



Real Madrid midfielder Guti shows the Primera Liga trophy to the cheering fans as his teammates wave from the balcony of the City Council of Madrid as their title celebrations went on through Monday.

Juventus snap up Iaquinta

INTERNET, undated

Serie B champions Juventus have completed their expected swoop for Udinese striker Vincenzo Iaquinta.

The 27-year-old has been linked with the Turin giants for some time and has today completed an 8-million move.

"I believe that I am the right age to realise this dream," said the World Cup winner. "I like pressure and I cannot wait to start this new adventure."

"I have grown up year-on-year and after seven seasons in Udine the moment has arrived to make a jump in quality."

"I now need to test myself with a challenge that only a great club like Juventus can offer, in Italy and in Europe."

Iaquinta, who has signed a five-year contract in Turin, scored 14 goals in Serie A last term and may have been brought in to replace David Trezeguet at the club.

"He is an important player, another World Cup winner who will help to write history at this club," noted Juventus director general Jean-Claude Blanc.

"He is a professional who we welcome and a player who will add experience and quality to the squad which is enthusiastically hoping to offer fans the satisfaction they deserve."

"There is no doubt that this is another forward step in making a

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Real architect at dead end?

AFP, Rome



Fabio Capello, who guided Real Madrid to the Spanish league title on Sunday, could quit coaching altogether if the club decide to sack him, media reported Tuesday amid speculation on who might replace him.

The 61-year-old Italian, who has coached AC Milan and Juventus in Serie A, still has two years left on his Real contract, but his future is far from assured given his fractious relationship with the club's president, Ramon Calderon.

Capello told Onda Cero radio Tuesday that "I have the feeling they will seek out a new architect for the new project."

Asked what he would do if Real show him the door, Capello told Italy's Gazzetta dello Sport: "I've already coached the best teams, so I could quit two years early."

He put his chances of staying with Real, whom he also helped win the Spanish title in the 1996-97 season, at 50-50.

"It's on the toss of a coin," he said. "All I know is that I would like to stay here to win the Champions League. I have already booked my flight (back to Spain) to return on July 19, because training starts on the 20th."

It seems unimaginable that Calderon would consider replacing Capello after the Italian engineered a success that seemed unlikely three months ago, but Real have sacked successful coaches before.

German coach Jupp Heynckes was sacked just days after Real won the Champions League in 1998 and Vicente Del Bosque, mooted as a possible successor to Capello, did not have his contract renewed in the summer of 2003 despite leading Real to two Champions Leagues and two La Liga titles in four years in charge.

After the title was won Calderon would only say that the Italian was under contract but AS magazine

headlined "Schuster for the 2007-08 season," and added that "Calderon has chosen Schuster" in reference to former Real midfielder and current Getafe coach Bernd Schuster.

Sporting director Pedja Mijatovic described Capello as having a "good project" and told Marca magazine that Fabio Capello, who still has two years to go on his contract, is the perfect coach to win further titles."

Calderon insisted that it was not his role to choose the coach. "The people in charge of the sporting side must decide, and I will do what they say. It is up to Mijatovic," he said.

But "I have a magnificent relationship with Capello," he insisted on Cadena Serradio.

Three months ago Real were five points adrift of Barcelona. But an unbeaten run since then saw them grab the title and prevent a Barca hat-trick, after which Capello said he wanted to carry on but would have to talk to Calderon about the

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'No change at Barca'

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona chairman Joan Laporta said Tuesday that he expected Dutch coach Frank Rijkaard and top stars Ronaldinho and Samuel Eto'o to stay at the club next season.

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Carlos excites Turks

Football

AFP, Istanbul

Thousands of fans cheered Roberto Carlos here on Tuesday as the Brazilian full-back formally signed with Turkish champions Fenerbahce.

At a largely ceremonial event at the Sukru Saracoglu stadium on the city's Asian side, Carlos, flanked by members of the Fenerbahce board, signed the deal for the cameras, clad in the Istanbul club's navy and gold strip.

"I am very proud to be wearing this strip," the 34-year-old said through a translator. "My dream is to win the UEFA Cup in this strip."

"Fenerbahce are the greatest, Fenerbahce are the champions," he said in Turkish as fans shouted "I love you Carlos."

Fenerbahce have not disclosed the duration or value of the contract, but Turkish newspapers reported that the club will pay Carlos four million euros (5.3 million dollars) a year for two years and he will be eligible for bonuses totalling an additional one million euros (1.3 million dollars) a year.

Carlos will join four other Brazilian players at Fenerbahce which Brazilian football legend Zico has been coaching since 2006.

Fenerbahce began chasing Carlos last year, but the former international decided to stay on with Spanish giants Real Madrid

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Former Brazil and Real Madrid left-back Roberto Carlos shows his skills with the football during his official presentation as a Fenerbahce player at the Sukru Saracoglu Stadium in Istanbul on Tuesday.

United step up Quagliarella bid

INTERNET, undated

Sampdoria striker Fabio Quagliarella has revealed that Manchester United have made an improved offer for his services.

The 23-year-old, co-owned by Udinese and the Genoa-based outfit, is one of the hottest properties on the transfer market after his impressive 13 Serie A goals last term.

Quagliarella's agent confirmed last week that United recently made a 10m-pound bid for him and the Premiership giants are now ready to secure his signature by digging even deeper into their pockets.

"Manchester United have raised their offer and it is an important figure," said Quagliarella to La Gazzetta dello Sport.

"I would be happy to join the Premier League as it's a fascinating and beautiful competition. If the deal with Manchester United were to be finalised then I would be glad to move."

Quagliarella is now an Italian international, thanks to his three caps, and he netted a stunning brace in the recent 2-0 win over Lithuania.

However, his future won't be resolved until Udinese and

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Lalas slams Premiership

Football

AFP, London

Stung by suggestions David Beckham is heading into semi-retirement in Major League Soccer (MLS), the President of LA Galaxy has branded the English Premiership an over-hyped, "inferior product."

Alexi Lalas, the guitar-playing former US defender and captain, let rip in an interview with Tuesday's Guardian newspaper in which he slammed much of the commentary surrounding Beckham's move to California as ignorant and delusional.

"We're Americans but we're not stupid," Lalas said. "We know when we're being patronised and I get so irritated when I hear the experts in England talk about David Beckham as if he's going into semi-retirement by leaving Real Madrid for Los Angeles."

"That's ignorance of the first degree because almost every one of those critics has not even seen a single MLS game. It's insulting to us and to our sport to say Beckham is on his way to Hollywood when he's coming to play in one of the most competitive leagues in the world."

"There are a lot of stars in European football who would

struggle over here. But Beckham has done his homework on this league, and his team-mates, and he recognises the merit of American soccer."

Fresh from winning La Liga with Real, Beckham is due in LA in the middle of next month and has signed a five-year-deal worth 250-million-dollars which will see him take centre stage in efforts to raise the profile of US soccer at home and abroad.

Beckham's recent return to the England side has fuelled a fresh round of dismissive assessments of the level of the MLS, with many pundits suggesting the midfielder will struggle to stay competitive while operating in a competition frequently compared to the Championship, English football's second tier.

But Lalas believes the perception of the Premiership as the world's top league is largely the product of superb marketing which manages to mask the huge gulf between the top, rich clubs and the rest.

"English football now has the haves and the have-nots, and even the top four in the Premiership may be narrowing down to two," he argued.

"But because of the structure of our league and the salary cap our competition runs deep. It's just that the Premiership have become so skilled in presentation. They took a page out of American

football and now have Saturday Showdowns and Super Sundays. I love it. This is high-calibre marketing: taking an inferior product and improving it through packaging."

"You know, there's no accounting for bad taste. The fact that a segment of the world worships an inferior product in the Premiership is their business."

"In England our league is considered second-class but I honestly believe if you took a helicopter and grabbed a bunch of MLS players and took them to the perceived best league in the world they wouldn't miss a beat and the fans wouldn't notice any drop in quality."

Lalas went on to suggest it is only a matter of time before the best teams in the United States are rubbing shoulders with the likes of Real and Manchester United in a world club championship that will rival the Champions League in terms of quality and interest.

"Beckham is not going to change anything overnight but the hope is that this will be a big stepping stone towards the point where we see ourselves in 20 years. We want to emerge as America's first superclub, to compete with Madrid and Man United. Some might say that's a pipe-dream but I prefer to call it our vision."

Angel in golfing heaven

INTERNET, undated

US Open Championship -- Argentina's Angel Cabrera, surprise champion at the 107th US Open, summed up his win best by saying he had beaten the field but not the course.

The brutal par-70 layout at Oakmont Country Club unquestionably had the measure of the players after a torture chamber of a week that ended with a winning US Open total of five-over 285.

"I beat everybody here, not only Tiger Woods," Cabrera said through a Spanish interpreter after becoming the second South American to win a major title.

"But I wasn't able to beat the golf course. The golf course beat me."

Beefy Cabrera, who held off world number one Woods and third-ranked Jim Furyk with his power game to claim his maiden PGA Tour title by a stroke, began and ended the week with scores of 69.

The 37-year-old from Cordoba was the only player in the field to produce two sub-par rounds on one of golf's toughest layouts.

"If you're a 10-handicapper, there

is no way you're breaking 100 out there," the 12-times major winner said. "If you played all out on every shot, there is no way."

"You just have to be so patient and on top of that you've got to be strong coming out of the rough and you've got to have unbelievable touch on the greens. Most 10-handicappers I know don't have that."

Although Cabrera's winning total matched the five over posted by Australia's Geoff Ogilvy to win last year's US Open at Winged Foot, Oakmont was described by most of the players as difficult but fair.

American Scott Verplank, who tied for seventh after closing with a 72, said: "I'm not going to call it unfair. It was unbelievably difficult."

"In those conditions, as dry as everything is and as fast as the fairways and greens were rolling, it wasn't unfair but it's unlike any other golf course you ever see."



Brazilian national team players Wagner Love, Naldo (C) and Mineiro fight for the ball during a training session in Teresopolis on Monday, as part of their preparation for the upcoming Copa America. The tournament kicks off in Venezuela on the 26th.

Suazo blocks Eto'o arrival

INTERNET, undated

Milan have admitted that Barcelona ace Samuel Eto'o is unlikely to arrive after they swooped for David Suazo this morning.

The Rossoneri sensationally captured the Cagliari hitman on Tuesday in an unexpected move which may now see primary target Eto'o remain just a dream.

"Eto'o will most probably not arrive and if we finalise the deal with Suazo (who has yet to sign) then our

transfer campaign will be over," stated Vice-President Adriano Galliani.

"Will our supporters be content this way? They have to be satisfied with the numerous Finals played over the years and the fact that we lead the European rankings."

Suazo was expected to join Inter after agreeing to a deal last week, but Galliani insists Milan didn't hijack the move to spite their city rivals.

"We had already been following the player last year. (Cagliari President) Massimo Cellino told us that the negotiation with Inter had stalled and we started conversations and struck a deal," he added.

"Will I call Inter? No, they didn't

call me when they signed Zlatan Ibrahimovic last summer," explained the official after Inter 'stole' the Swede from under the noses of the Rossoneri.

Reports suggest that Milan will pay £10m to Cagliari after Marco Borriello refused to be included in the deal.

"We need to wait for Suazo to sign as he is currently on holiday and might not want to move here," added Galliani. "If he agrees, we will have four great strikers in our squad."

"I called (President) Silvio Berlusconi to inform him of the negotiation and he was pleased with the news."