



Ex-Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho drives away from Stamford Bridge on the early hours of Thursday.

## Give me a job: Jose

### Football

#### THE TIMES

José Mourinho yesterday agreed a £12 million pound payoff as compensation for his dramatic departure from Chelsea, but he is already planning his return to football. Mourinho told *The Times* he is waiting by the phone and hopes to get back to work as soon as possible.

Tottenham Hotspur have already privately expressed their interest in a man who won six trophies during three unforgettable years at Stamford Bridge, although it is unlikely that the Portuguese would accept an offer to stay in London at White Hart Lane. "I'm going to enjoy my life, I'm going to wait for the telephone calls," Mourinho said. "I want to work."

He later released a statement that read: "I am very proud of my work at Chelsea. I want to thank all Chelsea supporters for what I believe is a never-ending love story. I wish great success to the club." Mourinho went on to thank the players and even his children's teachers.

Chelsea acted swiftly to move on from the controversy surrounding Mourinho's exit along with the bulk of his coaching staff by announcing Avram Grant as his replacement on a full-time basis. It is understood that

they are also considering offering Jamie Redknapp a coaching position. The club are conscious of the need to regain some goodwill from fans angered by Mourinho's departure and believe that Redknapp, the former England midfield player, would bring some glamour and Premier League experience. But it may take more than that to appease those who gathered outside Stamford Bridge last night to register their protest at the departure of the "Special One".

Chelsea's main problem will be rebuilding the confidence of players who are shocked and saddened by the treatment of Mourinho and Grant has much work to do to win over a sceptical dressing-room.

Although enjoying a close relationship with Roman Abramovich, the owner, the Israeli has not developed a rapport with the players since arriving as director of football in the summer and many are disillusioned by his appointment.

As the 52-year-old has not held a club job for five years and never managed a team outside Israel, such doubts over his suitability are understandable. However, having been on 1 million pounds a year, he will enjoy a healthy salary increase in his new role, though he will have to go into his first match, against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday, without Didier Drogba and Frank Lampard, who were ruled out yesterday.

Grant is bound to suffer in comparison with the youthful and energetic Mourinho, who was given an emotional send-off after his final visit to the training ground early yesterday. Lampard and Drogba were moved to tears when it came to saying goodbye.

Not all of Chelsea's squad will be sad to see him go, however, with Andriy Shevchenko understood to be potentially delighted and Joe Cole experiencing an element of relief.

Interestingly, John Terry was not as upset as many had expected. The England captain had clashed with Mourinho over his fitness before the manager's final game in charge, against Rosenborg on Tuesday.

Chelsea did their best to portray

Mourinho's departure as having been mutually agreed, but their statement could not disguise the acrimonious nature of the split. "What is clear is we had all reached a point where the relationship between the club and José had broken down," a statement read. "This was despite genuine attempts over several months by all parties to resolve certain differences." The breakdown had "started to impact on performances", Chelsea added.

## Real, Barca on a high

### AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona head into their weekend La Liga matches buoyed by wins at home earlier this week in the Champions League.

But while Barcelona beat French side Olympique Lyon 3-0 at home on Wednesday, the Catalan club have failed to click as yet in La Liga with two goalless draws and a solitary win to date to trail leaders and defending champions Real Madrid by four points.

Real Madrid meanwhile have won all three La Liga matches and scored a 2-1 win over German side Werder in the Champions League on Wednesday at the Bernabeu.

Barcelona will face second-place Sevilla on Saturday while Real Madrid visit mid-table Valladolid on Sunday and after their Champions League success optimism is flowing back into the camp.

"They played as a team and we have to congratulate each and every one of the players," Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard, who has been under fire for his side's lacklustre start to the season, said after Wednesday win over Lyon.

Barcelona captain Carles Puyol trained on Thursday with the rest of the squad for the first time since he injured his knee at the end of last season during a friendly against South Africa, adding to the upbeat feeling at the Catalan club.

Their opponents are heading into the match after suffering a 3-0 loss away to Arsenal on Wednesday in the Champions League. Sevilla lie in second place in the Spanish league with six points and have a game in hand on their rivals.

Real Madrid, with their maximum nine points on the board already, will be looking to extend their winning streak when they face Valladolid.

"We have won vital games in both the league and the Champions League. I cannot ask for more. Having said that, there are still things we have

to improve upon," said Madrid coach Bernd Schuster.

Real Madrid's cross-town rivals Atletico Madrid, who spent heavily in the pre-season to sign new recruits like Simao, Diego Forlan and Antonio Reyes, will face Racing Santander at home.

Racing Santander have not lost a Spanish league match this season and currently stand fifth, a point ahead of Valencia, who travel to Betis after opening their Champions League campaign with a win at Germany's Schalke.

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