



(L to R) Young guns Bastian Schweinsteiger and Lukas Podolski, Bremen trio Tim Borowski, Torsten Frings and Miroslav Klose, Dortmund recruit Alexander Frei and Hamburg's Dutch star Rafael van der Vaart will all look to leave their mark on the forthcoming Bundesliga season, which kicks off today.

## Ibrahimovic becomes a Nerazzurri

#### AFP. Rome



himovic has signed a fourvear deal with Inter Milan after a 24.8 million euro (31.9 million dollar) agreement was

reached by the club with Italian rivals Juventus on Thursday. The 24-year-old, who joined the club two years ago, has signed a

deal which will take him up until June 30, 2010. "Juventus have reached agree-

ment with Inter Milan for the signing of Zlatan Ibrahimovic for 24.8 million euros pavable over three years," the buying club said in a statement.

Following the sale, Juventus coach Didier Deschamps, the former France World Cup winning captain, said the Swede's departure

On Wednesday, Mauro interesting offer comes in. Camoranesi's agent also claimed his player wants to leave and Deschamps will have a fight on his hands to keep hold of other soughtafter star names such as Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and France forward David Trezeguet. "It's not because one leaves that

everyone else has to go too," said Deschamps. "Buffon has already chosen, he will stay at Juventus even if an

tion that satisfies him." Ibrahimovic becomes Inter Milan's fourth signing for the new season after Vieira, Fabio Grosso (Palermo) and Hernan Crespo (Chelsea)

"And concerning Trezeguet,

know him well. We will find a solu-

Ibrahimovic joined Juventus from Dutch side Aiax in 2004, scoring 26 goals in the past two years.

# Terry named Eng captain

**REUTERS**, London

Chelsea skipper John Terry has been appointed as England's new captain, the Football Association said on Thursdav.

Terry takes over the armband after David Beckham stepped down from the role in the wake of England's World Cup quarter-final defeat on penalties by Portugal last month.

Liverpool skipper Steven Gerrard, also tipped for the job, has been appointed vice-captain.

Terry, 25 and capped 29 times, has helped Chelsea win two consecutive Premier League titles and established himself with England as a first-choice central defender.

England's new coach Steve McClaren told the FA's Web site: 'Choosing a captain is one of the most important decisions a coach has to make. "I'm certain I've got the right man

in John Terry. I'm convinced he will prove to be one of the best captains England has ever had.' England's next game is a friendly

against European champions Greece in Manchester next

# **Mixed times for** Die Bundesliga

#### **QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM**

Football is making a swift BUNDES **GA** Deutschland as they themselves

the forefront of every football followers mind this summer as the German's hosted the World Cup with typical efficiency and a mixture of élan and creativity that none knew they had. Carried on the crest of a wave, the somewhat shoddy German team made it into the semifinals of the tournament and lost out to

Such was the level

be magnificent bargain buys. More

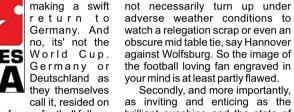
The losses though far outweigh By real, we mean, that they would the gains. Tomas Rosicky and Jan Koller, both Czech and both contracted to Dortmund switched allegiances. While the giant striker was lured to the tax haven of Monaco, the slight playmaker Rosicky moved to chilly London where he will link up with Arsene Secondly, and more importantly, Wenger and the Gunners in the superb Emirates Stadium, Johan brilliant sunshine and the state of Micoud, long a favourite of the the art stadiums of Germany may Bremen faithful and one of the last have seemed this summer, most of of the breed of silky playmakers, left the foreign stars and the most for Bordeaux, where he aims to famous home grown one failed to finish. Dmitar Berbatov also moved get the message. They left and that to the Premiership. The Leverkusen has leaves the league in quite a star, one of the most technically gifted players the Bundesliga could Make no mistake, the boast of and a natural goalscorer world has changed!). The Ligue 1 was the biggest culprit with a 2.13 average while Spain and England squared off near each other with the former 2.46 to the latter's 2.48. And that is not all. The

2.61 goals per 90 minutes. (How the

Bundesliga was also the best supported league in Europe last season with an average of 39,000 fans watching ever game.

The matches are entertaining, the quality and competitiveness within the league is very high (although Bayern are still a bit way above the rest the gap is closing rapidly). If you can sacrifice a bit of individuality and class, and forgive the odd glaring error here and there, then there is nothing more entertaining than the Bundesliga.

So with booming attendances has already caught the eye at and high goals per game there is not Tottenham Hotspur, Ze Roberto, the much more that a league could skillful midfielder and star performer want. for Brazil ended his long stay at The real question that rears itself Bayern. Although he has yet to find is how well the Bundesliga will a club, there will be no shortage of accommodate without a truly world suitors for the versatile midfielder. class name And last but not least, Michael In light of the recent spate of Ballack also went in search for a signing from Italian clubs (none to new challenge; the midfielder Germany), Kicker magazine somecompleting a free transfer to what ironically said, "The world-Chelsea after two consecutive class players don't move to the league and cup doubles with Bayern Munich. He said he was Bundesliga. But maybe they are already here?" seeking a new challenge but atleast By which they were pointing out half the Bayern faithful will tell you the players who under Juergen Klinmann's tutelage had become But enough of the negatives. atleast national if not international Why is the Bundesliga worth watchstars. Step forward Young Player of the World Cup, Lukas Podolski, For one, statistic wise, it is still Golden Boot winner Miroslav Klose. the most entertaining of the big Bastian Schweinsteiger and the Last season, the Germans man Pele considered the find of the eclipsed all the other leagues in tournament: Phillip Lahm. Only Michael Ballack has terms of goal per game. The average 2.81, although down from the deserted Germany and he did so season before was still quite a bit before the World Cup. But nine of more than the next in line, which is the 11 plavers who took Germany (hold your horses) the Serie A with SEE PAGE 22 COL 2



Bundesliga made some big name eventual champions Italy. signings, but to be honest they were

partying fans that we saw on TV this of that later. summer were not your 'real' fans.

otherwise.

leagues in Europe.

ing?

would be his side's last. However, it is not the first time

the disgraced deposed champions have made such a claim.

Juventus had claimed after the sale of France captain Patrick Vieira to Inter Milan last week that no more players would be allowed to leave.

But Ibrahimovic demanded out in the wake of Juve's demotion to Serie B - along with a 17-point penalty for the coming season - for their part in Italy's match-fixing scandal.

Juventus were also stripped of the league titles they won last season (2005/06) and the season before and barred from the Champions League.

France defender Liliam Thuram and Italy full-back Gianluca Zambrotta were the first to jump ship, to Barcelona, quickly followed by new Real Madrid pair Emerson, the Brazil midfielder, and Italv's World Cup winning captain Fabio Cannavaro

ZLATAN IBRAHIMOVIC ... confirms his switch to Inter Milan.

#### Nednesdav

## Low springs no surprises

AFP, Frankfurt

Germany coach Joachim Low remained loyal to his country's World Cup squad on Thursday remains a sketchy ideal. The World when naming his first group of 21players for the friendly against Sweden on August 16 in Cup may have, forever, changed the nation of Germany. However, all that is now almost a distant mem-Gelsenkirchen. Only Bayern Munich's Oliver ory

Khan, who announced his international retirement after Germany's third place finish on home soil, and injured duo Per Mertesacker and Robert Huth have been left out from last month's World Cup 23.

Instead, MSV Mainz defender Manuel Friedrich has been drafted SEE PAGE 22 COL 1

The primary reason is simple. Most of the beer guzzling and

bring. And rightfully so.

As much as most of the adulating

public would like to carry the sum-

mer euphoria into the new season,

there remain more than a few

doubts as to what this year will

has returned

big names only by Bundesliga euphoria and togetherness that standards. The much lauded many regarded it as the greatest youngster, Vincent Kompany occasion of public unity since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the formamoved to Hamburg. Swiss hero Alexander Frei switched from tion of unified Germany. For a day Rennes to Dortmund and Brazilian less than a full month, Germany itself lived and died with the exploits starlet Diego also swapped the sun of Portugal for the river of Weser of Juergen Klinsmann and his band and Werder Bremen. Good players, of merry men. The outpouring of all of them, but none are really in the national emotion was immense for a top bracket for any league. Mind country for whom national pride itself and identification with the flag you though, they may yet turn out to

limbo

### RIES

Friday Bavern Munich v Borussia Dortmund For the 'real' football fans, the festival starts today. Die Bundesliga Saturday

SV Hamburg v Arminia Bielefeld Schalke 04 v Eintracht Frankfurt, Bayer Leverkusen v Alemannia Aachen, VfB Stuttgart v FC Nuremberg, Borussia Monchengladbach v Energie Cottbus, Mainz 05 v VfL Bochum Sunday

Hannover v Werder Bremen, VfL Wolfsburg v Hertha Berlin

## Vieri quits Sampdoria

AFP, Rome

Weary Italian striker Christian Vieri is without a club after quitting Sampdoria following just one month with the Serie Aside.

Vieri, 33, agreed a one-year contract with the Genoa-based club in July but threw in the towel without even playing a game after admitting he no longer feels motivated.

A statement from the club said that after a meeting between club bosses and Vieri "both parties agreed that the professional basis on which the agreement was signed no longer exists"

Vieri played for Monaco in the French league last year but missed much of the season because of a knee injury

Capped 49 times for Italy, Vieri played just seven French league games since January scoring three goals and was not selected for the World Cup.

The striker has scored 130 goals in his career notably with Juventus (1996-97), Lazio (1998-1999) and Inter Milan (1999-2005).

He was the top Italian league scorer in 2003 with Inter Milan.

Vieri also played for Atletico Madrid, scoring 24 goals in as many matches in 1997-1998, finishing the season as the top scorer in the Primera Liga.

# **Gonzalez** spares L'pool blushes

utes of the second half.

attack, replaced Bellamy.

noisy, green-shirted fans with some

dogged defence, Argentinian striker

Roberto Colautti even coming close

to re-taking the lead after 15 min-

As Anfield grew increasingly

anxious, Liverpool boss Rafael

Benitez threw on Luis Garcia for

Bolo Zenden, and then England

striker Peter Crouch, surprisingly

left on the bench for a one-man

Finally, Gonzalez was sent on

The victory gives Liverpool one

The "away" leg will be played at a

foot in the main draw of the

Champions League, worth an

estimated 12 million pounds (22.8

neutral venue with either Kiev or

Cyprus in the running to host, after

UEFA ruled that it was too dangerous

new signings Bellamy, a 6 million

pound capture from Blackburn and

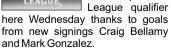
Benitez began the night fielding

to hold a game in any part of Israel.

million dollars) in extra revenue.

AFP. Liverpool

Liverpool came from behind to defeat Israel's Maccabi Haifa 2-VERA in a tense CHAMPIONS Champions



Chilean winger Gonzalez with five minutes remaining, and popped up with a goal two minutes from time, just moments after comscored a dramatic 88th-minute winner, firing high into the roof of the ing on as a subsitute in his Liverpool net after latching onto a Xabi Alonso debut to give the English side a precious advantage to take into the cross.

away leg. But Haifa -- whose players have spent the past few weeks living in hotels as their home city gets bombarded by Hezbollah rockets fired from nearby Lebanon -- very nearly forced what would have been a

famous draw. Haifa took the lead on half an hour through Brazilian midfielder Gustavo Boccoli, before home debutant Bellamy equalised, seizing on Momo Sissoko's blocked shot to fire into the top corner.

nger Jermaine Pennant. Haifa delighted their tiny knot of Although Bellamy was a lone striker, with captain Steven Gerrard pushing up with Pennant and Zenden on the wings, the early pressure was all from Liverpool and the Kop faithful perhaps sensed an easy night.

It was not to be -- just before half an hour had gone, Haifa exchanged some neat passes before Colautti, once of Boca Juniors, beat the offside trap to release fellow South American Boccoli.

The Brazilian, whose 12 goals from midfield last season helped make him Israel's player of year, advanced coolly on Jose Reina and finished crisply to the joy of the several hundred noisy, greenshirted Haifa fans who had made the trip from Israel

The goal spurred Liverpool into action and they struck less than four minutes later.

Pennant, whose pace and skills tormented Haifa left back Haim Magrashvili all evening, again sprinted past the defence and cut back a pass to Sissoko.

The midfielder's shot was parried by Nir Davidovitch in the Haifa goal, and Bellamy stole in to fire the lose ball into the top corner.

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Maccabi Haifa goalkeeper Nir Davidovitch (L) and Dekel Keinan (R) close in on Liverpool striker Craig Bellamy during their Champions League qualifying match at Anfield on Wednesday.