

# Fergie's another change of heart

## Football

AFF, London

Sir Alex Ferguson has changed his mind about retiring at the end of the season and offered to stay on as manager of Manchester United, the club revealed on Tuesday.

The 60-year-old, the most successful manager ever in British club football, had said the end of this campaign would be his last but United have found it difficult to find a successor to fill the hotseat at the two-time European Cup winning side.

The revelation that Ferguson, who had said he was retiring to spend more time with his family and watch his growing stable of racehorses perform, would probably be staying on immediately boosted the club's share value by two percent.

His decision could also have a beneficial effect on playmaker and England captain David Beckham, who has been holding out on sign-

ing a new contract amid concerns about who would succeed Ferguson.

"The board of Manchester United PLC confirms that it was recently approached by Sir Alex Ferguson on Sir Alex remaining as manager of the club beyond this season," the club said in a statement.

"The board has entered into discussions with Sir Alex and his advisors on a new contract."

"These discussions are continuing and a further announcement will be made in due course," it added.

Ferguson took over the United job in 1986 after a successful term in charge at Aberdeen, whom he led to among other trophies the 1983 Cup Winners Cup.

After a nervy start when United flirted with relegation and his position became shaky he launched the Red Devils on the most trophy-laden period in their history.

The club has garnered four FA Cups, seven championship crowns, the 1991 Cup Winners Cup and the jewel in the crown, the epic 2-1

injury-time win over Bayern Munich in the 1999 Champions League emulating Sir Matt Busby's feat in 1968.

When Ferguson signs his new



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

contract he will once again probably become the best-paid manager in the Premiership.

Last summer his salary increased from 1.67million pounds to 2million pounds for his final

season in charge.

However, this was eclipsed when Arsene Wenger signed his new deal at Arsenal, which is worth a reported 2.5million pounds a year.

Ferguson, who has always felt underpaid by United during much of his reign, will want at least that figure to carry on.

United, though, will consider him worth every penny and chief executive Peter Kenyon has been trying since his first day in the job to persuade him to stay.

Virtually all of the contenders for the job had ruled themselves out, including England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson, Leeds United's highly-rated Irishman David O'Leary, Arsenal's Arsene Wenger and Italian duo Marcello Lippi and Fabio Capello.

Celtic boss Martin O'Neill expressed interest at first but then changed his mind while Bayern Munich boss Ottmar Hitzfeld, the man in charge at that 1999 European Cup final, was also linked with the post.

## Italian Cup Juve v Parma most likely

AFP, Milan

Barring unforeseen circumstances Juventus and Parma should book their places in the Italian Cup Final this week as they defend what look to be winning positions in their semi-final second leg matches with AC Milan and Brescia respectively.

Juve, still on course for a treble of Serie A, Italian Cup and Champions League, are favourites to progress in Wednesday's semi when they defend a 2-1 lead against AC Milan at the Stadio Delle Alpi.

Throughout the Cup competition Juve have fielded their reserve players but the pairing of Nicola Amoruso and Uruguayan Marcelo Zalayeta have proved as prolific in Juve's lesser competition as first-choices Alessandro Del Piero and Frenchman David Trezeguet have in Serie A.

But it was substitute Del Piero's late goal in the San Siro in the first leg that gave Juve the advantage and they must fancy their chances of progressing against a Milan side that has looked demoralised in recent weeks and has not won since the 1-0 defeat of Lecce on January 6.

Parma, who on Thursday face Brescia for the third time in a week, are looking home and dry already as they take a 2-0 lead to Brescia's run-down Stadio Mario Rigamonti.

If any club is entitled to feel cursed at the moment it is Brescia who have tumbled deep into relegation trouble after a series of misfortunes.

Their two key players Josep Guardiola and Roberto Baggio have been sidelined, the Spaniard by a four-month ban for doping and the Italian by the injury that will keep him out of the World Cup.

But those two blows pale into insignificance when compared to the car crash that killed defender Vittorio Mero.

Carlo Mazzone, at 64, the oldest coach in Serie A has never won a major prize in his 34 years on the touchline and this year's Cup looks like eluding him too with the first two installments of the Brescia-Parma trilogy finishing 2-0 and 4-1 to Parma.

### FIXTURES

(1st leg scores in brackets)  
Wednesday: Juventus (2) v AC Milan (1) at 19:45 GMT  
Thursday: Brescia (0) v Parma (2) at 20:00 GMT

## Senegal, Cameroon in semis



AFP, Bamako

Cameroon, also the Olympic winners, merely confirmed their pedigree as one of the established giants of African football with their 1-0 victory.

Senegal face Nigeria on Thursday at 1600 GMT with hosts Mali tackling defending champions Cameroon three hours later in the second semi-final, both in Bamako.

Cameroon advanced after Patrick Mboma scored the decisive goal. African footballer of the year Mboma netted his third goal of the tournament midway through the second half at Sikasso's Babemba Traore Stadium.

The Parma star's winner came from a Geremi Njitap corner on 62 minutes, Mboma outjumping Salah Al-Hosni to glance his header past Egypt's keeper Essam Al-Hadary.

It was a sorry exit for four-time champions Egypt, whose strategy of defending in depth and looking for chances on the counter-attack made for a lacklustre encounter.

Cameroon, the more adventurous of the two sides, had chances to increase their tally late on but in the end had to settle for victory by a single goal.

Egypt were unable to respond to Mboma's strike, their only attempts at an equaliser coming from an Ahmed Hossam header that flashed well wide of the post and a Yaser Radwan freekick that flew over.

In the other semi-final, Congolese Alexis Tekumu became the first player to be sent off in the biennial African championship after the second brawl of the match erupted with full-time beckoning.

Tekumu made a two-footed lunge at Bouba Diop just after his team had fallen two goals behind, triggering ugly touchline scenes as Italian referee Domenico Messina battled to separate players.

Once order had been restored, Tekumu was shown a red card, marking the sad exit of a team that caused the surprise of the group phase by finishing ahead of Ivory Coast.

A headed goal by Alassane Diaou from French club Sedan put the Teranga Lions' ahead after 31 minutes and Al-Hadji Diouf struck a simple second with four minutes of normal time left.

# Baggio's chances bleak

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFF, Bologna

the World Cup question, telling journalists: "I am very sorry for him but please forget about the World Cup: when we are talking about an



ROBERTO BAGGIO

injury as serious as that Japan does not interest me much."

Operating surgeon Maurilio

Marcacci said that three and a half months would be the minimum recovery time.

"That time span is the best-case scenario," said Marcacci. "Although it is difficult to say what the precise likelihood is because Baggio does not seem like a 35-year-old (he turns 35 in a fortnight) and has the recuperative powers of a 20-year-old." Baggio injured his knee in last Thursday's 2-0 Italian Cup semi-final defeat by Parma continuing his miserable run of injuries which dates back to November.

Brescia's veteran coach Carlo Mazzone had admitted on Saturday that he feared the worst.

"The injury is certainly a serious one. We still hope for a miracle. But I think that this unprecented incident will end up closing the road to the World Cup for Baggio," Mazzone said.

Baggio, once the world's most expensive player when he joined Juventus from Fiorentina, has had a glittering career but is best remembered for his penalty miss in the 1994 World Cup Final penalty shoot-out that handed victory to Brazil.

## Bergkamp loses red card appeal

AFF, London

Dennis Bergkamp's appeal against his dismissal during Arsenal's FA Cup fourth round tie against Liverpool was turned down on Monday, following recommendations by the Football Association's video advisory panel.

The Gunners striker, dismissed for a two-footed lunge on Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher at Highbury on January 27, will receive a three-match suspension for violent conduct.

The ban will see the Dutch international ruled out of this Sunday's Premiership trip to Everton, the following weekend's FA Cup tie with Gillingham or Bristol Rovers, and the February 23 league clash with Fulham at Highbury.

A date remains to be arranged for Thierry Henry's hearing, with regard to his behaviour at the end of Arsenal's Premiership match with Newcastle at Highbury before Christmas.

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22 Evergreen

23 Domesticated

26 Telenovels

30 Commotion

31 "Indeed"

32 Raw rock

33 Mouth

frame-work

36 Carried on

22 Entreat

42 AMEX

counter-part

43 Holly-

wood

porker

44 Plumbing

problem

45 Anger

46 New

Haven

school

48 Listener

Solution time: 27 mins.

GLAD

IDS

SPAT

RAVE

MEW

ALLI

IDOL

PLAY

MA

NERD

MAG

REPORTER

NO

ELL

VEGAS

EAR

BIA

DASTARDS

YAM

SCAN

SIBYL

ABACUS

PLAYBILL

DONA

RICE

GEIL

ENID

YAKS

HAY

METE

CRYPTOQUIP

Z E W F N D P N W F T F O G W K F H

L E R C G W N : " G ' R K T W W H ,

Z M F H T M W F H C N G K D ' F

K N W L N P O N W N . "

Yesterday's Cryptopuip: I RECENTLY HEARD THE MASSEUR MIGHT GET CANNED. HE'S RUBBING PEOPLE THE WRONG WAY.

Today's Cryptopuip Clue: T equals T

The Cryptopuip 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.

## TV GUIDE

### TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS



EKUSHAY: 9:30pm. *Shundori*. Last Episode: Gofur Sherwanji has been murdered. In the court Jahir says that when he saw that someone was setting the jungle on fire and the tigers, deer and other animals are running for their lives, as a forest officer what else was there to do. He also said that he ordered his men to fire and later he fired the gun himself.

STAR WORLD: 6:00 & 9:30pm. *The Drew Carey Show*. As the name suggests, the show is a humorous outlook on Drew Carey's life. This lovable comedian and author has inspired this fast-paced comedy depicting the life of a single "every guy" who's just trying to have some fun along the way. In tonight's episode Drew tries to be more assertive, but it gets Larry fired.

AXN: 10:30pm. *America's Sweethearts*. For an awkward, self-conscious girl like Kiki (Julia Roberts), being the personal assistant to a beautiful mega-star like Gwen (Catherine Zeta-Jones) isn't easy. But when she dutifully accepts the task of helping Gwen and her estranged mega-star husband Eddie (John Cusack) make it through one last public appearance masterminded by legendary press agent Lee Phillips (Billy Crystal), forever devoted Kiki finds that her job is about to get even harder.

9:30 The Drew Carey Show  
10:00 Whose Line Is It Anyway?<