



Former Austria international Andreas Herzog plays keepy-uppy with the ball during a photoshoot after he was appointed as ambassador for Euro 2008 on Wednesday.

Van Persie out for six weeks

AFP, London

Arsenal striker Robin van Persie was ruled out Tuesday for at least six weeks with a broken foot after coming on as a substitute last weekend and scoring the equaliser in the Gunners' come-from-behind 2-1 Premiership win against leaders Manchester United.

The Dutch forward sustained a fractured metatarsal bone at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday and now looks set to miss a significant part of the season as Arsenal chase down the top three of the table, champions Chelsea and Liverpool.

"We have lost Robin van Persie for a while, how long I do not really know," said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

"It will be six weeks at least if not more. It is a big blow, but we have to take it. Robin has been on fire he has had a great season until now," the Frenchman added of Arsenal's leading scorer this term.

"What is terrible for me is that I did not want to use him at all (against Manchester United)," Wenger also told Arsenal TV on Tuesday.

"We were 1-0 behind and I decided to put him on -- but he got injured and you can never predict that."

Seedorf extends Milan contract

INTERNET, undated

Milan have announced that Clarence Seedorf has extended his contract until June 30, 2011.

The Dutchman has put pen to paper on a deal that will keep him at the San Siro for another four years.

By the time the new agreement expires, he will already have turned 35 years of age and been at the club for nine seasons.

Seedorf joined the Rossoneri from archrivals Inter in 2002, having previously worn the jerseys of Ajax, Sampdoria and Real Madrid.

The Netherlands international made history as the first player to win the Champions League for three different clubs and with Milan has also celebrated a Scudetto, European Super Cup, Coppa Italia and Italian Super Cup.

Del Piero had United option

INTERNET, undated

Alessandro Del Piero has admitted that he rejected an offer from Manchester United after Juventus' demotion to Serie B.

The captain was one of the first to confirm he would stay with the club following the Calcipoli scandal, but the decision to stay in Turin did see him turn down an Old Trafford move.

"It's true, in August I refused an offer from Manchester United," said Del Piero in an interview with the Sun newspaper.

"I was very disappointed about Juventus and I was seriously considering the idea of leaving," continued the World Cup winner.

"However, I have been a Bianconero for 13 years and I want to end my career here. I am sure Sir Alex Ferguson understood the reasons behind my refusal," ended the striker.

Pinturicchio had already stated in the past that he was tempted by an adventure in the Premiership and was ready to leave Juve in the summer -- probably given the presence of then boss Fabio Capello.

"There was a situation that was leading me far from Turin, but I would have never stayed in Italy," he had declared.

"I could have never even imagined of playing for an Italian club different from Juventus. Then the conditions changed and I am glad I decided to stay."

Man of Peace!

INTERNET, undated

He may have been vilified after the World Cup, but Marco Materazzi received a prize from the World Organisation for Peace.

The Inter and Italy defender, famously head-butted by Zinedine Zidane in the Berlin Final on July 9, was given a two-match ban by FIFA for "provocation."

However, the hard man is appreciated for another side to his character, as the WOFP presented Materazzi with the 'Football and Peace in the World' prize.

The centre-back was chosen as a "man of peace" and a "symbol" of the World Cup winning squad.

The award consists of a book containing messages of peace from the Presidents of the various football federations of the globe.

Materazzi was also named as an ambassador for the World Organisation for Peace, invested with the title by President Carlos Peralta at Inter's Appiano Gentile training ground.

They hope to organise a tournament of peace between teams from nations that are currently in war, with Italy chosen as the hosts.

Mourinho feeling at home

AFP, London

Jose Mourinho has hinted he will stay at Chelsea after making his peace with striker Andriy Shevchenko.

The English champions' Portuguese manager also said his desire to stay put had persuaded captain John Terry to sign a new Chelsea contract.

Shevchenko was back in Mourinho's good books after his double strike against Wycombe clinched a place in next month's all-London club League Cup final against either Tottenham or Arsenal.

The Ukrainian had been frozen out by Mourinho after failing to live up to his 30 million pounds price tag.

But he went some way to redeeming himself as he celebrated his recall with two clinical finishes and an assist for the first of Frank Lampard's two goals in the 4-0 semifinal second leg victory here Tuesday.

Shevchenko's two-goal salvo clinched a 5-1 aggregate win and led to a glowing tribute from Mourinho.

The Blues boss insisted he had never fallen out with Shevchenko and admitted his forward was finally beginning to adapt to Chelsea's style of play.

"Sometimes you need to kiss a player and sometimes you kick them. It is what I do with every player. It doesn't matter if you cost 30 million pounds or 300,000 pounds," Mourinho told reporters after Tuesday's victory.

"Sheva needed some time to adapt but if he can do what he did today with his sharpness and movement then he is arriving where we want him to be."

"One of the principles of my work is the players that work more and perform better game after game will be in the team."

"I'm very happy Sheva got the message. If somebody thought I did not play him because of a personal situation then he is a very silly sod."

"At this moment he has won the right to play on Sunday. If he has the same performance then he will play again on Wednesday. It is as simple as that."

"It is a process. You cannot open a player's head and put the philosophy inside."

"He has come from seven years at another club (Italy's AC Milan), so when he comes to a different club with players who know what makes me happy it is not easy."

Shevchenko added: "I'm very happy to get to the final. It is very important. I've had unbelievable support from the team and fans."

Mourinho's long-running dispute with Chelsea's Russian billionaire owner Roman Abramovich over the west London club's failure to sanction the signing of new players during the January transfer window had fuelled speculation that the former Porto manager would be lured away by either Real Madrid or AC Milan.

But he indicated he had persuaded England skipper Terry to sign a new contract worth 150,000 pounds per week by assuring the centre-half he plans to be at Chelsea next season.

Mourinho said: "He asked me if I was staying and my answer was I think so. 'JT has told me it is very difficult to play for another manager and he would like to play with me until the end of his career. It is because he accepts my philosophy and he is comfortable with it."

Adriano boost for Inter

Football

REUTERS, Rome

The return to form of Inter Milan striker Adriano will have boosted the holder's confidence ahead of Wednesday's trip to Sampdoria for the first leg of their Italian Cup semi-final (kickoff 2000 GMT).

The game is the first of five in days between the teams. Inter return to Genoa again on Sunday in an attempt to extend their run of 13 Serie A wins in a row.

Adriano, who was criticised in the Italian media for being out of

shape and overweight after failing to score in his first 13 matches for the club, has hit the target in each of his last four games.

The Brazilian gave his best performance yet for the Serie A leaders last weekend, setting up one goal and scoring another in a 3-1 win over Fiorentina.

That display prompted Brazil coach Dunga to recall him for the friendly with Portugal in London on Feb. 6 and earned praise from Inter coach Roberto Mancini.

"In the last month he has started to train seriously again. Now he just has to continue the good work," Mancini was quoted as saying in La Gazzetta dello Sport.

"Sampdoria are among the few

teams to have stopped us in Serie A this season. I'm expecting a very difficult tie," he said.

In the other semi-final tie, AC Milan host AS Roma on Thursday.

The game will be a chance for Milan to show off their latest signing -- Italy defender Massimo Oddo, who was joined for 7.75 millions euros (\$10.09 million) from Lazio on Tuesday.

Roma, beaten by Inter in the last two Cup finals, are expected to field a strong side, with midfielders Daniele De Rossi and David Pizarro returning to the starting line-up after missing Sunday's 1-1 draw at Livorno due to suspension.

"Sampdoria are among the few

Bayern up in arms

Football

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich have threatened to prevent its players turning out for the German national team following a row over sponsorship.

The Bavarian giants have been alarmed by reports that US sports-wear company Nike is pulling out all the stops to replace home favourites Adidas as the leading sponsors of the German team.

Adidas are shareholders in Bayern and for club players to wear Nike on their shirts would be seen as a betrayal.

"I just cannot imagine that a Bayern player would wear a German shirt with the Nike logo on it," said Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, the club president and former World Cup striker for Germany.

His comments brought an angry response from Oliver Bierhoff, the former striker who is now general manager of the German national squad.

"The rules stipulate that players must conform to the choice of sporting equipment made by the federation," he said.

Bierhoff said that if Bayern stood in the way of its players turning out for Germany, he would take the matter before world governing body

"To not do so would be criminal," he said. "But quite honestly I can't see them changing companies."

Bayern and Germany legend Franz Beckenbauer said that the German national federation had no option other than to seriously consider the Nike offer.

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Spartak coach Vladimir Fedotov said the move to France should help Cavenaghi.

"He (Cavenaghi) is a very good player and I'm happy for him that he will get a chance to re-start his career," Fedotov told Reuters at the opening of a six-team invitation tournament in Israel sponsored by Chelsea's billionaire owner Roman Abramovich.

Spartak in 2006 after hitting seven the previous year.

He scored 55 goals in 88 league matches for River Plate, helping them win three "clausura" championships in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

Although the terms of the Bordeau deal were kept confidential, Russian media estimated the deal at around 13 million dollars.

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Argentine sensation Fernando Cavenaghi (C) poses with new coach Ricardo (L) and president Jean-Louis Triau (R) during a press conference after putting pen to paper for Bordeaux in a move from Spartak Moscow on Tuesday.

REUTERS, Tel Aviv

Argentine striker Fernando Cavenaghi has joined Girondins Bordeaux from Spartak Moscow on a four-and-a-half year contract, the Russian premier league club has announced.

The 23-year-old, the Russian League's most expensive signing when he joined Spartak from River Plate for a 11.5-million-dollar fee in July 2004, never fully settled at the Moscow club.

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Cavenaghi joins Bordeaux

INTERNET, Tel Aviv

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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