

## Keegan quits Magpies

AFP, Newcastle

Kevin Keegan has quit as manager of Premier League outfit Newcastle United after holding talks with club's board on Tuesday, Sky Sports News reported.

The 57-year-old was reportedly unhappy with the club's policy on transfers and has left after less than eight months in the job.

Keegan had hoped for three or four major signings but they failed to materialise as the transfer window closed at midnight on Monday.

Sky Sports News reported that Keegan did not take training Tuesday morning and was locked in talks with the club's board.

Keegan recently claimed James Milner would not be sold only for the midfielder to join Aston Villa in a 12-million-pound deal.

But having been unable to add to the signings of Argentinian pair Fabricio Coloccini and Jonas Gutierrez with several big-name stars Keegan is believed to have become disillusioned with his lot at Newcastle.

The club's only business on transfer deadline day was a 5.7-million-pound signing of Spanish striker Xisco and the loan signing of midfielder Ignacio Gonzalez.

Former England and Manchester City boss Keegan, who managed the club from 1992 to 1997, returned for a second time to St James' Park in January after the sacking of Sam Allardyce.

The club are currently 11th in the Premier League with just four points from their opening three games.

## Ben Arfa pulls out

AFP, Paris

Marseille playmaker Hatem Ben Arfa on Monday withdrew from the France squad to play World Cup qualifiers against Austria on September 6 and Serbia on September 10, French team sources said.

Later on Monday, France coach Raymond Domenech called up Jimmy Briand of Rennes to replace Ben Arfa.

Ben Arfa missed his club's weekend win over Sochaux after suffering a groin strain and briefly appeared at the France squad headquarters in Clairefontaine outside Paris before returning to his club for treatment.

## City pull Robinho stunner

AFP, London

Manchester City flexed their new financial muscle by signing Robinho from Real Madrid less than an hour before the transfer window shut on Monday.

City had hoped to land Dimitar Berbatov after agreeing a British record fee of over 30 million pounds for the Tottenham striker.

But with Berbatov apparently close to a move to Manchester United following talks with Sir Alex Ferguson, City persuaded Real to sell Robinho, who agreed a four-year contract with the Premier League club.

The Brazil winger had been desperate to join Chelsea but the Blues infuriated Real by making public their interest before a deal had been agreed and City, bankrolled by prospective new owners Abu Dhabi United Group, made their 40 million euros move.

City manager Mark Hughes said: "I am absolutely delighted to get the opportunity to work with such an incredible talent like Robinho."

"I have said that in order to compete with the best teams in the Premier League we have to be in the market for players of this calibre, and Robinho is undoubtedly one of the best players in the world."

"My feeling has always been that if a player is not happy he should not remain at the club,"

Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon told Spanish news radio Cadena Ser after the deal was closed.

Calderon said it was the fourth biggest transfer in football history after the deals that saw Portugal's Luis Figo and France's Zinedine Zidane join Real and the one that saw Ukraine's Andriy Shevchenko join Chelsea.

"It's an extraordinary operation," he said.

Earlier Monday, Spurs started the last day of transfer activity until January by sealing their 14 million pounds move for Russia striker Roman Pavlyuchenko, while Croatia right-back Vedran Corluka also arrived at White Hart Lane from Manchester City.

Liverpool captured Spain winger Albert Riera from La Liga side Espanyol for an undisclosed fee.

The 26-year-old signed a four-year contract at Anfield after choosing Rafael Benitez's side over a host of other clubs, including neighbours Everton.

He joins Vitor Flora at Liverpool after the 18-year-old Brazilian striker, who holds an Italian passport, agreed a free transfer.

But striker Andriy Voronin and full-back Steven Finnan departed Anfield.

Voronin agreed a one-year loan deal with German side Hertha Berlin while Espanyol have moved for Finnan on a two-year contract.

Not to be outdone by their Merseyside rivals, Everton con-

firmed the signing of French striker Louis Saha from Manchester United for an undisclosed fee.

Saha signed a two-year deal with an option for a third year and has been joined at Goodison by Wigan keeper Carlo Nash.

Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp signed Algerian international left-back Nadir Belhadj on loan from French club Lens.

Newcastle signed Valencia's Uruguayan midfielder Nacho Gonzalez on a one-year loan deal.

West Ham left-back George McCartney returned to Sunderland for an undisclosed fee on a five-year contract.

Blackburn strengthened their squad with the acquisition of goalkeeper Mark Bunn, 23, from Northampton on a four-year contract.

Fulham signed Coventry midfielder Julian Gray on a season-long loan, sold Collins John to NEC Nijmegen and cancelled the contract of former Chelsea midfielder Alexei Smertin by mutual consent.

Defender Danny Higginbotham, 29, rejoined Stoke from Sunderland on a three-year deal for an undisclosed fee.

Hull landed Rangers striker Daniel Cousin just 24 hours after the Gabon striker scored and got sent off in his side's Old Firm victory at Celtic.

West Bromwich Albion swooped for AZ Alkmaar defender Ryan Donk on a season-long loan deal with a view to a permanent deal.

## MU seal Berbatov deal

AFP, London

Manchester United beat the transfer deadline to complete a 30.75 million pounds (\$77.7 million euros) deal for Tottenham striker Dimitar Berbatov on Tuesday.

Berbatov, 27, agreed a four-year contract with United and Tottenham confirmed the deal on their website 45 minutes after the transfer window shut.

Manchester City had tried to lure Berbatov to Eastlands after having an offer accepted for the Bulgarian, but he opted to join the European champions following talks with United manager Sir Alex

Ferguson at the club's Carrington training ground.

United's young striker Fraizer Campbell has gone to Tottenham in a year-long loan as part of the deal, while the London club have agreed not to pursue a complaint against United for making an illegal approach to the player.

Berbatov passed a medical at a south Manchester hospital and then went to Old Trafford, where he put pen to paper on the deal with Ferguson and United chief executive David Gill.

Forty minutes before the deadline expired, United submitted papers to the Premier League, hoping the registration would go through in time.

With Cristiano Ronaldo still

sidelined after ankle surgery and Louis Saha sold to Everton, Ferguson desperately needed to bring in Berbatov to ease the load on Carlos Tevez and Wayne Rooney.

Ferguson believes Berbatov has the quality to score goals himself and create chances for others.

Some may question the player's temperament in light of his recent behaviour but Ferguson has worked with plenty of highly-strung individuals, including Eric Cantona, and got the best out of them.

He will expect to do the same with Berbatov, starting when United travel to Anfield to face Liverpool on September 13.



Spain starlet Bojan Krkic (R) is challenged by Marcos Senna during a training session in Las Rozas on Tuesday. Spain will play Bosnia Herzegovina in a 2010 World Cup qualifying match on Saturday.

## Krkic replaces Torres

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona striker Bojan Krkic comes in for injured Liverpool striker Fernando Torres for Spain's World Cup qualifiers against Bosnia and Armenia, the Spanish Football Federation said Monday.

It is the third time that the 18-year-old, who has a Serbian father and a Spanish mother, has been called up by Spain.

Krkic was the most significant absence from the squad which new Spain coach Vicente del Bosque assembled for the match against Bosnia on September 6 in Murcia and against Armenia four days later in Albacete.

The striker was born in Spain and won the European under-17 title with the country. He opted out of Spain's Euro 2008-winning squad due to fatigue after his debut season with Barcelona's first team.

Torres pulled a hamstring while chasing a pass in the first half of Liverpool's 0-0 draw at Aston Villa on Sunday.

## Thousands back Casillas for Ballon d'Or

AFP, Madrid

Over 10,000 people have, as of Monday signed a petition calling on the European Footballer of the Year award to be awarded to Real Madrid keeper Iker Casillas.

Esteban Parro, the mayor of Mostoles, the city on the outskirts of Madrid where the 27-year-old player grew up in, told reporters that 10,458 people had signed the online petition since he launched it on August 25.

The supporters of Casillas have till October 31 to sign. It will then be sent to France Football magazine which was awarded the Ballon d'Or, one of football's top prizes, each year since 1956.

The Spain captain became a national hero after he saved two penalty kicks in the quarterfinals as Spain beat Italy 4-2 in a shootout after a 0-0 draw.

The winner of the Ballon d'Or award is selected by a panel of journalists and soccer officials in a vote organized by France Football magazine.

Russia's Lev Yashin of Dynamo Moscow was the last keeper to win the award in 1963. AC Milan's Brazilian midfielder Kaka won the Ballon d'Or award in 2007.

## Zaragoza offloads 3 players

AFP, Madrid

Spanish side Zaragoza, which was relegated to the second division, agreed to sell three players on Monday, the last day of the football transfer period, the club said on its website.

The club sold Argentine striker Diego Milito, 28, to Italian side Genoa, Spanish international striker Sergio Garcia, 25, to Betis Seville and international French midfielder Peter Lucien, 29, to Racing Santander.

The club gave no financial details but Spanish media said Milito was sold to Genoa for 8.0 million euros (11.7 million dollars) while Garcia, 25, who helped lead Spain to victory in Euro 2008, went to Betis for 10 million euros.

## Lamps pleads with fans

AFP, London



Frank Lampard has pleaded with England's fans not to turn Barcelona's Olympic Stadium into a theatre of hate again when his side face Andorra on Saturday.

Lampard and his teammates were subjected to horrific abuse from England supporters during a lacklustre Euro 2008 qualifying victory over Andorra 17 months ago.

Even though the Chelsea star, who was injured for the match, watched from the stands as Steve McClaren's team spluttered to a 3-0 win over the part-timers, that didn't spare him from the criticism.

With the signs of discontent among England fans after last month's friendly against the Czech Republic fresh in Lampard's memory, he is concerned Saturday's first World Cup qualifier could turn ugly

if Fabio Capello's team struggle.

"We just hope the fans who travel this time will be behind the team," he said. "When we went there before it was not a good atmosphere. Anyone who was there will know that."

"I don't know if it was as bad as I can remember but when you play for England you have to be tough and able to handle atmospheres like that."

"The problem is games like that can be frustrating. Andorra are just going to sit in and try to make the score as respectable as they can."

"You need the crowd with you because when you are trying to break a team down, sometimes you have to wait a bit longer for a goal than you expect."

Nobody has any doubt England will emerge victorious. It is the manner of that triumph that counts with Croatia to face in Zagreb four days later for a match that could define Capello's reign.

With Steven Gerrard out injured, Lampard will be England's

key midfielder but he played down suggestions that the onus was on him to provide a match-winning influence.

"I don't know if there will be more onus on me," he said. "I think the eyes are on all the team because we need to get results. It's not about individuals. The manager is very strong on that, it's about a team effort."

"We shouldn't single out any players. If people drop out we have a big enough squad to cope."

However while Lampard was anxious to talk up the team ethic Capello is determined to instil at the expense of individuals, he had a very clear view of what England want from their opening two games.

"We take these games as a package and we want six points, simple as that," he said. "Quite rightly, we are expected to beat Andorra."

"But those games aren't that easy. Hopefully we can score an early goal and then go on and get the comfortable result we want."

## Dream move for Quaresma

AFP, Milan



Portugal winger Ricardo Quaresma has spoken out about his joy at joining Italian champions Inter Milan in a late transfer deadline deal.

The 25-year-old was one of Inter boss Jose Mourinho's top transfer targets and the former Chelsea manager got his man with only hours remaining to the end of Monday's deadline.

For Quaresma, who joined from

FC Porto, it will be his second spell abroad following an unhappy season at Barcelona in 2003-04.

"Being at Inter is a dream for me because it's always been my aim to come to a big club and this is a big club with great players, hence I'm very thankful to Porto," Quaresma told the official Inter website.

Porto had initially held out for a higher fee than Inter were willing to offer but the deal eventually went through for a sum rising to 24.6 million euros plus six-million-euro rated Portuguese midfielder Vitor Pele.

Mourinho had said a few days

ago that he wanted to add a speedy winger, such as Quaresma, to his squad as his preferred 4-3-3 formation involves a central striker flanked by two wingers.

"Quaresma is an eclectic player who can play in a 4-3-3 or 4-4-2 formation," said Mourinho, who added he was delighted with the support he had received from club bosses in the transfer market.

"When I arrived I asked for three players: Quaresma, (Alessandro) Mancini and (Frank) Lampard."

"When Lampard changed his mind I asked the club for (Sulley) Muntari and they have delivered and I thank them."

"Now that I've got them, it's up to me to deliver."

## S Africa lose Kanu, Yobo

AFP, Lagos

Nigeria skipper Nwankwo Kanu and Joseph Yobo have pulled out of this weekend's 2010 World Cup qualifier in South Africa due to injuries, officials have disclosed.

"Both Kanu and Yobo have called to say they are injured and as such will not be available for the game on Saturday against South Africa in Port Elizabeth," said Nigerian team co-ordinator Peterside Idah.

Yobo said he suffered an injury during Everton's match against Portsmouth at the weekend while Kanu has yet to play this season because he is nursing injury.

Two other England-based stars, Chelsea midfielder John Obi Mikel and Obafemi Martins of Newcastle United, have also withdrawn because of injuries.

Officials also disclosed that Bolton Wanderers defender Danny Shittu has been permitted to arrive South Africa on Thursday, two days after the team set up training camp there.

Nigeria, who beat South Africa 2-0 in the first tie in Abuja in June, lead Group Four of the qualifying tournament for both the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations and World Cup with maximum 12 points from four matches.

South Africa are second on the table with four points, the same as third-placed Sierra Leone while Equatorial Guinea are bottom with three points.

## Nishikori's dream run ends

US OPEN

AFP, New York

Argentina's Juan Martin Del Potro ended the US Open dream run of Japan's Kei Nishikori with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 triumph Monday in a fourth-round matchup of teen stars seen as destined for greatness.

The 19-year-old South American stretched his win streak to 23 matches and became the first teen in the last eight at the US Open since American Andy Roddick in 2001, denying the honour to his 18-year-old Asian rival.

"It's unbelievable. I don't know what happened with me and my tennis but it has been a great week forme," Del Potro said.

Nishikori, who ousted fourth seed David Ferrer in the third round, was the youngest player to reach the US Open round of 16 since Marat Safin a decade ago and would have been the youngest quarterfinalist since Andre Agassi in 1988.

"I'm pretty happy right now. I came here trying to get past the first

round. That was my goal," Nishikori said. "Next year hopefully I will stay healthy and play well, make the quarters next year I hope."

Del Potro, ranked 17th, has won his past four tournaments - Stuttgart, Kitzbuhel, Los Angeles and Washington - and is only the second player ranked outside the top 10 in the past 20 years to compile a 15-match win streak.

"I just do my best in the matches," he said. "I'll try to win my fifth in a row but it's very tough."

Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic, a 21-year-old Serbian seeded third at the US Open after a run to last year's final, is impressed with the talent of the duo and Croatian teen Marin Cilic, whom he ousted in the third round.

"It's good for the sport to have rising stars coming up," Djokovic said. "Cilic and Del Potro and Nishikori, they are all top-10 players. I'm sure we are going to see them in the future."

Nishikori, who injured his abdomen and retired this year at Wimbledon in his Grand Slam debut, won his first ATP title in February at Delray Beach and can

see himself in the top 10 as well someday.

"Right now, no, but I'm playing well this year," Nishikori said. "I had so many injuries this year, my back, my stomach. I've got to work more on taking care of my body, less injuries. Then I can get my ranking higher."

"I will get more confidence from this week. I beat (Argentina's) Juan Monaco first round and I was almost cramping. I got mentally strong and beat Ferrer. I will get confidence."

Nishikori, who owns a home in Florida near his training base, failed in his bid to match the only Japanese man to ever reach the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam event in the 40-year Open era, Shuzo Matsuoka at Wimbledon in 1995.

"He taught me some things when I was 12 or 13. I'm trying to beat his career," Nishikori said.

The top idols for Nishikori are 12-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer and the man who replaced him as world number one, Spain's Rafael Nadal.

"I like how Nadal plays," Nishikori said. "Roger too. He can

do everything. He plays so smart. That's what I'm trying to be."

Nishikori was the first Japanese man to reach the final 16 at the US championship since 1937 and could have become Japan's first quarterfinalist at the event, counting pre-Open era results, since Zengo Shimidzu in 1922.

Nishikori, who would have been the lowest-ranked quarterfinalist since 1999 at 126th in the world, grabbed a 3-0 lead but lost seven games in a row and could never match Del Potro's rhythm in the match after that.

"I was a little tired, mentally more tired and at the same time he was playing really well. He didn't miss any balls," Nishikori said. "I was just waiting for his mistakes. I couldn't use my forehand."

Nishikori, with his mother Eri watching at Louis Armstrong Stadium, finally succumbed after two hours and eight minutes but not before earning his rival's respect.

"He's a good player. He has a good future," Del Potro said. "It's a good tournament for him also."



Argentina star Lionel Messi leans on teammate Sergio Aguero (bottom) as they relax during a training session in Buenos Aires on Monday. Argentina will face Paraguay in the 2010 World Cup qualifiers on Saturday.



Former Brazil international footballer Roberto Carlos poses with the 2008 Golden Foot Award in Monaco on Monday. The Golden Foot award is an international career award given to players who stand out for their athletic achievements.