

## Tardelli to quit Juventus board

AFP, Rome

Marco Tardelli, a World Cup winner with Italy in 1982, said on Thursday he is to resign from the board of newly-promoted Juventus.

The 52-year-old, a former Juve player, was appointed as a director of the Turin club one year ago.

Former coach of the Italy under-21 side, Tardelli cited differences with other board members as his reason for leaving.

"I agreed to join with the hope that I could make many changes, but I understand that was not possible," he said.

Tardelli, who is currently in Holland watching the under-21 European Championships, said he will formally hand in his resignation as soon as he returns to Italy.

Last month Juventus won promotion back to Serie A after spending a season in the second division following their demotion for match-fixing.

At the end of the campaign, Didier Deschamps quit as coach and was replaced by Claudio Ranieri.

## Reds in for Yossi, Tal bound for Blues

AFP, London

Liverpool have confirmed that they would like to sign West Ham's Yossi Benayoun in a surprise development that has prompted the Israeli playmaker to stall on signing a new deal at the east London club.

Benayoun reportedly agreed a new five-year-deal at Upton Park verbally three weeks ago, but he has yet to put pen to paper.

Liverpool chief executive Rick Parry confirmed the bid for the Israeli captain, although he dismissed reports that Liverpool had offered over three million pounds (5.9 million dollars) for the player.

"I can confirm we have made an approach for Yossi Benayoun, but the figures quoted are completely wrong," he said. "Other than that we don't want to say any more."

Benayoun's international teammate Tal Ben Haim meanwhile appears to be on his way to Chelsea after Newcastle conceded defeat in their efforts to sign the Bolton centreback.

Former Bolton boss Sam Allardyce, now in charge of the Magpies, had attempted to persuade the 25-year-old to rejoin him at St James' Park.

But Allardyce revealed Thursday that the Israeli was set on a move to Chelsea, who made a bid for him during the January transfer window.

"It's looking like Tal will be going to Chelsea, unfortunately," Allardyce said. "We have had a long, hard go, but I think the lure of the (former) champions has perhaps just pipped me at the post."

## Hitzfeld expects clash of personalities

AFP, Munich



After the biggest spending spree in Bayern Munich's history, coach Ottmar Hitzfeld admitted on Wednesday he expects a few personality clashes from his team of stars.

"Of course there will be a few personality clashes, that is natural," Hitzfeld told German daily newspaper Bild.

"And it is better to have them as it shows the team has some fighting spirit and although we face some big challenges, we have a great chance to do well this season."

After a miserable season by their high standards when the 20-times German champions finished fourth in the Bundesliga, Hitzfeld expects to pick up some titles next season and congratulated Bayern's board

set to return after a year with Santos FC and Miroslav Klose, the top-scorer at last year's World Cup, could also be tempted to Munich from Werder Bremen.

"They have recruited well and a high standard has been set, but it was urgently needed."

Hitzfeld -- who has won the Champions League on two occasions with Borussia Dortmund and Bayern -- has been given the thumbs up by Munich's chairman of the board Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

The former German international said: "Ottmar Hitzfeld is exactly the right man for the job. One of his big strengths lies in the integration of his players."

Hitzfeld's contract expires at the end of the coming season and the veteran admitted he is not thinking past the start of the Bundesliga in August.

## Vieira feels for pressured refs

Football

AFP, London

Inter Milan star Patrick Vieira believes referees are becoming too scared to make crucial, match-turning decisions because of the pressure put on them by fans and media critics.

Vieira spoke out in favour of referees as the subject became the latest topic to go under the microscope on a website.

The former Arsenal midfielder was no stranger to controversy in his time at Highbury, and was often at the heart of clashes with opponents.

"There is negative pressure on the referee and I really get the feeling that they don't get any help from players or from the football authorities.

"The referee is under too much negative pressure. Because of this, I think they lack spontaneity and passion. Being a referee should be like being a player -- you should go with your heart, enjoy it and not have to think."

"If you think it's a free kick, you give the free kick. But at the moment it's less spontaneous."

Vieira believes the problem is

when you see it replayed on the TV, you think 'That's not me -- that's unbelievable!"

But Vieira feels that mounting pressure from several sides has now left referees scared to stand their ground: "I feel now as if the referee is going on to the pitch afraid to make a decision -- afraid even to be a referee."

"There is negative pressure on the referees and I really get the feeling that they don't get any help from players or from the football authorities.

"The referee is under too much negative pressure. Because of this, I think they lack spontaneity and passion. Being a referee should be like being a player -- you should go with your heart, enjoy it and not have to think."

"It's true that we have interactions with them but only on the pitch. We don't know them and they don't know us."

## Saha out till November

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United striker Louis Saha has undergone knee surgery in the United States to repair an injury that kept him sidelined for much of last season.

The surgery was revealed by the agent who helped engineer Saha's 12.8-million-pound move from Fulham, Ranko Stojic, who claimed his former client would be out until at least November.

"Louis has had surgery in America and he won't be on the field now for a few months," Stojic told Tuesday's edition of the Manchester Evening News.

"I don't know when he will be able to start training again but he is looking at being back around November or December. But it is going to be a while."

A spokesman for the Stellar Group, which has represented the player since the end of last year, confirmed the surgery but insisted Saha was on track to be fit for the start of next season in August.

"I don't know when he will be able to start training again but he is looking at being back around November or December. But it is going to be a while."

"If they are going to sell me, I'd like to know," Smith was quoted as saying. "But I won't find out unless I get to speak to the manager."

Smith was a seven-million-pound signing from Leeds two years ago and has two years left on his current deal, but United have made no move to extend that contract.

Tottenham, Aston Villa and Rangers are among clubs believed to be monitoring Smith's situation.

## West Indies doubts over Zim tour

CRICINFO, undated

The West Indies Players' Association has expressed concern over the forthcoming A-team tour of Zimbabwe which is due to get underway in early July.

Dinanath Ramnarine, the WIPA chief executive, said that the doubts "resulted from discussions with various stakeholders and persons with intimate knowledge of the existing situation in that country". He added: "They have spoken of security threats, violation of human rights and a highly volatile situation that could threaten the safety of the players."

"WIPA has been placed in a further quandary by media reports that a team has already been selected and that a decision to proceed on this tour will be contingent on the advice the WICB receives from the CARICOM Secretariat. Furthermore, under the Memorandum of Understanding between the WICB and WIPA both parties are required to agree on the tour."



PHOTO: AFP

Gilberto Silva (L), Fred (C) and Elano, of the Brazilian national team, jog during a training session at Granja Comary in Teresopolis on Wednesday. Brazil are preparing for the Copa America which starts on June 26th in Venezuela.

## United prepare Quagliarella bid

INTERNET, undated

Manchester United are preparing a 10m-pounds offer for Sampdoria striker Fabio Quagliarella, according to the British Press.

The Blucerchiato, who is half owned by Udinese, scored 13 Serie A goals for his club this season and impressed for Italy with a stunning brace in their recent Euro 2008 qualifier against Lithuania.

The Daily Express claims that the Reds are ready to pay 10m pounds for the 23-year-old, as they search for young blood up-front after Louis Saha underwent knee surgery which could rule him out for six months.

Udinese and Sampdoria have allegedly already agreed to leave Quagliarella in Genoa, although Blucerchiato general director Beppe Marotta admitted that a high offer would be taken into consideration.

"We can't make any evaluations now, but we want to keep him here, also because of the excellent relationship we have with Udinese," stated Marotta.

"We would only consider letting him leave if we were to receive an extraordinary offer," he added.

Meanwhile, Roma are also following Quagliarella and might ask Sampdoria to buy their half of the player's ownership, offering striker Mirko Vucinic, young goalkeeper Gianluca Curci and cash in return.

The Blucerchiato, who would join Francesco Totti and Amantino Mancini to form an impressive attacking department, could reportedly be offered a 1m-pound-per-season deal by the Giallorossi.

## Clark bowls Hampshire into semis

AFP, London

Australia quick Stuart Clark bowled Hampshire into the semi-finals of English domestic cricket's Friends Provident Trophy one-day competition with a dramatic haul of six for 27 against Surrey at the Rose Bowl on Wednesday.

Clark's 10-over return gave south conference table-toppers Hampshire a home semi-final against Warwickshire a week on Wednesday.

Former England batsman Mark Ramprakash won the toss and elected to bat. But Clark removed the Surrey top three while Ramprakash himself was bowled for nought by all-rounder Dimitri Mascarenhas.

At one stage Surrey were 32 for six before a stand of 122 between ex-England duo Rikki Clarke (55) and Chris Schofield (75 not out) helped them recover to 181 all out.

Hampshire captain and former Australia leg-spinner Shane Warne took one for 46 from his 10 overs.

Hampshire, who then saw former England batsman John Crawley make 55, were cruising at 165 for three before a flurry of late wickets gave Surrey the merest glimmer of hope. But a no-ball from Australia seamer Matthew Nicholson sealed the south coast county's victory.

## Bundesliga coach in doping burst

APP, Berlin



Former Bundesliga coach Peter Nuerurer admitted on Wednesday he saw players take a banned stimulant in the 1990s and claims the practice was not unusual in German football at that time.

The 52-year-old, who parted company with Hanover last August, said he saw players taking banned stimulant Captagon while he was coaching Schalke 04 in the Bundesliga's second division in the 1989/90 season.

"The eyes look different. The player doesn't get tired and is inclined to over-react," he said.

The German Football Association (DFB) were quick to react to Nuerurer's revelations and have asked for more details.

"We have written a letter to Mr Nuerurer and have asked him politely to produce names and facts," said DFB press officer Harald Stenger on Wednesday afternoon.

But current Schalke manager

8x1

7x3