

SPORT

The Daily Star

though, and while some newspa

pers stressed the not inconsider-

able saving of Rivaldo's wages -- a

cost put as high as dollars 12 million a year -- the club insist the decision

"The departure of Rivaldo is a

Rivaldo left because of Van Gaal

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Rivaldo has made it clear that the return of coach Louis van Gaal to Barcelona was the reason behind his agreement to part company with the Catalan club.

"Van Gaal is the main cause of my departure," the Brazilian World Cup winner was quoted as saying in the Spanish press on Tuesday. "I don't like van Gaal and I am sure that he doesn't like me either."

Rivaldo's comments, made in a telephone interview on Brazilian television show "TV Record". confirmed speculation that Dutchman van Gaal and the former World Player of the Year were likely to be incompatible.

During van Gaal's last spell in charge at the Nou Camp, between 1997-2000, Rivaldo challenged his coach's authority by demanding to play in the centre of the pitch rather than out on the left wing.

Van Gaal won the battle of wills and Rivaldo was forced to apologise for his comments after sitting out two games on the sidelines, but relations between the two suffered irrevocable damage.

Barcelona have avoided the

possibility of another embarrassing dispute by deciding to release Rivaldo from his contract with a year still left to run.

The decision means that the multi-talented forward is now a free agent and will be able to move to any club of his choice

RIVALDO

Rivaldo, who was interviewed

together with fellow World Cup

winner Roberto Carlos, even

refused to rule out a move to arch-

tongue-in-cheek invitation to join

him at Real, Rivaldo said he was

willing to listen to an offer from the

club's sporting director Jorge

Responding to the defender's

rivals Real Madrid.

"Tell Valdano to ring me -- I am now an unemployed footballer," the 30-year-old said "I am free to go to any club including Real Madrid as I haven't

signed any special clauses." Real, however, have been doing

LOUIS VAN GAAL

their best to dampen any specula-

tion about a potential bid for the

Brazilian and Valdano told Spanish

television on Monday that the player

did not feature in their plans for next

may think differently and few doubt

that he would dearly love to sign one

of the world's top players to join

the club to sign just three players

over the pre-season, despite the

departure of several leading figures.

Barca paid just over dollars 6

Club president Florentino Perez

season

Zinedine Zidane, Luis Figo and Carlos at the Bernabeu. But Perez, whose dollars 56

million swoop for Nou Camp idol Figo two years ago saw an unprecedented increase in tensions between the rivals, will have to decide whether the signing of Rivaldo is worth another rupture with the Catalans.

If Real decide not to pursue Rivaldo, Italy appears to be the Brazilian's most likely destination.

Lazio made an offer last year and they recently expressed a renewed interest, while AC Milan have long been keen on the player.

Milan are reportedly in talks with Rivaldo, the Italian club's vice president Adriano Galliani has been quoted as saying.

"I can confirm that talks are taking place ... I won't say anything more," Galliani was quoted as saying by Italian news agency ANSA when asked about speculation that Rivaldo could be heading to AC Milan.

English Premier League bigspenders Manchester United and Newcastle United manager Bobby Robson, who has made no secret of his admiration for the player, are also likely to be keeping a close eye on developments.



Barcelona's Argentinean recruits Juan Roman Riquelme (L), Javier Saviola (C) and Roberto Bonano warming up during a training session at the Nou Camp on July 22.

Santini believes in old guard

Football

REUTERS, Paris

The players who won the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 for France will form the backbone of the national squad for the Euro 2004 qualifiers, new coach Jacques Santini has said.

"Why should I change everything? Have you heard of a top player or a top team who never failed?," Santini was quoted as saying in France Football magazine.

"Most of the players who will play the qualifying games will be the players who competed in the last international tournaments."

Santini, 50, was named last Friday as successor to Roger Lemerre, who was sacked after France's disastrous first round exit at last month's World Cup.

He said on Tuesday he was

comforted by the statements of the leading players of the team" following their return from South Korea and Japan.

"They showed that they were

Onus on the rest

reasons

Football

REUTERS, Barcelona

out on the left wing.

the year award.

done.

League.

including in goal.

record fifth time.

to let him go was for footballing Barcelona's decision to hasten the departure of Brazilian World Cup technical decision," Barcelona Vicewinner Rivaldo will strengthen the President Joan Castells told reporthand of Louis van Gaal as the Dutch coach begins his second spell in

After two games on the sidelines

In that final season under van

Rivaldo relented and apologised to

his team mates but the damage was

Gaal, Rivaldo scored just 12 league

goals, half the total of the previous

year, although he did weigh in with

10 goals in the side's run to the

semi-finals of the Champions

ers on Monday. "It had nothing to do with the charge. When van Gaal's return to the financial situation.

It will now fall to Juan Roman Catalan club he coached from 1997 Riquelme, the Argentine playmaker to 2000 was confirmed earlier this signed from Boca Juniors earlier year, the Rivaldo situation immedithis month, to fill the gap left by the ately looked like being problematic. In December 1999, Rivaldo had Brazilian.

Van Gaal will also hope that challenged van Gaal's authority by Gaizka Mendieta, signed on a loan issuing a public demand to play in the centre of the pitch rather than deal from Lazio over the weekend. can rediscover the destructive form of his time at Valencia and help drive Van Gaal refused to budge and Barcelona forward from midfield. dropped the Brazilian from the

squad, despite the fact he had just Rivaldo is the third Barcelona heavyweight to leave the club since picked up the European footballer of van Gaal's recall.

Spanish internationals Abelardo and Sergi were both told to look for new clubs shortly after the Dutchman's return, despite the lack of quality defenders in the squad.

That leaves Luis Enrique as the only player who arrived at the club before van Gaal's first spell.

"In the history of this club an infinite number of players have left,' Enrique said at a news conference on Monday.

That year Barcelona won nothing "The club have always survived. and van Gaal, after guiding the side I just hope there's a space for me in to league titles in each of his first two the team. seasons, decided not to continue.

With Rivaldo, Abelardo and Sergi On hearing of van Gaal's reapall gone, it is very much van Gaal's pointment two years on, Rivaldo team and there will be no excuses if pledged to play in any position, results do not follow. The coach, meanwhile, said he

Enrique, at least, has few doubts about the future.

would welcome the player if he "Van Gaal is a coach who has showed the same attitude as he did won titles here before," the midfielder noted. "I believe we'll be in the World Cup, when his five goals helped Brazil to the title for a back celebrating in June.'

It was never likely to happen,

Gunners want Carini

join the London side despite the fact that he is likely to start as number two to the 38-year-old Seaman.

Seaman has just signed a oneyear deal to stay at Arsenal but if he agrees to the loan move, Carini can expect plenty of opportunities to prove that he can eventually become the club's first choice goalkeeper.

Although he has been at the club for just one season, Wright has struggled at Arsenal and is likely to join Everton to ensure more firstteam action.



Super Eagles Adapting to time job available

AFP, Abuja

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) on Tuesday advertised a vacancy for the position of a local chief coach for the national squad, the Super Eagles.

Three weeks ago the NFA announced they would hire a foreign technical adviser for all its national teams while keeping a local chief coach for the Super Eagles.

Under the arrangement, the foreign technical adviser will be the chief coach's superior.

All applications for the position of chief coach should be submitted to the NFA not later than July 26 and interviews will take place at the federation secretariat in Lagos on August 2, according to the statement signed by the NFA secretary general Taiwo Ogunjobi.

The candidate must not be less than 40 years old, have coaching certificates, attended coaching courses and seminars and have 10 years post-qualification experience.

There has been speculation that former Super Eagles coach, Adegboye Onigbinde, is interested in the job.

Onigbinde, 64, a former schooteacher, was in charge of the eam that failed to get past the first

Football **REUTERS**, Madrid Barcelona's decision to release Brazilian forward Rivaldo with a vear remaining on his contract may

have had more to do with his personal relationship with coach Louis van Gaal than the club's desire to save money. Barca announced a surplus of

just over dollars 7 million as they presented their annual accounts on Monday, the day after they had controversially agreed to give a free transfer to their best player.

The budget for next season is down eight percent, however, and recent transfer dealings offer a stark picture of the changing financial landscape in Spain, as a club renowned for high spending has been forced into a belt-tightening exercise

In 1997, when van Gaal began his first spell in charge at the Catalan giants, the club shelled out over dollars 65 million to sign seven players, while another dollars 40 million was spent in 1998 and dollars 28 million in 1999.

In 2000, the club banked dollars 56 million from the sale of Luis Figo to Real Madrid but spent more than dollars 80 million in a massive rebuilding programme. That was followed by an even bigger outlay of dollars 90 million 12 months ago, as another seven players were signed axe seven players from the squad. "When I was here last time there was money and Barcelona could at sign any player that interested us " making potential. van Gaal said in a recent newspaper interview game have their own separate deals "We also sold players for imporfor television rights, running from tant sums. In the current climate you 2003 to 2008 and worth around sign whoever you can afford. dollars 50 million each a season. There's no spare money. That economy drive has allowed

million to acquire half of Juan Roman Riquelme's contract from Boca Juniors, while goalkeeper Robert Enke came on a free transfer and Spanish international midfielder Gaizka Mendieta joined on loan

from Lazio. Rivaldo had a huge row with van Gaal over the coach's tactical formation back in 1999 and few doubt that the main reason behind the Brazilian's departure is the pair's poor relationship. The decision will have the added

benefit of saving Barcelona salary costs estimated in some newspapers to be as high as dollars 12 million for just one season.

The club have also given free transfers this summer to two more high earners, the Spanish international defenders Sergi and Abelardo.

Barcelona are not the only club to have been unusually subdued in the transfer market.

Real recently signed a three-

European champions Real Madrid, who broke the world transfer record twice in two seasons to bring in Figo and Zinedine Zidane for a combined cost of dollars 122 million, have not signed a single player this year.

year shirt sponsorship deal with Siemens Mobile reportedly worth over 30 million euros.

Barcelona, meanwhile, added drinks manufacturers Coca-Cola and Damm to their list of main sponsors over the summer, deals that will bring in 12 million euros.

The rest of Spain's First Division clubs are currently negotiating a new deal for TV rights to run from 2003.

According to recent reports in Spain, that new agreement is likely to net the remaining 18 clubs between dollars 240 million and dollars 300 million a season, around the same level they currently receive.

With uncertainty still surrounding the issue, though, most clubs are exercising caution in the transfer market.

A recent survey in sports daily As suggested that spending is down around 60 percent from last year, with only Atletico Madrid and Deportivo Coruna laying out significant sums.

Atletico paid around dollars 15 million to bring in Javi Moreno from AC Milan, while Deportivo have spent over dollars 20 million on Paraguayan midfielder Roberto Acuna and Portuguese centre-back Jorge Andrade.

Those sort of sums, common

He cited the example of defender Laurent Blanc, who wanted to retire in 1994 but went on to win the 1998

World Cup and Euro 2000. "I haven't forgotten Laurent Blanc," Santini told the evening

newspaper Le Monde. "I was with (former France coach)

happened. But Santini, the former Olympique Lyon coach, warned that players would have to be in good physical and mental shape if they

"I'm going to listen to the players, be it Marcel Desailly or (whoever) and I'm going to check how they fare with their clubs," he told Le Monde. "Sidelining a captain or a senior

player is nothing new to me." Santini also told France Football that he only regarded his appoint-

"The hardest part is ahead of me,' he admitted. "My task is to help

two appearances in the 18 months he has been at the club. France will start their qualifying

Football Aime Jacquet when he persuaded REUTERS, London him to carry on and we all know what Arsenal are negotiating a loan deal

with Juventus for goalkeeper Fabian Carini as a replacement for Richard Wright who is on the brink of a move to Everton. According to newspaper reports,

the 22-year-old Uruguayan international is being lined up as David Seaman's understudy in place of Wright, whose transfer is expected to be confirmed on Tuesday.

ment as the first step.

France qualify for the Euro finals. Success or failure will determine the length of my contract."

France also meet Slovenia,

Israel and Malta in qualifying group

one for the 2004 tournament in

at 17 and his ability on the ball, rare

in English central defenders, quickly

caught the eye of then-England

Venables, whose arrival as

A drink-driving incident caused

Hoddle gave Ferdinand his

Ferdinand's fortunes dipped

also took him to the 1998 World Cup

again when he was dropped by

Hoddle to drop Ferdinand from the

Leeds manager on July 8 almost led

coach Terry Venables.

Arsenal have asked to take Carini on a loan for a season with campaign with an away game in

vanted to be selected.

round of the 2002 World Cup in Korea and Japan.

Nigeria came last in their group, which also included Argentina, England and Sweden

Onigbinde's future has been unclear since he returned from the finals.

At first he was reportedly deployed to work as the NFA technical director, then after the country's president gave his backing to the national team coaches, it seemed he would be given a new two-year deal to stay on as boss of Nigeria. The deal never materialised.

Khadafi's son breaks ankle

AFP, Mondovi

Saadi Khadafi, son of Libyan leader Moamer Khadafi, suffered a fractured ankle during a football friendly between the Libyan national side and amateur Italian outfit Cuneo, the Italian newsagency ANSA reported Tuesday.

Khadafi scored the first goal in his side's 5-0 victory on Monday night, but was injured in a collision with the rival team's goalkeeper and was transported to hosptial.

He is due to be released later Tuesday to rejoin his team-mates who are attending a training camp in the northern region of Piedmont.

It's too much for Wenger!

INTERNET, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger believes that Manchester United paid well over the odds for England defender Rio Ferdinand.

"They have bought a great player but they have paid a high price for him," he told tonight's London Evening Standard, initiating another bout of verbal pugilism. "I'd like to sign Rio Ferdinand - but for £10m less.

In stark contrast to his great rival Alex Ferguson, Wenger has spent just £2.1m on a central defender -Pascal Cygan from Lille. "When you have a lot of money in your pocket you buy expensive. And that's what they have done," Wenger said.

Real managed to clear a debt of place last year, have become the more than dollars 250 million by exception -- at least for now.

"I believe there will be still be a lot selling off their training ground and of signings around the dollars 12-18 club president Florentino Perez, anxious to avoid another slide into million mark," Deportivo Coruna the red, has told his technical staff to president Augusto Lendoiro said in a recent interview with Marca. But Real Madrid and Barcelona

"They won't come quite as often least still have huge moneybut as soon as this uncertainty over TV rights is over there will be signings on that scale. The two giants of the Spanish

"It is obvious that clubs are going to have to cut costs, though."

ready for a new start and that they were accepting their responsibility for the World Cup failure," he added.

In another interview, also published on Tuesday, Santini said he wanted to convince players like Youri Diorkaeff and Frank Leboeuf not to end their international playing careers.

The rise of Rio

on August 21.

Portugal

Football

REUTERS, London

Rio Ferdinand's record-breaking Ferdinand to stay at Elland Road, move to Manchester United from invited the defender to train with the Leeds completes the rise to riches England squad before the 1996 of a player who grew up on a European championships. deprived south London housing estate. Venables's successor Glenn

Ferdinand sealed his 30 million pound switch to the world's wealthi-England squad in 1997, but the est soccer club, the reward for a fine teenager was quickly forgiven. season at Leeds and some evecatching displays for England at the England debut later that year and World Cup in June in France.

To date. Ferdinand's career has been something of a roller-coaster ride.

He made his debut for West Ham



Rio Ferdinand (C) shakes hands with Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson while the club's Chief Executive Peter Kenyon (L) looks on after a press conference at the Old Trafford on July 22.

the option of buying him for around Cyprus on September 7, following a seven million pounds if the move friendly international against Tunisia proves successful

former England coach Kevin

Keegan just before the 2000

But after joining Leeds United for

18 million pounds from West Ham

later that year, Ferdinand has blos-

somed into a dominant central

defender of rare poise and sufficient

maturity to be named Leeds captain

O'Leary and Keegan's replacement

as England coach Sven Goran-

his earlier career at West Ham.

Ferdinand did not earn a single

yellow card in 31 Premier League

Under Leeds boss David

European championship

last season

Carini has had few opportunities

at Juventus with the Serie A champi-

ons preferring Italian international

Gianluigi Buffon over the

Uruguayan, and he has made only

Although Carini has told Juventus that he wants more firstteam football, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is confident that the agile keeper can be persuaded to

FABIAN CARIN

games last season.

His move to United, the world's richest football club, follows some outstanding performances in Japan as England reached the quarterfinals before losing to eventual winners Brazil

Ferdinand's aerial prowess, intelligent use of the ball and superb timing of his tackles earned him widespread acclaim as part of an England defence that conceded only one goal in its first four games at the World Cup.

Eriksson, Ferdinand has cut out the tendency to take risk and make His impact is not confined to the mistakes that characterised much of soccer world. Ferdinand is an inspirational role model for young-Leeds's disciplinary record has sters from ethnic minorities living in attracted much criticism but poor inner-city areas of Britain.

He grew up on the same Peckham housing estate where 10year-old Nigerian schoolboy Damilola Taylor was murdered two years ago.

Ferdinand was also at school with Stephen Lawrence, the black teenager who died after being stabbed at a London bus stop in 1993.

The 1.88m-tall defender has his own method of dealing with the racism he still occasionally encounters on the pitch.

"I go in a bit stronger and challenge them," Ferdinand told the anti-racism soccer website kickitout.org last year.

"Not verbally, I let the football do the talking and embarrass them. I'm not the type of person to confront people but I will try to win the game so I can look them in the eye."

Were David Beckham not so firmly established as Sven-Goran Eriksson's England captain, Ferdinand would be the prime candidate to skipper the national side as they embark on their 2004 European championship qualifying

Roy Keane's presence at United means Ferdinand will also have to bide his time if he wants to captain his new club side. At 23 time, like talent, is something Ferdinand has in abundance.

PHOTO: AFF

ARD SHARD 3 HOTO: INTERNET

possible," added Kenyon.

But manager Graeme Souness

has failed to prise Yorke away from

Old Trafford after failing to offer

enough money for the Trinidad and

partner Andv Cole

Tobago international.

lines for the wrong reasons.

won the Treble.

Andy Cole (L) and Dwight Yorke during their Manchester United days.

Just like old times? were on-going. Football "The gap between us is not as

INTERNET

Blackburn Rovers are still hoping to sign Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke.

Yorke, who has fallen out of favour at Old Trafford, is available for transfer after being told by manager Sir Alex Ferguson that his future lies elsewhere. Blackburn have so far refused to

meet United's asking price of about £6m for the former Aston Villa striker, who moved to Old Trafford for £12.6m in August 1998. But United chief executive Peter

Kenyon has hinted that a compromise could yet be reached. "If we reach a deal we will do it."

Kenvon told the club's website, suggesting that talks with Blackburn

MU shop shut

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester United do not plan to buy any more players before the start of the new season following the purchase of Rio Ferdinand, according to chief executive Peter Kenyon.

United spent a national record 30 million pounds on former Leeds defender Ferdinand on Monday and were expected to buy more players to boost their defensive and attacking capabilities.

But Kenyon told reporters: "We are not looking for new players. We concentrated on what we thought was our single number one target and that was Rio.

"There is a limit to the squad size you can have. Good players want to play football, they don't want to sit on benches and have rests. "We have got a squad size we

are happy with." big as has been reported and we

Kenyon added: "If you look at us have both moved. Everything is we have the best midfield of any team probably across Europe," a Blackburn are keen to re-unite reference to David Beckham, Roy Yorke with his former United striking Keane, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes and Juan Sebastian Veron.

"As for strikers, we brought in Diego Forlan last season. Ruud (van Nistelrooy) had a fantastic season and Ole (Gunnar Solskjaer) keeps on doing what he does -- so we are great in that department.

In his first season with United. "This was all about a quality Yorke finished as top goalscorer player in defence. We never sat with 29, and was named Carling down and said we needed to bring in Player of the Year as the Red Devils several players. This was all about getting the right one and in Rio we Yorke hit 23 goals in the following have the right one.

season but then things went down-"That really was what the game hill and his relationship with model plan from day one.' Jordan often had him in the head-

The new Premier League season starts on August 17.