

Pizarro eyes Inter future

INTERNET, undated
Bayern Munich striker Claudio Pizarro has admitted he would be keen on moving to Italy with Internazionale.

The Paraguayan has stated that life has been good with the Bavarian side, where he landed in June 2001, but confesses that he would like a new adventure in the future.

"I am happy here in Munich as I have won many titles, but I am still missing the Champions League," said the forward to newspaper Sport Bild.

"If I do not find an agreement to extend my contract with Bayern then I would like to move to a club who can do well in the Europe's most important tournament," added Pizarro.

"Arsenal, Chelsea and Barcelona are strong teams, as well as Internazionale, they can all compete for the Champions League and one of them could be my next club."

Pizarro played with Werder Bremen before joining Bayern and became a market target after the 2000-2001 season, when the media suggested that Real Madrid, Barcelona, Inter and Borussia Dortmund were all interested in his services.

Spain seemed to be his next destination, but Bayern then made the decisive offer just weeks after winning the Champions League.

Pizarro has since then won three Bundesliga titles, plus three German Cups, and will face Inter on September 27 in Group B of the European Cup competition.

The German side made an impressive debut by beating Spartak Moscow 4-0 last week, with Pizarro netting the opening goal of the match.

Deisler, Gorlitz back for Bayern

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich's German international duo Sebastian Deisler and Andreas Gorlitz both made a successful return to training this week after lengthy spells on the sidelines, the club said Thursday.

"I no longer have any problems but it is too early to give a date when I will play in the Bundesliga again," Deisler said on the club's homepage.

The 26-year-old Deisler missed this summer's World Cup after sustaining a serious knee injury in March.

Playmaker Deisler needed another operation on his right knee -- a persistent problem area that caused him to miss the 2002 World Cup -- but is now back in the fold.

"He has made a good impression and I hope he is back soon to help the team," said club director general Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

"But Deisler was injured for six months and we need to be patient with him."

Deisler has been known to put too much pressure on himself and his fragile temperament has seen him booked into Munich's Max-Planck-Institute for Psychiatry in Munich twice in the past three years.

Defender Gorlitz, capped twice by Germany, has not played since November 2004 with the 24-year-old constantly picking up new injuries.

"I just want to play football again without any pain. I need to take it one step at a time," Gorlitz said.

Keeper clashes with fans

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Santos goalkeeper Fabio Costa clashed with a group of his team's fans as he left the stadium after making a blunder in the 1-1 draw with Fluminense, Brazilian media said.

An unhappy night for the burly goalkeeper began when his mistake allowed Fluminense to snatch a late equaliser in the Brazilian championship match.

Costa misjudged a Fluminense free-kick and Santos defender Luiz Alberto headed the ball into his own net.

As he left the field, Costa was involved in an angry exchange with Santos fans behind his goal during which he was seen to make insulting gestures.

Brazilian media said that on leaving the stadium later, the goalkeeper lashed out at one fan who insulted him and was attacked by a group of around 15 supporters who kicked and hit him.

Security men pulled the fans off him and Costa was left with a bruised cheek and cut finger.



Aston Villa marksman Juan Pablo Angel (L) celebrates his strike against Scunthorpe United during their Carling Cup clash in Scunthorpe on Wednesday.

Premiership giants flop in League Cup

AFP, London

Premiership clubs Manchester City, Fulham and Middlesbrough were all sent crashing out of the English League Cup by lower league opposition in a dramatic second round on Wednesday.

City boss Stuart Pearce will come under increasing pressure after his side were beaten 2-1 by League One Chesterfield, while Fulham lost 2-1 at home to League Two Wycombe and Middlesbrough were defeated 1-0 by League Two Notts County.

Pearce's team have endured a miserable start to the season, winning just once in their first five matches, after also ending last term with a run of nine defeats in ten matches.

City had been dumped out of the League Cup at the same stage by Doncaster last season and Chesterfield repeated the feat at Saltergate.

Greece striker Georgios Samaras gave City the lead in the 40th minute with a simple finish after Bernardo Corradi's shot had hit a post.

But Roy McFarland's side staged a stunning second half fightback, with Caleb Folan leveling after 51 minutes before Derek Niven grabbed a superb long-range winner in the 67th minute.

Wycombe manager Paul Lambert has experienced the ultimate high in club football after the Scot helped Germany's

Borussia Dortmund win the Champions League in 1997.

He has less glamorous ambitions now but League Two leaders Wycombe showed plenty of his cup pedigree with a shock win at Fulham.

Wycombe striker Jermaine Easter opened the scoring with a close-range finish in the eighth minute.

Tommy Mooney put Lambert's side in complete control three minutes before the break when he converted a penalty awarded for Carlos Bocanegra's foul on Easter.

Heidar Helguson brought Chris Coleman's team back into the match with a 47th minute goal, but the west London side couldn't find an equaliser and slumped to another disappointing cup exit after last season's FA Cup defeat against Leyton Orient.

Middlesbrough boss Gareth Southgate included Australia striker Mark Viduka, Germany defender Robert Huth and Spanish midfielder Gaizka Mendietta in his side, but Notts County provided tougher opposition than expected.

County striker Tcham N'Toya stunned last season's UEFA Cup finalists in the 26th minute when he drilled a low drive past Ross Turnbull for the winner.

To add insult to injury for Middlesbrough, County boss Steve Thompson didn't even pick a full-strength team.

Aston Villa manager Martin O'Neill's last match in the League Cup six years ago ended in the glory of winning the competition and he was back in the old routine

as his team won 2-1 at Scunthorpe.

O'Neill was in charge of Leicester when they defeated Tranmere in the 2000 final to lift the trophy for the second time in his reign after also beating Middlesbrough in 1997.

Villa went ahead in the 42nd minute when Luke Moore was brought down in the penalty area by Richard Hinds.

Juan Pablo Angel's spot-kick was saved by Joe Murphy but the rebound fell perfectly for the Colombian striker to tap-in the opening goal.

Angel grabbed a second, his 12th goal in 15 League Cup appearances, with a powerful close range header before Scunthorpe's Billy Sharp reduced the deficit.

League One club Doncaster enjoyed a memorable run in the competition last season as they knocked out Premiership sides Aston Villa and Manchester City to reach the quarter-finals.

And they were at it again at Belle Vue as they beat Championship outfit Derby 8-7 on penalties following a 3-3 draw after extra time.

A double strike from Jonathan Forte and one from Brian Stock put Doncaster 3-0 ahead, but Derby staged a remarkable fightback as Steve Howard, Darren Moore and Arturo Lupoli all scored in the last 16 minutes to take the match into extra-time.

On-loan Arsenal striker Lupoli was sent off in extra-time but Sean O'Driscoll's side held their nerve in the shoot-out to secure a place in Saturday's third round draw.

Morientes blasts the English game

REUTERS, Madrid

Spanish striker Fernando Morientes says he is happy to have escaped the rough and tumble of the English Premier League after returning to Spain and joining Valencia.

The 30-year-old former Liverpool striker has scored two goals in two league games for his new club and bagged a hat-trick in the Champions League against Olympiakos Piraeus a week ago.

"I wanted to return to what I knew and play the kind of football in which I felt more comfortable," Morientes told sports daily Sport on Thursday.

The former Real Madrid striker failed to make his mark with Liverpool and only managed 12 goals in 61 appearances.

After less than a year and a half with the Merseysiders he joined Valencia in July for a reported fee of six million euros.

"I didn't like the physical nature of the game in England or the referees who let more things go, and who blow for fewer fouls than they do here," Morientes added.

"A striker isn't protected from rival defences there, and they gave me a really hard time."

Morientes is expected to lead the line for Valencia on Sunday when they visit champions Barcelona in the Primera Liga. Both sides have 100 percent records.

Spalletti applauds Nerazzurri

INTERNET, undated

Roma boss Luciano Spalletti has held up his hands to admit that Inter deserved their 1-0 victory at the Olimpico.

"It's very easy to explain what happened in this defeat," said the tactician. "Inter did things better than we did. At times we were unlucky, at others foolish, but overall they played better."

The Giallorossi were top of the table going into this Scudetto clash but, as in last season's Coppa Italia Final and the Italian Super Cup in August, it was Roberto Mancini's men who ran out the winners.

"It's not that they are a stronger side, they just have different qualities to us. We lost Rodrigo Taddei and Amantino Mancini, who are crucial parts of our teamwork, so that was a big blow. Inter are better on set-pieces and the one-on-one, they're more of an individual side."

Roma drop down to fourth, but Spalletti insists this isn't the end of their Scudetto challenge.

"We want to battle it out with everyone. We weren't terrible tonight and I am convinced my team will get back on track straight after this defeat."

Lucio ban reduced

AFP, Frankfurt

Bayern Munich's Brazilian international defender Lucio had his three-match ban reduced to just one game by The German Football Federation (DFB) disciplinary panel on Wednesday.

Lucio was initially handed a three-match suspension for an apparent elbow on Thomas Meggle in Bayern's 2-1 first round cup win over FC St Pauli.

Lucio maintained the incident, for which he received a red card, was an accident and the Bayern appeal has not fallen on deaf ears with the DFB panel agreeing to reduce the suspension by two matches.

However the World Cup winner with Brazil in 2002 still has to pay a 10,000-euro (12,700 dollar) fine for his conduct.

Becks set for new deal

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon has said the club will reach agreement with David Beckham on a new deal within the next three weeks.

"Beckham's new contract will be sorted out in the next 15 to 20 days, because the club and coach Fabio Capello are very pleased with him," Calderon was quoted as saying in an interview published on Real Madrid's site on the internet on Wednesday.

Calderon has previously said he hopes the 31-year-old midfielder will sign a two-year extension to his current deal which expires at the end of the season.

Spanish media have speculated over Beckham's future in the last few days after Capello put him on the bench for the Primera Liga match at home to Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Former Arsenal forward Jose Antonio Reyes started in his place on the right of midfield and scored his first goal for the club with a free kick.

Reyes made way for Beckham in the 73rd minute, who scored a superb individual goal, running from his own half to make it 2-0 just before the end of the game.

Taylor calls to tighten up transfer rules

Football

AFP, London

Gordon Taylor has called on English football bosses to implement stricter transfer rules to ensure there is no repeat of the bribes allegations that have rocked the sport.

Taylor, the long serving chief executive of the English Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), believes the BBC television probe into corruption among the country's top clubs could be positive if it leads to more transparent transfers.

The Panorama programme, broadcast on Tuesday, featured allegations from two agents that they had paid bribes to Bolton manager Sam Allardyce to smooth through transfers involving their clients.

Chelsea and Liverpool were also alleged by an agent to have

offered to pay a teenage Middlesbrough player to join them.

But Taylor hopes that the Premier League and Football League will use the revelations to enforce stronger transfer guidelines.

"The broad issue for the future is to have much greater clarity and transparency, as the Football League and the Premier League have been trying to arrange," he said.

"Any paperwork connected with the transfer of a player must be properly submitted to the FA and any payments to agents must come purely from the player, rather than the clubs."

"With the Premier League inquiry and the publicity surrounding this programme, there is every chance things will have to be even more transparent in the future."

"That's no bad thing for the image of the game."

Taylor is adamant that only

players should pay agents when they move between clubs because that would reduce the potential for people to abuse the system by offering 'bungs'.

He said: "If payments to agents are to come purely from the player it should help eliminate the alleged abuses of the past and the potential for exploitation."

"Obviously this does not meet with the agreement of the majority of agents."

"But it has to be better for the game in general and not least the player if he knows exactly what amounts are changing hands in connection with his transfer."

"The game must also deal with the serious social problem of agents hawking young players around nationally and internationally at increasingly younger ages."

"It needs to be strictly controlled by the authorities."

Allardyce hurt by son's role

AFP, London



Bolton manager Sam Allardyce has revealed he feels hurt by his son Craig after he was exposed in the BBC investigation into corruption in English football.

Allardyce was accused by two agents of taking bribes to allow transfers involving their clients to go through smoothly, while Craig, a former agent himself, was secretly filmed saying he could give access to his father in return for cash.

The Bolton boss is considering taking legal action against the BBC because he believes the Panorama programme has no proof to back up their allegations.

But he was still devastated to watch his son taking advantage of his father's position to boost his own reputation.

Allardyce said: "As a father of course it is painful to watch your son talk tall and exaggerate his influence for financial gain."

"But I am very angry at the lies told about me. The individuals who appeared in the programme making accusations against me have already confirmed in writing to my lawyers that they lied to the BBC."

"They lied in the hope of being able to make millions offered by the BBC undercover reporter to buy their sports agency businesses."

"As a result of their greed my good name has been tarnished by deceit and innuendo."

"I am determined to clear my name and have asked my lawyers to determine my next steps."

"Until I have had the opportunity of taking that advice it is difficult for me to say any more at this stage."

The English Football Association (FA) will investigate the allegations about illegal payments made by the BBC against the Allardyces, Newcastle assistant manager Kevin Bond and agents Charles Collymore and Peter Harrison.

The FA will refer any evidence about French-licensed agent Teni Yerima, who claimed to have paid Allardyce to do deals, to the sports

world governing body FIFA and the French Football Federation.

A joint probe by the FA and Premier League will also be launched into claims by Harrison that Chelsea's director of youth football Frank Arnesen, Liverpool and Newcastle had all offered a Middlesbrough youth player money to move to their clubs.

Arnesen and a Liverpool official were filmed by Panorama trying to tempt Nathan Porritt to leave Middlesbrough, and Newcastle were also alleged to have done so.

The joint investigation will also investigate Bolton's signings of Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata, Israel's Tal Ben Haim and Oman's Ali Al-Habsi as all three deals were mentioned in the programme.

Bolton chairman Phil Gartside, an FA board member, will also be spoken to after he was captured on the film discussing a deal to sell Nigeria's Jay-Jay Okocha even though he later complained in the media about agents trying to unsettle the player.

Ronaldo happy at United

Football

INTERNET, undated

Cristiano Ronaldo insists that he is happy to remain at Manchester United and is in no rush to leave Old Trafford despite making comments in the summer that he wanted to move to Spain.

Ronaldo was the subject of a strong negative media campaign in England after he was judged to have influenced the referee in Wayne Rooney sending off during England's World Cup quarterfinal loss to Portugal.

The press back-lash -- as well as the reception he received from neutral fans during his country's semi-final loss to France -- led Ronaldo to announce that he did not want to return to the Premiership.

But he now believes that returning to Manchester United was the best thing for him and that his comments in the summer were ill-advised.

"It is true that before returning to Manchester I said in an interview that anything could happen," the Portuguese star told PortugalGOAL.net.

"But this was a club that gave me a lot of support, and where I have won a lot of things, and the situation needed to be analysed calmly. With the support of the president Jorge (Mendes) and of Alex Ferguson I took the decision to stay very calmly and I really

think it was the best decision.

"When we are hot-headed sometimes we say things we don't mean to, or at least, that are not appropriate. If that happens we don't want to accept that we were wrong or that some people were wrong. What's important is that things turned out well."

Ronaldo went on to say that he believes that United is the perfect club for him.

"I have been here since I was 18-years-old. I have felt and I still feel very happy about that," added Ronaldo.

"I hope that things will continue to carry on in the same way for me, or even better. There's one thing I'm sure of: Manchester United is the ideal club for me."

The 21-year-old also admitted that he wishes to leave a permanent mark at the club.

"What I want to do is leave a permanent mark on Manchester, leave my mark on the club as the first Portuguese who played there, to leave the door open for others, my colleagues, to go there to play one day."



Atalanta forward Christian Vieri (L) watches his team's proceedings in their match against Empoli alongside girlfriend Melissa Satta in Bergamo on Wednesday.

Bellamy in tunnel brawl

THE GUARDIAN



Craig Bellamy was at the centre of an ugly spat with his former teammates and Newcastle United staff as tempers boiled over in the tunnel in the wake of Liverpool's 2-0 Premiership success on Wednesday.

An evening spent enduring abuse from visiting fans spilled into acrimony after the final whistle as Bellamy made his way towards the dressing room. There were suggestions punches had been thrown, although the Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez was adamant the incident was little more than a verbal exchange.

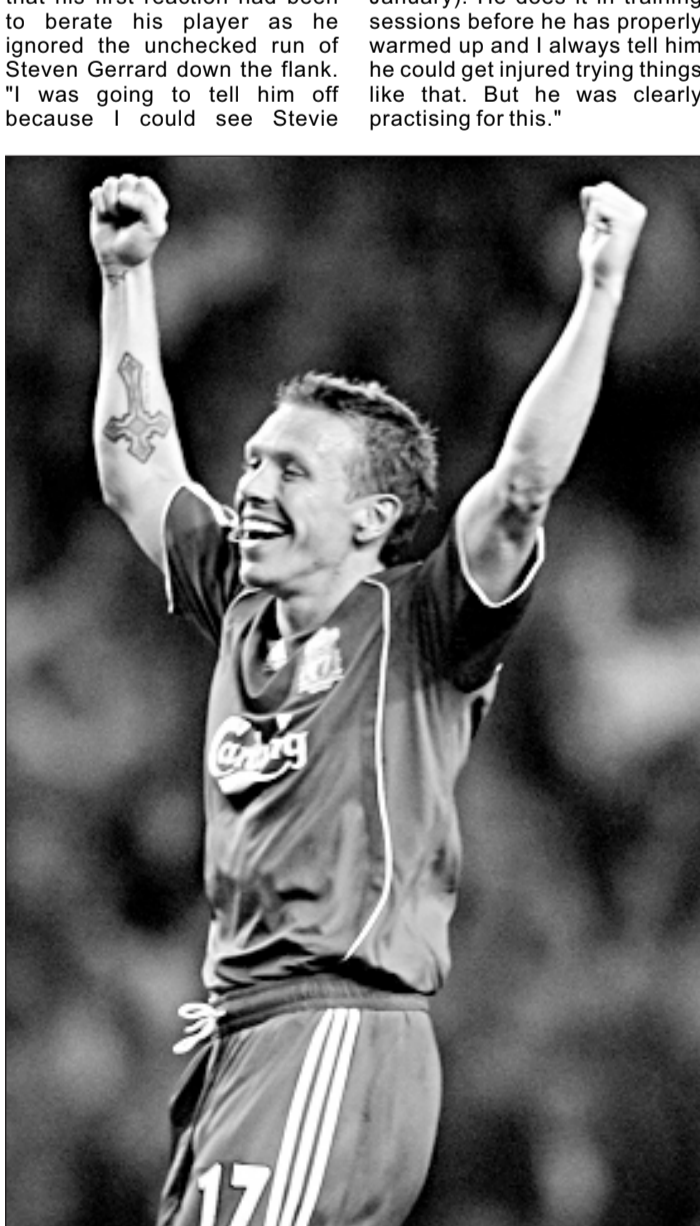
"I could hear something but I couldn't understand what happened," said the Spaniard. "I really couldn't see. It was over in maybe two seconds. I think it was shouting, nothing else."

That view was reiterated by Liverpool officials and stewards, with tempers frayed after Bellamy was taunted by supporters mindful of his very public falling-out with Newcastle and their former striker Alan Shearer -- present in the directors' box last night -- in particular. The Wales striker had a plastic bottle thrown at him in the first half, but he picked it up and pretended to drink.

The tunnel fracas, however minor, marred an evening which had simmered with venom. The Football Association may be pressed into viewing video footage of a first-half incident involving Celestine Babayaro, who appeared deliberately to catch Dirk Kuyt in the face, with the undercurrent of spite only overshadowed by a stunning goal from Xabi Alonso, scored from inside his own half 11 minutes from time.

It was the second time in less than a year that the Spaniard has registered from such a distance but Benitez admitted that his first reaction had been to berate his player as he ignored the unchecked run of Steven Gerrard down the flank. "I was going to tell him off because I could see Stevie

running forward," the manager said. "But it was an amazing goal. It was further away than the goal he scored at Luton (in January). He does it in training sessions before he has properly warmed up and I always tell him he could get injured trying things like that. But he was clearly practising for this."



CRAIG BELLAMY

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 Shopping 2 Charged 21 Actress 1 Plate area bit Downey 5 Command 36 Silt- 3 Hot tub 22 Squared 10 Fido 37 Bash 4 Aide 23 -- good example 8 Poker 38 Yule berry 24 Adversary 12 "Unh- quaff areas 25 Mixtures 13 Paddle, 41 Sharp 6 Water 27 Approach perhaps 42 Fork 7 People of 28 Pub 14 Poi base option Athens missile 15 Compar- 43 Velled 8 Using 29 Bohemian 48 Anger two 31 Hydrox rival 17 There- 49 Fellows outlets 34 Sex 18 -- de 50 Draftable 9 Small 35 Hungar- 51 Celebrity pie 37 Chum 19 Reagan 52 Pilpen 10 Incite 38 Blunders prede- 53 Kennedy 11 Entry 39 Capri- cessor 54 Kennedy 16 Feed- corn 21 VCR DOWN morsel 39 Capri- 1 "CSI" 20 Curved corn 24 Hibernia proof lines 40 Head over heels 26 Huge constrictor 41 Wild and crazy 30 Encountered 44 Bottom line 31 Portents 45 Menagerie 32 Corn spike 46 Type units 33 Popular word game 47 Next after cee

Cryptogram grid with numbers 1-53 and letters H, Y, O, W, Z, P, T, V, K, E, B, Z, I, O, G, W, B, Z, O, M, X, H, Y, O, Y, P, N, I, V, A, A, V, Q, X, Z, H, T, P, Q, H, V, K, E, Y, V, N, P, E, O, .

HYO HYONWPK VN NXWOGM PH WZPTVKE BZIOG WOBWZO. MXH YO YPN IVAAVQXZHT P Q H V K E Y V N P E O . Yesterday's Cryptogram: IF TWO HUNGER STRIKERS ARE RUNNING A FOOTRACE, I RECKON THE FASTER FASTER WILL WIN. Today's Cryptogram Clue: W equals P The Cryptogram 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.