure," said former US manager Bruce Arena. "With his goal scoring, ability in the air and intelligence on both sides of the ball, he is truly a player with qualities unlike any other player to wear the national team uniform."

McBride has spent the last three seasons at English Premiership club Fulham. Before heading to England, he was a five-time Major League Soccer All-Star and left the Columbus Crew as their all-time leading scorer.

Barcelona elections date set

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona's interim board have announced that presidential elections will be held on September 3.

President Joan Laporta and his board officially presented their resignation on Wednesday in order to stand for re-election.

An interim president, Xavier Sala Martin, has been installed to take charge at the club until a new supremo is voted in.

That will now take place in early September with Laporta hopeful of reassuming his post.

He was forced to stand down after the Catalan club were ordered to hold fresh elections by a judge.

He upheld a formal action launched by four disaffected former directors who claimed that Laporta and his board had already served a four-year term.

There had even been calls for Laporta to be prevented from standing for re-election because of his failure to call elections, but a Catalan sport court ruled on Tuesday that he had not violated the club's statutes by not calling a presidential election before the end of June.

Sevilla president accused of fraud

AFP, Madrid

Sevilla's president and the mayor of Marbella are being investigated for embezzlement, fraud and maladministration.

According to judicial sources there is evidence that lawyer Jose Maria del Nido, the Sevilla president, and Julian Munoz, the Marbella mayor who is serving time in prison over a corruption affair, entered into illicit financial agreements using public funds.

Del Nido was employed by the mayor as a legal consultant for mayoral organisations.

According to prosecutors: "Del Nido's functions did not amount to legitimate work for a lawyer, nor could they justify the enormous public funds paid to him."

Those funds amounted to 6.7 million euros (8.5 million dollars) from 1999 to 2003. Del Nido has denied any wrongdoing and said he had always conformed with legal ethics.

Fonseca joins Benfica

REUTERS, Mexico City

Striker Francisco Fonseca has joined Portugal's Benfica, continuing the exodus of Mexican players following the World Cup in Germany.

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Emerson completes Real switch

Football

AFP, Madrid

Brazil midfielder Emerson was officially unveiled as a Real Madrid player on Wednesday.

Just a day after his former Juventus teammate Fabio Cannavaro finalised his move to the Spanish giants, Emerson signed a three-year deal.

"I am very happy to be here," said Emerson. "It is something I had been thinking about for several years and now it has happened."

"Now I am playing for a team as important as Real Madrid and I hope to achieve great things, as happened at my previous clubs."

The 30-year-old, who spent two seasons at Juventus following spells at Roma and Bayer Leverkusen, was greeted by around a thousand cheering fans as he pulled on the famous white shirt for the first time.

Emerson not only joins up with Cannavaro but also former Juve boss Fabio Capello who also left the Turin giants in the wake of the Italian match-fixing scandal that saw Juventus relegated to the second division.

"He is a very valuable player who benefits the team, who sacrifices himself for the good of the team," said Real president Ramon Calderon. "He is a player that everyone appreciates and values."



Real Madrid's new signing Emerson poses at the Santiago Bernabeu as part of his official presentation on Wednesday.

Moggi still defiant

Football

REUTERS, Rome

The man at the centre of Italy's match-fixing scandal, former Juventus general manager Luciano Moggi, has hit out at the decision of an appeals court earlier this week to confirm the club's relegation to Serie B.

Nicknamed Lucky Luciano for his wily dealings in the transfer market, Moggi said he was disappointed after Juventus were found guilty of conspiring with referees and linesmen to rig matches during the 2004/05 season.

The club will start next season in Serie B on minus 17 points.

"The club has nothing to be sorry

for. Its staff have always behaved correctly," Moggi was quoted as saying in Corriere dello Sport on Thursday.

The scandal began in early May when newspapers published intercepted telephone conversations between Moggi and senior Italian Football Federation (FIGC) officials, discussing refereeing appointments.

Moggi quit his post on the last day of the season then refused to take part in the FIGC investigation or the sports tribunal that followed it, claiming he had become "extraneous to the world of football".

Juventus have said they will go to Italy's civil courts in an attempt to clear their name and be reinstated in Serie A.

Two other clubs found guilty -- Fiorentina and Lazio -- have also

promised further legal action after losing their places in next season's European competitions.

Moggi attacked the appeal court's decision to admit the phone taps as evidence and predicted a lengthy legal battle, which could end with the verdicts being overturned.

"It is not finished yet. In fact, it has only just begun and I'm hoping there will be a very different ending. You'll see that I'm right," he said.

"Meanwhile, it is right that (Juventus chairman Giovanni) Cobolli Gigli continues to fight in all the appropriate courts. That is what I'm going to do as well."

"It is yet to be seen whether they will manage to throw me out of the world of football."

Bayern look to Bastian

Football

INTERNET, undated

Bayern Munich coach Felix Magath wants midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger to step into the shoes of departed playmaker Michael Ballack.

For each of the last two seasons, Magath's first two in charge, the 21-year-old has spent the first few months of the season with Bayern's amateur side.

Magath wants Schweinsteiger's World Cup form for Germany translated to the Bundesliga as a replacement in the creativity department for Ballack, who has left for Chelsea.

"The players who played in Michael Ballack's shadow must now take over the responsibility,"

explained the 53-year-old on the club's website.

"We need somebody to dictate things in midfield and I expect Bastian to take over a little part of Michael."

"He has got to take the next step and I trust he can do so."

Ballack is not the only major loss to the Bayern midfield - Ze Roberto has also moved on while Sebastian Deisler is not due back for a few weeks yet after tearing cruciate knee ligaments.

"The midfielders are now called upon to show a little more," added Magath. "Not a lot has changed in defence, but we will look different in the attacking department than we did last year."

"Everybody now has the chance to find their position in the team and you can see in training how they are all pushing for their chance."

Schweinsteiger, Lukas Podolski and the rest of the national-team contingent are all due to link up with their team-mates on Friday, just two weeks before the season starts.

When they arrive, Magath will be making it clear the World Cup is history.

He said: "Everybody has got to be clear that the World Cup was a unique and extraordinary event as regards the atmosphere."

"The national team had an unreserved support, but at FC Bayern we don't always have that."

"Obviously, we want to continue the positive feeling, but we cannot expect it to go on and on."

"There is a difficult season before us because the expectation levels have also risen."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Frisbee, for one fully

8 Impale

12 Concept

13 Jockey Turcote

14 Pack animal

15 Disadvantage

17 Competent

18 Alias abbr.

19 Annoy repeatedly

21 Giraffe's kin

24 Chowderhead

25 It ain't worth a nickel

26 Chat locale

30 Have debts

31 Heard reveille

32 Drunkard

33 Best seats in the house, maybe

35 Unsigned (Abbr.)

36 Bush cabinet member

37 Extreme under-stand

41 Underwear with underwire

42 Largest of the seven towns or sleighs

43 Burr role

44 Pitch

49 Feedback morsel

50 Predicament

51 Initial chip

52 To the degree

53 - Nicole Smith

3 Do mending

4 Hors d'oeuvre

5 Met

6 Pantheon member

7 Small, as some

8 Intelligence (Sl.)

9 Brass instrument

10 Shake-speare

11 Honey bunch?

16 Schuss

20 Sheltered

21 Stench

22 Fuzzy fruit

23 Congressional city

24 Part of LED

26 Disagreement

27 "Say It So"

28 "The Lady or the Tiger?" option

29 Sicilian spouter

31 Unrepaired

34 Musical set in the 1950s

35 Iditarod locale

37 Samovar

38 Information

39 "When the Frost - the Punkin"

40 Heart of the matter

41 That and that

44 Informer

45 B&B

46 Adams or Johnson

47 JFK info

Solution time: 21 mins.

DOWN

1 Accomplished

2 Altar affirmative

11 Honey bunch?

16 Schuss

20 Sheltered

21 Stench

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CRYPTOQUIP

C E C E U H M I E Z M I Q F I

F W Z Y H W Y W Z X H E M I Z

F J P F T S U B T E J T I Z W H

F M C V F P X H C F V F S V E I Q

I Q H P B I H ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A MOBSTER CONCEALED HIS IDENTITY WITH A FEATHER BOA, WOULD YOU CALL HIM SCARF-FACE?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals D

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.