

## Another teenager in England squad

Football

AFP, London

Manchester City's teenage defender Micah Richards has been called up to the England squad for next week's friendly against Holland, barely 12 months after making his Premiership debut.

Uncapped Spurs defender Michael Dawson and young Manchester United goalkeeper Ben Foster, currently on loan at Watford, are also in Steve McClaren's 28-man squad for the trip to Amsterdam.

Despite the announcement of an unusually large squad, there was still no place in the party for former captain David Beckham.

Kieran Richardson, who has not been playing regularly for Manchester United, is the only player to be dropped after England took only one point from their Euro 2008 qualifiers at home to Macedonia and away to Croatia last month.

Chelsea midfielder Joe Cole, Spurs winger Aaron Lennon and Everton striker Andy Johnson return to the international fold following injuries.

Richards has been playing at right-back for City this season and, although he prefers to operate in

central defence, it is as cover for Gary Neville that he has been brought into the squad.

McClaren was at Eastlands to see Richards turn in an outstanding performance in City's Premiership win over Middlesbrough last month and was convinced enough to propel the Birmingham-born player above the likes of Theo Walcott and

### SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Paul Robinson (Tottenham), Chris Kirkland (Wigan), Ben Foster (Man Utd)  
**Defenders:** Gary Neville (Man Utd), Phil Neville (Everton), Micah Richards (Man City), Rio Ferdinand (Man Utd), John Terry (Chelsea), Ledley King (Tottenham), Jamie Carragher (Liverpool), Wes Brown (Man Utd), Michael Dawson (Tottenham), Ashley Cole (Chelsea), Wayne Bridge (Chelsea)  
**Midfielders:** Aaron Lennon (Tottenham), Shaun Wright-Phillips (Chelsea), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), Michael Carrick (Man Utd), Scott Parker (Newcastle), Jermaine Jenas (Tottenham), Joe Cole (Chelsea), Stewart Downing (Middlesbrough)  
**Forwards:** Wayne Rooney (Man Utd), Peter Crouch (Liverpool), Jermain Defoe (Tottenham), Darren Bent (Charlton), Andrew Johnson (Everton).

Leighton Baines and straight into the senior squad.

The England boss said: "I have watched him play a number of times and he is a strong, quick and athletic player who has really impressed at Manchester City this season."

"The match provides us with a great opportunity to have a look at him over the next few days, and he fully deserves his chance."

Lennon's place on the right flank was badly missed in England's last two matches and he could be in line to start in Amsterdam, where England have not won since 1969.

That would force a substantial reshuffle with Steven Gerrard moving back to a more central role in the midfield.

Johnson, who has been in good form in Everton, will also expect to see some action although McClaren has given no indication that he will not persevere with Peter Crouch and Wayne Rooney as his first-choice forward combination.

"Holland are always tough opponents as they have a great history and tradition and I am sure it will be very competitive," said McClaren.

"Both the staff and the players are really looking forward to playing one of the top teams in an impressive stadium."

## Ronaldo out again

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid said on Friday that Brazilian striker Ronaldo would be out for up to a month after damaging ligaments in his left knee in Thursday's Spanish Cup win over Ecija.

The 2002 World Cup winner had only just notched his first goal for the club in 215 days after missing the start of the season following a shin operation.

He has also come in for criticism from coach Fabio Capello for being too fat. As a result, he has played second fiddle to Dutch international Ruud van Nistelrooy and the back-to-form Raul, who was rested Thursday.

Club medical staff examined Ronaldo and ruled he should not train before packing him off to a clinic for a series of tests.

Real, fourth in the table after last week's home loss to Celta Vigo, face struggling Osasuna on Sunday.

## Dunga's injury worries

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil coach Dunga, already without star strikers Ronaldo and Adriano, was dealt another blow on Friday when Bayern Munich defender Lucio was forced to pull out of Wednesday's friendly against Switzerland in Basel.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said that Lucio has an ankle injury and will be replaced by 21-year-old Belo Horizonte player Gladstone.

Ronaldo is missing because of a knee injury while Adriano is out of favour at Inter Milan after failing to score since March.

### SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Julio Cesar (Inter Milan/ITA), Helton (Porto/POR)  
**Defenders:** Juan (Bayer Leverkusen/GER), Gladstone (Belo Horizonte), Luisao (Benfica/POR), Alex (PSV Eindhoven/NED), Cicinho (Real Madrid/ESP), Maicon (Inter Milan/ITA), Daniel Alves (Sevilla/ESP), Adriano (Sevilla/ESP), Carlinhos (Santos/BRA)  
**Midfielders:** Gilberto Silva (Arsenal/ENG), Edmilson (Barcelona/ESP), Dudu Cearense (CSKA/RUS), Elano (Shakhtar Donetsk/UKR), Diego (Werder Bremen/GER), Ronaldinho (Barcelona/ESP), Kaka (AC Milan/ITA)  
**Attackers:** Daniel Carvalho (CSKA/RUS), Robinho (Real Madrid/ESP), Rafael Sobis (Internacional Porto Alegre/BRA), Ricardo Oliveira (AC Milan/ITA)



Lyon winger Florent Malouda (L) controls the ball on his chest as Valenciennes defender Rudy Mater looks on during their French Ligue 1 clash at the Gerland Stadium in Lyon on Friday.

## Lyon snatch it late

AFP, Paris



Lyon had their centre-backs to thank for salvaging a home win against plucky Valenciennes at the Stade Gerland on Friday night after coming away with a 2-1 win.

But it was not the defensive efforts of Brazilian Cris and Frenchman Sebastien Squillaci that earned this victory -- far from it in fact.

Squillaci was absent without leave in the 76th minute as Steve Savidan turned Cris inside out and fired past France goalkeeper Gregory Coupet to give the visitors an unlikely lead on the break.

Five-in-a-row champions Lyon were on the brink of a shock second defeat in a row, having looked impenetrable in their first 16 matches, which yielded 15 wins

and a draw.

But two goals, owing as much to blind luck and errors as anything else, turned the match on its head and gave Lyon a 12-point lead over the chasing pack, until Saturday at least.

Two set-pieces undid Valenciennes. On 85 minutes, Cris rose at the back post after a Florent Malouda cross was headed up in the air by a defender.

The Brazilian rose as high as he could to get his head on the ball but could do little more than head it straight up in the air. Valenciennes keeper Nicolas Penneteau was caught flat-footed and watched helplessly as the ball looped into the top corner at his relief post.

That unleashed relief on the Lyon bench which quickly turned to unbridled joy.

Penneteau was at fault again as he flapped at a cross from Jeremy Toulalan just a minute later. The ball dropped to Squillaci, who with

his back to goal, flicked it back over the keeper.

There was a defender on the line who looked well placed to clear but he went for the ball with his foot rather than his head and ended up crumpled in the net with the ball.

Lyon had not lost two matches in a row since 2002 and never looked like losing this one until Savidan's opener.

Just minutes before, former Arsenal striker Sylvain Wilroth had volleyed acrobatically over the bar after delightful build-up play from Tiago and Malouda.

However, despite the three points, Lyon coach Gerard Houllier -- and indeed France coach Raymond Domenech -- will be more concerned with his striking resources.

Both Karim Benzema and Sidney Govou limped off, seemingly with hamstring pulls.

Benzema, who had been called up to Domenech's French squad, could now be out of Wednesday's friendly in Paris with Greece.

## Real forgive Cassano

INTERNET, undated

Antonio Cassano has returned to the Real Madrid squad, but only because Ronaldo is out injured for a month.

The Italian international had been frozen out of the side on October 30 after a furious row with Coach Fabio Capello.

The tactician had said he would welcome him back if he apologised, but only two days ago Cassano told Sky Italia television that he would "never say sorry until the day I die."

Everything was set for a January sale, with Roma, Milan, Inter and Napoli said to be interested, but yesterday evening the club announced this period on the sidelines was over.

"Following a meeting with the player, the technical staff and his teammates, all the issues have been clarified," said a statement on the official website.

The driving force behind this sudden reversal can be found in another former Serie A player.

Ronaldo has been ruled out for a month with a new injury, straining the interior lateral ligament in his left knee.

So the options have been cut down considerably in a disappointing period of form for Real Madrid, meaning Cassano is needed for Sunday's game against Osasuna.

## Eden Park in doubt

CRICINFO, undated

The future of a debt-ridden Eden Park as a cricket venue remains in doubt with the announcement that the venue's trustees have planned a NZ\$6 million upgrade for the 2011 Rugby World Cup.

The Eden Park Trust Board have expressed concern over the sustainability of the venue should Auckland Rugby, the local team, shift to the government's preferred stadium on the waterfront.

Eden Park, a board-owned venue that's hosted 47 Tests since 1952, is NZ\$20 million in debt and the cost of the huge demolition job would run into millions. John Alexander, the board's chief executive, felt that the move would render the \$150 million asset base useless.

"There are no pots of money here," he told The New Zealand Herald. "Once you pay off the liabilities and demolition costs I would suggest there's very little. It's like asking someone: 'what are you going to do when you die?'"

Alexander hoped that a redeveloped venue could host the 2011 final.

Brent King, Auckland Cricket's chairman, turned the government's decision to favour a waterfront proposal a betrayal of good faith. "The simple fact is that the Rugby World Cup wouldn't have been awarded to New Zealand if Eden Park hadn't got out on a limb to help," he said. "They should be recompensed for every penny spent. Administrators in both Auckland Cricket and rugby have spent thousands of man-hours trying to make this work, and they deserve their money back."

New Zealand, along with Australia, have been slotted in to host the 2015 Cricket World Cup.



Russian starlet Maria Sharapova pumps her fist after winning a point against compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova during their WTA Tour Championship match at the Rockodromo Arena in Madrid on Friday.

## Maria, Amelie in semis

Tennis

AFP, Madrid

Australian Open and Wimbledon champion Amelie Mauresmo cushioned the blow of losing her world number one ranking by beating top spot rival Justine Henin-Hardenne to reach the WTA Tour Championships semifinals on Friday.

Mauresmo, the defending champion, scored a gripping 4-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 win which meant elimination from the yellow group for double former champion Martina Hingis.

Henin-Hardenne will now face US Open champion Maria Sharapova in Saturday's semifinals while Mauresmo will take on Kim Clijsters.

Sharapova eased into the last four by beating Russian compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-1, 6-4. Clijsters made sure of her place in the semi-finals by seeing off Elena

Dementieva 6-4, 6-0.

Returning from a shoulder injury, Mauresmo started off here looking as if she might not last the pace following a straight sets loss to Nadia Petrova but instead she has ended up winning her group with gutsy wins over Hingis and now Henin-Hardenne.

"I am very happy the way I dug in both yesterday and today. I kept believing in myself despite the bad start. I'm proud of the way I played," said the Frenchwoman who will slide off the world top spot after 34 weeks on Monday despite taking her career series with Henin-Hardenne to 6-5 in her favour.

Either Henin-Hardenne or Sharapova will finish the year as world number one.

Sharapova, who took just 68 minutes to see off Kuznetsova in a red group encounter, landed these championships two seasons ago.

"I don't know if I am playing the best tennis of my life," said Sharapova.

"But I'm a better player than I

was a year or two ago."

After Henin-Hardenne got her nose in front and then went a break ahead in the second it seemed as if Mauresmo was done for, but she saved two break chances against her at 4-4 and then won the ensuing tiebreak when French Open champion Henin-Hardenne began to crack, serving up two double faults.

Mauresmo then waltzed through the decider against the women she beat for her two Slam titles this year.

Henin-Hardenne herself had suffered an injury-plagued build up, not playing for two months owing to wrist problems.

She also had to miss out in the last two editions of the championships with injury.

Despite Friday's reverse the diminutive star can secure the world number one spot if she wins her semi, but if she does not then Sharapova can catch her at the line if she reclaims the title.

## Nalbandian confident of defence

AFP, Shanghai

David Nalbandian on Saturday said he was confident of defending his Masters Cup title despite a strong field led by the rampant Roger Federer.

Nalbandian will open the tournament against the world number one on Sunday, a rematch of last year's classic final which he won in five sets.

"I believe that if I play good I can do anything and I can win again here," said the Argentine, adding that he felt no extra pressure as the defending champion.

Nalbandian and Federer will also play Roddick and Ivan Ljubicic in the Red Group round-robin, while Rafael Nadal, Nikolay Davydenko, Tommy Robredo and James Blake make up Gold Group.

## Scuffles in opening ceremony

AFP, Shanghai

The world's top tennis players looked on in amazement on Saturday as scuffles broke out between photographers at the Masters Cup opening ceremony.

The elite stars were left open-mouthed at the melee just feet (a couple of metres) away as they lined up to be photographed.

Several photographers jostling for position suddenly started shouting and shoving each other, forcing officials to intervene. Order was quickly restored.

China has become increasingly concerned about standards of behaviour ahead of the 2008 Olympics and has launched a series of initiatives to promote good manners.

Basketball superstar Yao Ming last month urged the public to be more courteous and in Beijing, buses are fitted with cameras to monitor passengers' manners.

The world's top eight tennis players are contesting the Masters Cup, which starts on Sunday.

## Dortmund shock Bremen

REUTERS, Berlin



Borussia Dortmund won 3-1 at Bundesliga leaders Werder Bremen on Friday to put top spot in Germany back in play.

Werder, hoping to stretch their lead to five points, fell behind in the seventh minute when Alexander Frei pounced on a mistake from Clemens Fritz.

Miroslav Klose scored an exceptional equaliser but Brazilian midfielder Tinga was left free at a corner to restore the Dortmund lead nine minutes after the break.

Dortmund made certain when Marc-Andre Kruska netted a penalty five minutes from time following

a foul on Nelson Valdez.

Werder have 23 points from 12 games following their third defeat of the league season and their first since mid-September.

VfB Stuttgart, with 21 points, will overtake them if they win at Hanover 96 on Sunday.

Before then, third-placed Schalke will be aiming to move level on points with Werder by beating Mainz at home on Saturday, while Bayern Munich can move back to within three points of Werder if they win at Bayer Leverkusen.

Victory for Dortmund was enough to move them up to fourth on 18 points.

Werder looked to be feeling the effects of their hard won league game against Nuremberg on Tuesday as Dortmund enjoyed much the better of the first half.

"We were too passive," coach Thomas Schaaf told reporters. "We

let them play their game."

Schaaf's side only had themselves to blame for opening goal, which came when former Bremen player Valdez ran on to a long pass from Nuri Sahin and crossed low.

Fritz had a simple clearance but he succeeded only in flicking the ball up for Frei to head in at the far post.

Werder created little before Klose brought them back level. The Germany striker took a pass from Jurica Vranjes on the left, turned the Dortmund defence inside out and beat keeper Roman Weidenfeller with a cool shot.

Ebi Smolarek missed two chances for Dortmund before another defensive mistake gave Tinga a flick header for the second.

Klose had two efforts saved at point-blank range before Werder hopes were finally snuffed out with Kruska's penalty.



Borussia Dortmund defender Marc Andre Kruska (C) celebrates his strike with teammates Ebi Smolarek (L) and Nelson Haedo Valdez during their win over Werder Bremen in their Bundesliga clash at Bremen on Friday.