

Robinho just a matter of time?

INTERNET SOURCE, Madrid

Real Madrid is close to signing young Brazilian forward Robinho from Santos, the player's agent said Tuesday.

Negotiations are taking place for Robinho to join Madrid on June 30, just after the Spanish league season ends, agent Juan Figgers said.

He said it was impossible for Robinho to move earlier because Madrid already holds its maximum quota of three non-European Union players -- Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and Walter Samuel.

"We're close, but whenever it's an important contract details arise, sometimes important ones," Figger was quoted as saying by Europa Press. "We're talking about all these details. Players of a different level get signed up, but you don't sign up a high-level player like Robinho that easily."

Madrid has first option on Robinho even though other clubs also are interested, Figger said. English Premier League leader Chelsea is believed to be one of them.

Also Tuesday, Real Madrid's Luis Figo could be suspended for a rough play which left an opponent sidelined for at least six months.

National daily El Pais said Tuesday that the Spanish soccer federation's competition committee might punish Figo at its weekly meeting later in the day for his sliding tackle on Zaragoza's Cesar Jimenez even though referee Jose Losantos Omar didn't issue Figo with a card at the time.

HONG KONG TOUR
Brazil at full power

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil have named most of their big guns, including Cafu, Roberto Carlos, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and Adriano, in their squad for next month's friendly against Hong Kong in a move that is likely to upset European clubs.

Hard-tackling Juventus midfielder Emerson was recalled after an absence of more than one year while Santos forward Robinho, still the subject of speculation over a possible move to Real Madrid, was also named for the match in Hong Kong on February 9.

Emerson last played in the World Cup qualifier in Peru last March and Robinho made his only international appearance as a substitute against Bolivia in September.

Brazil's last visit to Asia, a friendly in China in February 2003, ended in a goalless draw and infuriated European clubs who were forced to release their players for the game.

Last August, AC Milan refused to release Kaka, Cafu and Dida for the so-called peace match in Haiti.

The Hong Kong fixture has already sparked controversy in Brazil itself, with the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) publicly denying that it is receiving a \$1 million fee for the fixture.

"The organisation does not have financial participation in this match," the CBF said in a statement.

The CBF says the match has been arranged by one of its sponsors.

Coach Carlos Alberto Parreira, who said last year that he preferred friendlies against top-ranking European teams, was diplomatic about facing a side who are 134th in FIFA's world rankings.

"This friendly fills a gap in the fixture list and keeps the national team in action," he said.

"We always get something positive from these games."

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Gomes (PSV Eindhoven, Netherlands), Julio Cesar (Flamengo)

Defenders: Cafu (AC Milan, Italy), Belotti (Barcelona, Spain), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid, Spain), Gilberto (Hertha Berlin, Germany), Juan (Bayer Leverkusen, Germany), Roque Junior (Bayer Leverkusen, Germany), Lucio (Bayer Munich, Germany), Luisao (Benfica, Portugal)

Midfielders: Alex (Fenerbahce, Turkey), Diego (Porto, Portugal), Elano (Santos, Brazil), Emerson (Juventus, Italy), Julio Baptista (Sevilla, Spain), Juninho Pernambucano (Olympique Lyon, France), Renato (Sevilla, Spain), Ze Roberto (Bayern Munich, Germany)

Forwards: Ronaldo (Real Madrid, Spain), Robinho (Santos, Brazil), Ronaldinho Gaucho (Barcelona, Spain), Adriano (Inter Milan, Italy)

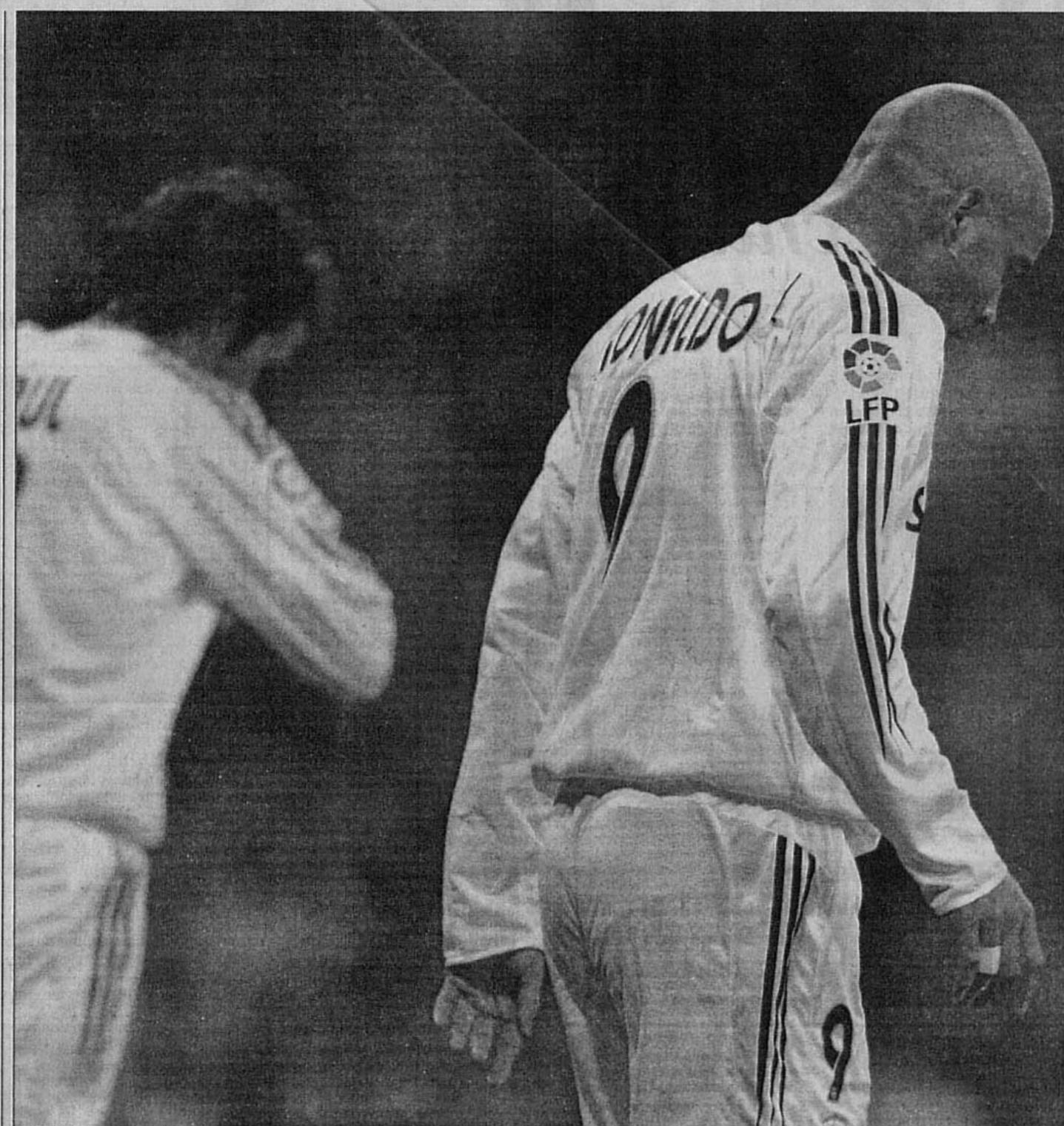
Savage drama finishes

AFP, London

The longest running saga of the January transfer window finally came to an end on Wednesday when Robbie Savage completed his move from Birmingham to Blackburn for a fee of around three million pounds.

The 30-year-old Wales international, one of the most combative and controversial midfield enforcers in the Premiership, has signed a three-and-a-half-year contract, Blackburn announced.

Savage is now clear to make his debut for Rovers in Monday's local derby against Bolton.



UEFA.COM'S TEAM OF THE YEAR

Henry keeps his place

Football

REUTERS, London

Arsenal and France striker Thierry Henry has been selected in the uefa.com users' team of the year for the fourth time in succession.

Henry has now been selected every year since the award's 2001 inception and was the only ever-present named in the 2004 team chosen by more than 1.2 million votes cast on UEFA's official website and revealed on Wednesday.

There are three players from Portugal -- mid-fielder Maniche and defender Ricardo Carvalho from Porto's Champions League-winning side and Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo.

Portugal's Jose Mourinho, who guided Porto to the European title before moving to Chelsea, is chosen as coach for the second successive year.

Henry is joined in attack by European Player of the Year Andrey Shevchenko. His AC Milan defensive colleague Alessandro Nesta is selected for the third year running, while Juventus pair Gianluigi Buffon and Pavel Nedved are honoured for the second year in a row.

Among six newcomers to the team are long-serving Brazil and Milan full back Cafu, Arsenal left back Ashley Cole, and Barcelona and Brazil playmaker Ronaldinho, who scooped over half of the votes in the attacking midfield player category.

Despite their success in winning Euro 2004, there were no Greek players in the team.

TEAM OF THE YEAR

Team of the year as voted for by 1.2 million users of UEFA.com

announced on Wednesday:

Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus/ITA); Cafu (AC Milan/BRA); Ricardo Carvalho (Chelsea/POR); Alessandro Nesta (AC Milan/ITA); Ashley Cole (Arsenal/ENG); Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United/ITA); Maniche (FC Porto/POR); Ronaldinho (Barcelona/BRA); Pavel Nedved (Juventus/CZE); Thierry Henry (Arsenal/FRA); Andrey Shevchenko (AC Milan/UKR).

Coach: Jose Mourinho (Chelsea/POR)

Wright-Phillips' chance

Football

AFP, London

Shaun Wright-Phillips, the terrier snapping at David Beckham's heels in the England squad, will be given his chance to impress in next month's friendly against Holland, head coach Sven-Goran Eriksson has confirmed.

But that does not necessarily mean that Beckham's place on the right of midfield is under threat from the Manchester City wide man, according to the Swede.

Eriksson is facing mounting pressure to drop Beckham from his line-up in favour of Wright-Phillips, who has already scored 10 goals this season and has been consistently outstanding for City.

But the coach revealed that he had been thinking about how he could accommodate both men in the same line-up, either by moving his captain Beckham into central midfield or by trying Wright-Phillips on the left flank.

"David now for one and a half years has played central midfield for Real Madrid so of course it's possible," Eriksson said.

"He could do that maybe for the national team as well. That depends on the way we want to play."

"It's not his best position but I'm sure Shaun Wright-Phillips could also play on the left, I'm quite sure about that."

"He's played second striker sometimes and he's clever so I'm sure he can play to the left but probably his best position is to the right."

When fit, Beckham has been an ever-present in England line-ups throughout Eriksson's four-year reign.

But his lacklustre performances at Euro 2004 and indifferent form for Real Madrid this season have presented Eriksson with a real dilemma about whether the world's most marketable footballer is really the best man to lead England into next year's World Cup finals in Germany.

A poll carried out by London's Evening Standard this week indicated that a large majority (61 percent) of England fans believe Beckham should lose the captaincy.

And despite Eriksson's comments about the possibility of playing Beckham in central midfield, the reality is that something would have to happen to Frank Lampard or Steven Gerrard for a vacancy to arise in that position.

Eriksson is also not short of suitable candidates to succeed Beckham as captain - Gerrard and Rio Ferdinand notably.

For now however he insists that is not a question that arises, although he does admit that Wright-Phillips deserves the chance he will be given against Marco van Basten's Dutch squad.

"We'll see if he starts or if he comes on in the second half, I don't know that yet," Eriksson said.

"He's doing better and better and he deserves to be in the squad and

maybe I'll decide to play him as well, I don't know."

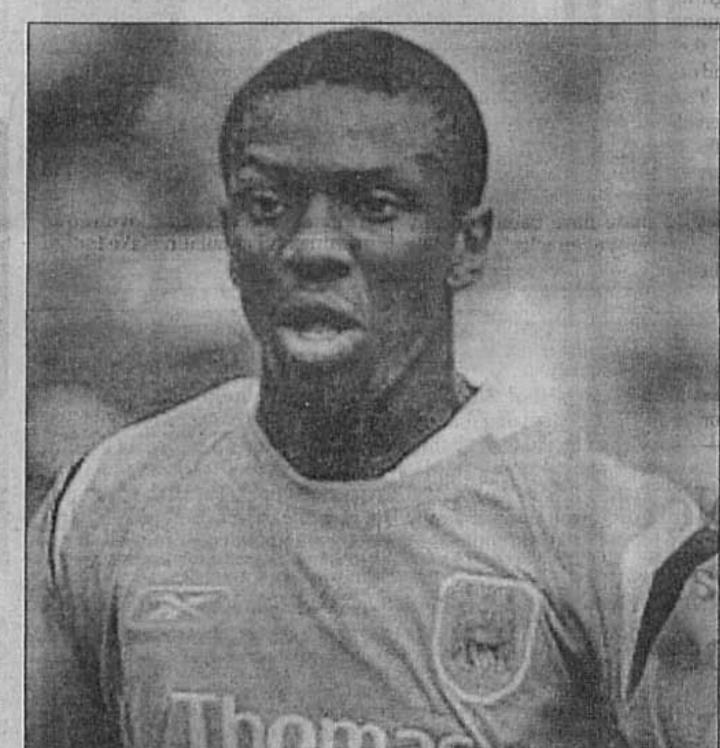
"He's very consistent and he's very tough. He's tackled but he always gets up again."

"I think that is important in international football and to be consistent in the Premier League is very, very good for a young player."

The friendly against Holland will be Eriksson's only get together with his players before World Cup qualifiers against Northern Ireland and Azerbaijan at the end of March.

As well as giving Wright-Phillips his fourth cap, Eriksson is also expected to include Middlesbrough's left-sided midfielder Stewart Downing, 20, in his squad.

Downing is seen by some as the answer to Eriksson's prayers for a naturally left-footed Englishman to emerge to fill the position that has given him most problems in his time in charge.



SHAUN WRIGHT-PHILLIPS

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Habigonj Road Division, Habigonj
Phone: 0831-53269

Dated: 10-01-2005

Memo No-92

Corrigendum No-01 (One)

Tender Package No. : 13 (Thirteen) EE RHD/RHD/2004-2005.

Invitation for : Re-construction of flexible pavement, carpeting & seal coat at 3rd km, 11th km & 13th km (p) of Chunarughat-Shatapur-Natunbaria Road under Road Division, Habigonj, during the year 2004-2005.

This is to notify for all concerned that as per Clause No. 10.1 of section 1 of standard tender documents PW2 the following amendment has been made into the tender document.

Sl. No.	Description	As stated	Corrected
1.	18. Eligibility of tenderer. (Section 2. Tender Data Sheet ITT Clause 12.3 (a))	C) General construction experience: Minimum value of similar type of construction work in a single contract in the last 5 years preceding the date of submission of the tender amounting to Tk 25.00 Lac. In case of the experience in Roads and Highways Department the attested copy of the requisite certificate for experience as stated above shall be from concerned Executive Engineer/Project Manager/Project Director of Roads and Highways Department and shall be submitted along with the tender. In case of the experience in an organisation other than Roads and Highways Department in Bangladesh the above mentioned certificate shall be from the concerned Executive Engineer/Project Manager/Project Director and the same certificate shall also be examined and countersigned by the Executive Engineer, RHD where the work has been constructed. The original or attested copy of the above certificate is acceptable. If the experience as sought above is from outside Bangladesh, the experience certificate of the tenderer shall have to be authenticated by his/her Embassy/High Commission office.	C) General construction experience: Minimum value of similar type of construction work in a single contract in the last 5 years preceding the date of submission of the tender amounting to Tk 25.00 Lac. In case of the experience in Roads and Highways Department the attested copy of the requisite certificate for experience as stated above shall be from concerned Executive Engineer/Project Manager/Project Director of Roads and Highways Department and shall be submitted along with the tender. In case of the experience in an organisation other than Roads and Highways Department in Bangladesh the above mentioned certificate shall be from the concerned Executive Engineer/Project Manager/Project Director and the same certificate shall also be examined and countersigned by the Executive Engineer, RHD where the work has been constructed. The original or attested copy of the above certificate is acceptable. If the experience as sought above is from outside Bangladesh, the experience certificate of the tenderer shall have to be authenticated by his/her Embassy/High Commission office.

This will be a part and parcel of tender document. All other terms and conditions of tender issued as per this office Memo No. 2308 dated 15-12-2004, will remain unchanged.

DFP-1459-17/01/05

G-82

Ali Ahmed Choudhury
Executive Engineer, RHD
Habigonj Road Division
Habigonj

Exeter exit with heads held high

Football

AFP, London

Gary Neville admitted Manchester United had flirted with disaster after the world's richest club finally squeezed past non-league minnows Exeter City in an FA Cup third round replay.

Not until the 87th minute, when Wayne Rooney scored to complete a 2-0 win for the world's richest club, were United finally able to relax in the knowledge that they had secured their fourth round appointment with Middlesbrough at the end of this month.

United's Premiership colleagues Blackburn and Fulham also made it through, albeit in vastly contrasting style.

Blackburn were somewhat fortunate to come through with a 3-2 win over a Junichi Inamoto-inspired Cardiff while Fulham were always in control during a 2-0 win over another Championship side, Watford.

Joining the big boys in the fourth round were Hartlepool, who accounted for League Two's Boston with a 1-0 margin, courtesy of Adam Boyd's winner.

The win obtained by a near full strength Manchester United side was scarcely less embarrassing than the goalless draw that a second string United line-up managed against Exeter at Old Trafford.

The only consolation for Sir Alex Ferguson, who had bailed that display as the worst of his 18 years in charge at United, was that it could have been infinitely worse.

Devine, one of a string of internationals restored to the side for Wednesday's replay, admitted things might have been very different if Exeter had made more of their chances.

"We knew when we drew the game two weeks ago that we were going to cause ourselves a few problems by having to come down here and tonight we had a lot of problems," the England defender said.

"Anybody who has played professional football knows that when you come down to play at any place it is difficult."

Exeter boss Alex Inglethorpe said he was proud of his players' performance.

"But we got through it and that is the main thing. We play Middlesbrough a week on Saturday and we just have to put this behind us now."

Devine was clearly offside when he did get the ball into the net nine minutes later, but the fact that he had the chance was indicative of the way Exeter's heart had proved more than match for the superior technique of their opponents in a nerve-tingling second half.

The way the match finished would have been predicted by few who witnessed the opening stages of the match, and particularly the slick move that led to Ronaldo's

ten days ago.

night in the west country, his side might have been facing extra-time but for Exeter's failure to take their best chance of the evening, just after the hour mark.

It fell to veteran striker Sean Devine, who pulled away from Gary Neville at the back post as a cross came in from the left and pulled his volley from six yards wide.

It was the chance of the night for Exeter, the chance of a lifetime for Devine, who will regret to his dying day that he did not decide to take the ball down before trying to lash it past Tim Howard in the United goal.

Inglethorpe however was philosophical about the crucial miss.

"We didn't have many chances in the game, so those we did have it was important to take them," he said.

"But Sean is a great player and he will score plenty more goals and it is just unfortunate that one did not go in."

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