



PHOTO: AFP

In-form Argentina playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme (R) plays keepy-uppy as midfielder Fernando Gago watches during a training session at the Farid Richa stadium in Barquisimeto on Tuesday.

## Hammers capture Bellamy

INTERNET, undated

West Ham have completed the 7.5 million pound signing of Craig Bellamy after the Welsh forward sorted out a contract dispute with the Merseyside club.

The transfer had been agreed at the weekend, only to be held up by arguments over a bonus payment the 27-year-old said he was owed.

The fee is a club record for the Hammers, who were recently turned down by Darren Bent despite agreeing a 17 million pounds fee for the then-Charlton man.

Bellamy is the Hammers' third major signing of the summer, following Scott Parker and Julien Faubert into Upton Park.

"I'm delighted to be here," he said. "It's taken a little bit longer than I would have liked but the main thing is that it is done now and I can look forward to the challenge ahead."

"I knew around two weeks ago that there was an opportunity for me to head away from Liverpool, but I had to make sure that any move was the right one for me and not just an off the cuff reaction."

"I had a lot to weigh up, and in the end I decided that West Ham United was the best move for me, and that's why I'm sitting here now."

"I wanted to make sure that, if I left Liverpool, it would be to a club that is going to be pushing for Europe. I want to play in Europe, it's important to me, and I felt that same drive and ambition here at West Ham."

The move brings to an end a turbulent year-long spell at Anfield, which was marred by alleged disciplinary problems, including an infamous golf-club attack on John Arne Riise.

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## Koumas joins Wigan

AFP, Wigan

English Premiership side Wigan have confirmed the signing of Jason Koumas on a four-year deal, the north-west side announced Tuesday.

The 27-year-old Wales midfielder has joined from Championship side West Brom, beaten in last season's play-off final by Derby County.

Koumas has moved for a reported fee of 5.3 million pounds (10.7 million dollars) which would represent a profit of 3 million pounds (6 million dollar) for Midlands club West Brom, who brought the player to the Hawthorns in a 2.5 million pounds transfer from Tranmere in 2002.

Koumas scored 23 goals in 141 appearances for the Baggies and also hit the back of the net 13 times during a season-long loan with Cardiff City in 2005-06. He has now become new Wigan manager Chris Hutchings's fifth pre-season signing since he replaced Paul Jewell at the end of last term.

Hutchings has also signed Antoine Sibierski, Carlo Nash, Titus Bramble and Mario Melchiot.

## Fitness first for Castillo

INTERNET, undated



Mexico star Nery Castillo insists he will not line up against Argentina in the second Copa America semifinal unless he is 100% fit. Castillo was substituted with a knee problem during the second half of the 6-0 drubbing of Paraguay in the last-eight encounter, but is desperate to feature in the next game.

The Olympiacos forward, who has scored four goals for the Tricolor outfit so far in the Venezuela tournament, said: "If I am not 100% fit, I will step aside to give the opportunity to another player who can help the team better. "You cannot give opponents an

advantage by playing such good rivals with an injured man. I want to play this game more than anything in the world, but I won't complicate things."

Argentina left-back Gabriel Heinze, meanwhile, is expecting a completely different match to anything his side have faced so far in the competition.

The last clash between the two countries saw Argentina, under Jose Pekerman's guidance, eliminate Mexico from last year's World Cup at the round-of-16 stage courtesy of Maxi Rodriguez's extra-time wonder goal.

Argentina have not yet tasted defeat in this year's Copa America, most recently strolling past Peru 4-0 to reach the last four.

But Manchester United defender Heinze is not taking

anything for granted.

He said: "Mexico will be an open game and they will go forward to win it because they have high-quality players."

"I hope we can go on winning as we've been doing in the championship."

Juan Roman Riquelme added: "The way the national team play makes me feel very happy."

"The team is more and more comfortable day after day. We are patient and have a group of players who enjoy being together. I hope we can have the pleasure of playing the final match on Sunday."

Kick-off is at 1:50am BST on Thursday at the Polideportivo Cachamay stadium in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela.

## The Old Lady returns

AFP, Rome



This time last year the 'Old Lady' was on her knees, her legs buckling under the strain of the biggest ever match-fixing scandal.

Juventus were contemplating their first ever campaign in the second division after being banished to Serie B with a nine-point penalty for their involvement in the furor. Many big names departed for pastures new and the future looked awfully bleak for Italy's most successful and best-supported club.

But following a swift promotion - masterminded by former Juve

player Didier Deschamps before he fell out with the club and quit - a major boardroom overhaul and a host of new signings, 'La Vecchia Signora' is back on her feet and ready to reclaim her place at the top of Serie A.

Gone are the two architects of Juventus' web of corruption - general manager Luciano Moggi and director Antonio Graudo - while on the pitch several new players have been drafted in.

Claudio Ranieri has replaced Deschamps as coach, while Italian World Cup striker Vincenzo Iaquinta and Portuguese midfielder Tiago are among an influx of reinforcements.

John Elkann, heir to FIAT, the Italian car manufacturing giant which own Juventus, insists the

Turin club are stronger than ever after putting their house in order.

"Being in Serie B was tough and it would have been better had we been able to avoid it - nobody enjoyed a season in purgatory," he said.

"Now we are back in Serie A with a clear conscience and strong squad - on the pitch and off it."

Juventus president Giovanni Cobolli Gigli predicted the club would make life difficult for their main rivals, Inter and AC Milan.

"We will make sure we give everyone a hard time, and as always we will play to win every fixture," he said.

"In Ranieri we have a great, experienced coach and I am more than satisfied with the signings we have made. It's been a real team effort, with (CEO Jean-Claude) Blanc and (sporting director Alessio) Secco the main protagonists. Blanc is very good in transfer dealings, he's like a poker player."

Expectations are high at Juventus after a summer makeover but Ranieri, who guided Parma to survival on the last day of the Serie A season, warned the club's fans not to expect miracles.

"We have a burning desire for victory - it's in the DNA of this club," said the former Chelsea manager.

"First we'll try to demonstrate it domestically, and then in Europe. I can guarantee I will tell my players the one thing I have always said in my career - I don't care who we're playing, I just want to win."

"But the fans must understand that rebuilding a squad and returning it to its past glories will take some time."

As well as bringing in several new faces, Juve managed to hold onto World Cup-winning goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, French striker David Trezeguet and Czech midfielder Pavel Nedved who will provide some much-needed experience as they navigate their way back in the big time.

While Italy were celebrating World Cup victory last year, Juventus hit their nadir.

But twelve months is a long time in football, and with a nip here and a tuck there, the Old Lady is starting to look glamorous again.

## Malouda now Chelsea's

AFP, London

Chelsea confirmed on Tuesday the transfer of France international Florent Malouda from Lyon on a four-year contract.

The winger switches to Stamford Bridge for an undisclosed fee although press reports had put the fee at upwards of 13 million pounds (20 million euros).

Malouda will waste no time in joining his new teammates in Los Angeles where they are currently preparing for the new season.

"The Chelsea squad landed in California to the news that they have a new teammate," the official Chelsea website reported.

"Florent Malouda successfully completed a medical at Stamford Bridge during the day of Monday and signed a four-year contract."

Jose Mourinho's squad left for Los Angeles on Monday after confirming that a fee had been agreed with the French champions leaving just the medical and agreement on personal terms to seal the deal.

Malouda, 27, was signed by Lyon in 2003 from Guingamp for 4.5m euros having begun his playing career with Chateauroux in 1996. Last season he scored 10 goals as Lyon won the title for the sixth straight time.

He won the first of his 30 international caps in November 2004 and was part of Raymond Domenech's side that made it through to last year's World Cup final against Italy.

Chelsea's new recruit won the French championship four times with Lyon and was voted the best player in the French first division in 2006-07.

Malouda is Chelsea's latest summer purchase following Steve Sidwell, Claudio Pizarro and Tal Ben Haim.

## Madrid rope in Pepe

AFP, Madrid

Spanish champions Real Madrid have struck an agreement to sign FC Porto's Brazilian central defender Kleper Laveran Lima Ferreira, otherwise known as "Pepe," the clubs said Tuesday.

The Portuguese club put the fee at 30 million euros (42 million dollars).

Pepe has agreed a five-year contract and will "immediately" join up with the squad, Real said in a statement.

Porto said the deal was subject to the 23-year-old passing a medical.

Pepe has been a mainstay of Porto's back four since 2004 and has won two league titles as well as a domestic cup.

Real are currently on a new spending spree after Monday unveiling Bernd Schuster as coach in place of the sacked Fabio Capello.

The Spaniards have already added Schuster's fellow German Christoph Metzelder to their back four and are still chasing Romanian defender Christian Chivu of AS Roma.

## 'Iran go home'

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Youngster Aziz Haydarov delivered a cheeky message to Uzbekistan's opening Asian Cup opponents on Tuesday: "Iran go home."

Haydarov scribbled the words on a piece of paper and held it up for media ahead of Uzbekistan's Group C opener against the regional giants.

The under-23 captain was bullish about Uzbekistan's chances, pointing to the earlier matches where not one of the favourites has won.

"All teams have come to Malaysia to win and qualify for the next round. There are no easy opponents in this tournament -- look at Oman drawing 1-1 with Australia," said the 22-year-old.

"If we build our game in the proper way we can have success."

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# The all-time bests

## Football

INTERNET, undated

The Brazil team that won the 1970 World Cup was voted the best team of all time in a global poll of experts conducted by the World Soccer magazine.

Argentina legend Diego Maradona's slaloming effort past a host of England players in the 1986

## EST MATCHES

- 1 Italy 4-3 West Germany, World Cup semi-final, Azteca stadium, Mexico City, June 17, 1970
- 2 Liverpool 3-3 Milan (Liverpool 3-2 on pens), Champions League Final, Olympic stadium, Istanbul, May 25, 2005
- 3 Real Madrid 7-3 Eintracht Frankfurt, European Cup Final, Hampden Park, Glasgow, May 18, 1960
- 4 West Germany 3-3 France, (West Germany 5-4 on pens), World Cup semifinal, Sanchez Pizjuan stadium, Seville, July 8, 1982
- 5 Hungary 4-2 Uruguay, World Cup semifinal, La Pontaise stadium, Lausanne, June 30, 1954

World Cup quarterfinal was voted the best goal of all time while Mexico completed a hatrick of events as it also bagged the best match of all time -- Mexico City hosting the epic semifinal battle between Italy and West Germany which the Azzurri won 4-3.

Brazil's 1970 squad were described as the 'ultimate exponents of the beautiful game,' as they finished ahead of the Magnificent Magyrs of Hungary in 1953. Johan Cruyff's Dutch side who finished runner-up to West Germany in 1974 were voted the third best of all time.

The AC Milan side of 1989-90 finished fourth, the highest-ranked club side. Real Madrid 1956-60, who won five successive European Cups, were voted sixth.

In the best goals category, Marco

## BEST TEAMS

1	Brazil	1970
2	Hungary	1953
3	Holland	1970
4	Milan	1989-90
5	Brazil	1958
6	Real Madrid	1956-60
7	Brazil	1982
8	Barcelona	1991-94
9	Italy	1934-38
10	France	1998-2000

Van Basten's superb European Championship winning strike for Holland against Soviet Union in Munich in 1988 was voted the second best while Zinedine Zidane's stunning volley for Real Madrid in their 2002 Champions League final victory over Bayer Leverkusen

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## BEST GOALS

- 1 Diego Maradona 54mins, Argentina 2 England 1, World Cup quarterfinal, Azteca stadium, Mexico City, June 22, 1986
- 2 Marco Van Basten 53mins, Holland 2 Soviet Union 0, European Championship Final, Olympic stadium, Munich, June 25, 1988
- 3 Zinedine Zidane 44mins, Real Madrid 2 Bayer Leverkusen 1, Champions League Final, Hampden Park, Glasgow, May 15, 2002
- 4 Saeed Owairan 5mins, Saudi Arabia 1 Belgium 0, World Cup first round, RFK stadium, Washington DC, June 29, 1994
- 5 Pele 55mins, Brazil 5 Sweden 2, World Cup Final, Rasunda stadium, Stockholm, June 29, 1958

## Europe Fergie's goal

## Football

AFP, Manchester

Sir Alex Ferguson has vowed to rotate his squad like never before as the Manchester United manager looks to make up for missing out on European glory last season.

Despite masterminding another Premiership title triumph, Ferguson was bitterly disappointed with United's failure to win the Champions League and has vowed to use as many players as possible to achieve success in England and on the continent.

Ferguson, speaking at the unveiling of new signings Owen Hargreaves and Nani, also aimed digs at rivals Jose Mourinho and Arsene Wenger, the respective managers of Chelsea

and Arsenal who have both played second fiddle to United and Liverpool in the transfer market during the close season.

"I thought there would be more spending," said Ferguson, who has invested nearly 50 million pounds (100 million dollars) on new players this summer.

"There is a lot of money in the television so I probably expected more to be spent."

"The thing about doing the business with two young players like Nani and (Brazilian midfielder) Anderson is great timing for us. They will now have time to adapt to the way of our club."

"They won't play every game next season, but they will play a lot of games and it gives us a future."

No one, said Ferguson, will be immune from his chopping and changing next season.

"In the 90s we rotated our squad very well," he added. "Last season we were involved in the three tournaments - the final of the FA Cup, the semifinal of the European Cup as well as the league."

"We had a great opportunity (to win the treble) but we just didn't have enough bodies to stretch our squad out and save legs where we could have saved legs. We got a lot of injuries all in the space of a few weeks."

"In that situation I sorted of regretted allowing the young players to stay out on loan. If I had been selfish and kept them we would have had a far better chance - a terrific chance - of getting to the final of the European Cup and a good chance of winning the FA Cup."

"Without question when talking about the profile of this club we should have done better in Europe."

"Last season was the third Champions League semifinal we have failed in. We don't like that. We think we should be doing better and signing these players does give us a bigger chance."

"But now we have a very strong squad and the evidence of last year tells us that we need a stronger

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## Dream start for Indonesia

AFP, Jakarta



Tuesday as they shocked Bahrain 2-1 in group D.

Pamungkas was on hand to slot home the rebound after the excellent Firman Utina's fierce drive had been tipped onto the post by Bahrain goalkeeper Abdulrahman Abdulkarim at full stretch.

That gave the minnows an unlikely victory over Bahrain, who finished fourth in the competition three years ago in China.

The skillful Indonesians settled first, making light of their physical inferiority, and gave notice of their counter-attacking threat with a series of lightning forays deep into Bahraini terri-

tory that ended only with poor decision-making.

Bahrain didn't heed the warning signs and the hosts deservedly opened the scoring on 14 minutes with a move of exquisite simplicity.

Utina timed his through ball to perfection and lofted it over a static defence for the livewire Budi Sudarsono to run onto, round Abdulkarim and slot into the unguarded net.

The throbbing Gelora Bung Karno stadium, of one the biggest in Asia, erupted with unbridled joy.

Bahrain were looking rattled but Indonesia's suspect defence always seemed likely to offer them a way back into the match - and so it proved on 27 minutes.

Muhammad Ridwan dallied on the left flank instead of clearing the danger and he was robbed by the overlapping Ala'ah Hubail who crossed for Abdullah Omar at the nearpost.

Indonesia goalkeeper Yandri Pitoy blocked his close range effort

but the ball rebounded to Sayed Mahmood Jalal to slot home from eight yards.

The second half opened at a frantic pace and it was end to end action aided handsomely by woe-ful, amateurish defending, particularly by Indonesia.

Following Pamungkas's goal, Indonesia's defending became more and more desperate, offering Bahrain encouragement.

Nigeria-born striker Jaycee John Akwani had the ball in the net 13 minutes from time but it was disallowed after he used his arm to bring the ball under control.

Moments later Rashad Al Dosari almost levelled matters as he was given time and space by a failed offside trap to pick his spot, but his chipped finish cannoned back off the bar.

The hosts remained dangerous and Sudarsono could have settled the tie nine minutes from time but he connected only with air from Pamungkas's teasing cross.



PHOTO: AFP

Indonesian players (in red) prepare to defend against a dead-ball opportunity for Bahrain during their Asian Cup group match at the Bung Karno stadium in Jakarta on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Italy World Cup winning defender Fabio Grosso listens to questions during a press conference where he was presented as a new signing for French champions Lyon on Monday.