

## Suazo set for Inter Milan

AFP, Rome

Cagliari's Honduras international striker David Suazo is set to become the first summer signing for Serie A champions Inter Milan.

"David Suazo can go to Inter," Cagliari president Massimo Cellino was quoted as saying in Wednesday's *Gazzetta dello Sport*.

The Italian sports daily said the transfer of the 27-year-old forward is likely to go through before the end of the week.

Suazo, who was close to joining AC Milan a year ago, scored 14 goals in Serie A last season.

His best return was 22 goals in 37 matches in the 2005-06 season. Suazo joined Sardinian side Cagliari from Honduran club Olimpia in 1999.



PHOTO: AFP

Ex-Bayern Munich manager Felix Magath (C) answers questions from the press in Wolfsburg after being unveiled as the new manager of VfL Wolfsburg on Wednesday.

## How Sir Bobby's luck finally ran out

Following is the concluding part of the excerpt from Brian Glanville's new book, *England Managers, The Toughest Job in Football* where the remaining part of England's Italia 90 adventure is dissected.

THE TIMES

Now he said he would go to bed for two days. "Then come and ask. We're going to enjoy it. We'll worry about Germany in good time. They're very good, we know what confronts us and they know what confronts them."

Sad to reflect that what awaited England was the meaningless anticlimax of a third place match in Bari, which they'd lose to Italy. "We've got here," reflected Bobby Robson later, before the semi-final. "I don't know how."

Robson's luck? It certainly ran out in Turin against Germany, when England succumbed on penalties after extra time. And there was arguably ill luck when the Germans led, on the hour a shot by the German full back Andy Brehme hit Parker, curling into the air, over Shilton's head and into the net.

England, who again used Terry Butcher as sweeper but again replaced him in the second half with Trevor Steven, equalised ten minutes from time, when Parker crossed from the right; Jurgen Kohler and Klaus Augenthaler, central defenders, clumsily confused one another, allowing the unmarked Lineker to score. And, in

an iconic moment much analysed in the years since, Gascoigne was cautioned and promptly wept when he realised it would mean suspension from the next match possibly the final. Tears that touched so many. The daft brush had become the sad clown.

Overall, the German team looked fired, but it held out into extra time, during which each team hit the post: Chris Waddle for England, Guido Buchwald for Germany, while Shilton made glorious saves from Lothar Matthaeus and Jurgen Klinsmann. But when it came to penalties, Pearce shot into the keeper Illgner's flying body, Waddle shot over the bar, and England were out.

In a moment of utter fatuity Peter Swales, Manchester City's chairman, and leading member of the Senior International Committee, announced that he would rather England lost the World Cup than Bobby Robson remain. Doubly fatuous, in that Robson had already announced before the tournament that he would not be continuing. So ended a stewardship hardly remarkable for its consistency, yet successful enough in two World Cups.

## Salzburg sack Matthaeus

AFP, Vienna

Germany's World Cup-winning captain Lothar Matthaeus has been sacked as coach of Red Bull Salzburg to ease tensions between the German and Salzburg's director of football Giovanni Trapattoni.

The 46-year-old Matthaeus coached the side, formerly known as Austria Salzburg, to the league title last season working under Italian coach Trapattoni, but tensions between the pair forced the club to act, the club said late on Tuesday.

"The board have unanimously decided to part company with coach Lothar Matthaeus with immediate effect," said a statement on the club's website.

"Differences of philosophy meant that a good working relationship would not be sustainable in the long-term."

The 1990 World Cup winner met with Salzburg's multi-millionaire owner Dietrich Mateschitz late on Tuesday to dissolve his contract that was due to finish next year.

The former Bayern Munich midfield star took his sacking with good grace.

"I accept the decision," said the 150-times capped midfielder Matthaeus, who formerly coached the Hungarian national team.

"There was a difference in opinion over footballing matters and for Red Bull it is better if we go our separate ways. I don't want to endanger the team's chances."

## Tuncay steps in at Boro

AFP, Istanbul

Fenerbahce and Turkey striker Tuncay Sanli is set to step into Mark Viduka's boots at Middlesbrough after agreeing personal terms with the English Premiership club.

The 25-year-old is out of contract at the Turkish champions and, subject to a medical, will be moving to the Riverside on a free transfer.

Tuncay's agent, Erdinc Sehit, said the player had been offered a four-year deal on an annual salary of 3.3 million euros.

Tuncay has had a fruitful five seasons with Fenerbahce, winning the league title three times and scoring 77 goals in 207 matches.

He has also become a mainstay of the Turkish national side, and has scored 13 goals in 43 appearances. He is best known in Britain for having scored a hat-trick against Manchester United in the Champions League in 2004.

Middlesbrough have already acquired the services of former Arsenal striker Jeremie Aliadiere as they seek to rebuild in the wake of Viduka's departure for Newcastle and improve on last season's 12th place finish in the Premiership.

Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani agreed with Nesta, blaming his decision on an intense and overburdening international fixture list. "I think these things happen all over the world. You need to consider that the footballing calendar is very intense."

Even national coach Roberto Donadoni when interviewed at Coverciano before Italy's qualifier with the Faroe Islands admitted: "I think Nesta's decision is final and will not be subject to change. I'm disappointed because he is still relatively young and could give so much more to this team, but I have spoken to him and he explained his motives."

If Nesta's decision to retire from the extra physical burden of interna-

tional call-ups is understandable in the context of the player's low fitness levels, doubts and mystery hang over national teammate Francesco's Totti's prolonged and self-induced absence since the World Cup (which he had not ended).

The Roman's breathtaking club

form this season puts his persistent

claims of unfitness into serious and

credible doubt. He has played

despite having a metal plaque in his

ankle, become Serie A's top marks-

man with 26 goals, currently leads

the race for European Golden Shoe

and will contest Serie A's player of the

season vote.

His breathtaking volley in a 4-2 away victory against Sampdoria was one of the goals of the season, and even had home supporters applauding its audacity and technique.

A brief break from the national set-up after the World Cup was com-

pletely understandable he competed in Germany having barely recovered from a serious ankle injury sustained in a league match against Empoli last February but his continued absence

raised a number of important ques-

tions, not just about his supposedly

narcissistic self-importance, but also

sociological and cultural factors, such

as the role of provincialism and

regional identity in Italy.

These two decisions are sym-

pathetic of a current and worrying

factor for the future and prestige of

international football in which players

and clubs put their interests ahead of

any national responsibilities. Clubs

develop and pay the players a wage,

surely their invested interest is a

priority over national set-ups which

pay no wage and limited compensation

if players are injured while on

duty!

And could sociological factors be

## A Roman puzzle

Football

INTERNET, undated

Alessandro Nesta and Francesco

Totti have been the subject of much

debate of late. Robbie Dymott looks

at possible reasons for their deci-

sions, and in particular, at

Francesco Totti.

"If I want to continue at the highest

level for many more years, then I

have to make some choices. Leaving

the Nazionale is one of them," Nesta

told 'Tuttosport', placing his priorities

and form at the disposal of AC Milan.

This decision is partially under-

standable given that Nesta's last two

World Cups have predominately

been marred by injury. The defender

has missed four months of this sea-

son's campaign with Milan after

surgery for a dislocated shoulder and

sizeable periods of the previous two

seasons with various complaints and

as a result, his domestic form has

suffered.

Milan vice-president Adriano

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If Nesta's decision to retire from

the extra physical burden of interna-

a conscious or unconscious motive

here? Italy is a relatively young

European state formed when the

disparate states of the Italian penin-

sla were united under the political

and social process of 'Risorgimento'

between 1815 and 1871, a process

unpopular still with sections of the

Italian peoples.

Regional and provincial rivalries

and loyalties still exist taking prefer-

ence over any 'national' pride or

identity, and there is still a strong

North-South schism. This provincial

rivalry was never better explained on

the international front than in Italy's

infamous 1990 World Cup semi-final

encounter with Argentina in Naples,

in which sections of the city decided

to pledge their support for Napoli hero

Diego Maradona and not for their

'compatriots'.

Totti compels and revels in similar

adulation and worship. Totti is a

symbol of Rome, a torch-bearer for

the City. For the fans of AS Roma,

their captain, in all his self-driven and

enigmatic, stylistic and technical

bombast is Rome. And for Totti, who

has turned down offers from Milan,

Barcelona and Real Madrid, Rome is

the centre of his universe, and his

loyalty and love are unequivocal.

If Rome is his wife, Italy his mis-

tress, so to speak, and that could,

perhaps, be one explanation, even if

a bitter one. Of course, it is just a

theory, but then again, one that has

become popular in Italy of late.

## Porto president under investigation

Football

AFP, Lisbon

The president of Portuguese cham-

pions FC Porto has been placed

under judicial investigation for

allegedly offering the services of