

Just another super player!

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

47 million euros signing Ronaldo flew into the Spanish capital Madrid and said he wanted to be just "one more" player in the Champions League-winning Real team.

"Finally at Real Madrid. I am very happy and much calmer," Ronaldo told the club's official website in his first interview since Real finally reached a cliff-hanger deal with Inter Milan minutes before Europe's transfer deadline expired on Saturday.

"Now I am only thinking about starting work and getting into shape as soon as possible to make my dream of playing in this marvelous team come true," he said, adding that Real's goal must be "to win everything".

Hours earlier, the Brazilian striker, top scorer in his country's triumphant World Cup campaign in June, arrived in a private jet at an air base just outside Madrid where he was greeted by officials of his new club amid tight security.

Asked why he chose Real, Ronaldo told the club's website: "Because it's the best team in the world... It's true I played well in the

World Cup, but then I decided that I wanted to be happy in a team that could help me, rather than being just me who helped the team. And Real Madrid was the best option, without any doubt."

Ronaldo had no qualms about how he would fit into the star-studded side, which already boasts Zinedine Zidane, Luis Figo, Raul and Ronaldo's fellow World Cup-winner Roberto Carlos.

Ronaldo said he knew all four of these players and was sure they would greet him with open arms.

"I have spoken to Roberto (Carlos) and I think he's happy. I hope the rest of the squad is also happy because I want to be one more player at Real Madrid," he said.

Ronaldo said there had been difficult moments during the protracted negotiations between Inter and Real, but said he had always been firm in his determination to come to Madrid.

He said he was present at Saturday's negotiations and it was "one of the longest days of my life". But Ronaldo added that he always trusted in Real Madrid president Florentino Perez.

Ronaldo admitted that he had to work more on his fitness. "I think in about 20 days I will be fine," he added.

The Brazilian, who has been

plagued by injury over the last three seasons, will have a medical on Monday before his official presentation as a Real player in the Santiago Bernabeu stadium at 1100 GMT.

Relaxed and smiling on his arrival, and no longer sporting his World Cup hair cut -- he had shaved most of his hair off at the finals except for a small wedge-shape at the front of his head -- the 25-year-old was immediately ushered into a waiting car before he could speak to the assembled press.

A convoy of five cars, escorted by members of the Spanish Civil Guard, then sped off to a restaurant in the foothills of the nearby Sierra Guadarrama where he lunched with Real sporting director Jorge Valdano and club president Florentino Perez.

The player was then driven to the capital where he checked in to a hotel in the city centre where he will remain overnight.

Real will pay the Italian club 35 million euros plus a player valued at between 10-12 million euros or a cash equivalent in order to acquire the services of the twice winner of the World Player of the Year award.



Arsenal's Ivory Coast recruit Kolo Toure (C) celebrates his goal as Chelsea custodian Carlo Cudicini (L) and defender William Gallas (R) pleads for an offside during their Premiership match at Stamford Bridge on September 1.

Mrs Ronaldo Leaves with heavy heart

Football

AFP, Milan



Milene Domingues, wife of Brazilian superstar and Real Madrid new signing Ronaldo, will be sad to leave Italy behind, it emerged Sunday.

But whereas Ronaldo is happy to have left Inter Milan for the start of a Spanish adventure Domingues was in tears Saturday as she had to bid farewell to her own football team, Fiamma Monza.

She will join Ronaldo in Spain next week but is unhappy at having to leave behind her other "family" - her teammates, Ansa news agency quoted the side's coach Raffaele Solimeno as saying.

"When we came back from pre-season training on Saturday I saw her crying for two hours during the five-hour trip," Solimeno said.

"It's a shame as I'd hoped she

would still play for us," he added.

"I proposed her a special personalised training schedule for Madrid that she join us Friday and Saturday for the match. But Milene doesn't want that. She adores her husband and wants to follow him with their son. The idea of coming back to Milan at the weekend doesn't attract her."

Contra joining Atletico

AFP, Madrid

Romanian international Cosmin Contra will join Atletico Madrid from AC Milan for eight million euros, Spanish radio reported on Sunday.

Contra, who many people rate as the best right back in the world, joined Milan from another Spanish club Alaves in the summer of 2001.

He becomes the 10th signing that the newly-promoted Atletico have made this summer.

Atletico were the Spanish league and Cup double winners in 1996 but who have spent the last two seasons in the Spanish Second Division.

Contra is expected to be officially presented as an Atletico player on Monday after a medical inspection.

The latest buy takes Atletico's purchases this summer to 34 million euros, and makes them biggest spenders in Spanish football.

Premiership Gunners owe Toure one

Football

AFP, London

Ivory Coast international Kolo Toure's first English Premiership goal ensured a point for 10-man Arsenal as the reigning champions drew 1-1 with London rivals Chelsea in an ill-tempered encounter here at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

Arsenal rallied after captain Patrick Vieira was sent-off for a second bookable offence four minutes into the second half.

Earlier, England keeper David Seaman endured another moment of free-kick misery when Gianfranco Zola's long-range effort gave Chelsea the lead 11 minutes before half-time.

The result stretched Arsenal's unbeaten league run to 25 games but meant they were still second in the table, two points behind arch north-London rivals Tottenham.

Afterwards Vieira pleaded with referee Andy D'Urso to change his mind. "It is always difficult for the referee with the crowd and players. But, thinking about myself, two yellow cards was wrong," France star Vieira told Sky Sports.

Julio Alvarez celebrated his summer move from Racing Santander to Rayo Vallecano by scored twice against Alaves, the second after 64 minutes from the penalty spot after Delif Geli had pushed Rayo striker Roberto Peragon.

However, the score finished 2-2 after Ivan Alonso and Magno Mocelin equalised for the club from Vitoria each time after Alvarez had put Rayo had gone ahead.

In other games, throwing away two goal leads was the theme of day.

Newly-promoted Recreativo Huelva looked to be on their way to their first victory since their last appearance in the First Division 23 years ago after early goal from Raul Molina and Emilio Viqueira, but lost their way when Malaga's Kiki Musamaga got into his stride.

Malaga won 3-2 at their near neighbours when the dreadlocked Dutchman hit a hattrick in 20 minutes, his first goal coming six minutes before the break and his last 14 minutes after the restart.

Villarreal were two ahead after just 14 minutes thanks to a brace from Victor Fernandez only for Osasuna to make the final score 2-2 with late goals from Antonio Lopez and Pablo Garcia.

team has been great physically, technically and mentally.

"The sending of Vieira was harsh: he went to play the ball on both occasions.

"I hope the referee, out of the heat of the game, will look at it again and reconsider his decision," Wenger added before praising Arsenal's resilience.

"At 1-0 down, 40 minutes to go on an away ground, we've shown our great strength again."

Seaman, deceived by Ronaldinho's 35-yard free-kick which sailed over his head for the decisive goal that saw eventual champions Brazil knock England out 2-1 in the quarter-finals of this summer's World Cup, was beaten from even further out on Sunday.

Zola himself won the free-kick after being brought down by Vieira.

The France star protested but veteran Italian Zola dusted himself down and sent in a curling effort from 40 yards.

Chelsea striker Eidur Gudjohnsen stole in behind the Arsenal defence and Seaman, no doubt anticipating a deflection, stayed on his line.

But the Iceland forward failed to make contact and with Seaman, 39 later this month, rooted to the spot, the ball bounced in front of goal and over Seaman's head and into the net.

A goal down at half-time, Arsenal's plight soon worsened when Vieira was sent-off for a second bookable offence by D'Urso following a late challenge on Jesper Gronkjaer.

However, Arsenal hit back on the hour mark when substitute Toure equalised.

He initiated the move that saw Sylvain Wiltord shoot after England full-back Ashley Cole's cross had cleared the home defence.

Chelsea keeper Carlo Cudicini parried but could do nothing about Toure's follow-up header which also evaded covering defender William Gallas on the goal-line.

Chelsea boss Claudio Ranieri had surprisingly left star striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink on the substitutes' bench.

But with 23 minutes to go he brought on the Dutch forward, recently linked with Barcelona, for Zola as Chelsea went in search of a

winner.

And three minutes later Ranieri sent on Mario Stanic in place of Boudewijn Zenden in a bid to give Chelsea extra impetus.

In the first half it was Chelsea who initially forced D'Urso to take disciplinary action, midfielder Frank Lampard booked for a late challenge on Vieira.

Then Chelsea full-back Graeme Le Saux, responding to an earlier elbow by Ray Parlour which only resulted in a free-kick, received a yellow card for a reckless tackle that took away the midfielder's legs.

Chelsea might have taken the lead in the 26th minute when Gronkjaer beat Cole.

His enticing cross was narrowly missed by the diving Gudjohnsen, but with the Arsenal defence distracted, the ball ran through to the unmarked Zenden who then pulled his shot across goal from 10 yards.

Earlier Sunday Michael Ricketts' 56th-minute penalty was good enough to give Bolton their first points of the season in a 1-0 win over Aston Villa that took the Lancashire side off the bottom of the table.

To make matters worse for Villa they saw their England striker Darius Vassell limp off shortly before half-time.

Villa boss and ex England manager Graham Taylor immediately ruled Vassell out of next week's international friendly against Portugal.

"He has a hamstring injury and with the England squad being named tomorrow (Monday) he will be pulled out of it," Taylor said.

Primera Liga Champs start like champs

Football

AFP, Madrid

Spanish champions Valencia got the defence of their title off to a promising start with a comfortable 2-0 win away at Real Mallorca on Sunday, despite all its recent off-the-pitch strife.

Last season, the club was renowned for its rows and public bickering until they entered the home straight and this summer has seen some old quarrels reignited with coach Rafa Benitez falling out with his Argentine winger Kily Gonzalez and fellow Argentine Pablo Aimar coming to blows with several of his teammates.

"However, all that was quickly put behind them when Uruguayan international Gustavo De Los Santos wasted little time in putting Valencia ahead.

De Los Santos got only one goal all last season but equalled that tally just 11 minutes into the new season when he stabbed home a pass from Francisco Rufete.

Spanish international midfielder Ruben Baraja got Valencia's second goal early in the second half from close range and the visitors continued to attack at will with only poor finishing preventing the scoreline being even more embarrassing for the Balearic island club.

"This is the side of Valencia everyone likes the most," said Benitez after the match, hinting at the recent problems.

"This is the Valencia that everyone knows and wants, and now it is up to us to see whether we can retain our form. The players showed their true faces on the pitch and that's made me very satisfied."

Deportivo la Coruna ran Valencia close in last season's championship race but this year it could be Real Betis who are challenging for the top spot instead.

Betis won 4-2 at Deportivo - who only lost at home twice all last season - with a display of attacking football which saw them go 4-1 up in 53 minutes before easing off in the final half hour.

Brazilian striker Assuncao showed that the 10 million euros the Andalusian club paid for him from AS Roma could prove to be a bargain as he got the opening goal with a swerving thunderbolt from the edge of the area and then hit the bar twice.

Right winger Joaquin Sanchez has clearly not had any hangover from Spain's World Cup campaign and tore Deportivo's hapless defence apart in the service of

others before finally finding the net himself for the Seville club's fourth goal.

Barcelona fought out a frantic 2-2 draw with Atletico Madrid with the pair of fallen Spanish giants suggesting that they may be on the verge of returning to their glory days.

Luis Enrique Martinez put the Catalan hosts ahead after just five minutes, pouncing on a defensive error by Atletico's Jorge Otero.

However, Otero made up for his mistake by scoring on the stroke of half-time.

Luis Enrique then got Barcelona's second shortly after the break before Fernando Correa levelled the scores three minutes from time.

Real Sociedad won their Basque derby battle 4-2 against Athletic Bilbao, with Real's new signing Valery Karpin opening the scoring with a right foot shot after 29 minutes.

The Russian midfielder also played for Real Sociedad between 1994 and 1996 and will have done his popularity no harm at all after terrorising the Athletic defence throughout the game.

Carlos Gurpegi got his first ever goal in the top flight of Spanish football to bring Athletic quickly back on level terms but Real took control again and never relinquished it when Nihat Kahveci found the net after 34 minutes.

One of the heroes of Turkey's remarkable World Cup run, Nihat got his second goal after 63 minutes and although Gurpegi closed the deficit 12 minutes later, Darko Kovacevic's header after 76 minutes proved to be the clincher.

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attack on an Asian student for which they faced two crown court trials.

"It is a new season and there are new qualifications and I have no problem in picking them," said Eriksson.

"I have said before that if someone has been punished for what

Premiership's top six

English Premiership table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Tottenham	4	3	1	0	6	3	10
Arsenal	4	2	2	0	10	5	8
Liverpool	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Leeds	4	2	0	2	7	4	6
Chelsea	4	1	3	0	7	6	6
Charlton	4	2	0	2	6	5	6

League One Nice going for Nice

Football

AFP, Paris

Surprise packages Nice maintained their early grip on the French League One (First Division) after the weekend's action when Auxerre could only garner a goalless draw in the Sunday match at Marseille.

Nice, who Saturday earned a precious point at the Parc des Princes in a 1-1 draw with Paris St Germain, lead the way on goal difference with 10 points from five matches for a spectacular return to the top flight following promotion last term.

Auxerre, who in midweek booked their passage into the Champions League opening group phase at the expense of Portugal's Boavista, have made an equally solid start after placing third last season but they were unable to find a way past a determined Marseille side at the Stade Velodrome.

In fact it was Guy Roux's side who were hanging on as Marseille made most of the running in front of a 55,000 crowd.

Cyril Chapuis twice failed to give the hosts the lead, missing a gilt-edged chance midway through the first half after Ibrahim Bakayoko

League One's top six

French League One table after Sunday match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Nice	5	3	1	1	6	14	10
Auxerre	5	3	1	1	6	3	10
Lens	5	2	3	0	6	4	9
Paris SG	5	2	3	0	5	3	9
Lyon	5	2	2	1	15	8	8
Guingamp	5	2	2	1	9	5	8

Leeds duo in, Seaman out

Football

AFP, London

England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson on Monday called up Leeds duo Jonathan Woodgate and Lee Bowyer into the national squad for Saturday's friendly with Portugal just under three years after they were originally suspended from international duty.

In his first squad since England's elimination from the World Cup at the hands of Brazil, Eriksson has also dropped veteran goalkeeper David Seaman.

Woodgate, who has represented his country once before against Bulgaria in June 1999, was cleared for selection at the start of this season after serving his 100-hour community service sentence for affray.

Bowyer, meanwhile, was cleared of all legal charges but was not previously picked by Eriksson for footballing reasons until the squad to face Portugal at Villa Park in Birmingham was named Monday.

They were joined by Elland Road team-mates goalkeeper Paul Robinson and striker Alan Smith, as well as defender Danny Mills, although keeper Nigel Martyn was dropped.

With Eriksson naming a relatively small squad of just 20 names due to injury concerns, the further omissions of Martin Keown and Teddy Sheringham nevertheless appeared to indicate the end of their international careers.

However, it is the selection of Woodgate and Bowyer which will cause the most controversy after they were accused of a night time

Ziege in shock

AFP, Frankfurt

Germany defender Christian Ziege will miss his country's opening Euro 2004 qualifier next Saturday against Lithuania in Kaunas following the death of the Tottenham player's mother.

"My mother has died unexpectedly. She probably had a heart attack. I can't imagine playing for the national team right now," Ziege said on his website.

Ziege, who played for Germany in the 2-0 World Cup final defeat by Brazil, also missed Tottenham's 2-1 win over Southampton on Saturday and instead flew to Munich to see his father.

"After such a blow I totally understand," said Germany coach Rudi Voeller.

German Cup Hertha only casualty

AFP, Berlin

German giants were having things all their own way in the first round of the German Cup - until minnows Holstein Kiel came along Sunday to put the skids under Hertha Berlin.

Third Division Kiel had held the Berliners 1-1 over 120 minutes before advancing 3-0 on penalties for a famous win.

But elsewhere there was little sign of the form book being upset.

Arminia Bielefeld crushed fourth division Saarbrucken while 1860 Munich whipped another amateur side, Alemania Aachen, 7-0.

Bayer Leverkusen, last season's finalists, were later meeting Third Division Rot-Weiss Essen.

On Saturday, holders Schalke just scraped past Bayern Munich's amateurs 2-1 with Danish international Ebbe Sand and Belgian forward Emile Mpenz on target against Third Division opposition.

Schalke had former German international midfielder Andreas Moller sent off 20 minutes from the end for a second bookable offence.

Bundesliga champions Borussia Dortmund eased through with an efficient 3-0 win at amateur side Concordia Ihrove thanks to second-half efforts from Jorg Heinrich on the hour and late clinchers from Jan Koller and Otto Addo.

Ten-time winners Bayern Munich scored a similarly clinical if unspectacular 3-0 success at Werder Bremen's amateurs.

Brazilian Giovane Elber broke the deadlock six minutes after the break and Peruvian international Claudio Pizarro and Michael Ballack made sure of the win.

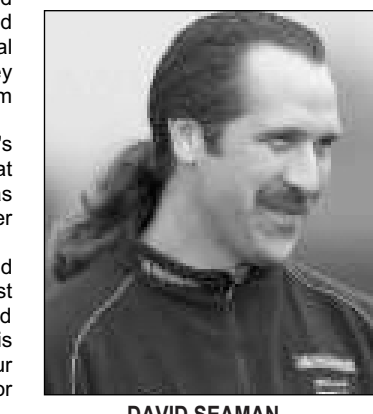
The Bundesliga incarnation of Werder Bremen, four-time winners who last lifted the trophy in 1999, had a tougher assignment as they eased past amateurs Stahl Eisenhutenstadt 1-0 with a 10th-minute goal from Greek new arrival Angelos Charistaeas.

Current Bundesliga pacesetters Bochum scored a 3-1 win at Third Division minnows Erzgebirge Aue despite going a goal down after just three minutes.

Hamburg romped home 6-0 against amateurs Schonberg while Stuttgart won 4-0 at Paderborn.



Javier Saviola (R) of Barcelona leaves Atlético de Madrid's Bosnian defender Misrad Hibic in his wake during their Primera Liga match at the Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona on September 1.



DAVID SEAMAN

SQUAD
Goalkeepers: David James (West Ham), Paul Robinson (Leeds)
Defenders: Danny Mills (Leeds), Ashley Cole (Arsenal), Wayne Bridge (Southampton), Rio Ferdinand (Man Utd), Gareth Southgate (Middlesbrough), Jonathan Woodgate (Leeds)
Midfielders: David Beckham (Man Utd), Nicky Butt (Man Utd), Kieron Dyer (Newcastle), Trevor Sinclair (West Ham), Danny Murphy (Liverpool), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Owen Hargreaves (Bayern Munich/Ger), Lee Bowyer (Leeds), Joe Cole (West Ham)
Attackers: Michael Owen (Liverpool), Emile Heskey (Liverpool), Alan Smith (Leeds).