

Mido Boro bound

AFP, London

Egyptian striker Mido on Tuesday appeared to be about to move again with Middlesbrough set to seal his transfer from Premier League rivals Tottenham Hotspur.

The northeast side said they hoped to clinch the transfer "within the next 36 hours" after confirming the forward is currently undergoing a medical.

Club manager Gareth Southgate told the club's website: "We've agreed a fee with Tottenham and that's enabled us to have Mido up to see us and he's currently in the process of having his medical.

"Hopefully if everything goes well we'll have some news in the next 36 hours."

Mido's move to Birmingham collapsed earlier this summer with Blues boss Steve Bruce revealing the player's insistence upon various contractual clauses prompted the breakdown.

Sunderland and Middlesbrough then expressed their interest to take on board the 24-year-old and the Teessiders appear to have won the race.

"All the talks have been very positive and I don't see the medical being too much of a problem for him," Southgate said.

VDV pleads for Valencia move

AFP, Hamburg

Dutch midfielder Rafael van der Vaart pleaded with his German club Hamburg on Monday to let him leave for a 'dream' move to Valencia.

Hamburg denied earlier in the day that they have received an offer for their captain but van der Vaart has now said that his mind is set on a move to the Spaniards.

"I am determined to leave and Valencia would be a dream for me," the 24-year-old said in an interview due to be published in the Tuesday edition of Hamburger Abendblatt.

"If I have to stay at Hamburg, that would be very painful for me," he added.

Hamburg later admitted to have received an offer for the former Ajax star but said they are determined to keep hold of the player they signed in 2005.

"In this particular case money is of no importance," said sporting director Dietmar Beiersdorfer.

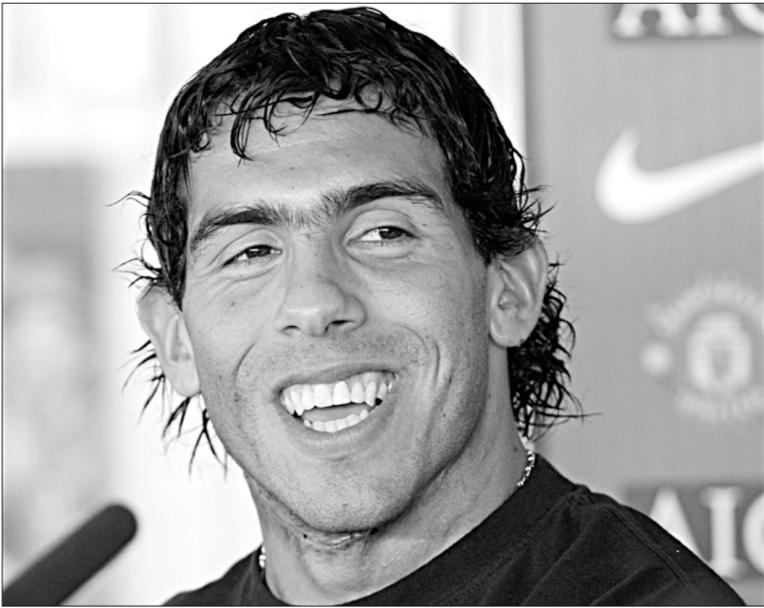


PHOTO: AFP

Argentine forward Carlos Tevez smiles during a press conference to officially announce his move to Manchester United on Monday.

Tevez unfazed by MU task

Football

THE TIMES

Three days into his Manchester United career, Carlos Tevez said yesterday that he would happily lay down roots at Old Trafford and while the club's hierarchy may prefer breathing space after the saga of his transfer from West Ham United, there can be little doubt that the Argentina forward has an opportunity to establish himself immediately after the loss of Wayne Rooney to injury.

With the England striker ruled out for at least seven weeks with a hairline fracture of his left foot, Tevez will be thrust into United's starting line-up for the Barclays Premier League match away to Portsmouth tomorrow evening. It is not the gradual introduction that Sir Alex Ferguson had in mind, but, as he was finally paraded at United's training ground yesterday, Tevez appeared to be warming to the idea of filling Rooney's boots.

"I have never felt pressure when I play football," Tevez said when asked whether he felt daunted by the prospect of standing in for Rooney. "Whenever I go on to the pitch I try to enjoy myself. All I can do is prepare myself

and to try to adapt as quickly as possible. It is a big blow to lose Wayne he is a great player and he will be very difficult to replace but at a big club like Manchester United, you hope to have a number of players who can slot in. I will do everything I can to help Manchester United be successful."

Ferguson smiled upon hearing such sentiments, having bought a player whom he feels can handle the pressure of playing for such a big club. United's previous experiences with South American imports have been largely disappointing; Juan Sebastian Veron, Diego Forlan and Kleberson were sold at substantial losses, while Gabriel Heinze, after an encouraging start, lost his place and is pushing for a move to Liverpool. But Ferguson believes that Tevez's experience of English football with West Ham last season means that this is a different case.

It was the 23-year-old's performances for West Ham in the final months of last season when he scored seven goals in the final ten league matches, having failed to find the net in the previous 16 that convinced Ferguson that he was worth the significant amount of time and trouble invested in his signing.

With his economic rights owned by

two companies, Media Sports Investment (MSI) and Just Sports Inc (JSI), he had to be released by West Ham who were compensated with a fee of £2 million leaving United to lease him on a two-year contract at a cost of £10 million, with the option of buying him from MSI and JSI for a further payment in the region of £15 million at any time before June 30, 2009.

It is a situation that had Ferguson shaking his head in mock confusion and David Gill, the United chief executive, calling for Fifa, world football's governing body, to clear up the mess that surrounds third-party ownership, but Tevez seems happy to contemplate a long-term future at Old Trafford. "Speak to David Gill," he said with a smile. "If he offers a contract for five years, I will take it."

The reality is far less straightforward with Kia Joorabchian, the player's representative, calling the shots but if Tevez can make light of Rooney's absence in the coming months, that conversation may not be too far away.

Warrant out for Thaksin

THE GUARDIAN

Thailand's supreme court has approved a prosecution request to issue arrest warrants for the Manchester City owner Thaksin Shinawatra and his wife on corruption charges. The former Thai prime minister, who has been living in self-imposed exile in England, took over City in the summer and installed Sven-Goran Eriksson as manager.

The Thai attorney general issued the warrant for Thaksin and his wife Pojarnam, in connection with corruption charges over a controversial land purchase deal in Bangkok. The first hearing on the case started today and the defendants' lawyers asked for the hearing to be indefinitely delayed on grounds that Thaksin and his wife felt it was unsafe for them to travel to Thailand.

Thaksin issued a statement in which he declared: "I am aware of the decision in Thailand. I shall consult with my legal advisers and make an announcement in due course."

A spokesman for Thaksin claimed the move was politically-motivated. "No doubt this latest publicity stunt by the military government has nothing to do with the referendum on the constitution taking place later this week," he said.

City won their opening game of the season 2-0 at West Ham on Saturday.

Cassano set for Sampdoria

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid's Antonio Cassano has agreed to join Sampdoria on a season-long loan deal.

The Italy international has decided to return to Serie A after struggling to make an impact at the Bernabeu.

Cassano had been linked with a move to the Premier League with Bolton and Manchester City both apparently keen on signing the former Roma striker.

But Samp and Real came to agreement on Monday and the Italian outfit also have the option to make the deal permanent at the end of the loan spell.

Cassano is set to be officially unveiled as a Samp player in the next few days.

Redknapp unsure of repeat

AFP, Portsmouth

Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp fears the timing of Manchester United's trip to Fratton Park on Wednesday diminishes his side's hopes of a second successive home win over the champions.

United suffered a shock 2-1 defeat on the south coast in April, days before their 7-1 thrashing of Italian side Roma in the Champions League.

United visit Fratton Park without England striker Wayne Rooney, who has sustained a hairline fracture in his left foot, but with Argentina hit man Carlos Tevez making his United debut in his place.

But Redknapp insists hosting the Red Devils in only their second game of the campaign reduces the chances of another upset - regardless of the danger posed by Tevez.

Redknapp, whose Pompey team also face United's Premier League title rivals Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal in the opening month, said: "Playing all of the big four so early on is not ideal."

"There is no doubt about it, you have a much better chance of beating all of those teams later in the season when they are competing for

the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup.

"The best time to play United, Liverpool, Arsenal or Chelsea is on a Saturday when they have a Champions League game mid-week.

"Look at last season. We beat United just before they were due to play Roma and when Liverpool came down they rested most of their players because they had a European semi-final with Chelsea and we beat them 2-0.

"Of course you have to play them at some point but getting all four so early on is a bit unlucky to say the least."

Redknapp boasts a proud record against United, having also knocked them out of the FA Cup during his first managerial job at Bournemouth and denied them the championship after his West Ham team held them to a 1-1 final day draw in 1995.

"I have had some fantastic results against United down the years but also know how dangerous they can be," he added.

Alex (United manager Sir Alex Ferguson) has some fantastic players to choose from and has made his squad even stronger over the summer.

"Players like Carlos Tevez, Cristiano Ronaldo and Ryan Giggs can hurt you and Paul Scholes is a terrific midfielder.

"They were worthy champions

last season and I am sure they will have another great year."

Redknapp will be the first manager to face Tevez in a United shirt after the completion of his protracted move to Old Trafford.

The Pompey boss admitted he considered a move for Tevez more than a year ago but pulled out due to the completed nature of the transfer - which prompted this close-season saga.

"I liked Tevez before he went to West Ham but was not sure what the deal was. He is a super player and will be a great addition for Alex," the 60-year-old said.

Sol Campbell will be the player charged with stopping Tevez as he makes his United debut.

Central defender Campbell, who could be in line for an England recall, says the Argentinian would be the one player in the world he would like to join him at Fratton Park.

"If I were a manager and I could sign one player it would be Tevez. He is a fantastic player, so exciting to watch and a real handful," the former Arsenal centre-half said.

"He played a massive part in keeping West Ham in the division last season and has a huge amount of ability. I am sure United will benefit from having him."

New forwards for Japan

Football

AFP, Tokyo

Japan coach Ivica Osim said Tuesday he may inject some new attacking players into his squad for next week's home friendly against Cameroon following their failure to defend the Asian Cup.

But he retained key J-League defenders and midfielders as he named 12 members of an 18-man side to face the four-time African Nations Cup champions in Oita, southern Japan, on August 22.

The Bosnian coach said he would call up six attacking players, probably including a number of new faces, after the J-League's 21st round at the weekend.

Osim recalled Brazilian-born defender Marcus Tulio Tanaka of the Urawa Reds, a centre back with attacking skills who missed last

month's continental championship due to a last-minute injury in the left knee.

As promised, Osim left off Europe-based players due to their club commitments. Celtic midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura and Frankfurt striker Naohiro Takahara had both taken part in the Asian Cup.

"These defensive players are the best in the J-League. As for offensive players, a number of new members will probably join," Osim, who led the former Yugoslavia to the 1990 World Cup quarter-finals, told reporters.

None of the 12 players, including gutsy goalkeeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, hard man centre back Yuji Nakazawa and midfielder Yasuhito Endo, were forwards.

The dozen, except for Tullio, all played in Japan's failed campaign to win a third straight Asian Cup. Osim warned of a shake-up after they lost to South Korea on penalties in the third-place playoff.

But Osim told reporters on Monday, "I don't think our Asian Cup squad were such an ugly team that required major changes."

Squad

Goalkeepers: Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi (Jubilo Iwata), Seigo Narazaki (Nagoya Grampus Eight)

Defenders: Yuji Nakazawa (Yokohama Marinos), Akira Kaji (Gamba Osaka), Yuichi Komano (Sanfrecce Hiroshima), Marcus Tulio Tanaka (Urawa Reds)

Midfielders: Hideo Hashimoto (Gamba Osaka), Yasuhito Endo (Gamba Osaka), Kengo Nakamura (Kawasaki Frontale), Keita Suzuki (Urawa Reds), Yuki Abe (Urawa Reds), Yasuyuki Konno (FC Tokyo)

Osim is to announce six more players after the J-League's 21st round at the weekend.

10x3

10x2

10x3