

Emerson
fancies
Juve return

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid flop Emerson is interested in rejoining Juventus -- just months after turning his back on the demoted Italian giants.

The Brazilian moved to Real during the summer, but has struggled to adapt to life in Spain despite the presence of boss Fabio Capello -- who worked with him at both Roma and Juve.

Real transfer market consultant Ernesto Bronzetti told Controcampo on Sunday that Emerson wanted to wear the Bianconeri jersey again and talks have begun.

The Corriere dello Sport newspaper claims that the player's agent Gilmar Veloz has contacted Juventus, who would be interested in the operation even if there may be financial hurdles to clear.

Although Emerson's market value has seemingly dropped from 10 million pounds to 5.7 million pounds since his move to the Merengues, the main problem might be represented by the Brazilian's salary demands.

Emerson, who was also paired with a switch to Milan in October, currently earns around 4.2-million-pounds a season.

The new Juventus management could not match such a wage which means an Emerson return would depend on the South American accepting a significant decrease in pay.

The proposed move would only take place in the summer, though, seeing as the former Bayer Leverkusen player is currently sidelined with injury.

Everton fail in
Barton bid

AFP, London

Everton have failed in a transfer bid to bring Manchester City midfielder Joey Barton to Goodison Park.

Toffees' manager David Moyes confirmed on the Everton website that the 24-year-old Barton had been a transfer target but that Manchester City were not interested.

"I can confirm that we have made an enquiry for Joey Barton," Moyes said.

"However, Manchester City made it clear he was not for sale and we respect the wishes of the club and Stuart Pearce."

Pearce rules
out Wright
return

AFP, London

The chances of Shaun Wright-Phillips returning to Manchester City are slim, manager Stuart Pearce has admitted.

Pearce claims Chelsea would look for hard cash instead of a loan deal if they wanted to move the player on.

"We have been quoted a price that is a million miles away from our budget. That is the end of it really," said Pearce.

"The message I have received from Chelsea is they do not want to loan the likes of Shaun, and I am sure the rest of their players as well.

"If there were any deals to be done then it comes down to straight finance, if they want to sell the boy."

PSG looking
for Le Guen
miracle

AFP, Paris

PSG players are counting on newly-appointed coach Paul Le Guen to have an immediate impact on the struggling Parisian giants when they take on Toulouse Wednesday.

Former Rangers boss Le Guen took over from Guy Lacombe on Monday, after the Parisians slipped to just one place above the relegation zone at the weekend.

Le Guen's first match in charge will be the midweek game at home and his players are hoping to see some of the skills that lead Lyon to three consecutive French league titles from 2003.

"He's someone who achieved things with Lyon, who has experience of the French first division. We're hoping to benefit from that experience," said PSG striker Bonaventure Kalou.

"But it's not just down to the coach. We all have to roll up our sleeves, listen to him and get down to business."

Injury-plagued midfielder Jerome Rothen added: "We're in a dangerous situation. The important thing is to concentrate on Wednesday's match which we desperately need to win.

"It's tough today but the situation is very real, we're in a fight against relegation. He (Lacombe) made mistakes but so did we. We're also to blame for this situation."

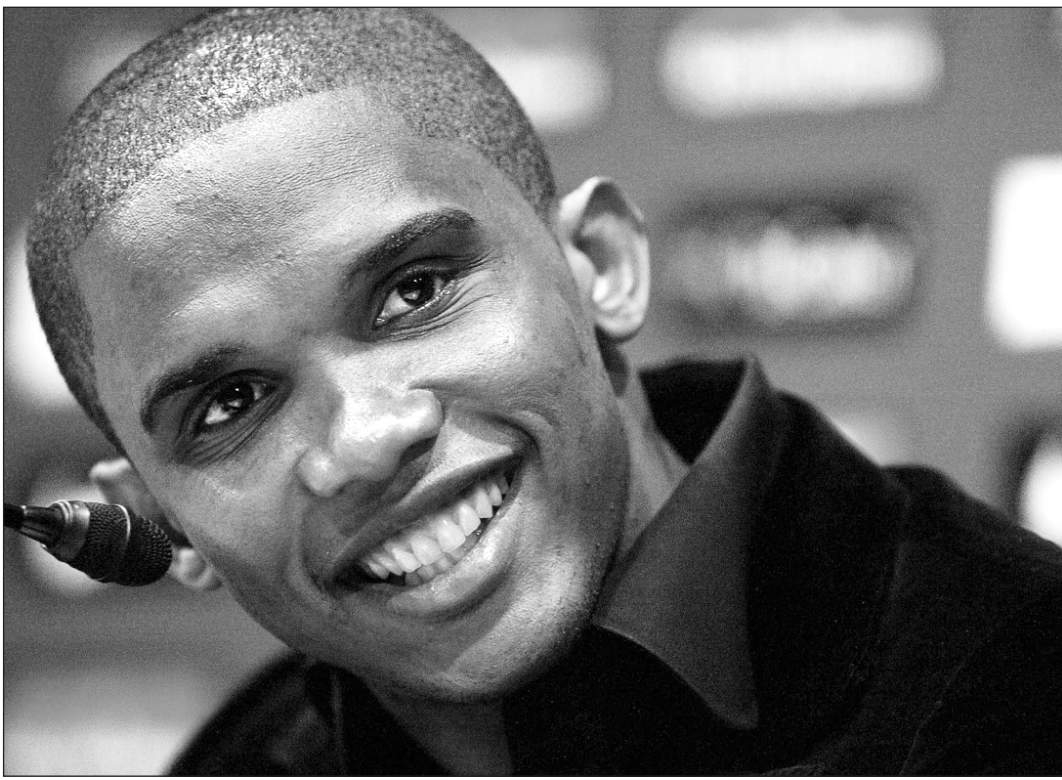


PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona's Cameroonian striker Samuel Eto'o smiles at a press conference following a training session at the Nou Camp in Barcelona on Tuesday.

'I'm no saviour'

REUTERS, Madrid



after over three months out with a knee injury.

"I'm not a saviour for anyone. I should just look to do my job so my coach is pleased with me," the Cameroonian international told a news conference.

Eto'o tore the meniscus in his right knee during the 1-1 draw away to Werder Bremen in the Champions League on Sept. 27.

After surgery, doctors said he would not return to action for five months but the 25-year-old has

made a rapid recovery. Eto'o requested his first training session with the squad should be behind closed doors.

"I'm not going to set a date for when I will return to play. When I do I will be 100 percent. I don't want to return any other way," he added.

"I'm keen to play again but I also want to enjoy this sport for many years to come, so I am not about to risk my knee for the sake of two or three days."

In his absence Barca have qualified for the knockout stage of the Champions League and are second in the Primera Liga, two points adrift of leaders Sevilla, with a game in hand.

But in recent games they have clearly missed the predatory instincts and fighting spirit of their leading scorer from the last two seasons.

They have drawn two and lost

won in the league, with Saturday's 3-1 mauling at city rivals Espanyol, particularly painful.

"These things happen. We have just reached the halfway point of the league so there is still along way to go. We'll see where we are at the end of the season," Eto'o said.

It is thought the striker might return to action in the league in two weeks time when Barca host Celta Vigo. On Feb. 21 Barca are at home to Liverpool in the next round of the Champions League.

Eto'o is line for a record breaking fourth consecutive African Footballer of the Year award when the winner of a shortlist of five is announced later this week.

Barca also expect Argentine forward Lionel Messi to return to training with the squad at the end of the month, after recovering from a broken metatarsal.

Leagues demand
more from UEFA



REUTERS, Brussels

Europe's top leagues will seek more power and cash from European soccer's governing body UEFA within the next 12 months, the chief executive of the European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL) said on Monday.

The EPFL, which represents 15 top European leagues including the English Premier League, Italy's Serie A, Spain's Primera Liga and the German Bundesliga, will ask UEFA for a vote in how the game is run.

At present, only UEFA's 52 member associations have any power within the Swiss-based organisation and are entitled to profits from its European Championship.

Money generated by UEFA competitions, such as the Champions League and UEFA Cup, are shared among the associations and teams involved but the EPFL wants a say in how it is distributed

and more cash for those clubs which do not qualify for Europe.

"This is not a revolution but an evolution," chief executive Emanuel Madeiros said after an EPFL meeting in Brussels.

"Considering the leagues generate 88 percent of the game's revenue, it is only democratic that we have a say. We will be seeking to start a framework for full UEFA membership."

While the exact proportions of power and revenue being sought are still under discussion, Madeiros pointed to the influence of the leagues at domestic level as the way forward.

"In France, the league has around a third of the power, while in other countries such as England the leagues have at least 25 percent of votes within their association," he said.

Madeiros said his organisation could be the solution to bridging the gap and overcoming the continuing spat between Europe's top clubs and those running the game around the

world.

Soccer's world governing body FIFA, of which UEFA is a member, is currently embroiled in a war of words and two court cases with the G14, representing 18 of Europe's most powerful clubs, over how the beautiful game should be run.

A case taken by Belgium's Charleroi and the G14 against FIFA seeking compensation over a player injured while representing his country, is before the European Court of Justice and a similar case is pending involving Olympique Lyon in France.

"We accept that the G14 has the right to exist and lobby, but we represent not just the cream of the crop but over 500 clubs of all sizes," Madeiros said.

"But at the same time we are not looking to be Robin Hood by robbing from the rich clubs and giving to the poor. What we are seeking is a fair balance."

Galeone out, Malesani in

INTERNET, undated



Udinese have confirmed the appointment of Alberto Malesani following the sacking of Giovanni Galeone on Tuesday.

Friulani owner Giampaolo Pozzo decided to replace the veteran tactician after the 2-0 loss to Palermo on Sunday, despite the fact that his side are just three points shy of a Champions League spot.

Pozzo informed Galeone of his decision on Monday evening after rumours suggested that the Coach himself was considering the idea of resigning.

Malesani started his coaching career with a bang at Chievo Verona in 1993 after immediately leading the side to promotion to Serie B.

After three seasons in the Second Division, he joined Fiorentina in 1997 before moving to Parma where he won the Coppa Italia in 1999, as well as the Italian Super Cup and -- more importantly -- the UEFA Cup by defeating Marseille 3-0 in the Final.

After leaving the Ducali, Malesani then coached Hellas Verona, Modena and finally Panathinaikos, where he left last year after a disappointing season.

The 52-year-old Malesani will be unveiled to the media on Tuesday

afternoon and will immediately start working with the team in view of the Messina match next weekend.

As for Galeone, who will turn 66

next week, he is now expected to announce his retirement from the game.



ALBERTO MALESANI

The softer side of LuaLua



Football

AFP, London

Lomana LuaLa has always been grateful for the privileges granted by a career as one of Africa's biggest football stars.

But still it took a chance meeting of painful poignancy for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s captain to realise it was time to start putting something back into his war-ravaged homeland.

Returning to the capital Kinshasa in the aftermath of the 1998-2003 civil war that created more than 1.5 million refugees and tens of thousands of orphans, the deeply religious LuaLua was shocked by the sight of under-aged girls prostituting themselves to survive.

"I saw a lot of very young girls out on the streets, doing things they were not happy about," the 26-year-old recalled. "But they had to do it to get money to survive and for education.

"One day we had a game and we won that game so we all decided to go out. I had some of my cousins with me and there was this girl who wanted to talk to me, but I wasn't interested, so I passed her on to one of my cousins to speak to.

"They started dancing and talking and it came out that all three of us were related but she was a prostitute.

"It hurt knowing that and God knows what would have happened that night if I was one of those people that thought 'yeah I'm going to sleep with her.' I would have ended up sleeping with a relative."

After discussions with his family and friends about how best he could help children facing a similar plight, the LuaLua foundation was born.

With an estimated 180,000 dollars of his own money, LuaLua has built a complex in Kinshasa to cater for dozens of orphaned children of all ages.

As well as providing a caring environment for kids who have lost both parents, it also gives them an opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The project is now in its second year. Its educational facilities have few equals in the country and there is even a small football academy for a handful of boys who might one day emulate LuaLua's achievements in the game.

"There are 10 of them in the academy but they are not just there to play football," LuaLua told

AFP in an interview. "They are learning other things as well."

LuaLua, who is best known to most football fans for his acrobatic, back-flipping goal celebrations, spent his teenage years in England having left the country then known as Zaire as an eight-year-old.

But the link with his homeland has never been broken and, once his football career is over, he plans to return to Africa, drawn by what he describes as the "bigger plans" God has for his life beyond football.

"When I retire, I will be back in the Congo doing the project full-time because there is nothing better than being around those kids.

"If you talk to people back home in my country they will tell you it's unusual to see someone who is a star in Europe to go back and be around people.

"I play football without shoes with those kids, I sit down on the ground in the sand with them and I eat the same way and same food they eat, just to show them that I'm one of them. And I thank God for giving me that humility to be able to do that."

At 26, the Portsmouth striker is a long way off retirement and he is looking forward to enjoying suc-

cess with Harry Redknapp's side, who have emerged this season as genuine contenders for a European place.

A devout Christian, the former Newcastle forward was this year presented with the ultimate test of his faith when his 18-month-old son, Jesus, died from a mystery illness while he was away playing for DRC at the African Nations Cup in January.

But, he says, his belief in God has not been shaken. He said: "Psalm 121, that's my prayer, I read that every day -- 'I lift up my eyes to the hills, where does my help come from?'."

"That prayer has made me what I am today. God has got bigger plans for my life and I'm not even halfway there.

"I'm still on my journey, don't forget it's hard when you are climbing up those stairs it takes some time to get up there.

"I read the story of Job, about how he was, that he used to have so much money and he was tempted when God took away everything.

"He was trying to test his faith, and that is what I believed happened to me this year. I went through a test and it's up to me to answer that and see if I still have faith in him and how I respond to it."

Atletico eye Cup progress



Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Atletico Madrid are confident their expertise away from home will help them to see off in-form Osasuna in Pamplona and progress to the quarterfinals of the King's Cup on Wednesday.

Javier Aguirre's side drew 1-1 in the home leg last week when striker Fernando Torres scored a spectacular equaliser near the end, after the side had been reduced to 10 men.

Osasuna, Aguirre's former club, have won eight of their last 10 games in all competitions and trounced Real Betis 5-1 at home on Sunday.

Nine-times cup winners Atletico have the best away record in the league, however, along with city rivals Real, having lost only once away this season.

They swept aside Celta Vigo 3-1 away on Sunday thanks to

the blooming partnership between Torres and Sergio Aguero. Torres bagged two and laid on a third for the Argentine. "It was a great morale booster for Wednesday because we have to score in Pamplona to progress.

Away from home we always produce the goods," said Torres. Atletico, who are fifth in the league, are not the only top side looking to improve on a first-leg draw.

Primera Liga leaders Sevilla take on third division Rayo Vallecano at home, having been held goalless last week. Juande Ramos's side have yet to win a game in 2007.

Third-placed Real Madrid drew 0-0 with Real Betis but are favourites to overcome a side struggling in the lower reaches of the table, at the Bernabeu on Thursday.

Five league wins on the trot for fourth-placed Valencia put them at an advantage for the visit of Quique Sanchez Flores's

former club Getafe. The tie is balanced at 1-1.

Second division leaders Valladolid caused the surprise of the last-16 first legs by taking a 2-1 lead over Primera Liga Villarreal.

Manuel Pellegrini's misfiring side achieved a lift with their first win in six games away at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday but have left Argentine playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme on the bench once again for Wednesday's home game.

Barcelona have failed to win in their last three league games but should have little problem at home to second division Alaves on Tuesday with a 2-0 first-leg lead.

The same goes for Real Zaragoza who have a 3-0 lead over second division Malaga.

Deportivo Coruna have a 2-1 edge over Real Mallorca but will be wary of a side who beat league leaders Sevilla 2-1 away on Sunday.

Galaxy deny early swoop



Football

INTERNET, undated

Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber and Los Angeles Galaxy general manager Alexi Lalas have denied reports that the American club are trying to move on David Beckham's contract before it ends with Real Madrid.

Garber denied that the league was trying to secure an early release for David Beckham from his Real Madrid contract.

Spanish media had quoted Garber saying Beckham's lawyers were working to get an amicable exit because the league was unable to pay the buy-out clause to bring him to the Los Angeles Galaxy before his contract ends in June.

But Garber said in a statement issued later on Monday: "David

Beckham remains a member of the Real Madrid club until his contract expires (on) June 30".

"Unless otherwise informed, we are looking forward to welcoming David this summer following the end of his contract with Real Madrid."

The Spanish reports had quoted Garber saying MLS and the Galaxy were doing everything they could to enable the former England captain to move sooner.

Lalas also denied any sort of early move.

"Our position is unchanged with regards to David Beckham. We look forward to welcoming him in the summer and we respect his chance to honour his contract with Real Madrid," Lalas said.

"All our plans are that we will welcome David here in the summer.

Garber added in his statement: "There have been many

recent reports from the news media that have attributed incorrect quotes from my office, including fabricated quotes that were attributed directly to me earlier today.

"I am out of the country in Mexico and have not spoken with any journalists since the afternoon of January 13."

Beckham has agreed a move to the Galaxy when his Real contract expires. The five-year deal with the MLS side is worth \$250 million, the biggest in world sport.

Following the announcement of the move, Real coach Fabio Capello dropped the midfielder from the squad and said he would not play for the Madrid side again.

The Italian said it was not possible to rely on a player who had already committed himself to another club.

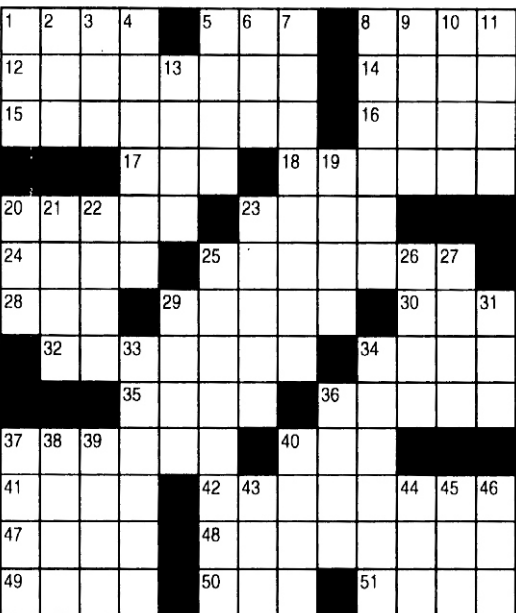
The MLS season starts in April.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 — mater power source
5 Name-tags, for short
8 Skilled
12 Bible
14 Go like a butterfly
15 Spectators collectively
16 — song (inexpensively)
17 Sullivan and McMahon
18 Secular
20 "The Stranger" author
23 Scoff
24 Works with
25 Bygone type of eatery
28 Wrestling win
29 Auto style
30 Joke
32 Southern
34 Positive
35 "Winnie-the- —"

36 Fulton's power source
37 Fame
40 Sauce source
41 Computer symbol
42 Fall-related
47 Drink quickly
48 You'll find them in a perfect world
49 Sharpen
50 Earl Grey, for one
51 "Zounds!"
DOWN
1 Khan title
2 Brock of baseball
3 Stylish, in the '60s
4 Farewells
5 Charged Jacob
6 Billy Ray Cyrus series
7 Bony
8 Validate
9 United nations
10 Old Italian coin
11 And others (abbr.)
13 Hotel course, often
19 A billion years
20 Half a pint
21 Largest continent
22 List of options
23 A son of Jacob
25 Balloonist
26 Chills and fever
27 "G.W.T.W." plantation
29 Pack away
31 Jewel
33 Looah, e.g.
34 Block
36 Opening course, often
37 Wealthy
38 Sound comeback
39 Person, place or thing
40 Old portico
43 Salt Lake athlete
44 Run-down horse
45 Literary collection
46 Hallucinations letters



CRYPTOQUIP

K L B Q W U G A S G X K Q W D Z B

Y Q Z Q X C A T W G X A D Y Q S C X K F T

B Q W X Y G X P U C C Z D , P Q W Z A

B Q W M C G L C F A C X M Z C F A C X ?
Saturday's Cryptoquip: The TV had been placed so far away from me, I could only view it by using a telly scope.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals Y