

Spain leave out Raul

AFP, Madrid

Spain coach Luis Aragones on Friday named an 18-strong squad for a friendly match against Greece in Salonika on August 22.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Iker Casillas (Real Madrid), Jose Manuel Reina (Liverpool/ENG)
Defenders: Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid), Carlos Marchena (Valencia), Juanito (Real Betis), Pablo (Atletico Madrid), Mariano Perna (Atletico Madrid)
Midfielders: Francesc Fabregas (Arsenal/ENG), Xavi Hernandez (Barcelona), Andres Iniesta (Barcelona), Xabi Alonso (Liverpool/ENG), David Silva (Valencia), David Albelda (Valencia), Joaquin Sanchez (Valencia)
Strikers: David Villa (Valencia), Miguel Angel Angulo (Valencia), Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid), Luis Garcia (Espanyol)

Real relief

Football

INTERNET, undated

An early penalty from Roberto Soldado, a 72nd minute strike from Ruud van Nistelrooy and an injury time goal from Javier Balboa saw Real Madrid pick up a long overdue win, over Cadiz in the consolation match of the Ramon de Carranza Trophy.

It was not necessarily a convincing display from Los Merengues, as they looked second best to Cadiz for lengthy periods, but it was a win all the same.

Cadiz were wasteful in the final third, and Madrid were not, and that was what told in the end.

For so much talk of 'touch' football, it was yet again a case of grinding out a result, something that has seen coaches sacked at the Bernabeu even recently.

It was Cadiz who looked the more dangerous of the two sides until Soldado converted from the

spot in the 14th minute after Saviola was brought down in the area.

The hosts put Real Madrid on the back foot again, but the lack of quality in the final third was all too obvious, and they failed to work Duke despite dominating possession.

Madrid came to life during the final five minutes of the half, and created a couple of good chances, but Soldado and Saviola failed to convert as the teams headed into the break with Schuster's boys ahead by a goal.

The host of changes during the break meant that the fluidity was lost again, and it was Cadiz who used that to grow back into the game.

They finally had some deserved joy on the hour mark when young Paraguayan forward Enrique comfortably out-jumped Pepe to head in from close range and bring them back level.

The game seemed ready to change on its head as the hosts took charge. However, the Madrid rear-guard managed to keep it tight,

before Van Nistelrooy - who had just come on - restored their lead in the 74th minute with a fine individual goal.

Cadiz tried to respond, but this time Schuster's boys kept the ball well. There were a couple of half chances in the final minutes as some panic hit them, but Balboa scored in injury time - with most Cadiz players at the other end of the pitch - to secure the result.

It was not quite a performance, but a result Real Madrid will happily take as they head into the second leg of the Spanish Super Cup clash against Sevilla.

Defending his side's showing Schuster said, "We've only been working for three weeks and we aren't in optimum form yet, but we are gradually getting there," he said.

"The important games start on Sunday. The League starts the following weekend. We still have things to improve on."

'Big Sam' under pressure

AFP, Newcastle

Newcastle United's new boss Sam Allardyce is under pressure to change the Magpies' goal scoring fortunes in his first English Premier League game in charge at home to Aston Villa on Saturday. In more than half a century the Toon Army have experienced nothing quite like it.

A club, which was dubbed "The Entertainers" in the mid 1990s, has not scored a league goal at St James's Park since February.

In 470 minutes of Premier League football on Tyneside frustrated home fans have been forced to live on the memory of Peru midfielder Nolberto Solano's winning goal, albeit from the penalty spot, against Liverpool six months ago.

Not since 1951 have the Magpies endured such a barren period but Villa should not expect that dismal run to continue.

Newcastle opened up this season's top-flight account with three goals at Bolton Wanderers and Michael Owen has since been declared fit for a first team return.

Such is United's sudden attacking strength in depth that the England forward will have to be content with a place on the bench.

"We can safely say that we can bring Michael into the squad after his two (reserve team) appearances this week," said Magpies manager Sam Allardyce.

"He's still short of match practice. But Michael Owen is Michael Owen and he's a goal scorer. We can say he's fit from the injury now."

Owen is one fifth of a fearsome attacking quintet featuring the Nigeria's Obafemi Martins, Australia's Mark Viduka and young Englishmen Alan Smith and Shola Ameobi.

It is a forward line the envy of many Premier League clubs and Villa manager Martin O'Neill would certainly benefit from such firepower.

RAFA HOSTS JOSE

Tasty Mancunian derby

AFP, London



Liverpool tackle Chelsea as a resurgent City play stuttering champions

United in the Manchester derby on a crunch weekend of fixtures in the English Premier League.

In the first "big four" clash of the new season, Rafael Benitez's Reds host Jose Mourinho's Blues in an early test of each side's title-winning potential.

And Manchester United head to Eastlands without last season's top scorers: the injured Wayne Rooney, and Cristiano Ronaldo, suspended for headbutting.

Manchester City, revitalised under former England boss Sven-Goran Eriksson, have the chance to prove their impressive start to the season makes them serious contenders this season.

The Manchester derby, Liverpool's clash with Chelsea and Arsenal's trip to Blackburn take place Sunday.

In Saturday's matches, league leaders Everton look to keep up their perfect start at Reading.

Big-spending Tottenham, desperate for a first win, host newly promoted Derby County and West Ham travel to Birmingham with new signing Kieron Dyer set to make his Hammers debut.

At the Madejski Stadium, two of the toughest teams to break down in the Premier League go head to head.

Early pace-setters Everton have got the better of Tottenham and Wigan so far, but they travel to Reading, whose man-marking tactics squeezed a goalless draw out of Manchester United and gave Chelsea a fright before the Blues ground out a win.

"We'll be playing three from the top six inside a week, and it's as if it's the hardest possible hurdle we could have been set," said Royals boss Steve Coppell.

Everton's new midfielder Phil

Jagielka reckons the Toffees are playing so well he faces an extended spell on the bench.

"I can't see the gaffer changing it for Reading," the England B international said.

"Nine or even seven points (from the first three games) would be a fantastic start."

Tottenham were tipped to be among the top sides this season but they have lost both matches so far.

"Now there is more pressure to get a result," said Spurs boss Martin Jol's assistant Chris Hughton.

"I'm sure Derby will try to make it difficult for us but it has to be about us and about bouncing back from two defeats. It has been a disappointing start for all of us here and we're determined to get back to winning ways."

Birmingham have been frustrated in their matches so far, losing 3-2 at Chelsea and succumbing to a disputed last-minute equaliser in a 2-2 draw at home to Sunderland.

They host West Ham -- who were embarrassed as visitors Manchester City tore them apart in a 2-0 opening day win.

England midfielder Dyer said he was ready to be thrown in to the Hammers team.

"It is probably one of my strengths -- my ability to hit the ground running, so even though I have had a bit of a stop start pre-season if the manager asks me to play at Birmingham on Saturday I

will be totally up for the challenge," he said.

Newcastle boss Sam Allardyce takes charge of his first league match at St James's Park as the Magpies host Aston Villa.

England striker Michael Owen could make a welcome return to Newcastle, who have not scored at home since February.

However, Villa boss Martin O'Neill wants his defenders to close down the likes of Owen more.

"If we could just tighten up a little bit, especially when we haven't got the ball, then I honestly believe we will start to do better," the Northern Irishman said.

"Once we get going, we'll be fine."

Mido should make his debut for Middlesbrough at Fulham.

Boro lost both their opening games and boss Gareth Southgate cannot wait for the tall Egyptian striker to get started.

"You want a centre-forward to hold the ball up, to be a physical presence and to score goals. Mido brings all of those attributes," he said.

"Mido is a player I believe possibly has a point to prove. He is a player of great ability, a strong player and a big character."

Roy Keane's Championship winners Sunderland travel to Wigan looking to capitalise on their four points from six games so far, with new striker Michael Chopra scoring in both games.

"Hopefully I can make it three in three at Wigan," he said.

"I've got self-belief and I always thought I should be playing in the Premier League."

Portsmouth host Bolton, who have lost both their opening games.

"It's right that we've got no points out of the two games but I want the players to have the belief in what they are doing," Bolton boss Sammy Lee said.

FIXTURES

Saturday (all times 1400 GMT)
 Portsmouth v Bolton (1145 GMT), Fulham v Middlesbrough, Wigan Athletic v Sunderland, Reading v Everton, Tottenham v Derby County, Birmingham v West Ham, Newcastle v Aston Villa (1615 GMT)
Sunday
 Man City v Man Utd (1230 GMT), Blackburn v Arsenal (1400 GMT), Liverpool v Chelsea (1500 GMT)



Real Madrid striker Ruud van Nistelrooy (R) fights with Cadiz player Medina during a match of the Carranza trophy at Ramon de Carranza Stadium in Cadiz on Thursday.

Nistelrooy back in Dutch fold

INTERNET, undated

Strikers Ruud van Nistelrooy and Robin van Persie have been recalled to the Dutch squad in a 20-man squad named by coach Marco van Basten for a friendly against Switzerland on August 22.

Real Madrid's Van Nistelrooy was dropped after the 2006 World Cup while Arsenal's van Persie played his last international against Albania before missing the remainder of last season through a foot injury.

Van Basten said he had not spoken specifically about van Nistelrooy's position in the team.

"His job is to score goals and that is what he managed at Madrid and I hope he will do it for us also," he said.

Ajax Amsterdam striker Klaas Jan Huntelaar has been dropped.

Forward Rafael van der Vaart, who missed SV Hamburg's UEFA Cup match on Thursday through a back injury, has been included in the squad.

"Our doctor told me that Rafael can play this weekend so it won't be a problem for next week," said Van Basten.

The Dutch are third in Euro 2008 qualifying Group G with 14 points after six matches. They host Bulgaria on Sept. 8 and play Albania away four days later.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Edwin van der Sar (Manchester United), Maarten Stekelenburg (Ajax/Amsterdam)
Defenders: Khalid Boulahrouz (Sevilla), Wilfried Bouma (Aston Villa), Urby Emanuelson (Ajax/Amsterdam), John Heitinga (Ajax/Amsterdam), Kew Jaliens (AZ Alkmaar), Joris Mathijsen (SV Hamburg), Mario Melchiot (Wigan Athletic)
Midfielders: Ibrahim Afellay (PSV Eindhoven), Giovanni van Bronckhorst (Feyenoord), Clarence Seedorf (AC Milan), Wesley Sneijder (Real Madrid), Demy de Zeeuw (AZ Alkmaar)
Forwards: Rafael van der Vaart (SV Hamburg), Ryan Babel (Liverpool), Dirk Kuyt (Liverpool), Ruud van Nistelrooy (Real Madrid), Robin van Persie (Arsenal), Jan Vennegoor (Celtic).

Mido seals Boro move

AFP, Middlesbrough

Egyptian international Mido completed his transfer from Tottenham to Middlesbrough on Thursday, signing a four-year contract at the Riverside.

Boro paid Spurs six million pounds (11.9 million dollars, 8.9 million euros) for the striker.

Mido found himself squeezed out at White Hart Lane by Tottenham's wealth of strikers, finding his opportunities limited by the presence of Bulgaria's Dimitar Berbatov, Ireland's Robbie Keane and England's Jermain Defoe and Darren Bent.

Middlesbrough manager Gareth Southgate reckons England winger Stewart Downing's crosses will be perfect for the tall Egyptian.

"He is someone I played against as a player and he always impressed me," said Southgate, the former England defender-cum-midfielder.

"He gave me a hard game and he certainly has attributes I'd like to bring to the team and give us different options."

"When you've got one of the best crossers in the league in Stewart Downing, you want someone like Mido who can head the ball."

Klose awaits Onslaught

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich striker Miroslav Klose is bracing himself to run a gauntlet of abuse from fans when he returns to former club Werder Bremen for the first time on Saturday.

Klose left Bremen and signed for Bayern in June for 12 million euros, but there is still plenty of ill feeling towards the 29-year-old star among the Bremen faithful.

He committed the cardinal sin, in the eyes of Werder's fans, by speaking to Bayern bosses about a transfer before Bremen's heavy 3-0 defeat in the UEFA Cup semi-final first-leg at Spanish side Espanyol last April.

Klose later apologised to the club and fans alike, but the bad feeling showed as he was booed every time he touched the ball in Bayern's 4-1 German League Cup win over Bremen in Duesseldorf last month.

"I am not more nervous than I would be before another other match, I want to score goals against Bremen as well," said Klose, who netted twice in Bayern's 3-0 win over Hansa Rostock on the opening

weekend of the season. Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge says there will be no war of words between the German giants and Bremen, so he is keen to heal the rift.

"We won't be saying anything at all in this respect," he said.

"I'm also convinced that Bremen have no interest in stoking up a hate campaign against Bayern in general, or Miro Klose in particular."

"It won't be an easy match for him, but I know Miro will come away from the game a stronger personality. These matches teach you lessons for life."

"Meanwhile, Turkish international midfielder Yildirim Basturk will make his debut for Bundesliga champions VfB Stuttgart when they take on Hertha Berlin at the Olympic Stadium in the capital on Saturday."

The 28-year-old, who has won more than 40 caps for Turkey, will be back at the club he signed from over the summer having recovered from a thigh strain.

Stuttgart are without their leading striker Mario Gomez as the German "Footballer of the Year" is still struggling with a leg injury and Brazilian striker Cacau has pulled an adductor muscle.

But after their 2-2 draw with Schalke 04 last Friday on the open-

ing weekend of the season, the champions are celebrating after Sami Khedira and Serdar Tasci were called into the Germany squad for next week's friendly at Wembley.

Revenge will be in the air at Schalke when they entertain close neighbours and bitter rivals Borussia Dortmund on Saturday.

Schalke were poised to win their first Bundesliga title on the penultimate weekend of last season, but were beaten 2-0 at Dortmund allowing Stuttgart to sneak past them and be crowned champions.

In an effort to ease the tension between the rival fans, the bosses of both clubs have written an open letter asking supporters to approach the game with a healthy, sporting attitude.

But Dortmund will also be looking for a win after they were embarrassed 3-1 at the hands of Bundesliga new boys Duisburg last weekend that left coach Thomas Doll furious.

Having lost 3-0 at Bayern Munich on the opening day of the season, newly promoted Hansa Rostock will be looking to bounce back when they host German Cup winners Nuremberg.

And after their explosive win over Dortmund, Duisburg take on a Wolfsburg side licking their wounds after last weekend's 3-1 drubbing at home to Armenia Bielefeld.

On Friday night, last season's second division champions Karlsruhe host Hanover while on Sunday Hamburg are at home to Bayer Leverkusen and Energie Cottbus host VfL Bochum.

FIXTURES

Saturday (all 1330 GMT)
 Schalke 04 v Dortmund, Werder Bremen v Bayern Munich, Hertha Berlin v VfB Stuttgart, Arminia Bielefeld v Eintracht Frankfurt, Hansa Rostock v Nuremberg, Duisburg v Wolfsburg
Sunday (all 1500 GMT)
 SV Hamburg v Bayer Leverkusen, Energie Cottbus v VfL Bochum

Death threats for VDV

INTERNET, undated

Rafael van der Vaart's wife Sylvie has denounced threatening emails directed to the Hamburger SV player by irate fans. Some HSV supporters are upset that Rafa has publicly stated his desire to leave Germany for pastures new - perhaps Valencia - despite his club's attempts to keep him.

Sylvie van der Vaart has hit out at those HSV fans who have bombarded her husband with threatening emails.

The Dutch playmaker has raised hackles in Hamburg after announcing his intention to leave the HSH Nordbank Arena in favour of a switch abroad.

Now, some supporters have taken the objectionable step of threatening the player's well-being - and Rafa's wife says that this is unacceptable.

"This is without grace," she said. "I am worried, particularly for my son, and mainly when Rafael is not in the house."

Van der Vaart once drew the anger of Ajax fans when the fiery midfielder fought his way out of Amsterdam - amidst his repeated public demands for a transfer, tensions rose so quickly that the player acquired a bodyguard for protection.

Now, it seems the same could happen again, even if - or perhaps especially if - no move comes to fruition over the next few weeks.

Valencia have repeatedly badgered HSV about the player both officially and through the press, only to be met with the same response each time: Rafael is going nowhere.

Nonetheless, the player is as eager as Los Che are for a move, and neither party is set to let the matter go quietly.



Hamburg star Rafael van der Vaart watches from the stands as his team takes on Budapest Honved during a UEFA Cup qualifying match at the Ferenc Szusza stadium in Budapest on Thursday.

Football

AFP, London

England manager Steve McClaren on Friday named veteran duo David James and Sol Campbell in a 28-strong squad for a friendly game against Germany in Wembley on August 22.

The Portsmouth pair, who have not featured for their country since the 2006 World Cup, will join uncapped Newcastle youngster Steven Taylor and LA Galaxy's David Beckham in the large squad.

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, even though he will not play after fracturing a toe in Toulouse this week, was also named.

However there was no place for Blackburn's David Bentley, with McClaren confirming his omission was a direct result of his refusal to play for the Under-21s side at this summer's UEFA Under-21s European Championships.

"Sol is a player with vast experience at international level. He had a very strong season at Portsmouth last year," said McClaren.

"I always maintained that I wasn't closing the door on Sol. I know he won't let England down and I'm very pleased to welcome him back into the

squad. "David showed excellent and

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Paul Robinson (Tottenham), David James (Portsmouth), Scott Carson (Liverpool, on loan at Aston Villa)
Defenders: Micah Richards (Manchester City), Wes Brown (Manchester United), Rio Ferdinand (Manchester United), John Terry (Chelsea), Ashley Cole (Chelsea)
 Sol Campbell (Portsmouth), Steven Taylor (Newcastle United), Phil Neville (Everton)
Midfielders: Nicky Shorey (Reading), David Beckham (LA Galaxy/USA), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool), Frank Lampard (Chelsea), Joe Cole (Chelsea), Shaun Wright-Phillips (Chelsea), Michael Carrick (Manchester United), Gareth Barry (Aston Villa), Stewart Downing (Middlesbrough), Kieron Dyer (West Ham United), Owen Hargreaves (Manchester United)
Strikers: Alan Smith (Newcastle United), Michael Owen (Newcastle United), Peter Crouch (Liverpool), Darren Bent (Tottenham Hotspur), Andrew Johnson (Everton), Jermain Defoe (Tottenham Hotspur)

consistent form for Portsmouth last season, that's why he is back in the squad," he added. "His attitude and professionalism has been first-class throughout this period. I also watched him in action this week against Manchester United, he is a top-class goalkeeper and deserves his recall."

Pander gets national call

INTERNET, undated

Schalke's Christian Pander has been rewarded for his performances last season with a call-up to the national squad as a replacement for the injured Clemens Fritz.

The 23 year old will make the trip to face England at Wembley on the 22nd of August. Werder full-back Fritz has had to withdraw from the squad due a stomach muscle injury.

"Of course, I'm delighted that I will be there for such a huge game. I've had lots of chances in the past, which I've not been able to take because of injuries" he explained.

"But now the time seems to have come. It's a great feeling."

PHOTO: AFP