

Rio showdown

Football

INTERNET, Leeds

Rio Ferdinand arrived for training with Leeds United on Thursday ahead of showdown talks with Elland Road chairman Peter Ridsdale.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Leeds United star defender Rio Ferdinand arrives for training in his blue Ferrari yesterday.

He arrived at the club's Thorp Arch training facility for what would be the last time as Manchester United prepare to make an improved offer for the England defender.

am merely an employee and I have a duty to shareholders to maximise the value of our assets.

Road for a minimum £25m in 12 months. There is a clause in his contract which relates to a minimum fee of £25m, but Ferdinand would only be allowed to join an English club if he had specific permission from Elland Road.

Ferguson told his club's television station, MUTV. "We're running out of time so we have to do something quickly. Maybe we will have to move on somewhere."

AFC Chief hints at fifth

INTERNET, Doha

Asian Football Confederation president Mohamed Bin-Hammam of Qatar strongly confirmed today "Asia is heading towards claiming a fifth place for the World Cup finals in four-year time in Germany."

Fergie losing patience

Football

AFP, London

Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson admitted Wednesday he would not wait much longer to conclude a transfer deal for defender Rio Ferdinand.

happening. "Leeds are saying a lot of things which we have to take on board. "We're running out of time so we have to do something quickly. Maybe we will have to move on somewhere."

Reds chief executive Peter Kenyon's offer some weeks ago. Earlier Wednesday an anguished Ferdinand said: "I have been torn apart over the past three days while I tried to make up my mind."



ALEX FERGUSON target list are rumoured to include Alessandro Nesta, Roberto Ayala and Lilian Thuram.

"Leeds took a huge risk on me when they bought me and I will always appreciate that," added Ferdinand, signed for 18 million pounds - a world record fee for a defender - from West Ham in November 2000.

Seaman for another year

REUTERS, London

England's World Cup goalkeeper David Seaman has signed a new one-year contract with English champions Arsenal.

Serie A gets tough

Football

AFP, Rome

The Italian First Division has clamped down on Serie A clubs signing non-European stars like Brazil's Ronaldo or Hidetoshi Nakata of Japan, it emerged here on Wednesday.

EU players on their books. "This is the right measure for football. I don't pretend that it is shared by everyone, but I have been

warm reception by leading figures inside the Italian game. "I would have preferred a limited number," said Roma coach Fabio Capello.



FABIO CAPELLO empowered to defend it tooth and nail. If we are to remain credible, then it is the way to go," added Carraro who admitted that the decision was a drastic measure.

"A foreign player arrives, another one comes in. If a well-known player from outside Europe wanted to play here, it would be beautiful to see him. But this new measure means that this would be impossible."

Cuper signs fresh deal

Football

INTERNET, Milan

Inter Milan coach Hector Cuper has signed a new deal at the Giuseppe Meazza Stadium.

Happy Gunner Henry

Football

INTERNET, London

With all the talk being of players being unsettled, whether provoked by their agents or otherwise, it's perhaps refreshing to hear one Premier League star who is content.



THIERRY HENRY doesn't extend to the national set up, and he used the interview to voice his discontent after France's

disarm performance in the World Cup. "The problem I had at the World Cup was the position in which I was asked to play", he said. "In three years with France and also for Arsenal I have played as a central striker."

Season of loss

INTERNET

A survey published by leading Italian financial newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore showed Serie A clubs made a combined operating loss of 702 million euros for the 2000-01 season.

The combined net loss for Italy's top flight clubs was reported as 133 million euros. Italy's four professional divisions racked up a total loss of 1.04 billion euros, the report said on Thursday.

Parma spent 10.3 percent more than their overall turnover on players' wages alone in the 2000-01 season, while clubs such as Inter Milan and Lazio spent over 80 percent of turnover on salaries, the Il Sole survey found.

The situation was even more dramatic in the second division, Serie B, where Ternana spent 183.1 percent of turnover on wages.

The cash crisis has led to one of the quietest close season transfer markets of recent years with most clubs limiting themselves to swap deals and free transfers rather than the record-breaking deals of recent years.

But while that may help to reduce short-term costs, the reluctance of clubs to spend big money on top players could also reduce the value of key assets and limit the possibility for clubs to sell their way out of trouble.

Three of the best paid players in Italy - the Inter Milan trio of Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldo, Italy striker Christian Vieri and Uruguayan international Alvaro Recoba - volunteered for a five to 10 percent pay cut recently.

The move came after details of their salaries - all reported to be in the 4-5 million euro per year range - were reported in the media.

Three of Italy's leading teams, Turin club Juventus and Rome pair Lazio and AS Roma, are quoted on the Milan bureau.

Ruiz an All-Star

Football

INTERNET, New York

Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber unveiled the starting 11 Wednesday for the MLS All-Stars which will face the U.S. National Team in the 2002 Pepsi MLS All-Star Game.

The contest kicks off at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, August 3, at 3:30 p.m. ET and will be televised live on ABC Sports.

The MLS All-Star Team will feature five players making their first-ever All-Star appearance, including the league's top two scorers, Taylor Twellman and Carlos Ruiz.

Twellman, the 22-year-old sensation from the New England Revolution, is joined up top by the Los Angeles Galaxy's Ruiz, a Guatemalan forward. Both players lead the league with 13 goals during their first MLS campaigns.

Also making their first All-Star appearances are defenders Carlos Bocanegra (Chicago Fire) and Ryan Suarez (Dallas Burn), along with midfielder Richard Mulrooney (San Jose Earthquakes).

By contrast, the Colorado Rapids' midfield duo of Carlos Valderrama (sixth selection) and Mark Chung (four appearances) have a total of 10 MLS All-Star Game appearances between them. New England Revolution midfielder Steve Ralston and MetroStars defender Mike Petke each appear for the third time in the league's midseason celebration.

In addition to Colorado and New England, two other teams - the Chicago Fire and MetroStars - also placed two players in the starting 11, as goalkeeper Tim Howard (MetroStars) and midfielder Dema Kovalenko (Chicago) earned starting nods for 2002.

THE SELECTION FOR THE MLS ALL-STARS IS AS FOLLOWS (3-5-2 FORMATION): Goalkeeper: Tim Howard (MetroStars) Defenders: Ryan Suarez (Dallas Burn), Mike Petke (MetroStars), Carlos Bocanegra (Chicago Fire) Midfielders: Richard Mulrooney (San Jose Earthquakes), Steve Ralston (New England Revolution), Carlos Valderrama (Colorado Rapids), Mark Chung (Colorado Rapids), Dema Kovalenko (Chicago Fire) Forwards: Carlos Ruiz (Los Angeles Galaxy), Taylor Twellman (New England Revolution)



CARLOS RUIZ

are represented in the MLS starting selection, while D.C. United, Columbus and Kansas City saw several players named to Bruce Arena's U.S. National Team yesterday.

MLS roster will be named on Tuesday, July 23, by head coach Frank Yallop in conjunction with Major League Soccer.

In addition, MLS Commissioner Don Garber will select two players to round out the roster of 18 players that will face the U.S. National Team on August 3.

Yallop earned the honor of coaching the MLS squad by leading the defending champion San Jose Earthquakes to the best record in the League through the midway point of the 2002 season (8-4-2, 26 points). Named MLS Coach of the Year in 2001, Yallop will make his first MLS All-Star appearance after

masterminding San Jose's worst-first turnaround last season.

RFK Stadium, the site of two MLS Cup Championship matches, will host its first MLS All-Star Game as the event returns to the East Coast for the first time since 1997. On August 2-3, Pepsi and MLS will host numerous family oriented events, activities and tournaments at RFK and in the Washington, D.C. area.

The confident quartet

Football

AFP, Paris

All four candidates for the French coaching job appeared optimistic on Wednesday of being handed the task of rebuilding the ailing former World Cup champions.

The quartet - Raymond Domenech, Rene Girard, Jacques

who said after his two hour meeting that he was "more than ever ready to take up the baton."

Lemerre's assistant added: "I lived four years at the heart of the team, and working with Roger Lemerre will enable me to start off more quickly."

"The president spoke about the job of manager, we touched on everything, even communication," added the 48-year-old former Strasbourg boss.

would put in place and on my method of working."

The third man quizzed was Jacques Santini, who led Lyon to their first ever French championship last season.

Santini declared himself "determined and serene" after his interview.

"I came here determined and confident and I'm leaving in the same frame of mind," he declared. "I feel capable of taking over this

manager. That's what I was for five or six years, that gives me the experience."

"For four years (as Japan coach from 1998-2002) I was subjected to intense media pressure. What's more I'm 47 and that gives me a certain maturity," added the youngest of the four interviewees.

"It's not a question of money for me," he continued, "in the sense that it's an extremely interesting challenge. "I reckon each candidate scored



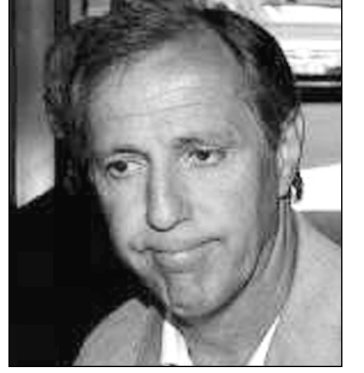
RAYMOND DOMENECH



PHILIPPE TROUSSIER



JACQUES SANTINI



RENE GIRARD

Santini and Philippe Troussier - were all grilled by French football federation president Claude Simonet throughout Wednesday, with Simonet due to announce who will take over from Roger Lemerre on Friday afternoon.

Rustu staying put

INTERNET

Turkey's World Cup goalkeeper Rustu Recber is staying at Fenerbahce - ruling out potential moves to either Arsenal or Everton.

The 29-year-old had been strongly linked with a move to the Premiership following a series of outstanding performances during the World Cup.

But his club and wife have persuaded him to remain in Istanbul and complete the final year of his deal with Fenerbahce.

Arsenal's rumoured interest certainly ended when David Seaman signed a new deal with the Gunners.

But Everton manager David Moyes is desperate to sign a new goalkeeper and may now have to reconsider an improved offer for Derby's Mart Poom.

Derby want £7m for their Estonian goalkeeper, but Poom himself has told BBC Sport Online that such a fee is unrealistic in the current market place.

Recher's agent Ergun Sancakli said: "He has decided to stay where he is."

"The president of Fenerbahce has told him that he really wants him to stay and his wife has also told him to stay."

Ex-Spain back attempts suicide

Football

REUTERS, Barcelona

Former Spanish international defender Julio Alberto was treated overnight at a Barcelona hospital after trying to jump from a third floor hotel window, a police spokesman has said.

and we deserved it. Now the big thing is to win the Champions League."

However Henry's happiness



THIERRY HENRY

doesn't extend to the national set up, and he used the interview to voice his discontent after France's

dismal performance in the World Cup.

"The problem I had at the World Cup was the position in which I was asked to play", he said. "In three years with France and also for Arsenal I have played as a central striker."

Henry was asked to play on the left wing by coach Roger Lemerre in France's first two games. The 24-year-old was sent off in the second match, against Uruguay, and played no further part in the campaign, but was also critical of Lemerre's management.

"When Lemerre said that if I did not play [in a warm-up match] against [South] Korea he would question my presence in the World Cup, it was my family who called me from France to tell me," Henry said. "Nobody [in the France camp] spoke to me about it."

Police found the former player's hotel room "destroyed" when they were called to the scene by reception.

"He had cuts to his skin when the police arrived," the spokesman said. "The police called an ambulance and while he was being treated he tried to kill himself. He got up from his chair and tried to jump out of a window."

A spokeswoman for the hospital

said he was treated in the accident and emergency department after arriving in a "state of excitement".

He was allowed to leave hospital on Thursday morning, the spokeswoman said, after declining to be admitted.

Julio Alberto, now 43, played at left back for Atletico Madrid and Barcelona in the 1980s and early 1990s and made a total of 34 international appearances.