

## EUROPEAN SUPER CUP

## MU take on Zenit

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United midfielder Owen Hargreaves wants to use Friday's European Super Cup clash against Zenit St Petersburg to kick-start his season.

Hargreaves, 27, has been struggling with tendonitis and hasn't made a first team appearance for United since helping Sir Alex Ferguson's side win the Champions League in May.

But the England international is finally back in training and Ferguson expects him to play against Zenit in Monaco.

Hargreaves is desperate to get back in action after an injury-ravaged beginning to his spell at Old Trafford.

The former Bayern Munich star made only 21 starts last season and he knows he could fade from the picture if he doesn't make a positive impact soon.

"I've got a big season ahead with United and England, and I want to be fit," Hargreaves said.

"I've felt the injury on and off for 16 months. Sometimes more, sometimes less - it's something I've had to cope with."

"The staff and I have worked very hard so that I'm fit and when I play I don't miss out."

"They've done a really good job. I think we've got it under control."

"Hopefully I'll be back soon and fit for the remainder of the season. I'm improving every day."

While Hargreaves focuses on his fitness, United manager Sir Alex Ferguson will be motivated by the bitter memories of his last Super Cup appearance when he sends his team out for Friday's match against the UEFA Cup winners.

Ferguson has won the competition once before in 1991 when United defeated Red Star Belgrade, but he is still bitter about Lazio's post-match celebrations when the Italian club beat United in 1999.

The Scot has no intention of

suffering a repeat in Monaco.

"I want to win. I remember the last time we went there I only played half a team because we had a Monday league game against Newcastle," Ferguson said.

"When I saw Lazio celebrating at the end, it was like they had won the World Cup. I was not too pleased. I thought: That will not happen again."

"We'll view the Super Cup as a one-off and we want to win it but we are expecting a very tough game."

With that in mind, Ferguson has pledged to send out a strong team and England defender Gary Neville should feature after an ankle injury.

Ryan Giggs is back from a hamstring problem, while Nani is available after completing a three-match ban for his dismissal against West Ham last season.

Ferguson's desire for victory can't be questioned but he might be distracted by off-the-field activities as United try to sign Tottenham striker Dimitar Berbatov before the transfer window shuts on Monday.



Liverpool forward Dirk Kuyt (2nd from R) scores the all-important goal against Standard Liege in the extra-time of their Champions League qualifying round second leg at Anfield on Wednesday.

## Senders joins Milan

AFP, London

Defender Philippe Senders has left Arsenal for AC Milan on a one-year loan deal, the Premiership club said on Wednesday.

The 23-year-old central defender had his medical in Milan on Tuesday and has now completed the move to the San Siro with Milan hosting Bologna on Sunday in their first league match of the season.

Senders moved to Arsenal from Servette Geneva five years ago. In his time in north London, the Swiss international won the FA Cup in 2005 and was part of the backline that kept a record 10 Champions League clean sheets in the 2005/06 season.

He has made 115 appearances for Arsenal, scoring four goals.

## Gerrard out for a fortnight

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool's England international Steven Gerrard will have a groin operation on Thursday and will be out of action for between 10 and 15 days, manager Rafael Benitez revealed.

Dirk Kuyt's goal three minutes from the end of extra-time at Anfield on Wednesday night ensured Liverpool progressed to the group stages of the Champions League at the expense of an unfortunate Standard Liege.

It had been decided Gerrard would play through the pain barrier for this match, Benitez added.

Gerrard will therefore miss England's World Cup qualifying matches against Andorra and Croatia early next month but should be fit for Liverpool's top-of-the-table clash against Manchester United on September 13.

## Robinho a Blue soon?

INTERNET, undated



Real Madrid forward Robinho should complete his 36 million Euros (£28.7m) transfer to Chelsea in time to make his debut in the home derby with Tottenham Hotspur, according to his agent Wagner Ribeiro.

Ribeiro said on Wednesday night that he expects his client to be a Chelsea player 'by either tomorrow or Friday', adding in the The Daily Telegraph, 'he should be available to [Luiz Felipe] Scolari for this weekend'.

Robinho, along with Deco, who

has already made the switch from Spain to Stamford Bridge, were selected as Scolari's main transfer targets when he became manager of the Blues in the summer.

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon shares Scolari's desire to lure Robinho to London and believes the Brazilian international can take the club to the 'next level'.

'He's the right age and he comes from Madrid so he understands what a big club is all about,' Kenyon said.

'What we're doing is supporting Scolari. He wants to change and move the style a bit [and] is confident about the player's ability and mentality and that he will fit in and

make an impact.'

Chelsea had two bids for the 24-year-old rejected by Madrid earlier in the transfer window but the La Liga club's desire to use Robinho as a make-weight during their pursuit of Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo has unsettled the player and he now wants to quit the Santiago Bernabeu.

He is expected to receive a salary of 70,000 pounds a week at Chelsea, double his income at Madrid.

Robinho is expected to wear the No 7 shirt vacated by Andriy Shevchenko, who has rejoined Milan two years after Chelsea signed him for 30 million pounds.

## Sheva not a failure

AFP, London

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon has responded to accusations that Andriy Shevchenko is the biggest transfer flop in Premier League history by insisting the Ukraine striker was a worthwhile investment.

Shevchenko, who cost Chelsea a club record 30 million pounds (37 million euros) in 2006, returned to AC Milan this week after two dismal seasons at Stamford Bridge.

The 31-year-old scored just nine goals but Kenyon is adamant Shevchenko was not a failure.

"I get fed up because it's not right," he said. "I'm not giving a lesson on accountancy, but you do write money off over the term of a contract."

"What we pay is in an investment. During that period you have a player who is doing a job and in this industry you buy and sell players."

"You have to look at these things pragmatically, sometimes these things don't work as well as you want them to."

"Remember, we got Deco for eight million pounds and that looks to be the buy of the season."

"You have got to counter these things and we are happy with where we are."

## Villa staying at Valencia

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid target David Villa, the top scorer at Euro 2008, has ended speculation about his future by extending his contract with Valencia until 2014, the Spanish first division club said Wednesday.

"The best striker in Europe will remain at Valencia," the club's president, Vicente Soriano announced.

The Internet site of sports newspaper Marca said Valencia would make the 26-year-old the best paid player in their history, with an annual salary of more than three million euros.

Villa's contract was extended by one season from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014.

"I am grateful to Valencia for this gesture and for all that (the club) has given me and to Vicente Soriano for the effort he has made," Villa said.

The news is a further blow to Real Madrid, who were looking for a possible replacement for Brazilian striker Robinho who has said he wants to join Chelsea.

The Spanish champions on Sunday reportedly offered 45 million euros for Villa, who was the top scorer with four goals at Euro 2008, which was won by Spain.

Earlier Wednesday, another Real target, Spanish international Santi Cazorla, announced he had renewed his contract with Villarreal.

And Real also failed in their bid to recruit Manchester United's Portuguese playmaker Cristiano Ronaldo.

Earlier this month, Valencia's other star striker, David Silva, a target of several top European clubs, also announced he would remain at the club.

Valencia, Champions League finalists in 2000 and 2001, finished just tenth in the Primera Liga last season and only qualified for the UEFA Cup thanks to a Spanish Cup victory.

## Real hammer Sporting

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid coach Bernd Schuster only gave a brief post match conference to the media after his side beat Sporting Lisbon 5-3 to clinch the Trofeo Bernabeu.

Despite his team putting on a footballing show in front of the home fans to bag their 19th Trofeo Bernabeu, Schuster looked rather disinterested during the post match conference and offered no more than a few seconds to answer just one question.

When asked to give his assessment of the game against the Portuguese visitors, he gave a typically blatant and cynical response.

"The first half was without doubt the best. We took all our chances, scored five goals and we were passing the ball well. Our rivals also helped us a lot because they thought the game started at 11 o'clock," he said, alluding to the fact that Sporting only really got going in the second half.

"It is one more trophy for us and it is a good way to start off the season this Sunday," he added.

He was then asked to comment about the upcoming Champions League draw and the club's failure to recruit either David Villa or Santi Cazorla. But he had the same reply for both questions.

"I have nothing to say. I am not thinking about the Champions League because it is not necessary to."

"I am tired now and I wish to go back home," he concluded abruptly.

## Liverpool leave it late

AFP, London



Five-times champions Liverpool, who were staring at Champions League elimination, scored the sole goal of the tie late on to oust Standard Liege and qualify for the lucrative group stages on Wednesday.

Dirk Kuyt's goal with three minutes to go in extra time propelled the Reds into the hat for Thursday's 32-team draw along with Arsenal who thrashed Steve McClaren's FC Twente 4-0 at home for a 6-0 aggregate scoreline.

French first division front-runners Marseille muddled through after an unconvincing 2-1 home win against Brann to go through 3-1 on aggregate while Atletico Madrid thanked the form of Olympic gold medalist Sergio Agüero in their 4-0 beating of Schalke 04 in the Spanish capital for a 4-1 overall victory.

Liverpool goalscorer Kuyt told ITV television afterwards: "We wanted to play in the Champions League. We have been in the semi-final and final the last two years. It was a tough match but we believed in ourselves and it was a good performance."

And on Liege, Kuyt added: "They were tough, they were really

fighting, even in extra time."

The Reds lifted the European Cup for a fifth time by beating AC Milan in Istanbul in 2005, then lost the final two years later to the same opponents.

Rafael Benitez's side had been unconvincing all evening and the game appeared destined for penalties when Kuyt struck with a far post volley from Ryan Babel's deep cross.

For Liverpool, the goal brought relief after a stuttering display that will have reinforced their manager's determination to bring in new faces during the remaining five days of the transfer window.

Benitez had attempted to downplay the significance of the first leg draw in the build-up to this game, insisting his side would be better prepared than they were when the two sides met in Belgium.

Then, Pepe Reina's penalty from Bonfim Dante had been largely responsible for Liverpool escaping with a scoreless draw.

And while the Anfield club's form had been disappointing in their subsequent two league games, they came into this clash having secured back to back wins and with a growing self-belief that their season was about to fire into life.

Down in London William Gallas produced the perfect response to his critics as the Arsenal captain booked his side's place in the

Champions League group stages with a rare goal against FC Twente.

Gallas's captaincy credentials had already been questioned after his meltdown against Birmingham last season, so when the France defender's sloppy marking gifted Fulham a shock victory on Saturday he was inevitably singled out for some harsh words from fans and pundits.

But Gallas led by example in the third qualifying round second leg against Twente. He was outstanding in defence and scored with a second half tap-in after Samir Nasri had given Arsenal the lead at the Emirates Stadium.

Theo Walcott and Nicklas Bendtner scored in the closing stages to put the seal on Arsenal's 6-0 aggregate victory.

It was their most emphatic performance of the season and Arsene Wenger must wish the Gunners could play Steve McClaren's team every week.

"It was a big game for us and the response was clear," Wenger said. "There was togetherness and focus. That is what we wanted after a result like Saturday."

"We needed to be organised because they play a little with your patience. We were disciplined and focused and we were never really under threat."

"I felt the whole team was sharp. Physically we were much better than Saturday."

## Bayern welcome Oddo

AFP, Berlin



Germany defender Marcell Jansen has joined Hamburg for a reported fee of eight million euros (11.8 million US

dollars) and been replaced at Bayern Munich by Italian World Cup winner Massimo Oddo.

Less than 24 hours after German tabloid Bild reported left-back Jansen had signed for Hamburg, Bayern Munich on Thursday revealed they had signed defender Oddo on loan from AC Milan.

With the summer transfer window set to close on September 1, Jansen, who has won 28 caps for Germany and played in the Euro 2008 final defeat against Spain, will undergo a medical in Hamburg on Thursday.

Jansen spent a year in Munich having joined last summer from Borussia Monchengladbach and made 17 Bundesliga appearances, but his progress was hampered by a three-month lay-off with a serious

ankle injury.

A series of minor injuries meant he struggled during pre-season this summer and was kept on the bench for the opening two league games.

His replacement Oddo, 32, arrived in Munich on Thursday and is set to face Hertha Berlin on Sunday at the Allianz Arena having been signed on a one-year loan deal.

"Massimo Oddo is a type of player who can control our defence," said Bayern coach Jurgen Klinsmann on the club's website about the defender who has 34 caps for the Azzurri.

"He will be a big addition to our team."

Oddo played 25 Serie A matches for Milan last season, but was not in the Italy squad for this summer's European Championships.

The Italians arrival is timely for defending champions Bayern who have struggled to impress so far this season with draws against Hamburg and Dortmund.

Of their key defenders, French star Willy Sagnol is injured, while Christian Lell is out of form.

Oddo spent 18 months at AC Milan having joined them in

January 2007 from Rome's Lazio and he is the third player to join Bayern this summer behind midfielder Tim Borowski and reserve goalkeeper Jorg Butt.

With the summer transfer window set to close on Monday, Bayern manager Uli Hoeness refused to rule out the possibility of more additions.

"With Bayern, anything is possible," he said.

But having quit Bayern, Jansen is relishing his switch to Hamburg and revealed how he was courted by the north German team for over a year.

"I am really pleased with the move and looking forward to the challenge in a new city," he said on the Hamburg website.

"The first contact I had with Hamburg was a long time ago."

"The club's executive committee have always dealt with me with great honesty and respect, which gave me a good feeling."

He is Hamburg's third new signing this summer after Croatia striker Mladen Petric joined from Dortmund while and Brazil central defender Alex Silva switched from Sao Paulo.



SYNCHRONISED TACKLING: Schalke's Levan Koblashvili (L) is tackled by Atletico Madrid's Kun Agüero (C) and Maxi Rodríguez during their Champions League qualifying round second leg at the Vicente Calderon Stadium in Madrid on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP



Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos (top) climbs on striker Gonzalo Higuaín to celebrate the latter's second goal against Sporting Lisbon at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP