

Rivaldo may sign Tuesday

Football

REUTERS, London

Bolton Wanderers hope Brazil's Rivaldo will accept by Tuesday to join them in the English premier league, the club's manager Sam Allardyce said.

"We are still talking and hopefully in the next 48 hours we will tell us yes or no," Allardyce told Bolton's website.

Former Barcelona and AC Milan striker Rivaldo, 32, is a free agent after leaving Brazil's Cruzeiro at the end of February and is in England discussing a deal with Bolton.

"Hopefully, we'll sort out all the (out of contract) players here before the end of the season," added Allardyce.

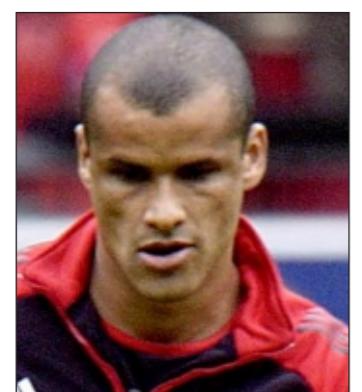
Even if the deal goes through, under Premier League rules Rivaldo would not be able to participate in the remaining games. Players, usually goalkeepers, are only allowed to be drafted in case of emergency.

Nevertheless Allardyce is keen to secure his signature as soon as possible, providing they can agree terms.

"We've been successful in the

past with talks with Youri Djorkaeff, Jay-Jay Okocha and Ivan Campo and we can be successful again.

"It would show there is no-holds-barred in our ambition to make the



RIVALDO

team better.

"It would show we have no problem dealing with the top end players, world-class players."

Nigeria captain Okocha and French World Cup winner Djorkaeff, whose contracts end this season, have not decided whether to stay on at Bolton.

Okocha has been nominated for the PFA Player of the Year award

that will be presented in London on Sunday night.

Allardyce, whose side face Southampton on Saturday, is anxious to take the club to higher level now their top-flight status has been secured.

That is why he has put pressure on chairman Phil Gartside and the board of the need to raise the bar financially if they hope to attract players of Rivaldo's quality.

"Ultimately there is a point where if you want to get into the top half, you may have to go a bit beyond what you really want to do financially," said the Bolton boss.

"You may have to speculate a bit more to accumulate. That's the name of the game and why we are in it."

"It is worth that risk now, worth that extra element as the whole club has proved it is sound, solid and reliable."

"To sustain that success, that's the way we should go. We should not be thinking about what the devastation of the First Division would bring."

"We should be getting past that scenario, providing we bring the right players in."



PHOTO: AFP

Fulham's Luis Boa Morte (C) is sent flying by Charlton's goalkeeper Dean Kiely (R) inside the D at Loftus Road in London on April 24.

Primera Liga

Deportivo's costly draw

Football

AFP, Madrid

Champions League semi-finalists Deportivo La Coruna drew 1-1 at Malaga on Saturday, a result that did nobody any favours despite an entertaining game.

Deportivo remain in fourth place while Malaga stay in eighth and squandered the chance to improve their position in the race for the two remaining places in next season's UEFA Cup.

The visitors demonstrated their early domination when Cesar Martin hit the post after 18 minutes and three minutes later Victor Sanchez put Deportivo ahead with an angled right-foot shot from the edge of the area.

Malaga coach Juande Ramos took stock of the situation and shortly afterwards sent on Miguel Canabal to bolster the attack.

It proved to be a protracted decision and four minutes from the break the much-travelled Canabal made the most of a fluffed clearance by Deportivo defender Hector Belenguer del Pino and blasted the ball home.

The home side had the better of the second half as Deportivo fell back on defence and had fair claims for a late penalty when Jorge Andrade appeared to push Malaga's Portuguese midfielder

Litos in the box.

However, the Malaga protests were waved away.

League leaders Valencia are at fifth-placed Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

Real Madrid, second only on goal difference, also play host to third-placed Barcelona on Sunday.

However both the bitter rivals will be lacking some of their usual firepower.

Real are without Ronaldo, who has problems with his left hamstring, while the Catalans will be missing Luis Garcia, who suffered a groin strain in training on Saturday.

At the other end of the table, Espanyol picked the right time to notch up their best home win of the season and beat Atletico Madrid 3-1 earlier on Saturday.

The victory means that the Barcelon-a-based side climb out of the relegation zone, at least for a day, and they keep alive their chances of escaping relegation to the Spanish second division.

Atletico let several first half chances go begging and instead it was Espanyol who broke the deadlock with Brazilian midfielder Fredson heading home an Ivan de la Peña corner after 64 minutes.

Espanyol never looked back after getting their noses in front.

A horrendous mistake by Atletico's Diego Simeone gifted Espanyol the second goal eight minutes from time, when the former Argentina captain sent a soft back

pass to his own goalkeeper Sergio Aragonés.

The ball arrived at the keeper's feet but Claudiu Raducanu managed to tackle Aragonés and then went round him before slotting the ball into the net.

Raducanu added a third with a header two minutes from time before Fernando Torres got a consolation strike for Atletico, his 16th goal of the season, with the last touch of the game five minutes into injury time.

Espanyol are now one place above the bottom three, although they may get pushed back into the drop zone if Real Mallorca can win at Valladolid on Sunday.

The loss means that Atletico, who started the day in seventh, fall off the pace in the race for the two remaining places in next season's UEFA Cup.

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