

Queiroz takes over at Real

Football

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid's new coach Carlos Queiroz aimed a swipe at his predecessor Vicente Del Bosque here Wednesday declaring the star-

Bosque had already achieved that. "Queiroz accepted the challenge of becoming the coach of the best club in the world with the best players in the world and therefore his task is to offer the best football in the world," said Perez, who since he became supremo has lured Figo, Zinedine Zidane, Ronaldo and Beckham to the club.

years after taking over from Welshman John Toshack in November 1999 when the club was in crisis.

Queiroz also paid tribute to United manager Alex Ferguson who allowed him to leave. "He is a person of great sensitivity and humanity," he said.

Inzy turning to county cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

Prolific Pakistan batsman Inzamamul Haq is ready to play league cricket in England to try to salvage his international career.

"Since there is no domestic cricket being played in Pakistan, the only way I can satisfy the selectors about my fitness is to play some league cricket," Inzamam told this news agency on Wednesday.

"I have contacted some league clubs in England through my Pakistan teammates who are in England. Hopefully, I should be active in league cricket by early July," he said.

The 33-year-old was one of the eight senior players axed from the Pakistan team following the World Cup in which he scored just 19 runs in six matches.

"I retain my hunger and passion for the game," Inzamam said. "I am not disheartened at being dropped after the World Cup. It happens to every player. You just have to fight back and make a comeback."

Inzamam has scored 6,214 runs in 85 Tests and 8,957 runs in 290 one-day internationals.

Big three for go-karting

AFP, New Delhi

The world's three top batsmen, Sachin Tendulkar, Steve Waugh and Brian Lara will assemble in India early next month to promote the fledgling sport of go-karting.

The three players, who endorse the Indian tyre company MRF on their cricket bats, will launch a go-karting tournament in the southern city of Madras on July five and six, a company release said on Wednesday.

The three cricketers will don specially designed racing gear and drive a few laps around the circuit in their go-Karts," the release said.

Go-karting, a poor cousin of Formula One, is run on 800 cc engines and has become a craze across India.

Many consider go-karting a stepping stone towards joining the big league of the Michael Schumachers of the racing world.

Australian Waugh will take time off from preparing for the short series against Bangladesh, while Lara will jet in from the West Indies after competing against Sri Lanka to join Indian super star Tendulkar in Madras for the event.

The trio will also field questions on cricket at a media conference being organised on the occasion.

Tendulkar, a racing fan, was gifted a Ferrari racing car by Schumacher when they met in England last year during India's Test tour.

Just gossip?

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid were reported Thursday to be ready to sell star striker Raul to Manchester United just a week after paying the English champions 35 million euros for England captain David Beckham.

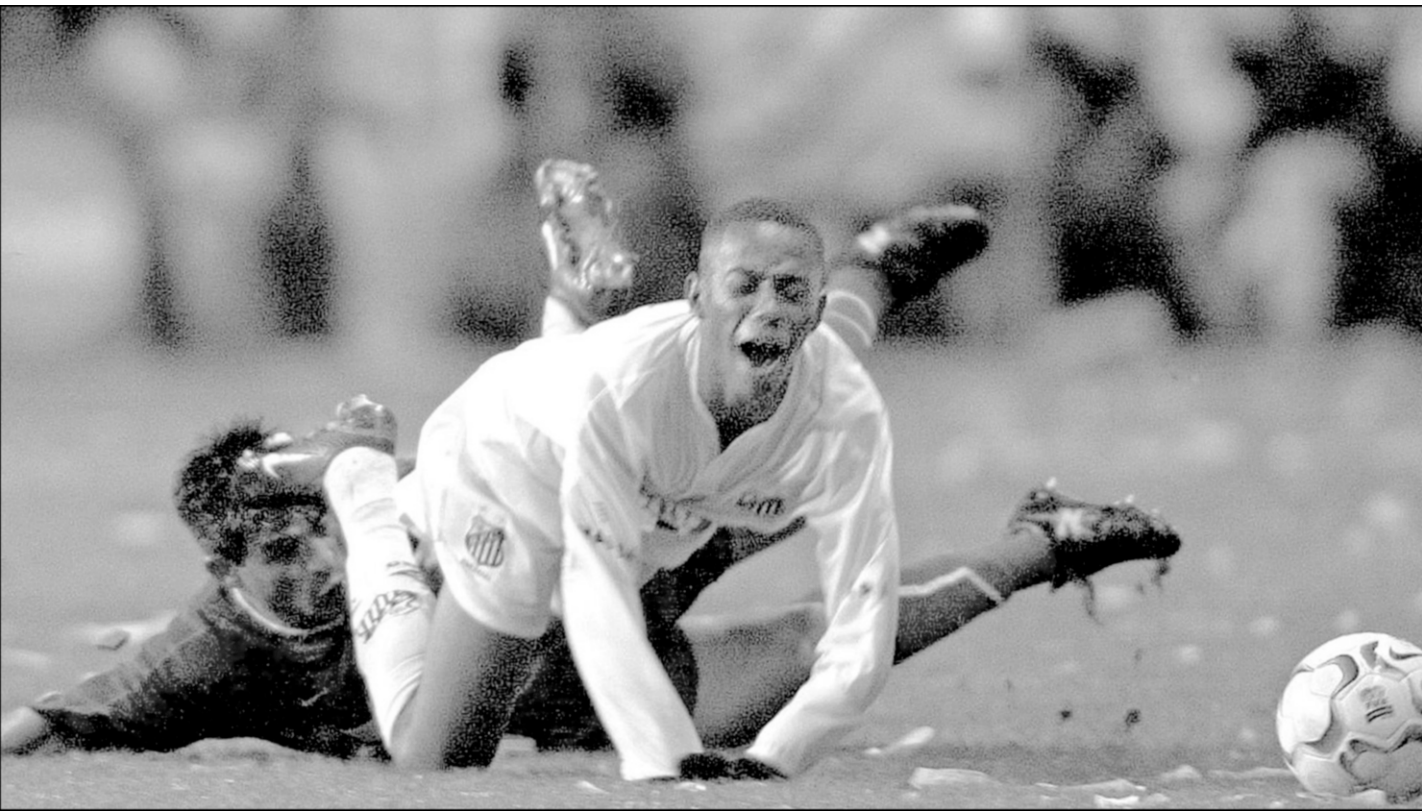
The Cope radio station said a deal was in the offing but Real denied the story.

Ronaldo was also reported by sports daily Marca to have pleaded with Real president Florentino Perez to sign his Brazil World Cup team-mate Ronaldinho from Paris St Germain.

Manchester are trying to sign Ronaldinho although Perez said last week he would be interested in the player for next season.

Cope also said that sacked Real coach Vicente Del Bosque and ousted Real captain Fernando Hierro have been offered jobs at relegated Madrid side Rayo Vallecano.

Real have replaced Del Bosque as coach with United assistant manager Carlos Queiroz who has promised that Beckham will be a first-choice player.



Santos prodigy Robinho (front) is brought down by Hugo Ibarra of Boca Juniors battle at the La Bombonera Stadium in Buenos Aires on June 25.

Copa Libertadores Final 1st leg Advantage Boca

Football

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Striker Marcelo Delgado scored twice to give Argentina's Boca Juniors a 2-0 win over Santos in the first leg of the South American Libertadores Cup final on Wednesday.

Delgado scored his eighth goal of the competition with a well-taken shot from the edge of the penalty area in the 33rd minute as Boca, Diego Maradona's favourite team, and Pele's former club played out a repeat of the 1963 final.

He added a second in the 83rd minute immediately after the Brazilian champions had full-back Reginaldo Araujo sent off for a second bookable offence.

The freak goal was a cruel blow for the Brazilian side after they had dominated most of the second half.

Delgado's goals, in a hard-fought game which produced more than 60 fouls and eight yellow cards, ended Santos's 12-match unbeaten record in the competition.

"It was an unjust result," Santos midfielder Diego said.

"Their team played with 10 players behind the ball which made things difficult but we still created some chances, we didn't take them and we paid the price. Now, we have to try and settle the tie in Brazil."

Santos, whose team has an average age of only 22, refused to be intimidated by the atmosphere of the Boca's Bombonera stadium and took the game to their opponents early on, winning two free kicks in good positions but failing to hit the target with either.

Boca's first real chance came in the 32nd minute when Delgado floated a free kick across the penalty area, the ball found Rolando Schiavi lurking at the far post and his point-blank shot was turned away by goalkeeper Fabio Costa.

The Argentines, who are attempting to win their fifth Libertadores Cup and their third in the last four years, went ahead from the resulting corner.

The kick was taken short to Delgado, who took the ball to the edge of the penalty area and instead of crossing, scored with a low shot which sneaked in at the near post.

Two minutes later, Fabio Costa made a full-stretch save to his left to turn away a shot on the turn by the lively Carlos Tevez as Boca enjoyed their best spell of the game.

Santos finished the first half with a flourish as Fabiano had a 25-

metre shot turned over by Roberto Abbondancieri and Robinho, whose famed dribbles were mostly ineffective, shot over from the edge of the penalty after breaking clear of the defence.

Santos took control in the second half, forcing Boca into some desperate defending.

Defender Alex was closest to equalised in the 68th minute when he shot wide from close range after a goalmouth scramble.

But it was Boca who scored again seven minutes from time.

The Argentines won a free kick around 30 metres from goal and Delgado's intended cross was missed by everyone in the penalty area and the ball bounced over a bemused Fabio Costa into the net.

The second leg is being played on July 2.

studded Spanish giants could play better as a team.

The 50-year-old, Mozambique-born, Portuguese coach made his comments as he was presented by club president Florentino Perez at a press conference after they had reached agreement for him to replace Del Bosque, who was sacked on Monday a day after guiding Real to their 29th league title.

"It is pointless to ask me to do my best because I am replacing Del Bosque," said Queiroz, who signed a two-year contract after leaving his post as assistant manager at English Premiership champions Manchester United after only a year.

"We are at Real Madrid and it is normal that it is demanded we do our best.

"As for the stars, it is not possible to get them to play better but it is possible to get them to play better football as a team."

Perez for his part demanded that Queiroz, who has coached two of the club's stars Luis Figo and new signing David Beckham at Sporting Lisbon and United respectively, provide spectacular football - though many believed that Del

"He must not only win but also give us a spectacular show."

Queiroz, who forged his reputation as coach of the Portuguese under-20 side that won two world championships in 1989 and 1991 and included such talents as Figo, Fernando Couto and Rui Costa, said his habit was never to make promises.

"My custom is to never promise but to produce results," said the former Portugal, United Arab Emirates and South Africa coach.

"It is a huge honour to coach a club with the best record in football. I hope I can live up to the aspirations of the club and the supporters.

"It is not the time for promises but to get on with the work and to do everything that is necessary to fulfil their hopes," he added.

Queiroz, though, faces a tough task to emulate 52-year-old Del Bosque, who despite his lugubrious look was adored by the players and the supporters and managed to soothe all the egos of the different stars.

He channelled that into landing two Champions League titles, two domestic crowns and a world club championship in just three

QUEIROZ Facts

AFP, Madrid

Factfile on Carlos Queiroz after his appointment as Real Madrid coach on Wednesday:

CARLOS QUEIROZ

Date of birth: March 1 1953

Birthplace: Maputo, Mozambique

Nationality: Portugal

COACHING CAREER

Clubs: Olivalis Lisbon (D2/1981), Belenenses (1982-83), Estoril Praia (assistant coach/1983-84), Sporting Lisbon (1993-96), New York/New Jersey Metrostars (USA/1996), Nagoya Grampus Eight (JPN/1996-97), Manchester United (ENG - assistant coach/2002-03)

Honours: Portuguese Cup - 1995 English Premiership - 2003

National coach

Coach of Portuguese youth side (1984-91)

Coach of senior Portuguese side (1991-93)

Coach of United Arab Emirates (1998-99)

Coach of South Africa (September 2000 - March 2002)

Honours: World Under-20 championships - (2) 1989, 1991

His work cut out

Football

AFP, Madrid

Carlos Queiroz's appointment as Real Madrid coach on Wednesday represents the new direction the Spanish giants apparently want to take - but don't count on him staying long.

The 50-year-old Mozambique born coach is one of a legion of bohemian managers who have coached on every continent but thanks to his reputation accrued over the years he has landed probably the most glamorous job in world football.

However while he declared that he never sets out targets for himself - publicly at least - he will have to go some to emulate the unfortunate Vicente Del Bosque, who was unceremoniously sacked on Monday a day after landing the club's 29th league title.

It seemed poor reward for the lugubrious looking former Spanish international, who had devoted the last 30 years to the meringues and rescued them from disaster in November 1999 landing two Champions League trophies and two domestic titles.

Queiroz forged his coaching reputation with the Portuguese Under-20 side - which included the stars such as Luis Figo, Fernando Couto and Rui Costa - winning two world championships with them in 1989 and 1991.

Since then, however, not one trophy has been added to his curriculum vitae, but he has earned the reputation of being one of the finest coaches in Europe, and Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson's stamp of approval in bringing him on board last summer said a lot about his quality.

"Bringing Carlos here was one of the best decisions I ever made," the Scotsman said.

His opinion was franked by former Ireland captain Roy Keane, whose respect is hard won as Mick McCarthy found out to his cost before the World Cup finals last year.

It followed an unhappy spell with South Africa where a disappointing

African Nations Cup last year ended with him resigning just months ahead of the World Cup finals - amid rumours of dressing room disenchantment and upsetting the powers that be in South African football. While Queiroz is Ferguson's cup of tea, he wasn't former England

manager Bobby Robson's as the doyen of coaches believed the Portuguese handler had lobbied to get him sacked - successfully as it turned out - from the Sporting Lisbon job so he could have it in 1993.



PHOTO: REUTERS

WELL-EARNED VACATION: Superstar Ronaldo arrives at the Tom Jobim International Airport in Rio de Janeiro on June 25, after helping his club Real Madrid win the Spanish League title.

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal have been told they will have to pay seven million pounds (11.6 million dollars) in cash for Leeds United's Australian star Harry Kewell.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger had hoped to tempt Leeds with four million pounds (6.6 million dollars) plus England Under-21 star Jermaine Pennant but Pennant, 20, has told Wenger he wants to stay and fight for a first-team place at Highbury.

Ray Parlour and Giovanni van Bronckhorst, also offered as possibilities in a player-plus-cash deal, have also said they do not want to move.

Leeds have been told by Kewell's agent Bernie Mandic his future will be decided by the end of this month. The 16-goal Aussie has rejected Leeds' offer of a new four-year deal worth 48,000 pounds (80,000 dollars) a week, which Leeds said on their website were the

best-ever terms offered a player at Elland Road.

Spanish giants Barcelona are now out of the running for Kewell but Wenger is facing a late challenge from Inter Milan.

The Italians have switched their sights to Kewell after being forced to admit defeat in their fight to land Luis Figo who wants to stay at Real

Lucio almost Roma's

AFP, Rome

AS Roma are on the verge of signing Bayer Leverkusen defender Lucio after the Serie A club agreed to pay 15 million euros (17.2 million dollars) for the Brazil international, according to Italian media reports on Thursday.

Reports said the fee will be paid to the German Bundesliga in installments over the next six years and that Lucio was discussing personal terms with Roma's director of sport Luca Baldini.

Madrid and link up with new Portuguese boss Carlos Queiroz after he quit Manchester United to go the Bernabeu.

Leeds manager Peter Reid has been told by chairman Professor John McKenzie the only money he will get to spend this summer is what he generates through sales.

Leeds have already banked 3.75 million pounds (6.25 million dollars) from Roma for French midfielder Olivier Dacourt.

So the Kewell cash will enable Reid to land his top two targets - Brazilian World Cup winner Kleberson and Northern Ireland winger Keith Gillespie, who has been freed by Blackburn.

Midfield star Kleberson will cost four million pounds from Brazilian club Atletico Paranaense and Reid is also hoping to raise a further five million pounds through the sale of goalkeeper Paul Robinson.

Aston Villa were expected to raise their offer to 3.5 million pounds but Robinson, 23, was expected to hold out for a switch to either Arsenal or Manchester United.

Real Madrid used a similar

Veron's heart with MU

Football

AFP, London

Argentine midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron hopes to help Manchester United win the Champions League next season after performing a U-turn about a move back to Italy.

"Right now my only thoughts are of United, and my aim is to improve my game," the 29-year-old Veron said Thursday.

"My first year at the club was so-so but in the second we won the Premiership title. Now I want to return to winning important trophies in Europe."

Manchester United were reported Tuesday to be ready to sell Veron to either Inter Milan or Juventus.

Manager Alex Ferguson, who last week sold England captain David Beckham to Real Madrid, was reported to have given up hope in Veron fulfilling his potential in the Premiership two years after he paid Lazio 28 million pounds (46 million dollars) for him.

Veron, who has three years remaining on his Old Trafford contract, had agreed he would probably be playing for either Inter Milan or Juventus next season.

But it was a different tune on Thursday.

"I know one day I will return to play in Italian football. But I am not planning to do so for the time being," he said.

Ferguson also seems set to give Fabien Barthez a second chance.

The erratic goalkeeper was dropped by Ferguson towards the end of last season and the United manager was believed to be ready to sell him.

But there have been no offers for the Frenchman and, despite buying American Tim Howard, Ferguson is to give Barthez another go.

"It was tough psychologically being number two but I'm not the boss," said the 31-year-old Barthez.

"But I never worry about what people think. The only person I have anything to prove to is myself."