



A Greek fan wearing a traditional costume waves a Liverpool flag among revelling Liverpool fans in Athens on Wednesday.

Distin signs for Pompey

INTERNET, undated



Portsmouth have signed former Manchester City captain Sylvain Distin on a free transfer.

The centre-half has agreed a three-year contract at Fratton Park after deciding to leave City following five years at the club.

Pompey boss Harry Redknapp had been interested in signing Distin last season but the Frenchman, 29, opted to see out the final year of his deal at the City of Manchester Stadium.

He left the club on Tuesday claiming he was seeking a new challenge.

Distin, who cost 4m pounds when he joined the Blues from Paris St Germain in 2002, could soon be joined by Ghana midfielder Sulley Muntari, who is expected to become the next of Redknapp's summer captures.

Distin said he was delighted to join an ambitious side and admitted: "Harry Redknapp was a big influence. I like the way his teams play and this is definitely a club on the way up."

"I was five years at Manchester City and made a lot of friends there. It was a tough decision but it was my decision and I am happy to stick by it.

"You have got to have ambition and for me that means trying to push for Europe. Portsmouth are

capable of doing that, more than capable, and that's why I am here.

"When you are on a free transfer you are going to get a lot of offers but this is the one I wanted to take."

Boss Redknapp revealed he panicked when he heard that rivals from the Premiership's top four, with Liverpool one of the teams linked with a late bid, had moved in on Tuesday night.

Redknapp said: "I've been down that road a few times before and to be honest I panicked when I heard about it.

"But thankfully we struck an agreement with Sylvain and I am really pleased we've got him."

"Last year when we showed an interest in him his price was £5million so to get him for £500,000 has got to be great business for the club."

"I have been an admirer for a long time. He's a fantastic player, left-sided and good in the air and very powerful."

Redknapp also put to bed rumours that Sol Campbell, last summer's major transfer coup, would be moved out to accommodate Distin.

He said: "There is no way. Sol is still absolutely key for us. He has still a year to go on his contract and he's not going anywhere."

"I will try, in fact, to sign another defender very soon because you have to have competition for places and a big squad. The Premiership is going to be tougher than ever next season and if you stand still you end up going backwards."

Redknapp admitted one of his targets could be Titus Bramble who has been recently released after five years at Newcastle. Redknapp said: "He's still a young player with plenty of potential and we will wait and see. He could be another outstanding free transfer."

Redknapp also admitted he has made an offer to Middlesbrough's out-of-contract Australian striker Mark Viduka and said: "Mark will make up his own mind. He has plenty of offers but we are looking to improve all around. We will need more goals and we have the money available to spend. The chairman is ambitious."

But next likely arrival at Fratton Park should be Muntari who will cost around 7m pounds from Italian club Udinese.

Redknapp said: "We are very close to getting him and I am keeping my fingers crossed."

"He is a fantastic midfielder, strong and quick and with an eye for goal and he is only 22."

It is believed that personal terms have already been agreed with the World Cup star whose arrival would shatter Portsmouth's transfer record – the 4.4m pounds they paid for Auxerre striker Benjani Mwaruwari.

And Charlton's Icelandic defender Hermann Hreidarsdsson is also in Redknapp's sights. He admitted: "He is a player I like very much. West Ham, I heard, bid 2m pounds for him not long ago and he's another one to watch out for."

Ribery, Quaresma on Bayern hit-list

Football

AFP, Berlin

French World Cup star Franck Ribery and Portuguese midfielder Ricardo Quaresma top the list of players Bayern Munich want to sign to reverse their fortunes after a poor season, a report said on Wednesday.

Bayern's bosses believe they can tempt Ribery, who is currently with French club Marseille, although the midfielder has said he would prefer a move to England or Spain, Sport-Bild magazine said, quoting club sources.

Although Bayern also pursued 24-year-old Ribery after he helped France reach the World Cup final in

Germany last year, FC Porto's Quaresma is a new name on Bayern's list.

Quaresma, 23, is also attracting interest from the English Premiership and Spanish club Atletico Madrid.

Other targets are Arjen Robben, the flying Dutch winger who has struggled to hold down a first-team place at English Premiership giants Chelsea.

One barrier to recruiting big name stars is the fact that Bayern failed to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in 11 years as they finished fourth in the Bundesliga behind newly crowned champions VfB Stuttgart.

Italian international striker Luca Toni is definitely expected to join Bayern from Fiorentina for a fee of around 18 million euros, the report said.

Toni's imminent arrival was confirmed by club president Franz Beckenbauer who said the transfer was "on the right tracks".

Zé Roberto, the muscular Brazilian midfielder who left Bayern in 2006, is expected to return to the Allianz Arena to fill the hole created by the departure of Owen Hargreaves to Manchester United.

And 21-year-old German international defender Marcel Jansen is almost certain to move to Bavaria after his club, Borussia Monchengladbach, were relegated this season.

However, Bayern's interest in Barcelona playmaker Deco has faded as the player has said he wants to stay at the Nou Camp.



Australia's Sydney FC midfielder Steve Corica fires a free-kick while Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds players jump to block during a Group E match of the AFC Champions League at Saitama Stadium on Wednesday. Red Diamonds drew 0-0 with Sydney FC to clinch a place in the AFC Champions League quarterfinals.

Juventus 'agree' Iaquinta deal

Football

INTERNET, undated

Juventus have reportedly reached an agreement to sign Udinese striker Vincenzo Iaquinta at the end of the season.

The World Cup winner has been paired with the Turin outfit for some time even though he extended his contract in Udine until 2010 last year.

A move now seems on the horizon though after the respected Gazzetta dello Sport claimed that a deal has already been done.

Iaquinta, a 27-year-old forward, will put pen to paper on a five-year contract with the Old Lady of Italian

Chelsea linked with Tevez deal

INTERNET, undated

West Ham's Carlos Tevez has been offered to Chelsea in a deal that would cost the club 35million pounds.

According to the Daily Express the Argentine striker could well move across London from Upton Park to Stamford Bridge after preliminary talks began between the FA Cup winners and the player's representatives.

Tevez has returned to South America to be with his wife and family but the Hammers are still hopeful he will agree to stay with them for another season, especially given their Premiership survival.

Kia Joorabchian is due to meet with West Ham chairman Egger Magnusson this week about

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An AC Milan fan holds aloft a banner pronouncing his loyalty to Milan and their Brazilian superstar Kaka at the central Athens Syntagma square on Wednesday on the eve of their Champions League clash against Liverpool.