

Lucarelli looks for ton

INTERNET, undated

Cristiano Lucarelli is aiming for his 100th Serie A goal and a long UEFA Cup adventure for his beloved Livorno.

"A few years ago I would've been taken away by the men in white coats if I'd said Livorno were going to play in Europe," smiled the striker who has found success with his hometown club.

"Now we're here and want to keep going. My other objectives for this season are to score my 100th Serie A goal and battle for the Capocannoniere crown."

Lucarelli has currently scored 86 top-flight goals, including the 24 in 2004-05 that allowed him to be the League's top hitman.

The Amaranto were entered into the UEFA Cup due to the Calciopoli scandal's changes to the Serie A table.

They stand a good chance of reaching the group phase, having beaten FC Superfund Pasching 2-0 in the first leg.

Before the decider in that tie, Livorno must face giants Milan at the Stadio Picchi this afternoon, a clash Lucarelli is particularly looking forward to.

"This is another important stepping stone for us. The Rossoneri are strong, but we fear nobody."



PHOTO: AFP

Porto's Brazilian star Jorginho (L) tackles Beira Mar's Emerson during their Portuguese Liga match at Dragao Stadium in Porto on Friday.

Saviola in Barca squad

REUTERS, Madrid

Argentina striker Javier Saviola has made the Barcelona squad for the first time this season for the Primera Liga clash with Valencia in the Nou Camp on Sunday.

"He is training well and has always been ready to step in. He deserves it," Barca coach Frank Rijkaard told a news conference on Saturday.

"On this occasion Santi Ezquerro is injured and we always have to keep in mind the Champions League next week."

The European and Spanish champions made it clear that Saviola was surplus to requirements after he returned from a loan spell at Sevilla last season.

The 24-year-old international has one year left on his contract but turned down offers from other clubs to stay and fight for his place.

Saviola joined Barca from River Plate for 28 million dollars on a six-year contract in 2001, but dropped down the pecking order under Rijkaard.

He spent the 2004-5 season on loan at Monaco and last year with the UEFA Cup winners.

He will have to compete with Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o and Iceland's Eidur Gudjohnsen for a place in the starting lineup.

Rijkaard has left out Brazilians Thiago Motta and Silvinho and French defender Lilian Thuram.

Barca travel to face Werder Bremen in Champions League Group A on Wednesday.

Dhorasoo feels 'humiliated'

INTERNET, undated

Vikash Dhorasoo, the Paris Saint Germain midfielder, claims he feels 'humiliated' by his exclusion from the Ligue 1 side's squad for Saturday night's match against Nancy.

The French international has been left out of the Guy Lacombe's squad for the fourth consecutive time, leaving the player - who featured at this summer's World Cup - rather frustrated, but determined to win his place back.

"I'm completely demoralised," the former AC Milan player told French daily L'Equipe. "I don't understand why they pay me so much just to play for the reserves."

"It's out of the question that I give up," he continued. "I'm going to continue to prepare myself to play."

"I love PSG, who rejected an approach for me from Bolton this summer, and want to stay and fight for them on the pitch."

"I'm fit. I don't see why, on the day of the Marseille match, (assistant coach) Eric Blahic came to see me and told me that the coaching staff were happy with me and my efforts, only to send me to play in the reserves three days later."

"I feel humiliated."

Dhorasoo returned from Germany at the start of the season having picked up a runners-up medal for France in the World Cup, although his contributions were limited due to tough competition in the centre of les Bleus' midfield.

Nevertheless, the 32-year-old was sure he was in good condition to play a part for PSG this year.

"I don't understand what's happened to me, that's the problem," Dhorasoo said.

"I came back full of good intentions and highly motivated and I showed that. That they don't think I'm good I understand, but it seems that I've been left out for other reasons."

"But I'm a PSG player until the end of my contract. I'm not a quitter, I'm a fighter."

Crespo's blast from the past

INTERNET, undated

Hernan Crespo realises his goal against Roma was unusual for him and is relishing the new lease of life he's had at Inter.

"When was the last time I dribbled past a player to score a goal? That was in the last century," joked the striker.

"Actually, it was for Parma against Juventus in 2000. They were playing in 10 men, we were in nine, and there were a few seconds left in stoppages. I ran half the pitch, went past two opponents and hit the back of the net. It was probably my best goal."

Although the winner at the Olimpico on Wednesday night was scored with the aid of a deflection off goalkeeper Alexander Doni's leg, it proved crucial in ending Inter's crisis.

"We earned an important victory, as we needed a clear signal sent out to the world, but above all to ourselves. Now we can go forward with a relaxed state of mind, the same that I have now that I'm back at Inter."

Former Lazio, Chelsea and Milan hitman Crespo was expected to join the Rossoneri this summer, but opted to return to the club he'd already played for in 2002-03.

"I honestly didn't think that my career would have another chance like this. Now that it has happened, I am facing this challenge with remarkable joy and determination. I am convinced I'll achieve great things here, as this is a very strong side."

Assis doubtful for United

AFP, Lisbon

Benfica midfielder Nuno Assis is in doubt for Tuesday's Champions League match with Manchester United, opened the scoring after 24 minutes through a header by Greek midfielder Kostas Katsouranis from a left-wing cross by Paulo Jorge.

Benfica were reduced to 10 men when Brazilian defender Leo was sent off soon after halftime for arguing with a linesman. Pacos also played the last 15 minutes without Luiz Carlos who was sent off for two yellow cards.

After Benfica squandered two good chances to double the advantage in the last 10 minutes, with Brazilian Luisao and Katsouranis hitting the post, the home team equalised in stoppage time when substitute Joao Paulo headed in a cross from the right.

He was substituted in the 29th minute by striker Emanuel Evaristo "Manu".

Assis joined Lisbon-based Benfica in the middle of the 2004/05 season from Portuguese side Vitoria Guimaraes.

Becks on the bench

INTERNET, undated

Former England captain David Beckham is not guaranteed a starting place for Real Madrid against Real Betis on Sunday, according to the Spanish club's coach Fabio Capello.

Beckham has seen his international future put in doubt since giving up the England captaincy following the World Cup.

The former Manchester United midfielder has been left out of the plans of new England coach Steve McClaren.

Capello has admitted Beckham cannot be guaranteed a place in the star-studded Real starting line-up.

Despite scoring Real's second goal in the 2-0 win over Real Sociedad after starting the last game on the bench, Beckham will have to wait to see Capello's starting line-up for the Betis game on Sunday.

"I haven't decided (about Beckham) yet, but 12 men cannot play," Capello said.

"I rotate my players, so some have to be left out every match. He's a member of the squad, just like the rest."

Babayaro banned

AFP, London

Newcastle full-back Celestine Babayaro has been banned for three games by the Football Association (FA) on Friday after admitting a charge of violent conduct.

The 28-year-old was punished after clashing with Dirk Kuyt during his club's 2-0 defeat at Liverpool on Wednesday night.

Match referee Mark Halsey and his team of officials did not see the incident, but Babayaro was charged after disciplinary chiefs viewed video footage.

The Nigeria international's admission means his penalty will begin this weekend, although he will be available for the UEFA Cup clash with Levadia Tallinn on Thursday night.

An FA spokesman said: "Celestine Babayaro has admitted the charge and will be suspended for three games with immediate effect."

The former Chelsea defender was banned in similar circumstances last season after an altercation with Everton's Tim Cahill.

No miracles with Rooney

Football

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester United cannot be expected to work miracles with Wayne Rooney after his long spell on the sidelines, assistant manager Carlos Queiroz said on Friday.

The 20-year-old England striker has been well short of his best form so far this season following his return from a broken metatarsal he sustained at the end of April.

His comeback was held up by a three-match ban carried over from a pre-season red card and, after being substituted in his last two games, Rooney has completed just one full 90 minutes for United this season.

"It is important to remind people that in six months he has played five or six games, and not complete ones," Queiroz told reporters.

"So it is natural to expect this progression. In terms of preparation we cannot produce miracles."

"He needs to play to get back to get his maximum form and that

is what will happen in the next few weeks, for sure."

Rooney, who played only a limited role for England at the World Cup, has looked frustrated by his lack of sharpness.

Queiroz believes that is understandable for a player who scored 19 times last season and was expected to forge a prolific partnership with French strike partner Louis Saha after the departure of Dutchman Ruud Van Nistelrooy.

"Wayne is a player with a lot of ambition and a great desire," the Portuguese coach said.

"He has a special winning mentality that every time he goes out, there is only one thing in his mind -- that is to perform and win the game."

"If that doesn't happen he feels it like any other player, or sometimes he feels it even more."

Rooney will get another chance to add to the two goals he scored on the opening day of the season when United go to Reading on Saturday.

United lost their unbeaten record in last Sunday's defeat by Arsenal, while Reading have

won both their home games to date and are sixth in their first season in the English top-flight.

Queiroz said: "We need to rebound from that result and get ready to play according to our standards against Reading."

"They have started the season in a fantastic way. I am not surprised if you check what they did last season when they got promotion."

"We expect a difficult game but I am sure it will be the first big test for Reading at home and if we get back to our normality I'm sure we will come back home with three points."

Edwin van der Sar is set to return in goal for United after missing the Arsenal game through illness.

Argentina international Gabriel Heinze is also included in the United squad for the first time this season following his recovery from a knee injury.

However, Welsh forward Ryan Giggs (hamstring) and French defender Mikael Silvestre (ankle) are both ruled out.

Ameobi to soldier on

AFP, Newcastle



With a painful midweek defeat at Liverpool still fresh in the memory, an inconsistent Newcastle United team take on the blue half of Merseyside on Sunday looking to cement a top 10 position in the Premiership.

Everton visit St James's Park undefeated in league action this season and buoyed by striker Andy Johnson's instant impact following his 8.5 million pounds (£16 million dollars) close-season transfer from Crystal Palace.

And there is no doubt the Magpies could benefit from a predator of Johnson's pedigree following the retirement of record goalscorer Alan Shearer and a career threatening injury to Michael Owen.

Nigerian-born forward Shola Ameobi is postponing a hip operation until January to aid Newcastle until the transfer window reopens in the New Year but the former England Under 21 international is

playing in constant pain.

In addition, United's 10 million pounds (£19 million dollars) summer signing from Inter Milan, striker Obafemi Martins, is still struggling to shake off the after effects of a virus picked up during pre-season in Italy.

And Magpies' manager Glenn Roeder admits the pair need time on the training pitch to forge an effective partnership -- time the duo have been denied as a result of Newcastle's hectic schedule and their lack of fitness.

"As a coach I would like to work with Shola and Obi aside from the normal training sessions to help them gain an understanding," said the former West Ham United boss.

"But with two games a week it is a case of playing, resting, playing and resting. There has not been an opportunity to sit down with the two of them properly."

"Shola needs an operation in January but he will be out for three months when he has the surgery. That's why we have our scouts scouring Europe for a powerful striker ready for when the transfer

window reopens."

Roeder will hand late fitness tests to central defenders Titus Bramble and Steven Taylor after both players returned to full training this week.

Peruvian playmaker Nolberto Solano is still sidelined with a hamstring injury but Kieron Dyer hopes to return to first team action in October following a five-month lay-off.

With his team sitting fourth, two points off leaders Portsmouth, Everton manager David Moyes will keep faith with central defender Joleon Lescott after the club's summer signing from Wolverhampton impressed in place of the injured Alan Stubbs.

The former England Under 21 international said: "I'm doing well but I know that the slightest mistake and someone will take over from me."

"Things are going well for me and for the team as a whole. But I have to keep my feet on the ground."



PHOTO: INTERNET

In spite of his good form this season, David Beckham does not have a certain place in the Real Madrid's starting eleven.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36 Tavern	DOWN	20 Charitable donations
1 Big truck	37 Zits	1 Parlor piece	22 Fuel cartel
5 Story of a lifetime	39 America's Uncle	3 Pathfinder destination	23 Bit of mischief
8 Rebuff a masher	41 Entanglement	5 Mono-	25 Apply Brylcreem
12 Arabian Sea	43 Arrangements	4 Bug	26 Chickening link
13 Disencomber	46 Old man	5 Mono-	27 Before all else
14 Ankle-length one	50 Jog	6 Midafternoon, on a sundial	29 Admitting clients
15 Ambulance offering	51 "No more drinks after this one"	7 Racetrack stats	31 Floral garland
17 Capri, e.g.	54 Data, for short	8 Say "cheese"	32 Corral
18 Bewildered	55 Erstwhile acorn	9 Done at the very end	34 Light provider
19 Like some crackers	56 Dangling locale	10 Wheel-base terminus	38 Thick and compact
21 Harvester's collection	57 Umps	11 Multi-colored votes	40 Mercury and Saturn
24 Lower limb	58 Method	16 Pitch	42 Make up your mind
25 Insane	59 Favorable		43 Commotion
28 Seniors' party			44 Sea eagle
30 Mattered, for one			45 Lento
33 "The Greatest"			47 Sheet of glass
34 Bounds			48 Entreaty
35 Catch sight of			49 Pub orders
			52 Motorists' org.
			53 Firmament

Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Z D Y P K K M P A Z D M J W P
O T P O E M P T S H M O W Z J .
Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE THESPIAN IS SUPERB AT PLAYING OLDER PEOPLE, BUT HE HAS DIFFICULTY ACTING HIS AGE.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: K 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.

Perfect Porto

Football

REUTERS, Lisbon

Champions Porto maintained their perfect start and moved five points clear in the Portuguese Premier League with a 3-0 win over promoted Beira Mar on Friday.

A stoppage-time goal gave Pacos Ferreira a 1-1 home draw with Benfica in a match played in heavy rain.

Porto, who visit Arsenal in the Champions League on Tuesday, have 12 points, with Pacos Ferreira on seven and Braga, Naval and Sporting all on six with a game in hand.

Second-half goals by Helder Postiga, Lisandro Lopez and Tarik Sektioui took the northerners to a comfortable victory against a home side reduced to 10 men after 75 minutes.

Porto's uncapped goalkeeper Helton, included in Brazil's squad for next month's friendlies with Kuwait and Ecuador, saved a powerful shot by midfielder Ratinho after 18 minutes.

A spectacular volley inside the area by Portugal striker Postiga gave Porto the breakthrough after 54 minutes following a cross by winger Ricardo Quaresma.

Argentine striker Lopez got the second in the 73rd minute after taking advantage of a mix-up in the home defence.

Beira Mar's Paraguayan defender Alcaraz was shown a red card for a foul and Porto took advantage when Moroccan winger Tarik Sektioui scored with a glancing

header in stoppage time.

Benfica, warming up for Tuesday's Champions League match with Manchester United, opened the scoring after 24 minutes through a header by Greek midfielder Kostas Katsouranis from a left-wing cross by Paulo Jorge.

Benfica were reduced to 10 men when Brazilian defender Leo was sent off soon after halftime for arguing with a linesman. Pacos also played the last 15 minutes without Luiz Carlos who was sent off for two yellow cards.

After Benfica squandered two good chances to double the advantage in the last 10 minutes, with Brazilian Luisao and Katsouranis hitting the post, the home team equalised in stoppage time when substitute Joao Paulo headed in a cross from the right.

Deschamps calls for repeat

Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus coach Didier Deschamps has called on his team to continue their midweek revival by brushing aside Modena this weekend.

"After a listless start to their Serie B campaign, which they began with a 17-point deficit, Juve started to click into gear with a 3-0 win over Crotone on Tuesday."

That followed a 1-1 draw with Rimini in their opening match and a struggling 2-1 win over Vicenza, all of which has reduced their deficit to just 10 points after three games.

"Football is always seeking

confirmation," Deschamps told a press conference in Turin on Friday. "We did really well against Crotone and now we have to do just as well against Modena."

"And that does not just go for Modena, no matter which teams we play against every one will be a potential banana skin."

"We have to remain concentrated at all times."

Meanwhile, Italy's number one stopper Gianluigi Buffon has said he is enjoying the change of surroundings in Serie B.

"It's something new but this year, I am playing with more pleasure than in Serie A."

"After many seasons in Serie A you already know it all, you even get

used to the chants of opposition supporters, in all stadiums."