

# 'Klinsi is a revolutionary'

Football

AFP, Munich

Bayern Munich boss Jurgen Klinsmann's new coaching methods will have major implications not only for German football but for the global game, according to club president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge.

Players returning to Bayern after their post-Euro 2008 vacations will find a radically transformed club, as Klinsmann rings in sweeping changes similar to those he implemented as Germany national team coach between 2004-06.

The new approach will be "not only for the Bundesliga but for all the footballing world,"

Rummenigge said.

The 43-year-old Klinsmann stamped his authority at the beginning of the month, banning mobile phones and implementing eight-hour training sessions at the club's new performance centre.

Replete with buddhist statues, the centre - designed by Klinsmann - will "release positive energy" and contain areas for relaxation, rest, study and massage.

"It is my philosophy that each player must want to improve each day," Klinsmann said with Zen-like clarity earlier this month.

"I would like to take the players to the next level, if each player becomes better, so too will the team."

Players have strict training regimes starting at 0930 and finishing at 1730, with meals prepared by Michelin-starred German chef Alfons Schuhbeck.

The changes seem to be paying off, with a Bayern Munich second-string side thrashing amateur side Lippstadt 7-1 last week, Klinsmann's first success at the Bayern helm.

"It was interesting to see how the players reacted to the first two weeks of training," said Klinsmann, who replaced Ottmar Hitzfeld, now in charge of the Swiss national side, on July 1.

Euro 2008 stars such as Luca Toni and Miroslav Klose, absent for that match after being granted holiday extensions, will be closely monitored in the early sessions as they attempt to reach match fitness.

Bayern - four-time champions of European - won the league and cup double last season and are hoping to make a big impression in the Champions League, which they last won in 2001.

# Fergie confirms Berbatov offer

AFP, Manchester

Alex Ferguson has confirmed that Manchester United have made Tottenham an offer for their Bulgaria striker Dimitar Berbatov.

United manager Ferguson had already revealed he was trying to sign a player who would significantly improve the European champions.

Now he has signalled an all-out attempt to prise Berbatov from White Hart Lane by going public with his interest.

"We have made Tottenham an offer on Berbatov and we have good expectations that this deal will go through," Ferguson told The Sun.

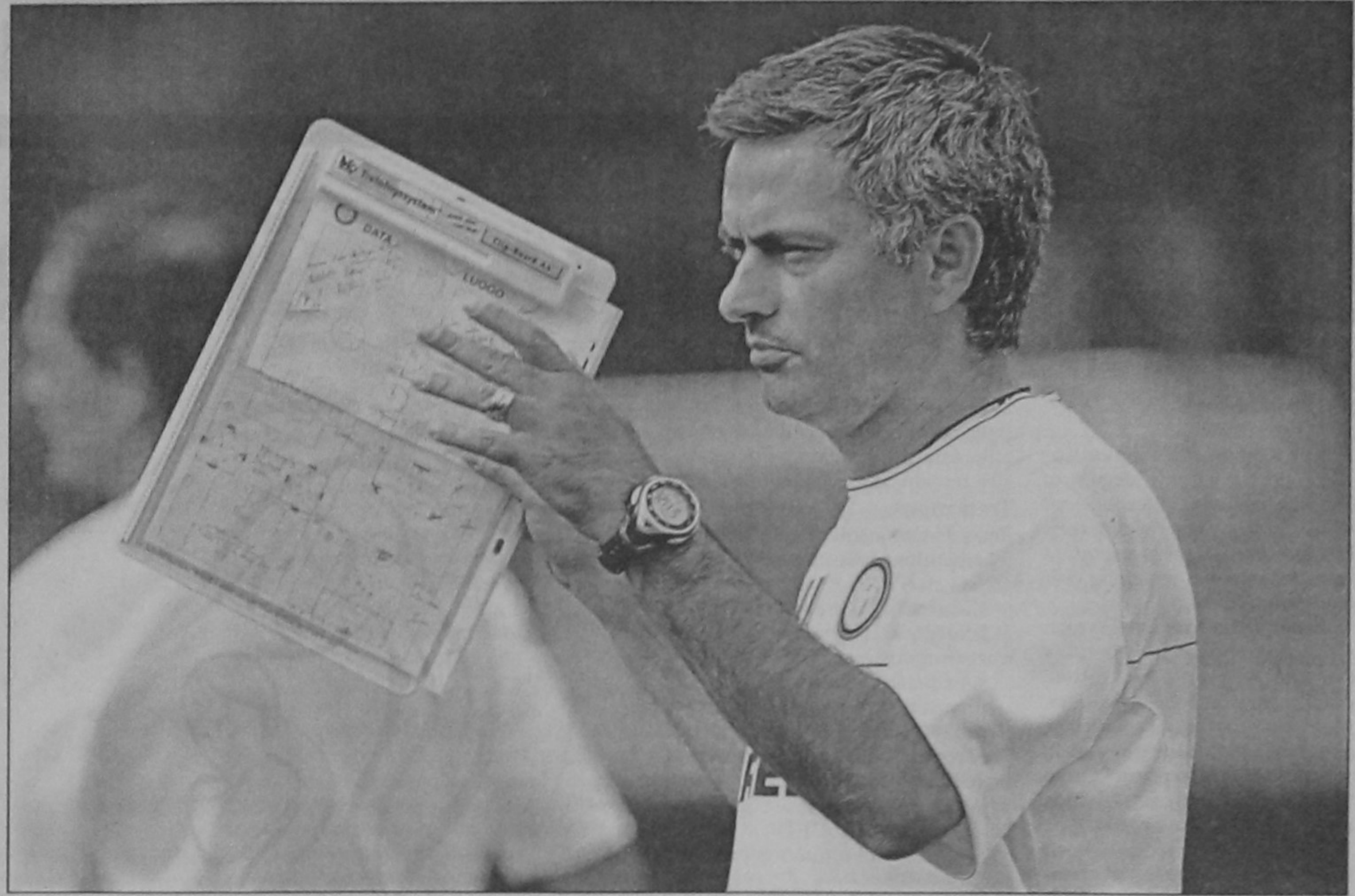
"Berbatov has been impressive during a long time and would be a great addition to our attack."

A move to Old Trafford would suit Berbatov, who is keen to play in the Champions League. But Tottenham are believed to want 30 million pounds (37 million euros) for their star player, while United are offering around 22 million pounds (27.6 million euros).

Ferguson remains convinced he will get his man eventually and jettied off with United for their pre-season tour to Africa in confident mood.

"I think time will work for us more than against us," Ferguson said.

"We will not stress this situation. We are hoping to have a constructive conversation with Tottenham in the near future."



Inter coach Jose Mourinho gives instructions to his players during a training session at "La Pinetina", the club's training camp at Appiano Gentile on Thursday.

# Keeping the wall in place

Football

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentine football is to use a quickly-vanishing spray in an attempt to stop defensive walls from creeping forward at free kicks.

Referees will pace the regulatory 9.15 metres between the ball and the nearest defender and then spray a white line on the pitch to mark the correct position of the wall.

The line then disappears from the pitch within a minute.

"This could help put an end to the practice of walls moving forward in football," said Pablo Silva, who has led the project to develop the product.

In a rare instance of new technology in the sport, the Argentina Football Association (AFA) agreed at an executive meeting on

Wednesday night to use the equipment during next season's second division campaign.

Silva, a sports journalist who has worked with chemical engineers to develop the spray, said the idea came to him when he was fooled at a free kick during an amateur game.

"It started seven or eight years ago when I was playing in a championship played amongst former school members," he told Reuters.

"In the 88th minute, we were losing 1-0 and won a free kick on the edge of the area. When I took the kick, the wall was three metres away. The referee didn't book anyone and didn't do anything."

"We lost the game and driving home later, with a mixture of anger and bitterness, I thought that we must invent something to stop this."

He added: "I have observed more than 1,500 matches all over the world and we have studied how

long it takes to take the free kick and how far the defensive wall moves forward.

"We have proved this is not just an Argentine problem, it happens everywhere."

"Hopefully, this can contribute to enforcing the current rules and improve the time that the ball is in play," he said.

Silva recalled a recent Boca Juniors game in which Juan Roman Riquelme needed 2-1/2 minutes to take a free kick because of arguing over the position of the wall.

He said the spray was different to a product that has been used in some competitions in Brazil in the last few years.

"We started work in 2000 and we didn't make it public," he said. "The Brazilian one appeared in 2002 and the substances are completely different. One has nothing to do with the other."

# Eto'o to move to Kuruvchi?

REUTERS, Tashkent

Unsettled Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o is considering a move to join Uzbek club Kuruvchi, the Cameroon international said on Thursday.

"I have several good offers from various clubs at present," Eto'o told a news conference in Tashkent after arriving in the Uzbek capital.

"I'm planning to return to Barcelona and starting from Saturday, I will consider all my options, including the one from Kuruvchi."

The three-times African Player of the Year has been told he is surplus to requirements at the Spanish club and is free to negotiate his own contract.

Kuruvchi, who lead the Uzbek championship and face Iran's Saipa in the Asian Champions League quarter-finals in September, have made a reported \$40 million offer to lure the 27-year-old from Barcelona.

"We have made a very good offer and are quite serious of getting Samuel to play here," Kuruvchi coach Mirjalol Kasymov told the club's official website (www.pfc-kuruvchi.com).

Eto'o has been Barcelona's first-choice striker since 2004 but missed a large part of the last two seasons through injury.

# Inter look at alternatives

Football

REUTERS, Milan

Inter Milan have looked at alternative buys in case they fail to strike a deal to bring Frank Lampard to Italy, president Massimo Moratti said on Thursday.

The Italian champions, managed by Lampard's former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, have made a bid for the England midfielder but the London club have said they are not willing to negotiate.

"Yes, definitely," Moratti told the club's television channel when

asked if there were alternatives to Lampard.

"Lampard is the priority but naturally in cases like this I have been looking around for some time. If it is not possible to take Lampard, we would take a player with the most similar characteristics."

Inter have expressed an interest in Porto winger Ricardo Quaresma but Mourinho said on Wednesday a central midfielder was a necessity.

Moratti confirmed media reports that Lampard is unsure over whether to ask for a transfer or stay put with just a year left on his contract. Talks with Chelsea over a

renewal are deadlocked.

"Lampard is a very serious lad and certainly he is torn between having the pleasure of doing something new or having a sense of duty towards his current club," Moratti said.

"In the end it is up to him to find a solution."

Portuguese Mourinho, who left Chelsea last September and was appointed Inter coach last month, took his first day of training on Thursday having previously warned his squad about tardiness.

"I was almost scared to arrive late," club owner Moratti quipped.

# 'Ronaldo is staying'

INTERNET, undated

Sir Alex Ferguson has met with Cristiano Ronaldo and insists the winger will not be sold to Real Madrid.

The 23-year-old has been heavily chased by the Spanish giants but at a press conference in South Africa to mark the start of United's pre-season trip, Ferguson confirmed Ronaldo is going nowhere.

Ferguson said: "The meeting went well - I think we both put across our points of view - where we stand and where the player stands."

"I can say he'll be a Manchester United player next season. That's our stance - he won't be sold."

# Wenger won't buy big

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger admits he is concerned about spending big money on star signings in case it blocks the development of his young Gunners.

While Premier League rivals Manchester United and Chelsea have once again splashed the cash in the close season transfer market, Wenger has opted to take a more low key approach.

The Frenchman has shunned high-profile transfers despite having a substantial transfer warchest, signing two emerging youngsters in France playmaker Samir Nasri and Welsh midfielder Aaron Ramsey so far this pre-season.

Wenger has been considering a move for Aston Villa midfielder Gareth Barry, who is valued at 18 million pounds (22.6 million

euros), but he doesn't want to stop the progress of his own youngsters like Abou Diaby and Denilson.

"Of course I am in a position where I can spend the money," Wenger told Arsenal TV. "But every time we have done such a great job with the young players that you are concerned 'do we kill a young player or not by bringing another player in?'"

"It is a very sensitive subject which is not specially linked with money."

"There is a lot of talk in the press, but we have always managed at this club by balancing the budget."

"We should not be criticised for that and should be respected for that."

While Wenger is keeping his powder dry in the transfer market, he is bullish about Arsenal's chances of winning silverware for the first time in four seasons.

The Gunners led United by five points before surrendering the lead in the Premier League title race last

season and crashed out of the Champions League against Liverpool despite dominating for long periods.

Those near-misses have convinced Wenger that his side are close to the top again and he wants to see domestic success ahead of Champions League glory.

"It is important you fight for the championship and to win it. All the other trophies are more of a consolation than anything else," Wenger said.

"We were very close, we were in the race and next year we want to show we can win it."

"I will try to achieve my best to develop the players, to fight in every game. I am more motivated than ever to achieve that."

"The team is performing well, but the target of a top-level sportsman is to always improve and I believe we can be more clinical, we can score more with the chances we create."

# Deco wants Lampard stay

Football

AFP, Cobham

Deco has urged Chelsea to secure Frank Lampard's future if the club wants to realise its dream of winning the Champions League.

Lampard has been the subject of frenzied transfer speculation since the end of last season, with Inter Milan keen to reunite him with former Blues manager Jose Mourinho at the San Siro.

The Italian club has already and rejected Lampard's bid to join the club and the England international is no nearer agreeing terms on a new contract with Chelsea.

The 29-year-old England star wants a five-year deal, worth around 140,000 pounds-a-week, while Chelsea are prepared to offer just four years.

But Deco - who was officially unveiled at Chelsea's training headquarters on Friday following his eight million pounds (10 million euros) move from Barcelona - insists the club must find a way around the impasse if they are to claim a first European crown.

"Frank is a fantastic player I have played against many times," he said.

"I have also seen him in training and he is a delight to watch because he works very hard. He has a first class attitude and I am looking forward to playing with him."

"I want to play with him. I'm not sure he will stay but it would be great if he did and we can all play together. You need great players to win the Champions League and he

is a great player."

"The Champions League is certainly the trophy we most want to win because Chelsea have been chasing it for a long time."

"I have won it with two other teams (Barca and FC Porto) and it would be fantastic to win it now with Chelsea."

Deco revealed he had snubbed interest from clubs in England and Italy to move to Stamford Bridge after being told he could leave.

But his Nou Camp exit was not without controversy.

Juan Laporta, the Barca president, claimed the Portuguese midfielder was on a downward spiral and that he would struggle to regain the levels which saw him become one of the world's most prized playmakers two years ago.

But the 29-year-old insists he is still a force at the top level and pointed to his impressive displays at Euro 2008 as proof of his qualities.

He added: "We won many titles for two years and then it was a bit difficult. In these situations, the blame is usually attached to the more important players."

"But this doesn't matter to me any more; I am here now at Chelsea, who are one of the greatest clubs in the world."

"I certainly don't think I am on a downhill slope. When big clubs don't win - whether it's Barcelona, Real Madrid or whoever - it's always a big disaster."

"Players can't come out of that looking good and it's natural that they will be criticised because that is football."

"But I still believe in myself and I

# Monaco snubbed off Kranjcar

AFP, Portsmouth

Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp has rejected a Monaco bid of 12 million pounds (15 million euros) for Croatia midfielder Niko Kranjcar.

Kranjcar, 23, is one of Europe's most promising playmakers and had a key role in Portsmouth's FA Cup success last season, as well as helping Croatia reach the quarter-finals of Euro 2008.

Redknapp has no intention of selling one of his prize assets as he prepares to lead Portsmouth into the UEFA Cup for the first time and was scathing about Monaco's interest.

"Monaco have come in for Niko and offered around 12 million pounds for him," he told The News. "We wouldn't sell him and he didn't want to go anyway so that was the end of that one."

"No disrespect, but why would he want to go there anyway? They get 6,000 people watching them."

"You go there on a weekend and it's a unique experience, people aren't interested in the football. They all go out on the Saturday night and get dressed up for dinner, not to watch football."

# Atalanta could be fined

REUTERS, Milan

Serie A side Atalanta could be given a six-point penalty this season if they are found guilty of attempted match-fixing last term, Italian media reported on Friday.

Livorno, relegated last season, may suffer the same points deduction in Serie B if an Italian federation (FIGC) media reports said a federation prosecutor had requested the sanctions but the FIGC made no comment.

Atalanta's Gian Paolo Bellini and former Livorno captain David Balleri were charged by the federation earlier this month with seeking to fix the results of the two league games between the clubs last season.

The first on Dec. 23 ended in a 1-1 draw while Atalanta won the May 4 encounter 3-2 with a late goal. After the match some Livorno players chased their opponents into the dressing rooms.

Balleri and Bellini could face bans of three years if found guilty.

The clubs and the players have denied the accusations.

Italy suffered a match-fixing scandal in 2006 when Juventus were demoted.

# Sven imposter fools Mexico

Football

THE GUARDIAN

The distinctive frameless spectacles, the studious Scandinavian manner and the ice blue tie all helped, but it was the pair of tall brunettes wearing short skirts by his side that really fooled Mexico.

A man looking very like Sven-Goran Eriksson, the former England manager who is currently in charge of the Mexican team, settled into the dugout at the Estadio Universitario in Mexico City on Wednesday afternoon and started talking tactics with the coach of the Pumas, a championship-winning team.

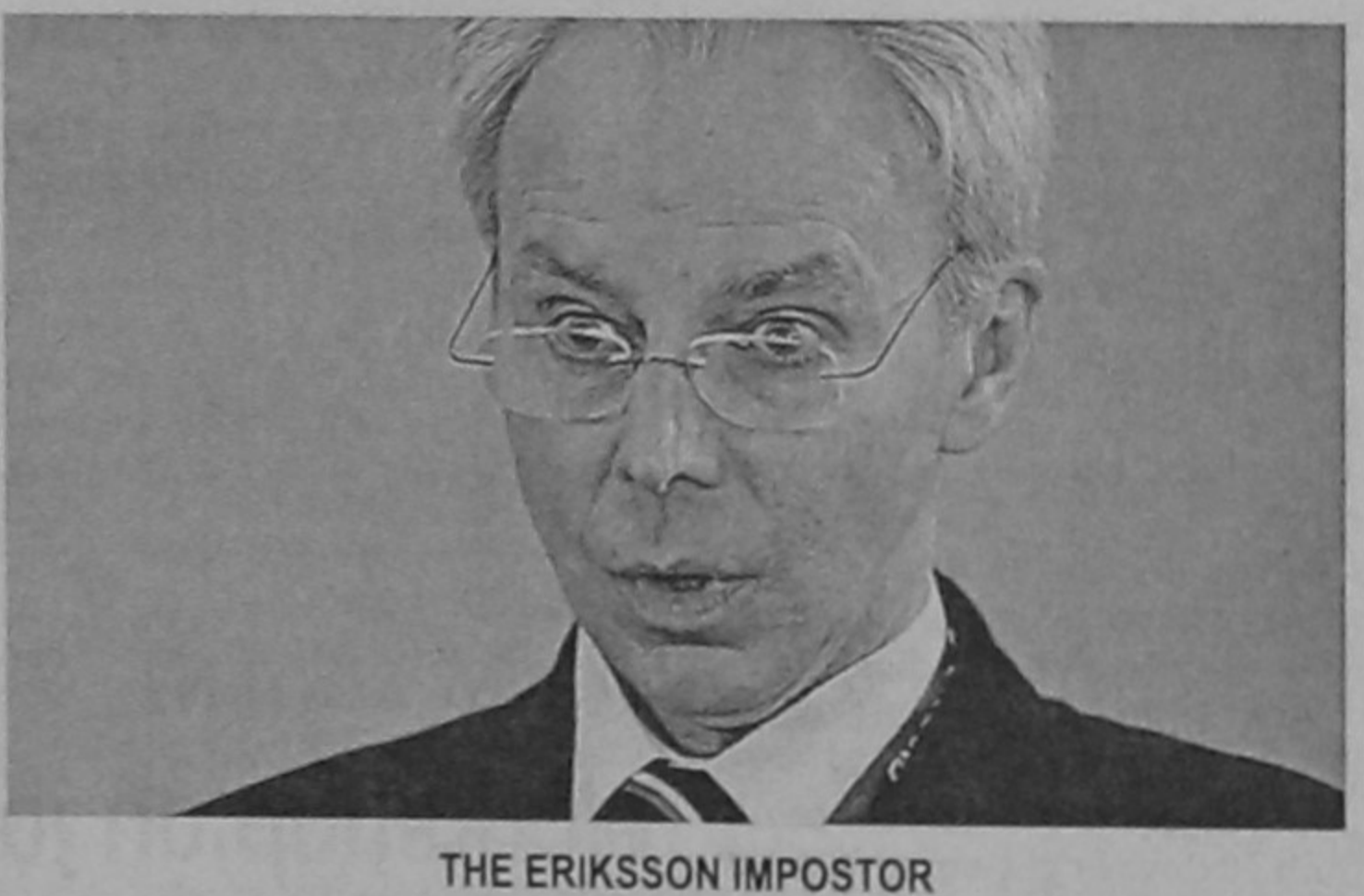
"He explained to me that he was looking at players for his first squad selection for Mexico, and I believed him," said Ricardo Ferretti, the team's Brazilian manager who had been putting his players through shooting practice.

With his lilting Swedish accent and reputation as a romancer apparently intact judging by the women on his arms, he convinced onlooking reporters too. "All of a sudden he appears with two girls and it looked very strange indeed," said José Angel Parra, who writes for El Universal. "We'd heard that over there [in Britain] he'd been involved in some scandals so we didn't know what to think. They sat down behind the goal but then they were called over to the bench."

Later the silver-haired fiftysomething chatted in the car park saying: "We will be building the team and I hope I have your support for the future." Reporters asked him about the stadium: "It is beautiful. Obviously not the same as some of those built more recently... I am very happy to be here. I am seeing a little more of Mexico now."

Then he said "hasta luego", meaning "see you later" in Spanish, and left.

It was only then that anyone realised this was not the national



THE ERIKSSON IMPOSTOR

manager at all, but Derek Williams, a 56-year-old actor from Welwyn Garden City and his appearance at the Pumas training session was part of an audacious bid to rekindle his career as a Sven lookalike.

With his career facing a potential slide following Manchester City's decision to sack the real Eriksson earlier this summer, Williams, who is married to the deputy headteacher of a Hertfordshire school, followed his alter ego to Mexico. In partnership with Record, a Mexican sports newspaper, he rode in a blacked out Chevrolet SUV to the home ground of the Pumas where the players were training. Flanked by a pair of bodyguards befitting his status as the manager of the Mexican national football team, the pretend Sven is understood to have used documents purporting to be from the Mexican Football Federation to gain access and once inside, he made a beeline for Ferretti before chatting to the media in English.

Williams, who is well-known on the British lookalike circuit for his convincing full-character performances complete with the Swede's vocal mannerisms and physical ticks, managed to fool everyone.

"To tell the truth, I liked the joke," said Ferretti afterwards.

The national federation was less

amused. It issued a warning to all the teams in the country's top league that there was a Sven imposter on the loose. In a statement it described Williams as "irresponsibly exploiting his likeness to the national coach" and warned clubs "not to let yourselves be surprised by this individual".

Mexico has not exactly welcomed the real Eriksson. Fervent nationalists argued that no non-Mexican could understand the idiosyncrasies of the national game.

The fact that he doesn't speak Spanish and will rent a \$12,000 (£6,000) a month penthouse with spectacular views made things worse.

According to Daithi Gilfoyle-McGroarty, an Ozzy Osbourne lookalike and a friend of Williams, he travelled to Mexico in trepidation. "He was basically worried that people wouldn't recognise him," he said. "But he is so good at it that people never see through it."

"He never knows where he is from one season to the next," said Tim Oliver, a Ricky Gervais lookalike who performed a double act with Williams called The Ex-Managers. "A football manager can be sacked at any time so you never know if you are going to be in a job. He worried about that."

# Yobo's brother released

AFP, Liverpool

Nigeria defender Joseph Yobo wants to repay Everton for their support after his kidnapped brother was released this week.

Norun Yobo was held captive after being seized at gun-point in a hotel in Port Harcourt, the main city of the Niger Delta region.

The kidnappers, who were demanding a 1.7 million dollar ransom, finally freed Yobo's brother and he flew to Lagos to be reunited with his family.

Although kidnappings in the region are common, it was a traumatic time for the Everton star while he waited for news of his brother's safety.

"First of all, I thank God that all our prayers have been answered and that my brother is safely back home with the family," Yobo told Everton's website.

"I would like to thank everyone connected with Everton for being so supportive and helping me stay strong."

"The chairman was in touch on day one and gave me a lot of support. He told me that if there was anything we needed, we just had to let him know. I was very grateful for that."

"The fans have been very concerned for my brother and for me and my family and I thank them for that," he said.

"I love them all and the only way I can repay them is to do what I know best and that's to play football to the best of my ability."

"I am more determined than ever to do my best for them and help the team do even better than we did last year."

# Yobo's brother released

Argentinian midfielder Pablo Aimar poses with the team's mascot Vitoria (Victory) during his public presentation at the Luz Stadium in Lisbon on Thursday.



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# Giuly denies Zorro comparisons

AFP, Paris

AS Roma's former French international Ludovic Giuly on Friday signed for Paris St Germain, the Parisian club's president Charles Villeneuve announced.

The 32-year-old former Barcelona star is reported to have penned a 2.5 million euro deal.

"I'm very, very happy to play for Paris. There is a great expectation of the club and the coach," said Giuly on Friday after passing his medical.

"For me it is very important to have confidence. The president has given me his word. I will do everything to make it work."

But Giuly warned that he could not be expected to turn the club around on his own, saying: "I'm not a Zorro to change everything."

Rumours linking the midfielder, who won 17 international caps and netted on three occasions, with a move back to France have been rife but Villeneuve said he had received faxed confirmation from the Italian club.

"I'm going to try and bring my style of play, my experience, my rage on the pitch," added Giuly, who played for Lyon between 1994 and 1997.

PSG had a disappointing 2007-08 season under coach Paul Le Guen, winning the League Cup but only narrowly avoiding relegation on the final day of play.

Giuly - who won the French championship with Monaco in 2000 - is PSG's second new recruit, following the signing of Le Mans' Benin international Stephane Sessegnon last week.