



Teammates happy with Becks

Football

AFP, Los Angeles

David Beckham was officially introduced to his LA Galaxy teammates Friday and it wasn't long before they were sharing a joke.

"It's just like the first day of school," Beckham said of meeting his new colleagues.

"You are taken out of your comfort zone and into another changing room with players you never met before."

"I have been through it before. It was a different time when I signed with Manchester United and a different time when I signed with Real Madrid. It's a new experience, and I am really looking forward to it."

The former England captain was given a red carpet reception at his first news conference as a Galaxy

player less than 24 hours after arriving at Los Angeles International Airport with his pop star wife Victoria and their three children.

Galaxy coach Frank Yallop helped break the ice for Beckham, who seemed to blend in just fine.

"I just want to be part of the team," Beckham said. "I always try to handle things the right way."

"I just came from the changing room. Frank gave a speech and said it was going to be 'madness for a couple of weeks'. Everyone laughed and then Frank said 'well, maybe for a couple of months.'

About 5,000 season ticket holders, and an estimated 700 journalists from around the world, were on hand at the Home Depot Center for the lavish outdoor ceremony, which was held in the southwest

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The Brazil team (L) take part in a special training session while the Argentines (R) take a light jog around the park on Friday, as both teams gear up for the all-important final of the Copa America to be played on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

ARGENTINA - BRAZIL

El Finale

INTERNET, undated



Argentine defender Roberto Perfumo played for clubs in both Argentina and Brazil in the 1970s and he knows both countries well enough that his opinions are worth listening to.

After the 2002 World Cup Perfumo had this to say about the way both countries played football: 'We use (the ball) to achieve an objective, they use it for their personal pleasure,' Perfumo said. 'And that has to do with the way of seeing life. For us, football is tragic, but for them it isn't.'

That's the way it has always been. Brazil were the ball players, Argentina the ball winners. Brazil played for the fun of it. Argentina played to win, any way they could. As the old cliché goes, it was happy, dancing samba against weary, melancholic tango.

Bremen sign Carlos Alberto

AFP, Bremen

Werder Bremen on Friday said they had finally secured the services of Brazilian midfielder Carlos Alberto from Corinthians.

Financial details were not revealed but reports in the German press suggested that the four-year deal was worth 8.5 million euros.

The 22-year-old's move to Germany had been on the cards for some weeks but had been delayed by the ongoing legal wrangle involving Corinthians owner Kia Joorabchian.

Carlos Alberto began his career with Fluminense in Brazil in 2000 before moving to Portugal where he played in Porto's 2004 Champions League winning team.

Becks debut on schedule

AFP, Los Angeles

David Beckham says with proper treatment on a swollen ankle, he will go ahead as planned and make his Los Angeles Galaxy debut against England's Chelsea in a friendly on July 21.

"It is still swollen," said Beckham, during his official unveiling as a member of the Galaxy here on Friday. "I ran on it three days ago in London and it felt unstable."

"There is still a bit of work to do to get it ready. I will get some more treatment, some massages and it should be right for the first game against Chelsea."

The 32-year-old iconic midfielder hurt his left ankle while playing last month for England in Euro 2008 qualifying. He reinjured it a week later in a match with Real Madrid.

The former England captain said Friday that he looks forward to sharing duties between the Galaxy and England's national side.

"They (the Galaxy) made it clear they are proud of me being part of England's team and they will do everything possible for me to play for England," he said.

Beckham, who said staying fit is one of the keys to his success, admits being the wealthiest player in Major League Soccer could attract some added attention on the field.

"I have always been target for players I played against," Beckham said. "If I am a target, hopefully my teammates like me enough to stick up for me."

MU could face charges

THE INDEPENDENT



Manchester United could be charged with "tapping up" Carlos Tevez if they continue to push for the striker's 35m pounds transfer without the agreement of the Premier League.

So far the Premiership champions have done nothing wrong in their attempts to sign the 23-year-old Argentine despite the controversy surrounding the complicated saga. But if Tevez flies into Manchester next week for a medical, which his adviser Kia Joorabchian said will take place on Wednesday, United could risk the wrath of the Premier League.

The organisation argue that United should be dealing directly with West Ham United, Tevez's

current club and the holders of his registration, and not Joorabchian. Yesterday a Premier League source warned that failure to do so could be a breach of their rules and therefore a case of approaching a contracted player without the permission of his employer. The punishments for the offence range from a fine to a ban on transfer activity for up to two transfer windows.

That stance appears perplexing because Joorabchian received an email four weeks ago from West Ham informing him that they would not be taking up the 40m pound option to buy Tevez. Since then, however, the Premier League have insisted that it is West Ham who have to do the deal and the club maintains it has had no contact with United and that no offer has been made to them.

At the same time Joorabchian

and United admit that they have negotiated a deal with Sir Alex Ferguson declaring he believes Tevez will end up at Old Trafford.

Joorabchian also claims that West Ham have agreed to the deal taking place but the club deny this, declaring that the businessman's actions are "irresponsible", even if, at the same time, club sources have hinted that a breakthrough may come at the beginning of next week.

An impasse was reached after the Premier League declared it would not sanction the transfer unless West Ham kept the largest portion of the transfer fee. This is because the club, after pleading guilty at a disciplinary hearing, gave undertakings that Tevez is solely their player when it tore up the agreement it had with Joorabchian.

The Premier League are

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Yellow jersey holder Switzerland's Fabian Cancellara (C) of the CSC team rides with other competitors during the seventh stage of the Tour de France between Bourg-en-Bresse and Le-Grand-Bornand on Saturday.

Fergie fires back at Jose

TIMES ONLINE

Sir Alex Ferguson claims that José Mourinho's dig at Manchester United's summer spending spree proves his great rival is feeling the heat at Chelsea.

Baptista will be hoping to start the match and put together his longest run yet in the national side. The burly midfielder was brought in to the team midway through Brazil's second match against Chile and has held down his place in the three games since. Whether he plays or not - and the odds are that Dunga will prefer his physical presence both to ruffle the Argentine back four and harry Javier Mascherano when he has the ball - he knows what Brazil need to do to win the match. In short, he said, they have to stop Juan Roman Riquelme.

The Boca Juniors midfielder has not only been the fulcrum of Argentina's attacks but he has also scored five goals to make him the tournament's second highest scorer behind Brazil's Robinho.

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Galaxy unveil Beckham

Football

AFP, Los Angeles

David Beckham's bid to bring football in from the fringes of American sport began amid a burst of confetti and booming rock music Friday as he took his first bow for the Los Angeles Galaxy.

"Soccer can be as big here as it is everywhere around the world, and I'm very proud to be a part of that over the next few years, and maybe a few more years after that," Beckham promised several thousand fans at the Home Depot Center, where the Galaxy rolled out the red carpet for their new star.

That is just what the Galaxy and Major League Soccer were banking on when they engineered the acquisition of Beckham back in January, when Spanish club Real Madrid and England had become disenchanted with the midfielder.

At the time, the deal that could be worth as much as 250 million dollars including endorsements and merchandising was seen as a move to a football backwater by a player entering the twilight of his career.

Not so, insists Beckham, who has since been recalled to England and helped Real to the Spanish League title.

"I don't see this as a winding down of my career," he said. "I may not be 22 years old anymore, but I am as fit as I was at 22. I am as

eager as I was at 14 years old."

Beckham, looking dapper in a grey suit and tie, flashed his grin as he was handed a Galaxy jersey bearing his name and old Real Madrid squad number of 23 -- evoking the spirit of basketball great and Beckham hero Michael Jordan.

He posed for pictures alongside Galaxy general manager Alexi Lalas and his new head coach, Frank Yallop, Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber, Tim Leiweke -- the chief executive and president of the Galaxy's owners AEG -- and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

While Beckham has known for months he was headed Stateside, he showed he still has a few adjustments to make.

"The first thing in my life is always my family," he told the crowd. "The second most important thing has always been foot-soccer," he said. "Sorry, I'll get used to that, I promise."

Some 14.5 million Americans play football, but its popularity pales in comparison to the top three sports: American football, basketball and baseball.

"Throughout my career I've always looked for challenges and something exciting in my life," Beckham said. "This is one of the biggest challenges I've taken on in my career."

While Beckham insisted he is no soccer messiah, he said the climate

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Milan loan out Oliveira

AFP, Rome

European champions AC Milan have sent Brazilian striker Ricardo Oliveira on a season-long loan to Spanish side Real Zaragoza, the Serie A club confirmed on Saturday.

Milan bought Oliveira from Real Betis last summer for a fee of 17 million euros plus Swiss midfielder Johann Vogel, but the 27-year-old forward has failed to secure a regular place in the first team.

Oliveira was a Spanish league winner with Valencia in 2003 and moved to Real Betis the following year.

He also helped Brazil win the Copa America in 2004 and the Confederations Cup in 2005, but was not included in last year's World Cup squad.

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Iran coach hits out at ban

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Outraged Iran coach Amir Ghalehnoei on Saturday lashed out at his touchline ban for the crunch Group C match with China.

Ghalehnoei, red-carded for throwing a water bottle during the 2-1 win against Uzbekistan on Wednesday, said he was "amazed" to be barred when Qatar's coach had a ban rescinded.

"I'm amazed the Qatar coach was forgiven and I've been suspended," said the fiery Ghalehnoei ahead of Sunday's match.

Qatar's Dzemaludin Musovic was sent to the stands during their 1-1 draw with Japan for complaining about a straight red card shown to striker Hussain Yaser.

But he later appealed and was allowed to take his place in the dugout for Qatar's draw with Vietnam.

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Nakamura blames weather

AFP, Hanoi

The scorching tropical weather is to blame for Australia's lacklustre showing in their Asian Cup debut, Japan and Celtic star Shunsuke Nakamura believes.

"Even Australia are suffering in this tournament," Nakamura said after Japan beat the United Arab Emirates 3-1 while Australia crashed to Iraq by the same score on Friday.

"There must be some impact of the heat when a country, which reached the World Cup knockout tournament, are left with one loss and one draw."

"This may be typical of the Asian Cup and it is tough."

Australia's players, many of them European-based, have struggled to get to grips with the sapping conditions in Bangkok and have looked a shadow of the team that beat Japan during the World Cup in Germany last year.



PHOTO: AFP
David Beckham holds his new Los Angeles Galaxy jersey during his presentation at the Home Depot Centre in Carson, California on Friday.

