



German internationals (from L) Tim Borowski, Torsten Frings, and Miroslav Klose refresh themselves with a drink during a training session of their club Werder Bremen on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

## Ruud's parting shot

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy has said the breakdown of his relationship with manager Alex Ferguson was the reason for him seeking out a move to Real Madrid from Manchester United.

"My relationship with Ferguson had ended which was very painful. He did a lot for me, waiting for me while I was injured then giving me the chance to play and giving me confidence," Van Nistelrooy told a news conference at the Bernabeu on Friday.

"But what happened, happened. A good relationship ended. It was very disappointing for me."

The 30-year-old signed a three-year contract with the Primera Liga club after passing a medical earlier on Friday. No fee was officially disclosed but Spanish media reported it was about 15 million

euros (\$19.12 million).

Signing Van Nistelrooy for United from PSV Eindhoven had been a personal quest for Ferguson who pressed ahead with the move even after the striker failed a medical in April 2000.

The Dutchman then sustained a serious cruciate ligament injury while training with PSV a few days later but United stood by him and he eventually joined for a then-British record fee of 19 million pounds (\$35.39 million) in 2001.

He went on to score 150 goals for the club but fell out of favour at United last season as Ferguson increasingly selected Frenchman Louis Saha to partner Wayne Rooney in attack.

The final straw came, Van Nistelrooy said, with his omission from the team for the League Cup final.

The striker, who scored 20 goals or more in four of his five seasons at Old Trafford, put in a transfer request two weeks ago and Real

have beaten Bayern Munich to secure his services.

"I finally decided my time was over after the (League) Cup final," he said. "That was when I became unhappy. It had nothing to do with the club or the fans. It was the relationship with the manager that broke. I thought it was best to leave."

"I had an incredible five years in Manchester and I will always remember my time there and the unconditional support from the fans."

Van Nistelrooy said he did not bear a grudge with Ferguson over the situation.

"I never got to say goodbye to Ferguson but there is plenty of time for that. I owe him a lot and that is why it was so painful."

Looking ahead Van Nistelrooy said he was excited about linking up with former team mate David Beckham.

"It will be great to be reunited with him. I had two years with him at United before he left and I missed

him as a person and a player," he said.

"I am keen to come here and to show my qualities."

Real president Ramon Calderon said: "We are delighted to be able to complete the signing of another player requested by our coach Fabio Capello. He is a goalscoring machine with great technical abilities, good with his head and both feet."

"This won't be the last time we are up here presenting players. We are making a great effort to construct a winning team to break this run of three seasons without a trophy."

Van Nistelrooy is Real's third signing under their new president following Italy's World Cup-winning captain and defender Fabio Cannavaro and Brazil midfielder Emerson.

The Dutchman now faces the challenge of competing with Raul, Robinho, Julio Baptista, Antonio Cassano and Ronaldo for a place in the Real attack.

## Sidwell's tattooed vows!

AFP, London

Reading midfielder Steve Sidwell has turned his back on his wedding vows - by having them tattooed on his body.

The former Arsenal player, who helped The Royals to a first ever promotion to the Premiership last season, has had the vows to wife Krystell tattooed on his back.

Sidwell, 23, told The Sun on Saturday: "It's just the wedding vows I said to my wife."

"They're not the traditional wedding-day vows - they're ones I made up myself and said to her. It's pretty long."

Sidwell had the 100-word text tattooed on his back just days after the couple returned from honeymoon.

"There are a fair few words to it and, off the top of my head, I can't remember all of them. Shell kill me for that," he said.

## LuaLua agrees Pompey deal

AFP, Portsmouth

Democratic Republic of Congo captain Lomana LuaLua signed a new three-year contract with English Premiership club Portsmouth on Friday.

LuaLua, 25, had been linked with a move away from Fratton Park this summer but the striker will now stay with Portsmouth until 2009.

He told Portsmouth's website: "There's been a lot of speculation about my future but I always wanted to remain with Pompey."

"I'm grateful to the board and management for their support and for showing faith in me. I will not let them down."

LuaLua, who has been at the club since joining from Newcastle in 2004, played a key role in Portsmouth's remarkable escape act last season as Harry Redknapp's side climbed clear of relegation in the final weeks of the campaign.

## All eyes on Ronaldinho

Football

AP, Newark

While FC Barcelona is ostensibly using their upcoming U.S. tour to prepare for the defence of their Spanish League and Champions League titles, a more pressing question is sure to be on the minds of many who will see them



RONALDINHO

play.

What's up with Ronaldinho? While Barcelona's lineup is stocked with elite players such as Argentina's Lionel Messi and African player of the year Samuel Eto'o, the most attention figures to be focused on the long-haired Brazilian, the two-time FIFA world player of the year.

After a sparkling season in which he helped Barcelona win

the Champions League with a come-from-behind victory over Arsenal in the final, Ronaldinho was held scoreless in the World Cup and shouldered a good share of the blame for favoured Brazil's surprising quarterfinal exit.

Some publications referred to him as the Cup's biggest flop.

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard expects his star player to regain his form.

"It's part of the life of a sportsman that you have these moments," Rijkaard said Thursday. "You have to go on. I expect a lot from players like Ronaldinho. They know they have to start working again as a team, and I'm sure they will perform quite well."

The tour will take Barcelona to the Los Angeles Coliseum to face Mexico's Chivas de Guadalajara on Aug. 6; to Houston's Reliant Stadium on Aug. 9 to face Mexico's Club America, and to Giants Stadium on Aug. 12 to face the New York Red Bulls of Major League Soccer in coach Bruce Arena's Red Bulls debut.

It will be Barcelona's first visit to the U.S. since 2003 when they went 1-1-1 against European clubs Juventus, AC Milan and Manchester United.

Some elite clubs have come under criticism -- occasionally from their own players -- for scheduling foreign tours during the summer months between league seasons. Players like Ronaldinho play in their country's league, the Champions League and in other international tournaments in an average year, not to mention the World Cup every four years.

Barcelona is trying to fend off fatigue by having players who played in the World Cup join the team in the U.S., after the rest of the team trains in Denmark.

"I understand the concern. It was a very long season," Rijkaard said. "The players who are joining the team in the U.S. have had a good vacation, a good rest. They've had nearly a month off, and before the World Cup they had a week vacation."

Promoters for the event said Thursday that 100,000 tickets had already been sold for the three games.

## Cole AWOL

INTERNET, undated

Ashley Cole's relationship with Arsenal has deteriorated so much he forgot to turn up for the club's pre-season tour to Austria.

Defender Cole is at home while the rest of the squad are put through their paces by boss Arsene Wenger.

He should be with them despite Arsenal's admission vice-chairman David Dein is in talks with Chelsea about a £20million move.

Cole believed the deal had been concluded weeks ago. He jetted away on honeymoon with Cheryl Tweedy after their wedding on July 15 thinking he would not be returning to Arsenal.

Cole, 25, returned yesterday to learn he is still on the Gunners' books and should have reported on Monday to fly to the boot camp.

Dein has admitted for the first time that Arsenal have held talks with Chelsea but insists Cole remains an Arsenal player. The Emirates Stadium chief said: "There have been discussions with Chelsea. I can confirm that we have had some civil talks."

"But as we speak he is our player and, unless something changes, he will remain our player. He's special."

England left-back Cole is due to return to Arsenal on Monday unless the clubs can sort out their differences in valuation.

Arsenal are holding out for £20m while Chelsea insist on paying no more than £15m.

## Benni moves to Blackburn

AFP, Blackburn

South African striker Benni McCarthy, who has completed a 2.5-million-pound move to Blackburn Rovers, said it was always his dream to play in the English Premiership.

The 28-year-old signed a four-year deal at Ewood Park after Rovers manager Mark Hughes, who needed a replacement for Craig Bellamy, secured his services from FC Porto.

"I was very thrilled because it's always been a dream of mine," said McCarthy.

"I have had so many opportunities for me to come to England but always something seemed to go wrong, the wind always blew me to Portugal, to Spain or Holland but never to England."

"Blackburn never lost faith. It didn't happen last season but this season they fought again and finally I'm here and I'm going to make the most of it."

McCarthy paid tribute to Hughes who he believes was one of the major reasons why he decided to move to Lancashire.

"Blackburn are a great club and they are managed by one of the best strikers ever to play in England," said McCarthy.

"So, for me, it's a privilege and an honour to play for this team. I hope to score as many goals as possible to put the team where they belong."

Hughes, who sold Bellamy to Liverpool, has been busy in the transfer market in the summer adding Jason Roberts, Jason Brown and Francis Jeffers to a squad that finished sixth in the Premiership last term.

"I'm pleased with the business we've done so far," said Hughes.

"At the end of the day, Craig has gone and we're not going to harp on about players that aren't here anymore."

"Instead, I'm focusing very much on the guys that are here and they have a job to do for us this year."

## League Cup opens German season

INTERNET, undated

The German football season commences this weekend with the first piece of silverware and a welcome cash boost in the sights of six Bundesliga sides.

The Premiere-Ligapokal - the German League Cup - invites the top six teams from last season's Bundesliga to battle it out for the top prize of 2million euros.

Hertha Berlin face Hamburg in the competition's opening match on Saturday at Dusseldorf's LTU-Arena, and coach Falko Goetz admits the prize money on offer - a total of 5.2million euros - makes it an interesting prospect.

"For the economics, it is of a huge meaning," he said.

"The prize money is very attractive and will be very welcome in the coffers."

In a Saturday double-header, the LTU-Arena then plays host to the clash between holders Schalke and Bayer Leverkusen, with the winners of the two ties going forward to play Werder Bremen and Bayern Munich respectively in the midweek semi-finals before the final on August 5 in Leipzig's Zentralstadion.

Werder coach Thomas Schaaf is also looking forward to the competition, although he is focused purely on the quality of the opposition.

"The Premiere-Ligapokal is the best way to start the season," Schaaf told bundesliga.de.

"We can measure ourselves against our strongest rivals from last season just before the start of the Bundesliga, and Werder Bremen, despite the level of the opposition, want to win this competition."

## WC hangover for Lyon

Football

AFP, Lyon

Three weeks after the retreat from Berlin, French football is still suffering a World Cup hangover with Lyon stripped of their international stars ahead of Sunday's Champions Trophy clash with PSG.

Five-time French league champions Lyon will be without nine of their 11-strong World Cup contingent for the traditional season curtain-raiser.

Five of the players who featured in the World Cup defeat at the hands of Italy haven't yet returned to training.

As a result, Lyon manager Gerard Houllier tried unsuccessfully to have their opening league fixture, against Nantes next

Friday, postponed in order to help his preparations for the new campaign.

Not that Lyon have suffered too much in pre-season with the champions having won all of their warm-up matches scoring 12 goals and conceding just two in five games.

"The match against PSG is not just a preparation game," said Houllier. "We are ambitious for a good performance."

Gregory Coupet, Eric Abidal, Florent Malouda, Sidney Govou, Sylvain Wiltord, Brazilian stars Juninho, Cris and Fred and Portugal's Tiago will miss Sunday's game in Lyon where the home side are chasing a fifth successive Champions Trophy title.

Defender Sebastien Squillaci could make a first official start for Lyon following his switch from

Monaco and he is determined that his new side get off to a flying start.

"It's an important match for everybody, especially for us, the players," said Squillaci.

"We want to win this trophy. To start with a win in the Champions Trophy would be a great thing."

"PSG have made some good signings. We know that the club has players capable of making the difference at any given moment. They are a big team in France and it won't be an easy match."

PSG coach Guy Lacombe is without two World Cup players - French midfielder Vikash Dhorasoo and Portugal striker Pauleta.

"We will have to make the most of our opportunities," said PSG's Ivory Coast midfielder Bonaventure Kalou.

## Therapeutic football

Football

AFP, New Delhi

A frail-looking man named Diosiam jogs on to a football field in an upmarket New Delhi suburb, followed by a band of keen-looking players -- all of them ex-drug addicts or living with HIV/AIDS.

They warm up on the slushy field as a small crowd gathers to see them in action, not a common sight in a country besotted by cricket.

But football is now being used as a therapy for those trying to put their lives together after years of drug abuse or who have been sidelined by society due to their being infected by the HIV virus.

"Football has turned out to be one of our major successes ... in helping bring people back on track," says Shantanu Chowdhury, 46, a programme manager with non-governmental organisation Sahara which operates a treatment centre here.

"The game helps our inmates not only to gain fitness but also acts as an instrument of empowerment. It has helped them boost their morale and lead a healthy life," says Chowdhury, an ex-drug addict who has been work-

ing with the organisation for nine years.

Some 200 people are at any one time involved in various therapy programmes run for the past 28 years by Sahara in the south Delhi suburb of Greater Kailash, according to Chowdhury.

While women are engaged mainly in handicrafts, men focus their energies on football -- and a rock band they have formed at Sahara, which terms itself "a therapeutic transitional community".

"Football has made me feel part of society as it has brought me back into the mainstream," says Diosiam, 33, who like many Indians uses only one name.

"I was fed up with life but could not get out of drugs. During rehabilitation, football gave me a zest for life and I now play in Delhi's A division league," he says with pride.

Diosiam, who has been at Sahara for eight years -- first to kick an addiction and later as an employee -- is one of seven players from Sahara who are good enough to have made it to the Delhi league.

Diosiam's cousin Sawmpau, who died of AIDS a few years ago, was instrumental in inculcating football in their daily routine and a tournament is organ-

ised in his memory every year.

Initially residents of Chittaranjan Park resisted the idea of allowing players from Sahara to play football on the local ground.

"Convincing the residents' association to let us use their ground was not easy," says Chowdhury.

"It took a lot of effort to make them understand that our players are normal people who make some mistakes in life," he says.

Now teams from Sahara regularly use the ground to play against each other or against teams from other parts of Delhi.

"(Local residents) come out to watch us play. Some even join us for a game, which shows that the stigma attached to drug users and HIV positive persons is eroding," says Diosiam.

Most players on the Sahara teams are from northeastern India, where football is more popular than cricket, but some foreigners from Iran and Nigeria living in India on permits have also joined up.

Diosiam, who hails from the northeastern state of Manipur, feels football has helped forge a strong bond between Sahara inmates and has also helped them create an identity.

For some, he says, football heralds a new beginning in life.



Footballers from an Indian NGO called 'Sahara' take part in a friendly football match as part of a rehabilitation of ex-drug users and HIV positive patients in New Delhi on last Monday. PHOTO: AFP

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 PBS science series
  - 5 Where Goldilocks was found
  - 8 Masticate
  - 12 Send forth
  - 13 Man-mouse link
  - 14 Tra trailer
  - 15 Tom Hanks movie
  - 17 Persisting
  - 18 Prepare to pray
  - 19 "Who cares?"
  - 21 Bridge coup
  - 24 "My home, sweet home"
  - 25 Equitable
  - 28 Alger's "before"
  - 30 Method
  - 33 Sternward
  - 34 Permissible
  - 35 Noshed
  - 36 Cattle call
  - 37 "Oh, woe"
- DOWN**
- 16 Every iota
  - 20 Vote off the island
  - 22 Seed coating
  - 23 Showy parrot
  - 25 Predicament
  - 26 E.T.'s craft
  - 27 Fare beater, may be
  - 29 Dorothy or Lillian
  - 31 \$ dispenser
  - 32 "Of course"
  - 34 Neighbor of Cambodia
  - 38 Sale settling, at times
  - 40 Clues
  - 42 Unclose
  - 43 Sty group
  - 44 Castle
  - 45 Ova
  - 47 Author Wister
  - 48 Combo
  - 49 Argus's 100
  - 52 Debtor's letters
  - 53 "— Rylan's Express"
- Solution time: 21 mins.**
- DISCROSS**
1. PBS 2. AGO 3. STABLE 4. BROWN 5. HULL 6. DOWN 7. SIDE 8. ABLE 9. AKA 10. HARBASS 11. OKAPI 12. DOLT 13. TIME 14. FIRE 15. SIDE 16. OWE 17. AROSE 18. SOT 19. RINGSIDE 20. ANON 21. RICE 22. ULTRA 23. DIGEST 24. BRA 25. ASTIA 26. TROUSERS 27. CISS 28. OAT 29. KNOT 30. ANTE 31. NTH 32. ANNA

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54						55			56		
57						58			59		

## CRYPTOQUIP

IWPSU ZYKZ ZYW GZTPSU  
EJGPLPKSG KTW KFGA  
EKTZYASWTG MWAMFW  
LKFFZYWE TJSSWTG ASIKGG.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DID I MENTION THAT A ROBBER BROKE INTO A CLASSY MUSIC STORE AND WALKED AWAY WITH THE LUTE?  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z 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.