

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.



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid's new coach Carlos Queiroz (R) watches as the club's President Florentino Perez introduces him at Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on June 25.

stunned 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

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 1953

Birthplace: Maputo, Mozambique

Nationality: Portugal

COACHING CAREER

Clubs: Olivas 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

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.

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 Pakistani 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.

He believed Beckham had the skill and stamina to play in central midfield.

"David is a brilliant professional, the type of guy who didn't miss one training session while I was at United. He is born to run - I say that because it's as if he's addicted to training and working, making himself fitter and stronger. I like that," Queiroz said Thursday.

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