

Capello mulls US option

INTERNET, undated

Fabio Capello is mulling over a job offer in the United States following his sacking by Real Madrid last month.

Capello won the Spanish title in his first season but complaints about his team's style of play and failure in the Champions League led to him being replaced by Bernd Schuster.

"They have contacted me from the United States, however I must think about it," Capello told Monday's Gazzetta Dello Sport without naming the U.S. team.

"It would be a new experience that would intrigue me not for the money but to see if anyone could make American soccer take off."

David Beckham, dropped by Capello at Real before being brought back into the team to help win the title, has just joined Los Angeles Galaxy in a multi-million dollar deal aimed at increasing interest in soccer in the U.S.

Capello, the former AC Milan, AS Roma and Juventus coach, said he had received other offers.

"Dynamo Kiev and Lokomotiv (Moscow) have come to me with interesting work propositions but I have left it," added the 61-year-old, who said last month he would contemplate retirement.

Bridge faces months on sideline

INTERNET, undated

Chelsea could enter the new season without a recognised left back after Wayne Bridge underwent surgery on a pelvis injury on Saturday.

Bridge, who was due to fly home from the club's United States tour on Monday to begin his rehabilitation, faces three months on the sidelines, according to a report in the Daily Mail.

With Ashley Cole yet to return to training following an ankle operation at the end of last season, Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho must reconsider his defensive options going into the new campaign.

Bridge has been told it will be two months before he can resume ball work, meaning Mourinho may ask new signing Tal Ben Haim to fill in at left back when the season begins on August 11.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United star Cristiano Ronaldo stretches during a training session in Tokyo on Monday.

MU pushing hard for Tevez



AFP, Tokyo

Manchester United are hopeful of sealing the "over-complicated" transfer of Argentina striker Carlos Tevez from West Ham within the next week or so, according to chief executive David Gill.

United, who arrived in Tokyo on the first leg of their four-game Asian tour on Monday, are determined to make Tevez their fourth summer signing following the arrivals of Owen Hargreaves, Nani and Anderson.

He is due to undergo a medical at Old Trafford this week but the transfer has proven to be a problematic one with confusion over who actually owns Tevez, be it West Ham or the sports company MSI, who own the player's economic rights.

The Premier League are determined to see that West Ham and not MSI receive any payment for Tevez and the transfer is currently locked in red tape, but Gill insists that talks are progressing.

"We are working on it, but it is complicated and maybe over-complicated in my humble opinion," Gill told reporters here.

"We are having to deal with four

parties -- the player, West Ham, the companies that own Carlos's economic rights and the Premier League - in an effort to sort everything out.

"The process is on-going as we speak, but Carlos will fly in to undergo his medical some time this week and we will take it from there.

"But we are confident that it can all be concluded over the next week or so."

Tevez's Argentina teammate Gabriel Heinze has been linked with a move away from Old Trafford and bitter rivals Liverpool are leading the chase for the former Paris St Germain defender.

However, United boss Sir Alex Ferguson insists that speculation tipping Heinze with a move may be wide of the mark, with little word from the player over whether he will see out the final two years of his Old Trafford contract.

"The situation with Heinze is quite clear in that his agent is adamant that the player wants to move on," said Ferguson.

"We aren't too sure if that's the case, but we have not received any concrete offer from another club.

"There is clearly some momentum regarding the player's next move, but there is nothing to report at the present

time and he isn't with us in the Far East because he has been in duty for Argentina at the Copa America."

Santoro takes Newport title

AFP, Newport, Rhode Island

Fabrice Santoro captured his first ATP title in five years here Sunday, defeating Nicolas Mahut in straight sets in an all-French final at the 416,000-dollar Hall of Fame Tennis Championships.

The 6-4, 6-4 victory saw fourth-seeded Santoro lift his fifth career title, but his first since he triumphed in Dubai in 2002.

In the process he denied compatriot Mahut, the fifth seed, his first ATP crown.

Mahut was playing in his second final in a month. He reached the championship match at Queen's Club in London, where he fell to four-time champion Andy Roddick.

On Sunday, Mahut's bid to break through was doomed by 10 double faults.

Cops raid London clubs

AFP, London

British detectives raided three football clubs Monday as part of a probe into alleged corruption in the game, police said.

The City of London Police did not disclose which clubs were involved or which leagues they were in.

The raids took place between 7:30am and 9:00am (0630-0800 GMT) and were not connected to Lord John Stevens' ongoing Quest inquiry into the English Premiership.

"We can confirm that search warrants were served at three football clubs and the homes of two individuals in connection with corruption in football and its impact on owners and shareholders," a spokeswoman said.

Erratic form worries Iran coach

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei admits he is concerned after another Jekyll-and-Hyde performance from the three-time Asian Cup champions.

Iran were 2-0 down inside 33 minutes and facing a heavy defeat by China on Sunday before shaking off their early nerves and rallying for a 2-2 draw.

Ghalenoei said Iran were developing a worrying trend after also going behind to an own goal against Uzbekistan before recovering to win 2-1.

"We had a good second half even though China added defensive players but I'm sorry we were so up and down," said the coach.

"We have to think about it and resolve this problem."

Iran goalkeeper Hassan Roudbarian had an especially shaky start, dropping a routine cross before failing to keep out Shao Jiayi's 35-yard free-kick. Roudbarian was beaten at his near post again by Mao Jianqing's second.

But Ghalenoei defended Roudbarian, who also looked at fault for Rahman Rezaei's own goal against Uzbekistan.

"He was very close to stopping the first goal but he couldn't see it very well and it went in," the coach said.

"But the Chinese goalkeeper let in some goals too so you can't say Roudbarian was totally guilty."

Mourinho warns Ballack

TIMES ONLINE



Jose Mourinho warned Michael Ballack yesterday that he has lost his "untouchable" status and is facing a difficult fight for his place at Stamford Bridge. The Germany midfielder player has not travelled on Chelsea's preseason tour to the United States after having an ankle operation last week and is a doubt for the start of the season.

Mourinho named Ballack as one of his nine so-called untouchables last season, but the player's fortunes have dipped in the past six months, with relations with the manager deteriorating after his unilateral decision to have ankle surgery in May. The Portuguese has resolved to play a more attacking formation with two wingers in the coming campaign, leaving Ballack vulnerable, while Claude Makelele is under increasing pressure from John Obi Mikel.

"What I can say is that Ballack is a player I like, but his life is not

easy," Mourinho said. "Like for the other people life is not easy. We have a lot of good players. I'm not the kind of coach that gives places to people just because they are faces or names. Everybody with me has to fight for his place. But I think they have a difficult task because the squad is really good."

Mourinho issued a similar challenge to Andriy Shevchenko, who, despite labouring for 45 minutes of Saturday's 2-1 win over Club América, of Mexico City, is still interesting AC Milan. "If he performs, if he shows me day after day and match after match that he deserves to play, I'm very, very happy," Mourinho said. "If Sheva plays magnificently I'll have to play him and [Didier] Drogba together. No problem for me, I'll be very pleased with that.

"What I want is a free competition between players and players with their performances to influence my decisions. I'm not stupid. If a player is performing at a high level, I play them."

Mourinho's reversion to wingers in a 4-2-3-1 formation showed

signs of promise against Club América at Stanford University, in Palo Alto, California, with Florent Malouda, on his debut, scoring the equaliser and creating the winner for John Terry.

The France player celebrated his goal with a bizarre dance routine in reference to the Crazy Frog song he performed for his teammates during his initiation of Friday. "It was great fun out there playing with my new teammates," Malouda said. "We like to entertain, but it was difficult at first because it was so hot out on the pitch. But we won and that was an important way to start."

Wayne Bridge will be out for three months after having surgery on an injured pelvis in Colorado this weekend, leaving Tal Ben Haim to fill in at left back in the absence of the injured Ashley Cole. "Without Bridge and Cole for a few more weeks, I think Tal is my first option for left back," Mourinho said. "I will play him in one of these matches at left back because I want to give him some routine, but I know he's a player I can trust."

Advocaat tipped for Aussie role



AFP, Bangkok

Dutchman Dick Advocaat is to be installed as Australia's new football coach in time for next year's 2010 World Cup qualifiers, Australian media reports said Monday.

Advocaat, who managed the Netherlands in two spells and took the Dutch to the quarterfinals of the 1994 World Cup, is nearing the end of a two-year deal with Russian club Zenit St Petersburg, which expires on November 11.

The report said that current Socceroos coach Graham Arnold, who has a contract until 2010, will likely focus on qualifying the Olympic (under-23) team for next year's Beijing Games.

Australia, under Arnold, had a disastrous Asian Cup campaign with a last-gasp 1-1 draw against Oman and a 3-1 loss to Iraq, and must

beat co-hosts Thailand later Monday if they are to qualify for the quarterfinals.

Advocaat, 59, was first interviewed by Football Federation Australia in mid-2005, but countryman Guus Hiddink took the Socceroos to last year's World Cup instead.

The Sydney Morning Herald said after a year-long search to find a permanent successor to Hiddink, it is believed FFA is close to finalising a deal for Advocaat to guide the Socceroos through the 2010 World Cup campaign.

The first round of qualifiers kicks off in June next year after the draw is made in Durban, South Africa, on November 25.

Advocaat also has experience with Asian football and has coached South Korea and United Arab Emirates in the past four years.

The Herald said FFA chairman Frank Lowy, one of Australia's richest men, will personally fund Advocaat's wages.

Advocaat has been mentioned for the Socceroos' job along with Gerard Houllier, Jurgen Klinsmann, Louis van Gaal and Leo Beenhakker.

The report said the FFA is looking at using Arnold in rotation with technical director Dutchman Rob Baan to continue coaching the Socceroos on a game-by-game basis until Advocaat is installed as the new boss.

Australia have a match against Argentina in Melbourne on September 11, while another home match against China is mooted for October.

Arnold has been under fire as the Socceroos, full of their leading European stars, have struggled at the Asian Cup and on Sunday he dismissed reports of a rift among the squad.

There has been considerable agitation back home about Arnold's position with a website (sackarnold.com) operating as an online petition to have him fired.

The website said Monday it had garnered 2,287 signatures so far.