

## Lyon going public

AFP, Paris

Lyon on Friday made a bid to boost its financial future -- and secure the cost of a new stadium -- when it unveiled details of its plans to become the first French football club to float on the stock market.

The operation will value the club, which has won five consecutive national titles, at 305 million euros (394 million dollars).

Club president Jean-Michel Aulas said 30 percent of the club's shares would be up for sale at a price of between 21 and 24.40 euros each when they hit the stock market on February 9.

He hoped the shares sale would bring the club "between 85 to 100 million euros in revenue."

"This will help to give the group fresh, disposable resources and thus prompt new growth," said Aulas.

Lyon is able to float its shares after the French government earlier this year changed a law preventing professional sports clubs from listing on the stock market.

## Bolton sign Slovakian pair

AFP, London

Bolton manager Sam Allardyce has confirmed the signing of Slovakia defender Lubomir Michalik on a three-and-a-half-year contract.

The 23-year-old Michalik's FC Senec team-mate, 19-year-old striker Zoltan Harsanyi, is also moving to the Reebok Stadium on loan until the end of the season with a view to a permanent deal.

The two players are Allardyce's first signings in the January transfer window, which only has five days to run.

Bolton currently sit fifth in the English Premiership table 17 points adrift of Manchester United and five points adrift of fourth placed Arsenal.

## UEFA studying Scots, Irish proposal

AFP, Dusseldorf

European football's ruling body has agreed to launch a feasibility study on a proposal to increase the number of teams in the European Championship finals from 16 to 24.

The proposal was made by the football federations of Scotland and Ireland, who argue that having 24 nations in the four-yearly finals will boost the smaller federations in terms of image and revenues.

The proposals to launch a study was agreed unanimously after 44 of the 52 member nations voted in favour.

UEFA's executive committee would pore over the results of the study before then making any decision.

## Bremen sign Rosenberg

AFP, Amsterdam

Ajax Amsterdam and Werder Bremen have reached an agreement for the immediate transfer of Swedish striker Markus Rosenberg to the German league leaders, Ajax announced Friday.

Rosenberg, 24, was under contract at Ajax until July 2009. The Swede made his debut for the Amsterdam side in August 2005 and played 63 official games, scoring 20 goals.

As Rosenberg already played for Ajax in the ongoing UEFA Cup tournament he will not be eligible to play for Werder Bremen in the UEFA Cup, Ajax said on its website.

## Coppa Italia Roma hit back

AFP, Rome

Roma staged a thrilling comeback from two goals down to draw 2-2 at AC Milan in the Italian Cup semi-final first leg clash.

Watched by Ronaldo, who is expected to move from Real Madrid to Milan on Monday, the home side took the lead after just four minutes at a sparsely-attended San Siro tie.

Ricardo Oliveira was the man on target converting a pass from Massimo Ambrosini.

Kaka set up the second goal when he released Marek Jankulovski whose cross was tapped home in typical fashion by 'Pippo' Inzaghi to make it 2-0.

Roma pulled one back in the 29th minute when Simone Perrotta scored from close range before David Pizarro made it 2-2 six minutes before halftime when his long range shot evaded Dida in the Milan goal.

The second leg takes place next Wednesday in Rome with the winner facing either Inter or Sampdoria in the final.

Holders Inter took a 3-0 lead after their first leg clash on Wednesday.

## Rijkaard circumspect

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard refuses to see his team as the title favourites despite history showing that the leaders at the halfway point have gone on to win the Spanish championship in 10 of the last 12 seasons.

"It's too soon to talk about that. There are four or five other teams who are candidates," said the Dutchman, mindful of the fact that a one point advantage at the top of the table doesn't guarantee success.

Barcelona are the only one of the top four teams playing at home this weekend and could make significant progress towards winning La Liga for the third consecutive year by beating struggling Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Celta have not won in their last eight league games and slipped down the table.

"The team is frustrated. We didn't think we were going to be in this position at the start of the season," admitted Celta defender Borja Oubiña.

To add to Celta's difficulties, the Galicians will be without the suspended Pablo Contreras and Iriney while Pablo García, on loan from Real Madrid, is doubtful with a left thigh strain.

Second-placed Sevilla have 38 points and are just ahead of Real

Madrid on goal difference but have yet to win in 2007.

However, last season's UEFA Cup winners will be hoping to end that dismal run at Levante on Sunday.

"We've slipped in the last few weeks but every competition is still open to us," said striker Adriano.

The often-inspirational Adriano believes he will play at Levante, who are just one place above the relegation zone, despite suffering a dislocated shoulder in last week's 0-0 draw at Villarreal.

"I've still got some inflammation but there are several days to do and I should be fit by Sunday," said the Brazilian.

"However, I think we've got a hard game ahead of us. Teams in their position (Levante) are now going to be fighting to get themselves out of trouble."

Last week, Levante welcomed back Irish international defender Ian Harte for his first game after injury and he should get further match practice thanks to the suspension of Alexis Sánchez.

Real Madrid, despite all the off-the-pitch turmoil concerning their departing 'galacticos' David Beckham and Ronaldo, have started to show better form by winning their last two games.

Coach Fabio Capello will be looking to continue that trend at Villarreal on Saturday and received the good news on Thursday that both Sergio Ramos and Gonzalo Higuaín should be fit for the trip to

last season's Champions League semi-finalists.

The pair both received heavy knocks in the 1-0 win at Real Mallorca on Sunday but were finally training normally on Thursday.

Valencia are the current team in form and have strung together six consecutive wins to move them back into contention in fourth place.

The 2002 and 2004 champions are now just three points adrift of leaders Barcelona and will see whether seven is their lucky number at relegation-threatened Real Betis on Sunday.

The match will see Valencia's Joaquín Sánchez return for the first time to Betis, where he was an icon after playing more than 200 league matches in six seasons at the club where he started his career, since his move last summer. Valencia (2000)

## FIXTURES

### Saturday

(Kick off in GMT)

Atletico Madrid v Racing Santander (1900)

Villarreal v Real Madrid (2100)

### Sunday

Getafe v Osasuna (1600), Gimnastic Tarragona v Espanyol (1600),

Levante v Sevilla (1600), Real Mallorca v Recreativo Huelva (1900),

Real Sociedad v Athletic Bilbao (1600),

Real Zaragoza v Deportivo La Coruna (1600), Barcelona v Celta Vigo (1800),

Real Betis v

## Things look up for Sheva

Afp, London

Andriy Shevchenko believes his Chelsea future is looking bright after he ended a ten-game goal drought to help Jose Mourinho's side into the League Cup final at the expense of Wycombe in midweek.

The Ukrainian, branded a 30-million-pound flop and blamed for perceived tensions between Mourinho and the club's owner Roman Abramovich, has had a tough time since arriving in London.

But the 30-year-old has been given a boost by his midweek double and he gets the chance to plunder more goals against lower league opposition when Chelsea entertain League One's Nottingham Forest at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

"After more than a month, it is very important for a striker to score goals again," he said. "It was also important to play well, and the support from the fans was incredible."

"Now it is all much better and I believe in the future."

Mourinho had publicly snubbed Shevchenko after Chelsea's league defeat at Liverpool last weekend, but he has moved to build bridges by lavishing praise for the striker's display following his return to the starting line-up.

"He needed the performance more than the goals," Mourinho said. "He had the effort, the commitment, the aggressiveness and the desire - all the ingredients that we want in our players, plus the quality for scoring goals he has."

Chelsea captain John Terry, who spent a spell at Forest on loan as a teenager, is still not ready to return following back surgery but Mourinho is hopeful the baldly-missed centreback will resume full training next week.

Ronaldo has struck seven goals in his last seven appearances and with Ryan Giggs likely to operate on United's left-hand flank, Redknapp's strategy will be to strengthen his defences in the wide areas.

"If you left Ronaldo one-on-one with the best right-back in the world, he would beat him. I don't care who it is," Redknapp said. "It's very difficult to stop him. You've got to get tight with him and stop him getting the ball, really, which is not easy."

"Our full-backs will need all the help they can get. You can't get isolated one-for-one with Ronaldo. You need to shut down the sides."

Lauren, signed this month from Arsenal, will operate on

Portsmouth's right but with left-back Djimi Traore cup-tied, Redknapp faces an anxious wait on the fitness of replacement Nemanja Matic before deciding on his eventual line-up.

Ferguson, meanwhile, has no injury concerns and must decided whether to hand a fourth successive start to the on-loan Henrik Larsson or recall Louis Saha who has been reduced to a substitute's role since the arrival of the Swede this month.

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Portsmouth manager Redknapp

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feeling again. That's how the play-

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League and FA Cup.

Among the Portsmouth ranks this

weekend will be Andy Cole, the

35-year-old striker whose partner-

ship with Dwight Yorke helped fire

United to the treble.

And while the veteran forward

insists Pompey are capable of

springing an upset, he believes the

current United side is capable of

succeeding on three fronts if they

make it through to the fifth round.

"Since 1999, the likes of

Arsenal, Chelsea and even United

have aspired to repeat it because it

is such a unique thing to do," Cole

said. "But if anyone can do it again it

would be United."

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