

## Ancelotti rules out Ronaldo

INTERNET, undated

Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti has confirmed he is not interested in signing Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Portugal international has returned to training with United after a summer that saw him declare a determination to join Real Madrid and then incur the wrath of a nation for his part in Wayne Rooney's sending off in the World Cup quarterfinal.

Although Ronaldo has his admirers in Italy, the Rossoneri will not be making a move for 21-year-old.

"Cristiano Ronaldo?" said Ancelotti. "He's a guy with good qualities."

"But he's a winger and so he can't play at Milan."

"We would have to change our game."

Milan have been buoyed by the relative success of their appeal against the punishment meted out by the Italian authorities following the refereeing scandal that engulfed the country.

Ronaldo was rumored to be one of their targets but it seems certain that the youngster will remain at Old Trafford, despite facing a hostile reception at away grounds throughout the season.

## Juve lodge appeal with Coni

AFP, Rome

Disgraced Italian football giants Juventus on Tuesday lodged their appeal with the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) against relegation to Serie B and a 17 point penalty for matchfixing seeking a reduction of their punishment.

However, two other clubs found guilty of matchfixing Lazio and Fiorentina, who despite being reinstated into Serie A -- though with 19 and 11 points having been docked -- after an earlier appeal had said they would also appeal had yet to lodge their dossiers with Coni.

"For the moment Juventus is the only club to have lodged a dossier with us," a Coni spokesman told AFP.

No date for the hearing has yet been set, but there is a little less urgency about the date after the announcement by the Professional League Clubs later on Tuesday that the Serie A and Serie B campaigns would start on the weekend of September 9 and 10 instead of August 27 as had been previously scheduled.

All three former club administrators, Juventus duo Luciano Moggi and Antonio Girardo -- banned from football for five years -- and AC Milan's Adriano Galliani, who copped a nine month suspension have lodged their dossiers with Coni.

AC Milan have decided not to appeal to CONI, having been docked eight points but permitted to retain their place in the Champions League, subject to UEFA's stamp of approval.

Coni's role is not to try the cases again but to find a compromise over the punishments that suits both those found guilty and the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) -- though a lot of observers have expressed their disdain at the leniency shown.

Juventus, Fiorentina and Lazio have also said that they are prepared to go to court if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

## Blair in Chelsea camp

AFP, Los Angeles

British Prime Minister Tony Blair indulged his passion for football during his visit to Los Angeles, meeting players from English Premiership champions Chelsea on their pre-season tour, his spokesman said Tuesday.

Blair -- an avowed fan of Premiership side Newcastle United -- dropped in on a reception for the west London club in the California city Monday night, the spokesman said.

"He was invited by Chelsea to go to the reception. He dropped in for 15 minutes. He thought that was the courteous thing to do," he told reporters.

"He spoke to (captain and defender) John Terry, (midfielder) Joe Cole and (midfielder) Frank Lampard about the pressures of taking penalties and left."

Penalties remain a key topic of conversation -- and frustration -- among fans of the England national side, after they were knocked out of the World Cup in a quarterfinal shoot-out with Portugal.

Lampard was one of three England players who missed from the spot.



Chelsea's new signing Michael Ballack holds his jersey during a press conference in Beverly Hills, California on Tuesday.

## Ballack puts team first

Football

REUTERS, California

Germany midfielder Michael Ballack, sporting a close-cropped haircut and smiling readily, was officially presented to the media with his number 13 Chelsea shirt on Tuesday.

The 29-year-old, who joined the English champions in May on a three-year contract, says he is ready for the challenge of the Premier League and is happy to play anywhere in the team.

Ballack is expected to be rotated in the Chelsea line-up with Ghana's Michael Essien in a three-man midfield featuring top goalscorer Frank Lampard and Frenchman Claude Makelele in the holding role.

"It doesn't really matter where he (Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho) puts me in the team because we all want to succeed," Ballack told a news conference at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

"I am happy to fit in with whatever is best for the team."

"Chelsea know about my strengths, that's why they picked me. There's great competition in the midfield and I'll just have to do my

best."

The Germany captain, who signed for Chelsea as a free agent from Bayern Munich where he was the leading player, is unfazed about moving to a team loaded with big names.

"I don't really mind being less of a leader with Chelsea because I'm part of a greater team," said Ballack, who has spent the last two days training with the English club at the University of California Los Angeles. "You can see that with a bigger team like Brazil who have a lot of stars but focus on playing together as a team, rather than on one star."

The three-times German Footballer of the Year played down any suggestion of a friendly rivalry with Lampard over their respective goal-scoring from the midfield.

"We want to be successful and we don't want to compete with each other," he said.

"We all want to work together to become a winning team and I'm glad to be part of that."

"I think Frank is a great player and, just like any other team I've been on, I really enjoy playing with other players."

Ballack, who was approached by Manchester United before he decided moving to Chelsea, is

looking forward to the challenge of the next three years in England.

"It's a big change for me to move to a foreign country to play in the Premier League for the first time but I was looking for a challenge," he said. "I am really excited about it."

Winning the Champions League is definitely one of my goals but it's not the only one. I want to focus on every match I play for Chelsea."

The English league champions launch their title defence against Manchester City on Aug. 20

Ballack, who helped Bayern win consecutive German league and cup doubles and six trophies in all during his four years at the club, already feels he belongs to the Chelsea family.

"I have been accepted very well, even though I am still getting to know the other players and the coaching staff," he said.

Being a new signing, however, there is one cloud on his horizon.

"I'll have to sing to the team tonight," he said of the Chelsea ritual. "I don't know what I'm going to sing but I hope I can sing it very short."

## Serie A delay confirmed

INTERNET, undated

The Italian Football League have confirmed that the new Serie A season will now kick off on September 10.

The fresh campaign was originally scheduled to start on August 27, but that date has been deemed as unrealistic given another summer of controversy in Italian football.

Due to the various appeals with regard to the initial Calciopoli sentences and the threat of another tribunal hearing involving more clubs, the new season's start date has been delayed by two weeks.

Serie A will start on September 10 and come to a conclusion on May 27, 2007. Serie B will begin on September 9 and end on June 10, 2007.

There will be four midweek fixtures in the First Division and four Sunday breaks in the schedule as a result of international commitments and Christmas.

The Coppa Italia will kick-off on August 19, with the two-legged Finals set for April 18 and May 9, 2007.

The Italian Super Cup Final between newly crowned Italian champions Inter and Roma, last season's Coppa runners-up, will be played on August 26.

## Henry to miss UCL opener

AFP, London

Thierry Henry will not feature in the first game of Arsenal's Champions League campaign next week as he will have only just returned to training, manager Arsene Wenger said on Tuesday.

Last season's Champions League finalists face either Dinamo Zagreb of Croatia or Lithuanian side Ekrenas -- most likely the former, who took a 4-1 away win in the first leg -- in a third round qualification match in a week's time.

The Gunners face qualification to reach the main group stage as they finished fourth in the Premiership last season.

As well as German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann, who is suspended after being sent off in May's Champions League final defeat to Barcelona, Henry will miss the first leg, Wenger said.

"Jens is suspended and Thierry will be short as well," Wenger said after Arsenal's 8-1 thrashing of Austrian third division side Schwadorf in a pre-season friendly.

"He (Henry) comes back on August 20 so it is very short until August 9."

The team playing the Champions League tie would be very similar to that which defeated Schwadorf, Wenger said, although Czech midfielder Tomas Rosicky and teenage England striker Theo Walcott could also feature.

"Tomas Rosicky is OK," Wenger said. "Theo Walcott is a bit short. He has had a virus so he has not practised well."

"The fittest players will play whether it means Walcott or not I don't know yet."

## Gallas in hot water

AFP, Los Angeles

French international defender William Gallas will not join Chelsea on their US tour, the English Premiership champions announced on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old was due to join the team with the other Chelsea players who participated in the World Cup semifinals and final -- he played in the final penalty shootout loss to Italy -- and be available when Chelsea faces the Major League Soccer All-Stars on Saturday in Chicago.

Gallas, who has indicated he would like to leave the club as he does not like playing full-back instead of his preferred centre-back position, requested extra-time off following the World Cup but was informed he should still report to Los Angeles on the date previously agreed.

His failure to report has club officials considering further disciplinary action as a consequence.

"William Gallas will not be joining up with Chelsea on the pre-season tour of the United States," read a statement from the club.

"William requested extra-time off following the World Cup but was informed he should still report to Los Angeles on the date previously agreed with him. He did not report and further action will now be considered by the club as a consequence."

"Pre-season training and the tour is about building team spirit among our squad and extra leave is only granted for valid football-related reasons."

Gallas, who signed from Marseille for 6million pounds five years ago, has one year remaining on his Chelsea contract but talks are ongoing over a new one as the Premiership champions have insisted he is not going anywhere.

## Superstar sweepstakes

Football

GABRIELE MARCOTTI

Did you pay attention in Econ 101? Remember the law of supply and demand?

If you do, you probably know that this is the single most unusual transfer market in recent history. And even then, there's the odd move, which -- seemingly -- has no grounding whatsoever in common sense.

One thing at a time. The law of supply and demand states that the greater the supply, the lower the price, provided demand stays constant or falls. And, of course, the reverse is true.

What we are seeing this summer is that, following the dismantling of Juventus, the supply of top players on the market has gone through the roof. Lilian Thuram, Fabio Cannavaro, Gianluca Zambrotta and Emerson have already been sold, Patrick Vieira and Mauro Camoranesi are on their way, with David Trezeguet, Zlatan Ibrahimovic and, possibly, Gigi Buffon likely to follow.

Throw in the rest of a talented crop (some who have already moved, others who may yet do so) angling for the big time -- Lukas Podolski, Michael Ballack, Andriy Shevchenko, Fernando Torres, Luca Toni, Ruud van Nistelrooy, William Gallas, Carlos Tevez, Ashley Cole, Javier Mascherano -- and what you have is a veritable glut of talent on offer.

The market for players of this magnitude -- guys who expect to

earn in excess of 7-million-dollars-a-year -- is tiny to begin with, and with Juventus out of the mix, there are no more than eight clubs left who can even think about signing them: Real Madrid, Barcelona, Inter, Chelsea, AC Milan, Manchester United, Bayern Munich and possibly Liverpool.

Real, Barcelona and Bayern seem to have already completed their shopping for the summer. Chelsea (a left-back, most likely Cole) and Liverpool (a striker) are looking for one more signing. Arsenal is not the kind of team to break the bank, which leaves United, Inter and Milan (UEFA permitting) as the only teams likely to still spend big.

That's why, if those three clubs play their cards right, they can find some veritable bargains. They're like the guys who show up at a garage sale at dusk, with plenty of stuff still on offer. That's what Econ 101 would suggest. In fact, the transfer market sometimes acts in strange and mysterious ways.

Take United, which paid 33 million dollars for Michael Carrick this week. Carrick is a fine holding midfielder and a delightful young man. But 33 million dollars? You could have bought both Lyon's Mahamadou Diarra and his namesake, Lens' Alou Diarra, for that amount and had plenty of change left over. And you'd probably be better off.

Or how about Real, which shelled out 20 million dollars on van Nistelrooy? The same amount would have fetched Trezeguet, who is younger and just as prolific.

But that's the weird unpredict-

ability of the transfer market. It's not transparent and it's certainly not an exact science. A player's valuation is a convoluted cocktail of ability, age, wages, how many years he has left on his contract and how many clubs are interested in him and can afford him.

Torres may indeed be worth 40 million dollars, as Atletico Madrid insists. But who can afford to pay that much? Maybe United, maybe Milan. That's it. And will they want to bid that much when Torres has only two years left on his current contract, which means his price is likely to halve in 12 months' time? For that kind of money you can probably get Ibrahimovic and Tevez. Two for the price of one.

That's what makes this summer so interesting. The scandal in Italy has had far-reaching implications, not only in terms of clubs circling around Juventus' spoils but also for those players hoping to make the jump to the big time. With cash already scarce (Chelsea notwithstanding), players feeling the pressure to move and a limited number of clubs who can afford them, this could be the most bargain-laden summer in history.

It's also a reminder that at the highest level, players don't "belong" to the Premiership, Primera Liga or Serie A. They belong to those seven or eight clubs who can actually afford them, strewn across Europe's top leagues. You could say that, in that sense, the European super-league is already here.

(Gabriele Marcotti writes for the SI.com)

## Bremen reach League Cup final

Football

REUTERS, Berlin

A late strike from Torsten Frings gave Werder Bremen a 2-1 victory in the semifinal of the Bundesliga pre-season League Cup tournament on Tuesday.

Hamburg were down to 10 men from the 76th minute after Nigel de Jong was sent off for a challenge on German midfielder Frings.

But nevertheless they had more chances to break the draw until

Frings beat two Hamburg SV defenders eight minutes from time and fired a fine shot from the left into the far corner.

"I saw the corner was open and took a chance the goalkeeper wouldn't see it coming," said Frings. "Fortunately, it went in. We want to win the first title at stake this season to get off to a good start."

Bremen, who finished second in the Bundesliga last season, now play in the final of the League Cup, made up of the top six teams, on Saturday against the winner of Wednesday's semifinal between

Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich and Schalke 04.

Mohamed Zidan, returned to Bremen after being loaned for a season to Mainz 05, had put Bremen ahead in the 50th minute after collecting a superb pass from Miroslav Klose. Zidan then surprised the Germany striker by kissing him on the cheek.

HSV equalised in the 70th minute when Ivory Coast's Boubacar Sanogo broke free from midfield to latch onto a through ball and beat Bremen goalkeeper Andreas Reinke.

## Chevanton signs for Sevilla

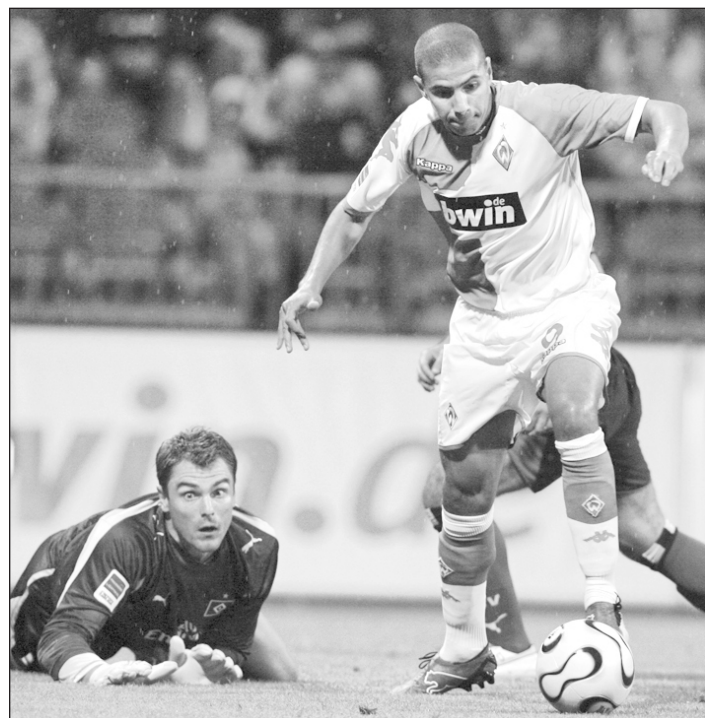
AFP, Madrid

Uruguayan international striker Javier Chevanton on Tuesday completed a five-year deal with Spain's UEFA Cup champions FC Sevilla for a fee of 8million euros from 2004 Champions League finalists Monaco, the Spanish club said.

The 25-year-old, nicknamed Chevalog, has been with Monaco since 2004 scoring 20 goals in 50 appearances.

A Monaco source had earlier said a four-year contract was in the offing after the French league club's managing director Marc Keller said that "the two clubs have come to an agreement."

Sevilla's website said the player would on Thursday join up with the club as they head for a tour of Japan.



Werder Bremen's Egyptian striker Mohamed Zidan (R) gets the ball past Hamburg keeper Stefan Waechter (L) during the German League Cup semifinal Bremen on Tuesday.

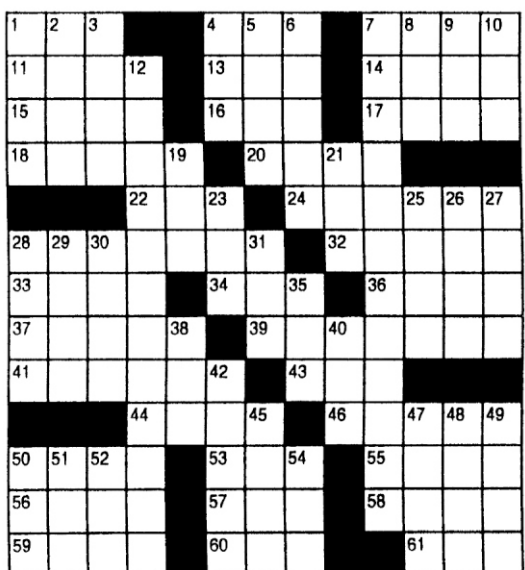
## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
 1 Unsatisfactory  
 4 Kyoto  
 7 Creche  
 11 Physical  
 13 Skedad-dle  
 14 Throat  
 15 -- Romeo  
 16 Right  
 17 Cloverleaf  
 18 Stylish  
 20 Soak up  
 22 Will twice  
 24 Volcanic  
 28 Casino  
 32 Broadway  
 33 Winged  
 34 Play-ground  
 36 Luau

**DOWN**  
 1 Cave  
 2 Dweller  
 3 Mad  
 4 Raw rock  
 5 Eventual  
 6 Extended-family  
 7 What "X" does  
 8 "I understand"  
 9 Jewel  
 10 Mischief-maker  
 12 Wacky  
 19 Lubricant  
 21 Bro's  
 23 Ex-GI  
 25 Smear  
 26 Lecherous  
 27 Repeat  
 28 Long cut  
 29 Saxophone  
 30 The red planet  
 31 Rule, in British  
 35 Tooth-paste type  
 38 Pod  
 40 Menagerie  
 42 Camel's  
 45 Tournament  
 47 Send out  
 48 Start over  
 49 Differently  
 50 Doctrine  
 51 Hot tub  
 52 Lummox  
 54 Explosive network?

## Solution time: 24 mins.

TURIN LAURA  
 AURORA ABSENT  
 STACKS SLACKS  
 TON SASSEY ALPA  
 GURUBALACAPER  
 EISIG OEBSTIS  
 LOBER DOT  
 CHILLER SCOFF  
 HONE MOB HULL  
 ELF SUMAO TAO  
 SWACKS SHACKS  
 TECHIE SUCKES  
 STAND OBEYS



## CRYPTOQUIP

Y Z Y I Y X H Y D R N  
 U M A R K M Z Y I Y A M J H T R D, H  
 U M T H M X M V M K H F V D  
 K R X M D R Y V H F V M N J T Y I M.  
**Saturday's Cryptoquip:** I GUESS A FILM ABOUT AN INACCESSIBLE MOUNTAIN CHAIN SHOULD BE CALLED "A RIDGE TOO FAR."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals A  
 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.