



VIVA VILLA: Valencia's Spanish international forward David Villa is elated after scoring against Salzburg in Tuesday's Champions League qualifying match at the Mestalla.

Tevez angers Corinthians

AFP, Sao Paulo

Argentine striker Carlos Tevez is in hot water with his Brazilian club Corinthians after being spotted out partying while failing to show up at the club's training ground.

Corinthians have demanded an explanation from Tevez, although the man who helped Argentina reach the quarter-finals of the World Cup before being eliminated by hosts Germany seems hardly bothered.

Tevez indicated after Sunday's 18th league game of the season, in which Corinthians beat Botafogo 1-0 to climb off the foot of the table, it might have been his last game for the club.

According to Corinthians president Edvar Simoes on Tuesday, Tevez disappeared from the club's training ground the day before and was later seen at a concert.

Argentine television then showed footage of Tevez, on another occasion, singing in Buenos Aires with the music group "Los Palmera", without having advised his club he would be doing so.

"Tevez has to account for his absences and give us a reason why he was not at the club," said Simoes.

The latest episode involving the Argentine has added fuel to speculation that he is angling for a move, with Europe a possible destination.

Hargreaves to make Bayern plea

BBC ONLINE

Owen Hargreaves will reportedly hold a news conference on Wednesday to say he wants to leave Bayern Munich.

According to reports, the 25-year-old will criticise the German club for standing in the way of his move to Manchester United.

Relations between the two clubs soured on Tuesday when Bayern threatened to report United for breaching Fifa rules with their pursuit of Hargreaves.

The England international's Bayern contract runs until 2010.

And Bayern are particularly keen for him to honour that after losing Michael Ballack to Chelsea over the summer.

United are thought to be prepared to offer up to £17m for Hargreaves, whose stock rose with some impressive performances at the World Cup.

But Bayern general manager Uli Hoenes said: "Bayern Munich will never be taken for a ride and become weak at the knees as soon as a certain level of money is mentioned."

Rodriguez extends with Atletico

REUTERS, Madrid

Argentina forward Maxi Rodriguez has agreed to extend his contract with Atletico Madrid until 2010, the Primera Liga club said on Wednesday.

Maxi, who joined Atletico from Espanyol on a three-year deal in 2005, was the club's second highest scorer with 10 goals last season.

"Atletico have been delighted with the player's performance and the commitment he has shown since he joined the club," Atletico said on their Web site.

The 25-year-old, who is reported to have rejected an offer to move to Inter Milan, was a key member of Argentina's team at the World Cup, ending the tournament as their joint top scorer with three goals.

Valencia make return

REUTERS, Madrid



Valencia believe they are back where they belong after earning a place in the group phase of the Champions League following their 3-1 aggregate win over Salzburg.

"We've reaped the reward for all our hard work of the last season," coach Quique Sanchez Flores said after Tuesday's 3-0 victory at the Mestalla.

"The club has regained the prestige we needed and we have also ensured that we will receive an important economic boost. We're back where we belong."

Valencia overcame a 1-0 first-leg deficit against the Austrians thanks to first-half goals from Fernando Morientes and David Villa and a late strike from midfielder David Silva.

"It was a vital game for us," said Morientes, who joined Valencia from Liverpool during the close season. "We needed to win after the first leg, but in the end everything went as planned."

Valencia, who reached the final of the Champions League in 2000 and 2001 and won the UEFA Cup in 2004, missed out on European competition last season but will now join Barcelona and Real Madrid in the group phase of the continent's elite club competition.

There was no such luck, however, for Osasuna who missed out after a late goal from Hamburg SV

midfielder Nigel de Jong wiped out the Navarans' early lead and put the German side through on away goals.

"It was a very tough defeat to take, especially as the game was so even and there was so much at stake," said Osasuna coach Jose Angel Ziganda.

But Ziganda was determined to see the bright side of the defeat for a team that equalled its best ever result in the Primera Liga with a fourth place finish last season.

"The team was fantastic in all senses," he said. "In terms of attitude, effort and play we were able to match a big side like Hamburg. I'm really proud of the players."

The draw for the Champions League group phase takes place in Monaco on Thursday.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS

AFP, Paris

Results of Champions League third preliminary round second leg matches played on Tuesday:

At Valencia, Spain
Valencia (ESP) 3 (Morientes 12, Villa 31-pen, Silva 90+3)
Salzburg (AUT) 0
Valencia win 3-1 on aggregate

At Lisbon
Benfica (POR) 3 (Rui Costa 21, Nuno Gomes 45+2, Petit 57)
Austria Vienna (AUT) 0
Benfica win 4-1 on aggregate

At Belgrade
Red Star Belgrade (SCG) 1 (Dokic 80)
AC Milan (ITA) 2 (Inzaghi 29, Seedorf 79)
AC Milan win 3-1 on aggregate

At Pampeluna, Spain
Osasuna (ESP) 1 (Cuellar 6)
Hamburg (GER) 1 (De Jong 74)
Hamburg win on away goal rule after match finished 1-1 on aggregate

At Kiev
Maccabi Haifa (ISR) 1 (Colautti 63)
Liverpool (ENG) 1 (Crouch 54)
Liverpool win 3-2 on aggregate

France defender Jean-Alain Bounsong swapped one black and white striped shirt for another when he joined Italian giants Juventus from English Premiership side Newcastle United.

The 26-year-old was in Turin to finalize the 3.3 million pounds (6.2 million dollars) deal and signed a four-year contract.

Bounsong joined Newcastle from Scottish club Rangers in January 2005 for an eight million pounds fee. However, he endured a dismal spell at St James' Park and the Magpies were seemingly happy to cut their losses.

He was a non-playing member of the France squad at the World Cup in Germany where "Les Bleus" lost to Italy in the final after a penalty shoot-out.

Juventus will play a friendly against Newcastle at St James' Park next year as part of the deal.

The sale should boost Newcastle boss Glenn Roeder's transfer kitty ahead of the transfer window closure at the end of the month.

The Magpies are desperate for a big-name striker to replace the retired club legend Alan Shearer and the injured England forward Michael Owen.

Roeder has succeeded in signing only Republic of Ireland winger Damien Duff so far and has missed out on landing Netherlands forward Dirk Kuyt and Germany striker Miroslav Klose.

However, the Magpies have agreed a 10 million pounds (19 million dollars) fee with Italian side Inter Milan for their Nigeria striker Obafemi Martins.

Mexico's World Cup coach Ricardo La Volpe was named as the new coach of Boca Juniors, the most popular club in his native Argentina, on Tuesday.

"I'm proud to be in charge of a team like Boca Juniors, one of the world's great clubs," he told a media conference. "It's a big responsibility."

La Volpe, who has spent his entire coaching career in Mexico, replaces Alfio Basile, who will take over as Argentina coach from Sept. 15.

Basile led Boca to a double in the 2005/6 season as they won both the Apertura and Clausura championships.

The gruff La Volpe, third choice goalkeeper in Argentina's 1978 World Cup-winning squad, took Mexico to the last 16 at the World Cup, where they lost 2-1 to Argentina in the second round.

His contract ended at the tournament in Germany.

During his four years in charge of Mexico, La Volpe gave the team a younger and more competitive edge but he frequently clashed with the media.

He was criticised for leaving out playmaker Cuauhtemoc Blanco, for fielding two foreign-born players and including his son-in-law Rafael Garcia in the World Cup squad.

La Volpe had initially turned down the Boca job, saying he was unfamiliar with Argentine domestic football, before changing his mind.

Away goals do it for Hamburg

INTERNET, undated



Hamburg sealed their place in the lucrative group stages of the Champions League with a thrilling 1-1 draw against Osasuna

in Pamplona on Tuesday. Elsewhere, La Liga side Valencia also booked their place in Thursday's group phase draw with a 3-0 win over Salzburg at the Mestalla.

Nigel de Jong's 74th minute equaliser saw Hamburg through after Javier Cuellar opened the scoring for Osasuna with an early headed goal on six minutes.

The Basque side started the better in a brilliantly intimidating atmosphere in the Estadio Reyno de Navarra, Cuellar delighting the

crowd with his header after some poor marking from the Hamburg defence.

Indeed, the visitors looked a little uncomfortable in the white-hot atmosphere from the outset and the goal did nothing to settle their nerves.

But the Bundesliga side did manage to compose themselves enough to create a handful of first half chances, Boubacar Sanogo and Benjamin Lauth both going close with headers.

Hamburg were able to build on that in the second half and the more the game progressed, the more likely a tie-winning equaliser became as Osasuna began to let their nerves get the better of them.

With Rafael van der Vaart in the mood to play, Hamburg's equaliser was never far away, and sure enough the Germans made their pressure count with just over fifteen

minutes left when de Jong was presented with a chance he could not miss.

It was van der Vaart's deep free kick which was headed back across the face of goal by Demel to find the Dutchman unmarked. He made no mistake and slotted home from two yards leaving the Spanish side claiming Demel fouled at the back post.

The home side could, and should, have stolen it at the death, but substitute Pierre Webo missed a golden opportunity to become the hero for the night when he headed over from Raul Garcia's cross when Savo Milosevic was in a far better position to score.

That left the unfortunate Webo as the lasting image of the night, as he sank to his knees at full time with his head buried in the turf, just wishing the magnificent public would leave him alone in his misery.

Juventus sign Bounsong

AFP, Newcastle

Diarra completes Madrid move

REUTERS, Madrid



Mali international Mahamadou Diarra completed his 26 million-euro (\$33.4 million) move from Olympique Lyonnais to Real Madrid when he was unveiled to the media on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old was rushed to the Bernabeu after undergoing a medical following his arrival in the city late in the afternoon.

The player's presentation was delayed because of arguments between Real and Lyon over who would pay the 1.3 million euros in compensation to his previous clubs Bamako, OFI Crete and Vitesse Arnhem for their role in the player's development.

Radio Marca reported that the deal finally went through after

Real, Lyon and the player agreed to share the payments between them.

"It was a difficult signing, but Fabio Capello had expressly asked for the player," said Real president Ramon Calderon. "We needed him to strengthen our midfield and Capello considered him vital in order to consolidate this new project."

"He is an intelligent footballer who knows how to defend and also how to attack -- a complete player."

The holding midfielder could make his debut in Wednesday's pre-season match against Anderlecht in the Bernabeu Trophy.

Neither club disclosed fee details but Spanish media say the nine-times European champions have agreed to pay Lyon some 26 million euros, making Diarra the most expensive close-season signing in the Primera Liga.

Diarra is the fourth player to join Real since Ramon Calderon was elected president last month and brings the club's total close-season spending to over 60 million euros.

Real have also signed Italy's World Cup-winning captain Fabio Cannavaro and Brazil midfielder Emerson from Juventus and Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy from Manchester United.

A key figure in the Lyon midfield, Diarra joined the French side from Vitesse in 2002 and has won the last four Ligue 1 titles with the club.

He will team up with Emerson to form what Real hope will be a watertight partnership in central midfield, a problem area since French midfielder Claude Makelele left for Chelsea in 2003.

Injury list grows for L'pool

Football

AFP, London

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez emerged from his side's successful Champions League test against Maccabi Haifa with mixed feelings on Tuesday after seeing his injury list grow.

Liverpool scraped through to the Champions League group stages after a less than convincing 3-2 aggregate victory following a 1-1 draw against the Israelis.

But as they head into their final Premiership game before the international break, Benitez has concerns.

Full back Stephen Warnock is out for two weeks with an ankle injury while midfielder Mohamed Sissoko should miss three weeks with a knee problem.

Benitez said: "We are in the group stages and I believe we

deserve to be so ... But the worst thing for us is the injuries to Stephen and Momo. Both will be out for a while."

That means they will miss Saturday's home league game with West Ham, along with Jamie Carragher, John Arne Riise and Gabriel Paletta, who all missed the trip to the neutral ground in Kiev with injuries.

It was a subdued Benitez who now awaits the Champions League draw in Friday, knowing his team are among the top seeds and are now guaranteed around 12 million pounds (22.7 million dollars) in cash from the UEFA pot.

But he said: "We are not at 100 per cent yet, I know that. It has been a difficult preparation for this season with so many of the players returning at different times from the World Cup."

"When we have got over this game with West Ham and then the two-week international break you

will see a side improving and progressing together and ready to take on the really big teams in the Champions League."

"You will see a much better team then."

The crucial aggregate victory came about thanks to Peter Crouch's second-half header, and means Liverpool have reached the stage of the competition where the really big money can be earned, which Benitez has already said is vital to pay for his squad rebuilding.

"It has been very hard to get the players to the same level of physical preparation," added the Spaniard.

"They have all returned from the summer at different times because of the World Cup and that has made things very difficult."

"Maybe after the next couple of weeks and then when the international break is over you will see a side that can progress more together."

La Volpe takes over Boca Juniors

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Inquire
4 Nylon trade-marked by DuPont
9 Wire measure
12 Manmie's hubby
13 Beneath
14 Frozen
15 Lake Wobegon locale
17 Neither mate
18 — Dhabli
19 Father, Son and Holy Ghost
21 Melancholy
24 Sweet potatoes
25 Clay, today
26 Ron of baseball
28 Mexican entrees
31 Mid-morning
33 —
35 Speechless
36 Must, colloquially

DOWN
2 Vocalized
22 Hodge-podge
23 Lamb adornment
27 "Verily"
29 Ear-related
30 Calendar abbr.
32 Greek vowels
34 Tidied (up)
37 A Mus-keteer
39 Bernadette or Brock
42 Hogs
44 Predicament
45 Long story
46 Verve
50 Away from SSW
51 Frightened squeal
52 Exist
53 Play-ground game

Solution time: 24 mins.

AFT SLAB TORT
BASE POSE OPUS
BARS RIOT DADA
AROUND FIEDLER
BONE WAX
BEPHOGE YET LOP
AMOK WAS WILLY
YUP MOP CLADY
EAR FRI
CENTERFIELDER
LUAU TOTA ASS
ARID EXIT AAS
MOLLE DYNE NITH

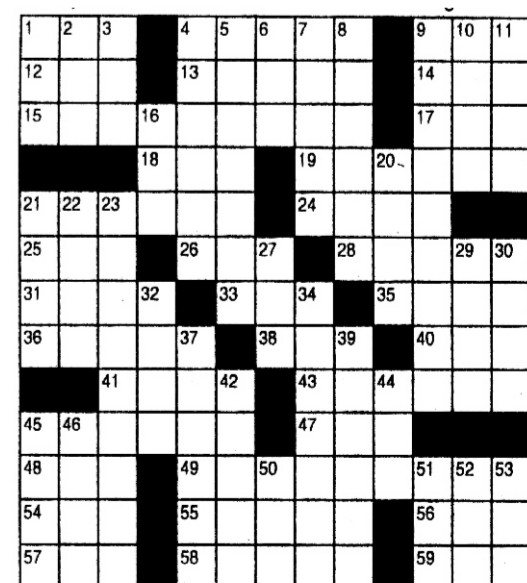


PHOTO: AFP
New Real Madrid signing, midfield hardman Mahamadou Diarra gives the thumbs-up sign during his routine medical in a clinic in Madrid.

CRYPTOQUIP
S Z H V O S E S I S N M H A F V E
N O O J Q A G E V G V Y A E L S M C
S C J A G G W V J Y S C L E G N W

S E ' G F V G G - F A Z A F A M I A Q .
Saturday's Cryptquip: SUPPOSE THE INVISIBLE MAN HAD SOME CHILDREN. WHAT WOULD HE HAVE BECOME, A TRANSPARENT?
Today's Cryptquip Clue: G equals S

The Cryptquip 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.



PHOTO: AFP
Barcelona forward Ronaldinho (R) is congratulated by teammates Thiago Motta (L) and Rafael Marquez (R) following his goal against Bayern in the Joan Gamper Trophy at the Camp Nou on Tuesday.