

# Crespo loaned to Milan

## Drogba deal near

### Football

AFP, Marseille

Marseille expect to sell Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba to English Premiership side Chelsea by the end of the week.

Three days after club president Christophe Bouchet denied they were considering the move, Marseille now admit they will be unable to resist a 35 million euro offer.

"We'll see by the end of the week

if Drogba leaves or not," said Marseille general manager Pape Diouf.

Marseille coach Jose Anigo added: "If the offer Christophe Bouchet has talked about comes in then it's only logic. It's a lot of money for the club."

Bouchet has already turned down a 28 million euro bid.

Chelsea appeared to be poised to return with an improved offer after their 16.8 million pound Argentina striker Hernan Crespo flew to Milan to complete a 12-month loan move. Milan said on their club website the

29-year-old had signed until June 30, 2005.

Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani said: "I am delighted Crespo will be coming to Milan."

New Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho had said they would only bid for Drogba if Crespo left.

Marseille bought Drogba, 26, for six million euros from Guingamp last year and his contract runs to 2008.

He scored 19 of Marseille's 47 goals in the French championship last season and 11 of their 18 goals in their path to the UEFA Cup final,

including a brace which killed off Newcastle in the semi-finals.

Marseille were already being linked with Ajax's Sweden striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Lyon's Congo-born French striker Peguy Luyindula, who scored 16 goals in the last championship.

Crespo began his career at River Plate before moving to Parma where he had a successful time - scoring 62 times in 116 appearances - and landed the 1999 UEFA Cup.

He joined Lazio for 35 million pounds and then had a season at Inter before joining Chelsea.

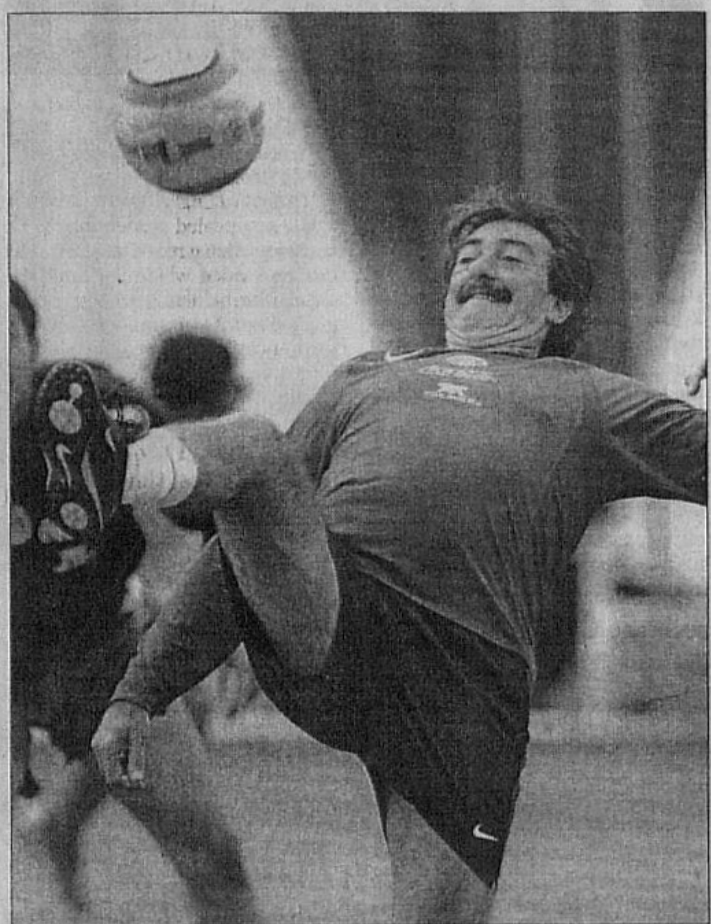


PHOTO: AFP

**IKNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT PLAYING TOO!** Ricardo Lavolpe, coach of the Mexican National team, controls the ball during a training session of his team at the Santo Toribio de Magravez school in Chiclayo on July 14.

## Lavolpe's philosophy



REUTERS, Hicalayo

Mexico coach Ricardo Lavolpe reiterated on Wednesday that he believes his team to be serious contenders for the Copa America.

Lavolpe, whose team will face either Paraguay or Brazil Sunday's quarter-final in Piura, said it did not matter who his team play.

"Whoever we meet, we have to overcome them so we can reach the grand final," the gruff 1978 World Cup winning former Argentina goalkeeper told reporters.

"We have to prepare for whatever comes, without worrying about what might be."

Mexico have enjoyed an excellent tournament so far, beating

Argentina 1-0 on their way to winning Group C with seven points from three games.

Their performance has been a boost for Lavolpe, who had been criticised after poor results in friendlies over the last 18 months.

One of Lavolpe's priorities has been to improve Mexico's self-belief and shake off their reputation as a team who start well but fade at the crucial stages.

Midfielder Ramon Morales, who scored the winner against Argentina with a brilliant free kick, and defender Ricardo Osorio are doubtful for Sunday's game because of injury.

Team doctor Jose Luis Serrano said Morales suffered a bruised right ankle in the 2-1 win over Ecuador on Tuesday while Osorio is being treated for a knock on his right knee.

Lavolpe said that striker Jared Borgetti, who went home on Monday after his sister died, was expected to return to Peru on Friday.

## Those Sino spies!



AFP, Beijing

Bahrain coach Srecko Juricic has revealed that Asian Cup rivals China have mounted a globe-trotting spying mission ahead of the two teams' tournament-opener here Saturday.

Juricic said he had spotted China coach Arie Haan or his assistants at several matches throughout the region in the build-up to Saturday's Group A showdown at Beijing's Workers Stadium.

"He's been following us," Juricic said of Haan. "He was in Lebanon watching us, he was in Thailand watching us, and one of his assistants came to watch us in Bahrain," the Croat added.

Whether Haan has been able to glean any useful information from the various scouting missions remains to be seen though. Juricic acknowledged that his team had been sending out mixed messages during their preparations.

"In Thailand we played poorly and won, while in South Korea we

played well and lost," said the 49-year-old, who leads Bahrain into their first Asian Cup since an appearance way back in 1988.

Bahrain are a rapidly improving team, a fact recognised by being the best mover in the FIFA world rankings in 2003.

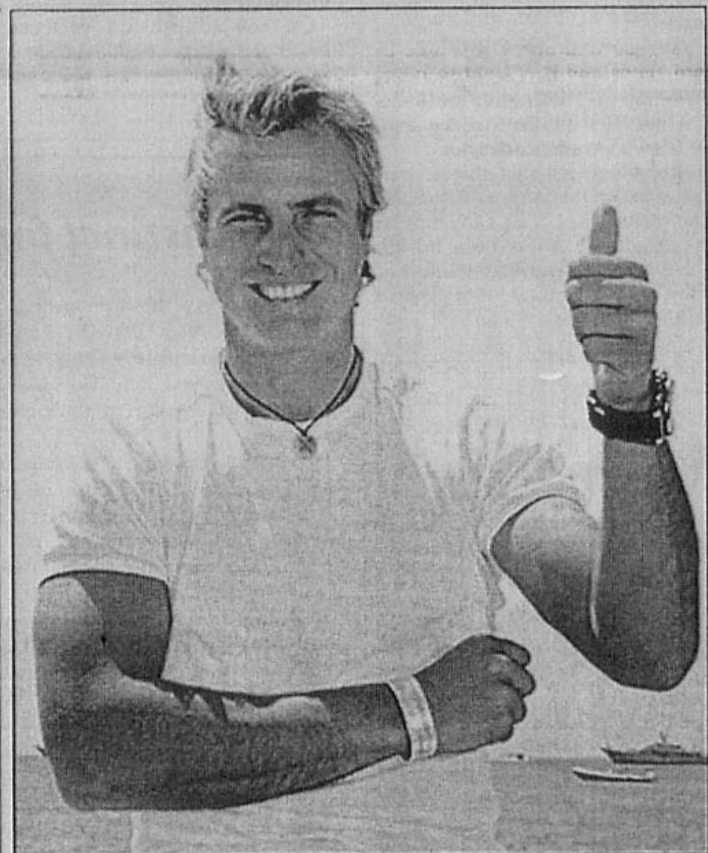
They also finished runners-up to Saudi Arabia at the last edition of the Gulf Cup and are top of their 2006 World Cup qualifying group.

Juricic knows his team face a formidable challenge against the host nation but insists the Bahrainis are championing at the bit to get started.

"Waiting is the worst part. The team would prefer to be playing as soon as possible," said Juricic. "It's going to be a very demanding match. The first match of any major tournament is always important. But we must remember that it is only three points."

China completed their preparations for the Asian Cup with a laboured 2-2 draw against the United Arab Emirates last weekend. But Juricic said he was not reading too much into that result.

"The UAE match was not their real face. They will be stronger against us," said Juricic, whose side also faces Qatar and Indonesia in Group A.



DAVID GINOLA

## Ginola the doctor!

### Football

AFP, London

Former French football glamour boy David Ginola is set to swap shampoo adverts for a doctor's white coat in a BBC soap opera, it was revealed on Wednesday.

The 37-year-old former French international - who will forever be remembered for giving the ball away that led to the Bulgarians scoring and beating France in the last minute to take their place at the 1994 World Cup finals - is to star in the top rated BBC hospital drama 'Holby City'.

"Producers are very excited and

think he will be a huge hit with female viewers," a BBC source told 'The Sun'.

"The character is cast specifically to be a smouldering sexy French doctor and the women will love it."

Ginola, who played for Newcastle, Aston Villa and Spurs in a largely successful career in England after leaving France, is a trained actor having undertaken a course at the prestigious Royal Academy and Dramatic Arts (RADA) school after retiring from football last year.

The BBC source said that Ginola hoped for his Holby City debut to be the start of a glorious acting career.

"David sees this as his big break into the BBC, and this could lead to other meaty roles," the source said.

## Moratti can't forget Ronaldo

### Football

INTERNET SOURCE

Inter Milan supremo Massimo Moratti hasn't given up on trying to bring Ronaldo back to the San Siro.

With Florentino Perez having secured the Real Madrid presidency for another two years, Moratti was quick to contact him this week with

his congratulations.

The phone call is also believed to have included an enquiry about Ronaldo. The Brazilian international has committed himself to a new contract at Real, but that hasn't deterred Moratti, who is prepared to splash out big to bring the striker back to Inter before his deal expires at the Santiago Bernabeu, says Tuttosport.

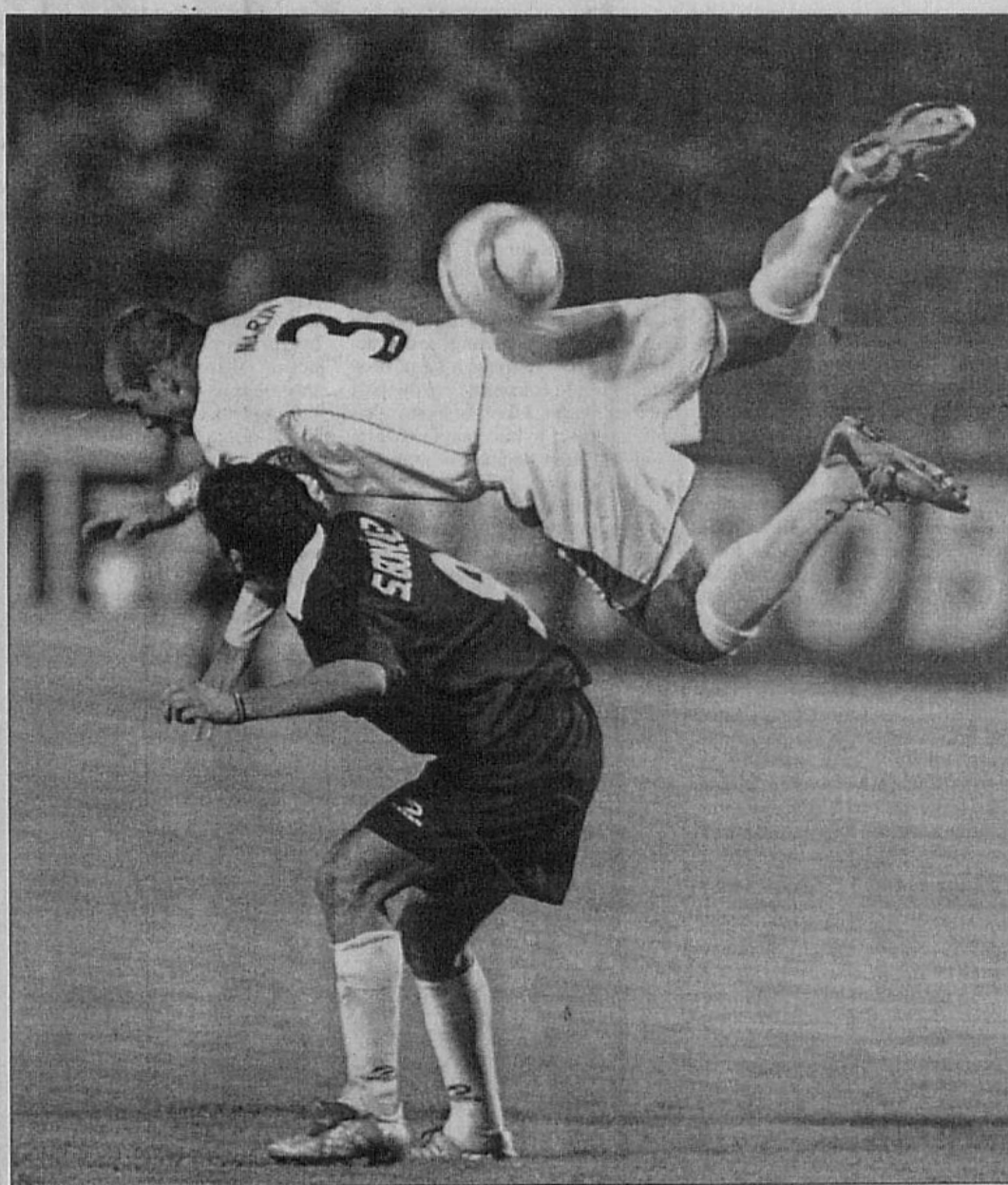


PHOTO: AFP

**WATCH OUT!** Costa Rican Luis Marin falls over Chilean Sebastian Gonzalez during their match on July 14.

## Hull's recognition for Collina

### Football

AFP, London

Italian referee Pierluigi Collina was awarded an honorary degree Wednesday by England's Hull University to mark his contribution to football.

Collina, widely regarded as the best referee in the world before his retirement from international football following the Euro 2004 Championships, was made a Doctor of Science.

Speaking before the ceremony at Hull town hall, north-east England, 44-year-old Collina said: "This is a very particular day for me. It's not usual for anyone to receive an honorary degree from a university, particularly for an Italian in England."

"The degree has been awarded for my ability as a referee on the field and I am proud that what I did on the field in the last 27 years has been recognised."

"I hope that what I did in the last years can help the image of other referees," added Collina, whose bald head and bulging eyes made him one of the most easily identifiable

sporting officials of his generation.

Collina also received a silver whistle engraved with the Hull University crest. "This is a very nice gift from the university, but it's a bit different to the whistle I'm used to on the field."

In a speech to graduating students, Collina said: "I am used to facing hundreds of millions of people on television but this is a very different experience for me."

"It is a great day for me as I am sure it is for you. What I wish you all is to have great success in your life and your future."

His degree was greeted with loud applause and David Sewell, Dean of Hull's Faculty of Applied Science and Technology, who made the presentation, said Collina was an appropriate recipient of such an award.

"We believe Pierluigi Collina brings a range of skills to the science of refereeing, including detailed knowledge of his subject matter, objectivity and fairness and the ability to make rapid decisions based on evidence such as events on the field. He also exhibits excellent communication skills, leadership qualities and calmness under considerable pressure - all skills valued

by the University of Hull.

"In addition, he is recognised by players, fans and other officials as an outstanding referee."

The Italian is 45 next February and so reaches the compulsory age for retirement at international level.

However his last international match ended in suitably dramatic style as Greece's Traianos Dellas headed in a silver goal winner in the dying seconds of the first-half of extra-time to give them an historic 1-0 victory over the Czech Republic in the Euro 2004 semi-final earlier this month.

He refereed the 2002 World Cup final between Brazil and Germany and is remembered for the way he handled the 1999 European Champions League final between Manchester United and Bayern Munich, when he consoled the weeping German players after they lost to two late goals.

"It is too easy to celebrate with the winners," Collina said. "It is more important to stay close to the losers. When you see someone crying it's normal to try to say something to them, even if it changes nothing."

## Shearer's threat

AFP, London

Former England captain Alan Shearer has warned Newcastle United he might ask for a transfer if manager Bobby Robson does not make him an automatic first-choice next season.

The prolific former Blackburn man is an iconic figure for The Magpies, and underlined his desire to remain at the club for what is expected to be the last year of his glittering career.

However, with Robson being linked with a number of strikers - including James Beattie and Patrick Kluivert - Shearer says he is not ready to play a bit-part role.

"If the manager said to me I wasn't going to be a regular, I'd have to consider things," said the 33-year-old.

"I want to play as much football as I can in my last season. I think there's a good year left in my legs."

"I was pleased with passing 20 goals again last season and I hope I do the same, if not better this year."

## Sheringham at West Ham

### Football

AFP, London

Former England striker Teddy Sheringham joined First Division side West Ham on a one-year deal Wednesday.

Last season 38-year-old Sheringham scored nine goals for Premiership side Portsmouth, managed by former Hammers boss Harry Redknapp, but left when his contract expired at the end of June.

West Ham just missed out on

promotion to the Premiership when they lost 1-0 in May's playoff final against London rivals Crystal Palace.

But Hammers boss Alan Pardew told the club's official website, www.whufc.com, that Sheringham could help take the team back to the top.

"I am very pleased to have signed Teddy, whose vast experience and goalscoring ability will be a vital ingredient to my promotion plans for this season," Pardew said.

"He is a proven goalscorer at all levels and will be a massive influence on the younger players in the squad."

## Wake up call

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ourselves against something that we knew was coming," Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira said.

"Losing is never nice but at least we could afford to lose this one."

Luis Fabiano scored a fine equaliser on 35 minutes, chesting down a cross from midfielder Kleber and shooting high into the net from a tight angle. The game seemed to be drifting toward a draw in the second half when Paraguay stunned Brazil by regaining the lead.

Figueredo knocked on a hopeful ball from midfield and a gaping hole opened up in the Brazilian defence, allowing Bareiro to slot the ball past Julio Cesar.

Paraguay coach Carlos Jara Sagüer said: "We all know that Brazil have excellent players and will make life difficult for you, but my players did an excellent job of organising themselves and snapping up the chances that came their way."

"What more can you ask?"

### COSTA RICA 2; CHILE 1

Costa Rica beat Chile on Andy Herron's goal three minutes into second-half injury time. Herron's goal eliminated Chile and Bolivia, who would have qualified if the score remained 1-1.

Chile captain Rafael Olarra put his team ahead in the 40th minute when he was in the right place at the right time. Luis Jimenez's free kick glanced off the back of Costa Rica defender Cristian Badilla and in off the right shoulder of Olarra.

Costa Rica tied it just before the hour mark. Alonso Solis sent in a free kick that rebounded to Walter Centeno, whose shot from the right wing was trapped in the goal mouth by teammate Mauricio Wright, who tapped in the ball.

Herron then scored the winner with a hard shot from the right side past Chile keeper Alex Varas.

Costa Rica, who eliminated Chile 2-1 on an injury-time goal earlier Wednesday, advanced as the second-best third-place team and will play Colombia this weekend.

## Stoichkov to the rescue

AFP, Sofia

Former Barcelona star Christo Stoichkov was made Bulgaria coach on Thursday, succeeding Plamen Markov after Bulgaria's woeful performance in Euro 2004.

The 38-year-old, leading scorer in the 1994 World Cup, was offered a two-year contract with an option for a further two years.

Stoichkov scored 35 goals in 83 internationals for Bulgaria. He ended his playing days with Barcelona in 2003 after a brief spell in the US soccer league.

A strong-headed man, he was often in conflict with coach Johan Cruyff in his Barcelona days.

His first task will be to qualify Bulgaria for the 2006 World Cup.

## Ricardo couldn't care less!

AFP, Lisbon

Portugal goalkeeper Ricardo has labelled as crazy the fans who have offered millions for the ball that England captain David Beckham blasted into the stands during the Euro 2004 penalty shoot-out against Portugal.

"I would not pay anything for it. It is the same as other balls," he told Portuguese daily 24 Horas, adding "there are crazies capable of anything."

A Spanish fan who caught the ball put it up for sale on an Internet auction site in Spain on Monday at a starting price of one euro but after little more than 48 hours bids reached 10 million euros (12.4 million dollars).

The online auction will close on July 22.

Ricardo became a national hero after he saved a penalty in the shoot-out then slammed the decisive spot kick into the net to give Portugal a 6-5 victory over England.

## Dunfermline observe Maradona junior

### Football

REUTERS, Glasgow

Diego Maradona junior, the son of Argentina's 1986 World Cup winner, began a two-day trial with Scottish premier league club Dunfermline Athletic on Thursday.

Dunfermline opened up their East End Park ground to enable the public to watch the 17-year-old forward train with the club's first team squad.

Maradona is in the youth ranks of Italian second division club Napoli, the team his father helped win their only Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990, as well as the 1989 UEFA Cup.

"There is always a risk when you bring in a foreign player but if he is good enough, we will take it forward," Dunfermline's director of football Jim Leishman told reporters.

Dunfermline, who will play in the UEFA Cup after finishing fourth in the SPL and Scottish Cup runners-up last season, first declared an interest in signing Maradona Junior last year.

Media reports had suggested that bigger clubs were also interested in signing the player, including Portugal's Benfica and England's Blackburn Rovers.

But Maradona's mother Cristiana Sinagra told local newspapers in Scotland that she felt her son had a better chance of first-team



DIEGO MARADONA JUNIOR

football at Dunfermline.

Maradona senior, 43, is regarded as one of the finest players in soccer history. Four years ago he was voted "player of the century" by fans on FIFA's official website.

He led Argentina to World Cup victory in 1986, scoring one of the best goals in the tournament's history in the quarter-final against England.

He has spent much of the past four years undergoing drugs rehabilitation treatment, and was admitted to hospital in April after suffering heart problems.

Costa Rica advanced as the second-best third-place team and will play Colombia this weekend.

The other quarterfinal match features Peru against Argentina.



PHOTO: AFP

**LEGEND FOR ETERNITY:** Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva and his wife Marisa Leticia pose with the great Pele during the presentation of the movie 'Pele Eterno' (Eternal Pele) at the Alvorada Presidential Palace in Brasilia on July 13. Pele, who was a member of three World Cup-winning teams and scored 1,283 goals in his career and is still one of the world's most recognized sportsmen, was honoured with this film on his life.