

# Cloud not clearing

Football

REUTERS/AFP/INTERNET, Milan

Inter Milan president Massimo Moratti says Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldo will play one more season for the Italian club before leaving -- despite the player's desire to quit the Serie A side.

"Do you want to know how this story is going to end? Ronaldo will play one more year for us, against his will, and then he will leave whether we win something or not. Just watch," said Moratti in an interview with the daily Gazzetta dello Sport published on Tuesday.

It was not clear whether the interview took place before or after Ronaldo made his clearest statement yet that he wanted to end his time in Milan.

Ronaldo confirmed on Monday that he wanted to leave Inter but refused to say why and said he had no idea how negotiations were progressing.

"We'll see what happens," he told reporters in Fortaleza where Brazil faces Paraguay in a friendly international on Wednesday, the team's first match since winning the World Cup on June 30.

"It's not up to me to say how things are going because I don't know what the situation is."

"What is certain is that I want to leave. I have my reasons and the club knows what they are. But there's no need to make them public."

Ronaldo joined Inter before the 1997/1998 season but has played little in the last three seasons during a series of injuries. His contract runs until 2006.

Ronaldo, top scorer in the World Cup with eight goals including two in the final against Germany, arrived late in Fortaleza after missing his plane in Rio de Janeiro due to a traffic jam.

He was forced to take a longer route on a later flight and only arrived in mid-afternoon.

He admitted he was not match fit and said he did not know whether he would play in Wednesday's



PHOTO: INTERNET

**DON'T ASK ME, I KNOW NOTHING!** Brazil superstar Ronaldo Nazario reacts during a training session of the national squad at Castela stadium in the northeastern Brazilian city of Fortaleza on August 19.

game, which has been arranged to celebrate Brazil's fifth world title.

"I have only been training for ten days and I still haven't trained with a ball. So I'm behind the others. I had 35 days of deserved holidays, I travelled a lot and made the most of them."

Paraguay has announced a below-strength team for the match and is under the charge of caretaker coach Anibal Ruiz.

There were reports last season that Ronaldo and Inter's Argentine coach Hector Cuper had a strained relationship although Cuper has

denied that there has been any dispute between the two.

Should Ronaldo be forced to return to Inter he is likely to be treated with disdain by Inter supporters.

The fans are furious that after being supported through his injury plagued years, the Brazilian wants to leave Inter in the wake of his World Cup success with Brazil.

Spanish club Real Madrid have been constantly linked with a move for the striker and Moratti recently confirmed that there had been contact with Real.

Ronaldo has frequently referred to Moratti as a "father figure" but the rapport with the Inter president has not surprisingly soured in recent weeks.

"He thought that he might be behaving like a son who doesn't want to work with his father any more, but Ronaldo is not my son. He has disappointed me that is for sure," said Moratti.

The Inter president said that after being without the Brazilian for much of the past three seasons his absence would not make a huge impact on the club.

"Unfortunately we are used to his absence and not having won three titles and five European Cups his departure won't be such a torture," added Moratti.

Although Ronaldo looks to be staying in the meantime, his agent Alexandre Martin is becoming a less and less popular figure around Inter's San Siro stadium.

Martin insisted Monday that, one way or another, his client would fulfil his request to leave Inter and sign for Real.

"... we know there's many ways the transfer can be concluded. In the end Ronaldo will sign for Real Madrid," Martin had told Spanish daily Marca by telephone from Rio de Janeiro.

Regarding Martin - thought to be at the root of the player's transfer request, Moratti had this to say: "Ronaldo has disappointed me, that's for sure. But what bothers me most is his sidkick who's been ridiculous about this whole affair."

# Eriksson's Beckham appeal to Fergie

AFP, London

England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson has made a veiled request for Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson to test David Beckham in a central midfield role.

Beckham currently plays on the right side of midfield however the Swede wants Ferguson to pull Beckham back to a more central position.

"I think those people who say Beckham should play inside in midfield might be right.

"But it's not up to me to test that, it's up to Alex Ferguson. My job is to select the right players and let them play at the positions they already play in at their clubs," said Eriksson.

However the plea, made in a new biography on the England manager, may fall on deaf ears - especially after the latest round of the club versus country issue was played out in the media.

On Tuesday Ferguson came under fire from the unlikely direction of Eriksson's mum, who told The Sun newspaper that the Scot was preventing her son from doing his job.

"Alex Ferguson is a threat to my son. Sven told me during a phone conversation that it is pointless having national team games in April or May because Ferguson, in one way or another, makes sure his stars aren't fit."

In any case, Ferguson may be reluctant to move his star midfielder, who is one of the best ball crossers in the world, despite the fact Beckham has already expressed a desire to play through the middle.

Eriksson added: "David works extremely hard. By just being himself he is a leader. In training he goes first all the time."

"There are never any discussions about whether it's raining, or if it's windy."

"He agrees the work should just be done, end of discussion."

# Shevchenko blow for Milan

REUTERS, Milan

AC Milan striker Andriy Shevchenko will be out of action for two months after undergoing an operation on a damaged knee ligament, the Italian club said on Monday.

Shevchenko played the full 90 minutes in Milan's 1-0 win over Slovan Liberec in a Champions League qualifying match on Wednesday but after the game examinations revealed damage to the external meniscus ligament.

The prolific striker underwent the operation on Monday at a clinic in Belgium and Milan said in their official website that he would be out for "around two months if there are no complications".

Shevchenko has established himself as one of the most feared marksmen in Italy, scoring 62 goals in three seasons in Serie A since joining Milan from Ukrainian club Dynamo Kiev.

His absence is a blow to Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti who had been hoping to start the season with the front pairing of Shevchenko and Filippo Inzaghi supported by Brazilian World Cup winner Rivaldo.

Without Shevchenko for Sunday's pre-season Berlusconi Trophy match against Juventus, Ancelotti played Danish striker Jon Dahl Tomasson alongside Inzaghi and the striker, signed from Dutch club Feyenoord before the World Cup, is likely to be given an extended chance in the starting lineup in the absence of the Ukrainian.

Milan begin their attempt to regain the title they last won in 1999 at home to Udinese on September 1.

They also face the second-leg of their Champions League qualifying tie against Slovan Liberec on August 28th in the Czech Republic.

# Tyson Terry!

AFP, London

Chelsea defender John Terry punched a nightclub bouncer so hard he broke a bone in his hand, a court was told on Monday.

Terry, 21, suffered what doctors call a "boxer's fracture" to his right hand when he punched doorman Trevor Thirlwall on January 4.

Former England under-21 captain Terry was examined by Chelsea medical officer Neil Fraser the day after the player was alleged to have attacked Thirlwall at a central London nightclub.

Fraser told the jury at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court in west London: "The injury suggested he had broken that bone having put some degree of force through it."

"He had an X-ray and saw a specialist and it was confirmed he had a fracture."

"In the medical textbooks it's referred to as a boxer's fracture."

Terry has admitted punching Thirlwall once but claims it was self-defence and has denied glassing the bouncer with a beer bottle.

He claims that a fight broke out after bouncers attacked his friend, Wimbledon defender Des Byrne.

The two players were on a night out with another Chelsea player Jody Morris when the fracas happened.

# Premiership Lit up by Lua Lua

Football

AFP, London

Congolese international Lomana Tresor Lua Lua inspired Newcastle to an impressive Premiership campaign opener with two goals in a 4-0 home win over West Ham on Monday.

Lua Lua struck twice in 11 second-half minutes to set up the home side for a deserved victory at St James' Park.

Former England striker Alan Shearer added a simple third 14

minutes from time and then set up Nolberto Solano for the fourth goal in the dying minutes.

It was a night of many landmarks for Bobby Robson's side - it was the 50th Premiership win of the manager's reign, the club's 100th clean sheet since they returned to the top flight and, remarkably, the first time Shearer had scored for his home town club on the opening day of the league season.

West Ham, looking lightweight up front in the absence of injured forwards Paolo Di Canio and Frederic Kanoute, managed few efforts on Shay Given's goal and were outclassed by the hosts in a

one-sided contest.

Lua Lua refused to let his head drop after failing to convert a couple of early chances.

"The manager just kept telling me to hit the target and when I was missing I knew that my chance would come in the second half and it did," he told Sky Sports.

Shearer was convinced that Newcastle would eventually wear West Ham down despite going in goalless at the interval.

"We knew if we kept passing something would drop our way," he said.

"We got a little break and it was a great finish from Lomana through the keeper's legs, and once we got one everyone grew in confidence and it was just a matter of how many we were going to get."

The Magpies could have been in front before the interval when Shearer slotted into an empty net after Hammers' centre-back Christian Dailly stumbled chasing a ball back to his own goal.

But referee Paul Durkin judged Shearer had pushed Dailly in the back before tucking the ball home.

The breakthrough finally arrived with 61 minutes gone when the impressive Jermaine Jenas flicked on a Solano corner and Lua Lua arrived right on time to dispatch the ball into the back of the net.

West Ham goalkeeper David James made a magnificent stop moments later to deny Hugo Viana a goal on his Premiership debut, but there was nothing the keeper could do to keep out Lua Lua once again with 18 minutes remaining.

Solano's cross field pass picked out Viana on the left, and his ball was perfectly weighted for Lua Lua to power home his second with a bullet header.

Not to be outdone, the United skipper got in on the act four minutes later as his side ran riot, turning up on the end of a superb exchange of passes between Solano and Lua Lua to steer the Peruvian's cross home.

Shearer returned the favour four minutes from time when he jinked his way into the box to cross for Solano to add a fourth goal with the Hammers in total disarray.



PHOTO: INTERNET

**LUA LUA SPECIAL!** Newcastle United's Congolese recruit Lomana Tresor Lua Lua in the middle of a somersault while celebrating one of his two strikes against West Ham United at Saint James' Park on August 19.

# Vogts wants bravehearts

Football

AFP, Glasgow

Berti Vogts has called upon Scotland to show their true fighting spirit when he leads his side out for the first time at Hampden Park against Denmark in a friendly here Wednesday.

Vogts, who won the World Cup with the then West Germany back in 1974 and a former Germany coach, has only led the Scots out once on home soil so far, against Nigeria at Aberdeen in April.

And the 55-year-old feels the fact that Scotland, unlike Germany and England, actually have a national stadium will hopefully play in his favour.

"It is my first match at Hampden and it will be a special occasion at the national stadium. Germany and England are both still looking for a national stadium," said Vogts who has fond memories of Hampden prior to its recent refurbishment.

"I remember playing there in a very different time in the World Cup qualification in 1969."

"There were around 129,000 people there and it was not an easy game for us. The atmosphere was absolutely fantastic for that game."

Scotland's last friendly before their first qualifying match - against

the Faroe Islands on September 7 - begins for the 2004 European Championships should also provide Vogts with the chance to run the rule over Rangers midfielder Barry Ferguson who, due to injury, has been unable to play for his new national coach.

The influential 24-year-old



BERTI VOGTS

should play for Scotland for the first time in 17 months alongside debutant Derek McInnes, a former Rangers player who is now captain of English Premiership new boys West Bromwich Albion.

Although Ferguson has not yet had a chance to show Vogts his wares at international level, the manager believes he has plenty to

offer Scotland in the years to come.

Vogts said: "I hope he will look back at the age of 35 or 36 and think that he has given a lot of confidence to Scottish football and Scotland."

"I hope he will be able to look back on a great career for club and country."

"Barry Ferguson is one of the best midfielders in Britain. I saw him against AC Milan and he is a fantastic player. But we need a good combination to supply the forwards."

"It is not only about Ferguson. We also have to think about Paul Lambert, Gary Naysmith and Robbie Stockdale."

So far Vbogts has only won one game in charge of the Scots. After a forgettable 5-0 drubbing by then world champions France in Paris, the Scots played better in their defeat to Nigeria in Aberdeen.

On their Asian tour Scotland won their first game under Vogts - against a Hong Kong Select XI in May.

But Vogts says he will continue to play quality sides as he attempts to build a solid team for the future.

"We need good opposition. I am looking for an attacking side," he added when asked about the Denmark game.

"This is not a friendly for us. We are playing the team who are 12th in the world."

# Three Lazio deals annulled

REUTERS, Milan

Serie A club Lazio have had three transfer deals annulled by the Italian Football League due to the clubs' parlous financial state.

The Football League said in a statement that they had not approved the transfers of Christian Manfredini and Brazilian Eriberto from Chievo Verona nor Massimo Oddo's move from Verona to Lazio.

The ruling means that the three players will now have to return to their original clubs unless they can arrange new moves or Lazio can produce guarantees of their ability to pay for the players.

The decision is the latest sign of the growing financial crisis within Italian soccer.

Oddo is currently training with the Italian national team ahead of Wednesday's friendly with Slovenia which could see his international debut. But he may yet be forced to return to Verona, who were relegated to Serie B last season.

Wingers Manfredini and Brazilian Eriberto were two of the key players in Chievo's impressive debut season in Serie A, which saw the team from the tiny Verona suburb finish in fifth place and qualify for the UEFA Cup.

Lazio were not immediately available for comment.

# Italian clubs vote to delay start to season

REUTERS, Milan

Italian clubs have voted to delay the start of the Serie A season by two weeks due to a row over television rights, Gino Corioni, president of Brescia soccer club said on Tuesday.

The Italian Football League voted to start the season on September 15 rather than the planned date of September 1 as eight of the smaller Serie A clubs are still without pay-per-view television deals for next season, Corioni said.

# Barca profit from Van Gaal return

AFP, Barcelona

Saving money was the motive behind Barcelona's decision to rehire Dutchman Louis Van Gaal for a second term as coach earlier this year, Spanish daily AS reported on Monday.

Van Gaal took Barcelona to the Spanish title in his first stint with the Catalan club in 1998 and 1999, but then resigned two years ago to coach the Dutch national team.

When he quit Van Gaal still had two years of his contract left to run, and by inviting him back to the Nou Camp hotseat before June 2003 Barcelona saved paying him two million euros (1.952m dollars) in loyalty bonuses, AS claimed in its report.

# Santini set for start

Football

AFP, Tunis

Jacques Santini faces his first test as the new France coach on Wednesday with a friendly against fellow World Cup flops Tunisia.

Whereas the Tunisians were not expected to get out of a World Cup group containing tournament co-hosts Japan, Russia and Belgium - Japan and Belgium advanced to stage two - the French turned in the worst ever showing of a defending champion, a first-round exit after failing to score a goal against Senegal, Uruguay and Denmark.

That led to the sacking of

Santini's predecessor Roger Lemerre and Santini took advantage of his stock being on a high - having just led Lyon to the French league title - to take the reins of Les Bleus.

Santini has called up several fresh faces - including Lyon striker Sidney Govou - while the club's keeper Gregory Coupet is set to make a second start in the absence of injured Fabien Barthez and Bordeaux's Ulrich Rame, replaced by Mickael Landreau of Nantes.

The other newcomers are Auxerre's classy defender Philippe Mexes and Anthony Reveiller, whom Lyon would like to capture from Rennes, as well as attacking midfielder Bruno Cheyrou, just arrived at Liverpool from Lille.

Meanwhile, Arsenal's combative midfielder Patrick Vieira said he would like to "become much more involved" in team affairs - but said he was not looking to displace Marcel Desailly as skipper.

"In my mind Marcel is the skipper, and there is no need for a change," said Vieira, though he has replaced legendary defender Tony Adams in taking the Arsenal armband.

Vieira has 56 caps under his belt, including a run of 40 on the trot and feels he should act as a senior statesman.

"With (my) experience I can allow myself to make my opinion known a little more often," Vieira said, while wishing he had done so at the World Cup two months ago.

"If we'd spoken a little more we might have avoided certain things. I spoke with Zinedine (Zidane). He has a few regrets too," said the Gunners stalwart.

"But the World Cup is in the past," he insisted. "It's nice to be back together - and the French team will doubtless rise again."



PHOTO: INTERNET

French superstars Thierry Henry (L) and Zinedine Zidane doing some stretching during a training session in Tunis on August 19.

# Unhappy Litmanen

Football

REUTERS, Liverpool

Finnish striker Jari Litmanen is unhappy at Liverpool but is resigned to enduring the last year of his contract at the English Premier League club with very little first team football.

Litmanen was signed by Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier from Barcelona on a free transfer in January 2001, but has only made 19 starts for the club and has been given squad number 37 for the new campaign.

"I really wanted more out of this move but when you are not playing it is difficult to remain enthusiastic,"

the 31-year-old Finland international was quoted as saying in Tuesday's Guardian newspaper.

"If I look at the last two seasons I have to admit it has not made me a happy person. Liverpool might have a problem keeping everyone happy at the club if they are not playing regularly."

"I would really like to play a bigger part in our championship race."

"It is purely the manager's choice and he does not explain why I am not getting in. All I hear is that 'we have a big squad and everyone will play some games.'"

"I know that Michael Owen and Emile Heskey are first choice players but if one of them was not playing last season it was either Robbie Fowler or Nicolas Anelka

who would play.

"Houllier is the boss at Liverpool and nobody argues with him. I will not either. I just have to accept my situation even if it makes me miserable at times."

When Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier signed El-Hadj Diouf after the World Cup, Litmanen was expected to return to Dutch side Ajax -- where he played for seven years before joining Barcelona -- but he could not agree terms.

"I don't think Liverpool expected me still to be here," Litmanen said.

"They expected every player to turn up for pre-season training except me. I have to accept I will probably be here for another 12 months, as I can see no solution to the problem."

Football

INTERNET, London

David Seaman has warned Arsenal that he cannot rule out the possibility of a repeat of his howler that saw



DAVID SEAMAN

England crash out of the World Cup. Seaman came unstuck against Brazil in the quarter-final when he was lobbed by Ronaldinho and his tournament ended in tears.

But while that memory will continue to haunt him the England goalkeeper admitted that he cannot

guarantee that a similar embarrassment will not happen again.

He said: "If I was to carry on playing for the next five or six years then it could happen again."

"That is the life of a goalkeeper and it is how you react afterwards which is important. You have to get on with life and you can't let it destroy you."

"We were doing really well at the World Cup and I have always wanted to win something with England, so it was very hard."

"But the response afterwards was fantastic and I had letters from all over the place."

"The people who got in touch really made a difference to me and genuinely helped me over the last couple of months."

"At the time my mind was all over the place and I didn't know what I was going to do but I went away and sorted myself out and I'm ready to have a good season with Arsenal."

Boss Arsene Wenger is looking to strengthen his goalkeeping ranks after Richard Wright moved to Everton and is now setting his sights on Croatia's Stipe Pletikosa, who plays for Hajduk Split.