

England appoint Capello

Football

THE GUARDIAN

Fabio Capello was appointed as England coach last night following the conclusion of negotiations between his legal team and Football Association officials at Soho Square. The Italian, the 15th man and second foreigner to do the job since the war, will begin his 6.5m pounds-a-year, four-and-a-half-year contract on January 7 and will meet the media on Monday.

Capello will be assisted by four Italians, though an Englishman will work with the assistants Franco Baldini and Italo Galbiati, the goalkeeping coach Franco Tancredi and fitness coach Massimo Neri. Sir Trevor Brooking will play a part in this appointment; Stuart Pearce, the England Under-21 coach, is the leading candidate.

Confirmation of the appointments came after Capello's representatives agreed with the FA over salaries for his support staff, who will be paid from a pool of money distributed by the coach. Capello's contract contains a break clause after the 2010 World Cup. He will give up his television commentary work with RAI Uno in Italy in the new year, though he is expected to fulfil commitments this weekend which mean he will not attend either the Liverpool v Manchester United or Arsenal v Chelsea match tomorrow.

None of the back-room team

was formally described as a coach by the FA yesterday, indicating that, while Galbiati, Tancredi and Neri will be involved on the training pitch, Baldini, formerly technical director at Roma and Milan, may have a broader role. Despite concerns that Baldini's brief could overlap with Brooking's, the FA's director of football development was said to be comfortable with the appointments.

"Fabio Capello is widely recognised as one of the world's finest

football. We are excited about working with him over the coming years as we focus on qualification for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa."

The appointment is a victory for Barwick and his key advisor, Simon Johnson, who will regard the capture of a world-class coach 22 days after Steve McClaren was sacked as vindication of their approach. Having committed close to 30m pounds, however, their fate is now tied to Capello's ability to galvanise



FABIO CAPELLO

coaches," said Brooking, who worked with the FA chief executive, Brian Barwick, in the appointment process. "He has achieved huge success wherever he has worked and has the respect of everyone in

the national side. "When we set out to recruit the new manager, we said we were committed to appointing a world-class candidate. In Fabio Capello we have that man,"

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6

Never befriend a player

AFF, Paris

New England coach Fabio Capello has an iron philosophy for success - never be a player's friend.

The tough, uncompromising Italian, who was handed a four and half year contract on Friday with the task of making England a serious international force rather than a laughing stock, is determined to ensure that players know their place.

"A coach needs to speak to his players but not become their friend," said the 61-year-old.

"If you become a player's friend, the others are immediately jealous and then start to think someone is playing just because he is a friend of yours."

"A coach needs to be humble, with a strong personality and be respected by the players."

Capello will start work in January and attempt to restore the confidence of a team whose failure to make the finals of Euro 2008 cost his predecessor Steve McClaren his job.

"In order to improve you have first to find your player's weak points, but you can only improve a person or a player if he understands that everything you do is with the purpose of improving him and not just to expose his weaknesses," Capello told www.uefa.com.

"The best thing that happened to me, I think it's worth telling, is when I was coaching Clarence Seedorf at Real Madrid. After two months with him, I asked him: 'Do you think you can shoot?' He said: 'Yes, very well'."

"I told him he could shoot only one way. In football you shoot several ways, with the outside of your foot, with the inside, and I gave him a small lesson. He is a lad with great character and determination and he started to work hard and improved a lot."

WORLD CLUB CUP Milan eye title

AFF, Yokohama

Italian powerhouses AC Milan hope to end their "hard and difficult adventure" on a winning note against Boca Juniors of Argentina in the Club World Cup final on Sunday.

"I hadn't expected us to reach the final when we started the adventure," Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters Saturday. "But if we can win tomorrow, we can finish it full of satisfaction. It's a sort of utopia, a great honour for us."

The Serie-A side and Argentina's most successful club have both won the Intercontinental Cup three times, more than any other team, before the traditional Europe-South America contest was merged into the world club championship in 2005.

Sunday's winner will seize the honour of becoming the world's top club for a record-breaking fourth time.

And Milan have a score to settle after losing to Boca on penalties in the 2003 Intercontinental final.

Ancelotti said Boca Juniors are "more experienced," although they have younger players, and have a "stronger" team than their 2003 squad.

"Our goal is to show an exciting game, showing all of our potential. We are confident even if it goes into extra time and penalty shootout," he said.

"I feel strange. I was a player when AC Milan won the Intercontinental Cup in 1989. This time, it's a different competition, we have some games before the final, and we are tenser than when we won the Cup before. I feel our motivation is higher," Ancelotti said.

FIFA bans high-altitude matches

AFF, Tokyo

Football's governing body FIFA Saturday banned all matches it sanctions at an altitude of more than 2,750 metres (9,022 feet) "without acclimatisation", relaxing its earlier limit.

"You have to take care of the health of players," FIFA president Sepp Blatter said after the body's executive committee, meeting here on the sidelines of the Club World Cup, made the decision.

"It was recommended that the same limit be enforced in all other international matches," he said.

In May, FIFA originally slapped an unconditional ban on matches at 2,500 metres or higher after its medical committee advised that playing at such a height was neither healthy nor fair.

It also cited home-field advantage of high-altitude teams over visiting teams from lower altitudes.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

PICTURE OF THE WEEK



PHOTO: AFP

NOW CRANES WILL PLAY: Three cranes walk on a rain-cover on the ground as play on the fifth and final day of the second Test match between Sri Lanka and England was called off due to rain at the Sinhalese Sports Club Stadium in Colombo on Thursday.

Liverpool face MU check

AFF, Liverpool



of Manchester United's visit to Anfield on Sunday.

But the Liverpool boss knows only too well that his side's performance against the champions will be regarded as a benchmark of the progress he believes they have made this season.

Benitez's sides have always been characterised by defensive resilience and there is no doubt that the summer addition of Fernando Torres -- a player Sir Alex

Ferguson admits he would have loved to sign for United -- has undeniably given them an additional edge going forward.

With 12 goals already in his debut season on Merseyside, Torres has taken the first steps towards establishing himself as an Anfield legend.

The young Spaniard will accelerate considerably along that particular path if he can add to his tally on Sunday and help end United's recent run of success at the famous old ground.

In their last five visits to Anfield, United have won four and drawn one and memories of last season, when John O'Shea's injury-time winner ensured all three points for the ten-man visitors, are particu-

larly painful for the Liverpool faithful.

Little wonder then that Benitez acknowledges that Sunday's match is as much about psychology as about points.

"Maybe this game against United will be more important for confidence than anything else," said the Spaniard.

"In terms in points were in December and we all know Christmas is a vital time with all the matches."

"It is so close the line between the two teams. Our statistics in these matches might not be the best but in every game it has been really tight."

Benitez's men go into the match

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Gunners ready for Blues

AFF, London



will go a long way towards deciding the destiny of the Premier League title.

Wenger is convinced the Gunners can win the league for the first time since 2004 if they come out on top in their clashes with Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester United.

A victory for Wenger's side at the Emirates Stadium would open up a six point gap on their London rivals. And with Liverpool playing second placed United earlier on Sunday, Arsenal could have a

healthy advantage at the top by the end of the weekend.

After two years consigned to the sidelines while Chelsea and United battled it out for English supremacy, Wenger is relishing the chance to play a major role in what is shaping up to be the best title race for years.

"It's down to consistency in the big games. I believe without a doubt that this season will be the most exciting year in the Premier League," Wenger said. "Since I have been here you have never had four teams as tight as after 15 or 16 games. It is super healthy."

"But you want it to be fair and remain fair during the season because it could get a little bit out of hand sometimes when it's very tight."

Arsenal's win over Steaua

Bucharest in midweek wasn't enough to earn top spot in their Champions League group but it could still prove to be a turning point.

Robin van Persie's return in that 2-1 victory was perfectly timed to lift a side feeling down on their luck after defeat at Middlesbrough.

Van Persie had been out for two months with a knee injury but looked like he'd never been away as he produced an influential display.

Wenger is set to start the Dutch striker against Chelsea and his midfield could be bolstered as well with Cesc Fabregas, Mathieu Flamini and Alexander Hleb back in training on Friday.

The main sub-plot of Sunday's meeting between London's pre-eminent forces is Ashley Cole's first

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Fergie receives touchline ban

AFF, London

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has been banned from the touchline for two matches and fined 5,000 pounds for verbally abusing a referee.

Ferguson did not contest a misconduct charge brought by the Football Association over his use of 'insulting words' to referee Mark Clattenburg at half-time in United's defeat by Bolton last month.

Clattenburg sent Ferguson to the stands after being confronted by the Scot, who will now have to sit in the stand for United's trip to West Ham on December 29 and the home encounter with Birmingham on January 1.

Cesc urges English improvement

AFF, London

Arsenal star Cesc Fabregas has suggested the lack of English players trying to improve themselves abroad may be just as harmful to the English game as the steady influx of foreigners in the Premier League.

The Spanish midfielder is one of many foreigners plying their trade in the world's richest league - a situation which some believe has stifled local talent and therefore played a role in England's failings.

England's failure to qualify for the 2008 European Championships has led to plenty of soul-searching in recent weeks.

And amidst the search for a new England manager, following the sacking of Englishman Steve McClaren, it was highlighted that much English talent has been overlooked in favour of foreign imports.

But Fabregas, who will miss Arsenal's showdown with Chelsea on Sunday as he nurses a hamstring injury, believes English players would improve their game if they were to try their hand abroad.

"I don't see a lot of players taking the risk to go out of the country and to try to fight for their chance," Fabregas, who famously left his homeland at the age of 16 to join Arsenal, told The Times on Saturday.

"It looks like they are comfortable where they are and that is it. For me, I had to leave my country to fight for my life and my chance and my dream."

"Sometimes that is what you

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Anderlecht, Lazio fined

AFF, Paris

Belgian side Anderlecht and Italian giants Lazio were both fined 18,000 euros by UEFA on Friday after their fans disrupted matches in the Champions League and UEFA Cup this season.

Anderlecht were punished after their fans threw missiles onto the pitch during the 1-1 UEFA Cup draw against Tottenham in Brussels on December 6.

Spurs' Didier Zokora was hit by one of the objects while goalkeeper Paul Robinson handed a metal bar he found lying on the pitch to the fourth official after the match.

Lazio were fined for the racist conduct of their supporters at the Champions League Group C tie against Werder Bremen in Germany on October 24.

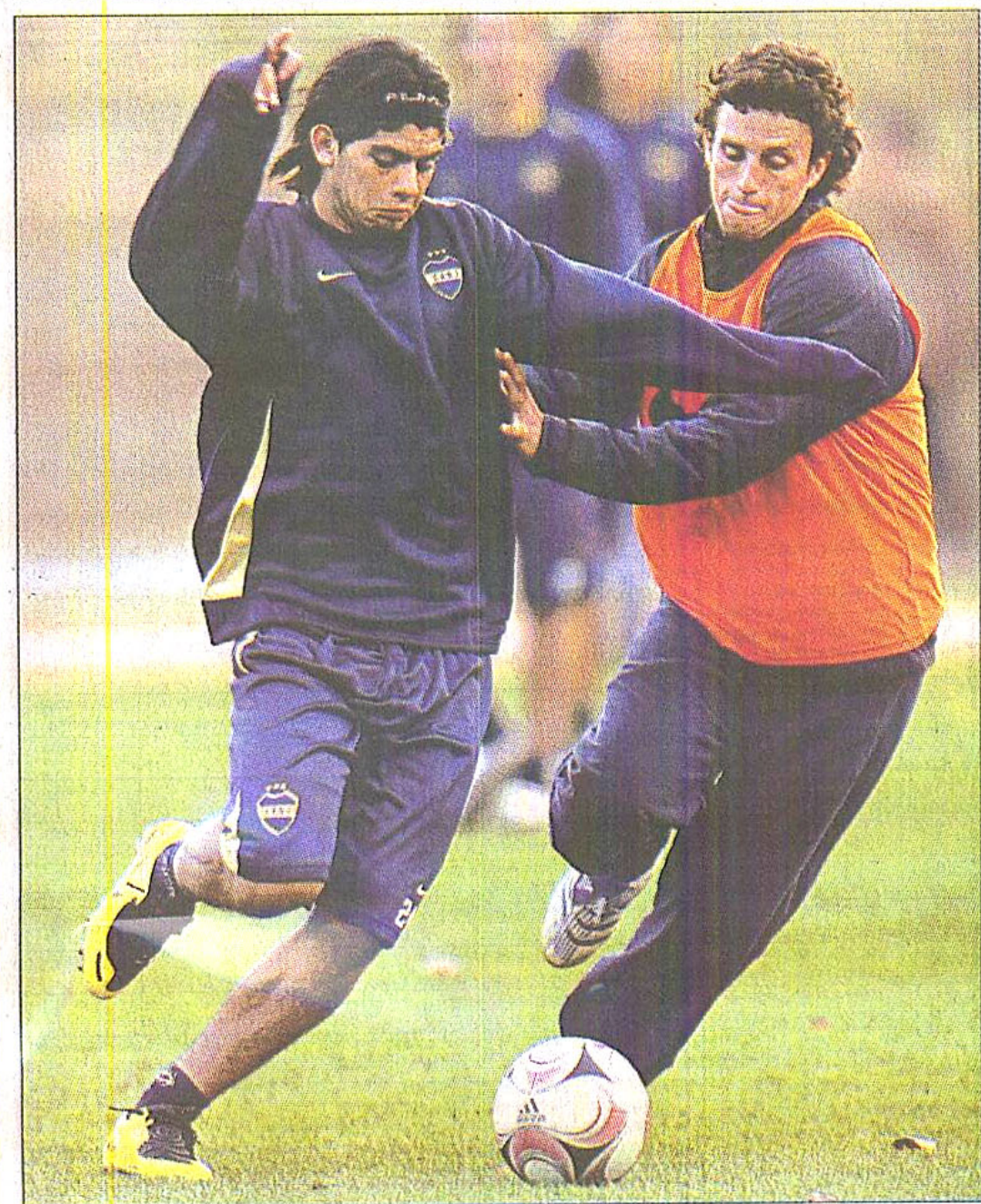


PHOTO: AFP

Boca Juniors midfielders Ever Banega (L) and Pablo Ledesma fight for the ball during a training session at Yokohama on Saturday.

যতো সুখ অর্জন আর বিজয়ে...

১৬ ডিসেম্বর
মহান বিজয় দিবসে

আমাদের সম্মানিত গ্রাহক
স্বাধীনতা ও দেশবাসীকে শুভেচ্ছা

