

# Kaka's Real move not done yet

**Football**

AFP, Madrid

Spanish media downplayed reports that Real Madrid had signed AC Milan star Kaka, saying details remain to be worked out and that Chelsea still hope to buy the Brazilian for a world record fee.

"The transfer (to Real) is still not official but all the parties are giving it as a done deal," the sports daily AS said Wednesday, noting "pressure" from Chelsea.

Another sports paper, Marca, predicted Kaka's transfer to Real would be completed "before next week."

The two papers, along with Radio Cadena Ser, had reported late Tuesday that the 27-year-old playmaker had signed for Real in a 65-million-euro deal.

They said newly-installed Real president Florentino Perez sealed the deal with AC Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani and Bosco Leite, father and agent of the 2007 world and European player of the year.

Kaka, currently in Brazil with the national team ahead of a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay, will sign up for five years and a salary worth nine million euros a year, they added.

But AS said Chelsea representatives had travelled to Milan on Tuesday to make an offer that topped Real's.

The English Premier League club would be ready to pay 80 million euros, which would make Kaka the most expensive player in history, and offer him a salary of 12

million euros and his father a 12-million-euro commission.

The paper noted that Chelsea's new manager, Carlo Ancelotti, has just moved from AC Milan and could have some influence in luring Kaka to London.

Real Madrid has not released any statement on the negotiations.

Kaka himself insists he's staying put in Italy, telling Monday's La Gazzetta dello Sport: "I'll tell you this for the last time, the very last. I don't want to leave Milan."

"To the millions of Milan fans, I tell you that I've made my choice. I've said I want to stay. Leave me in peace, please."

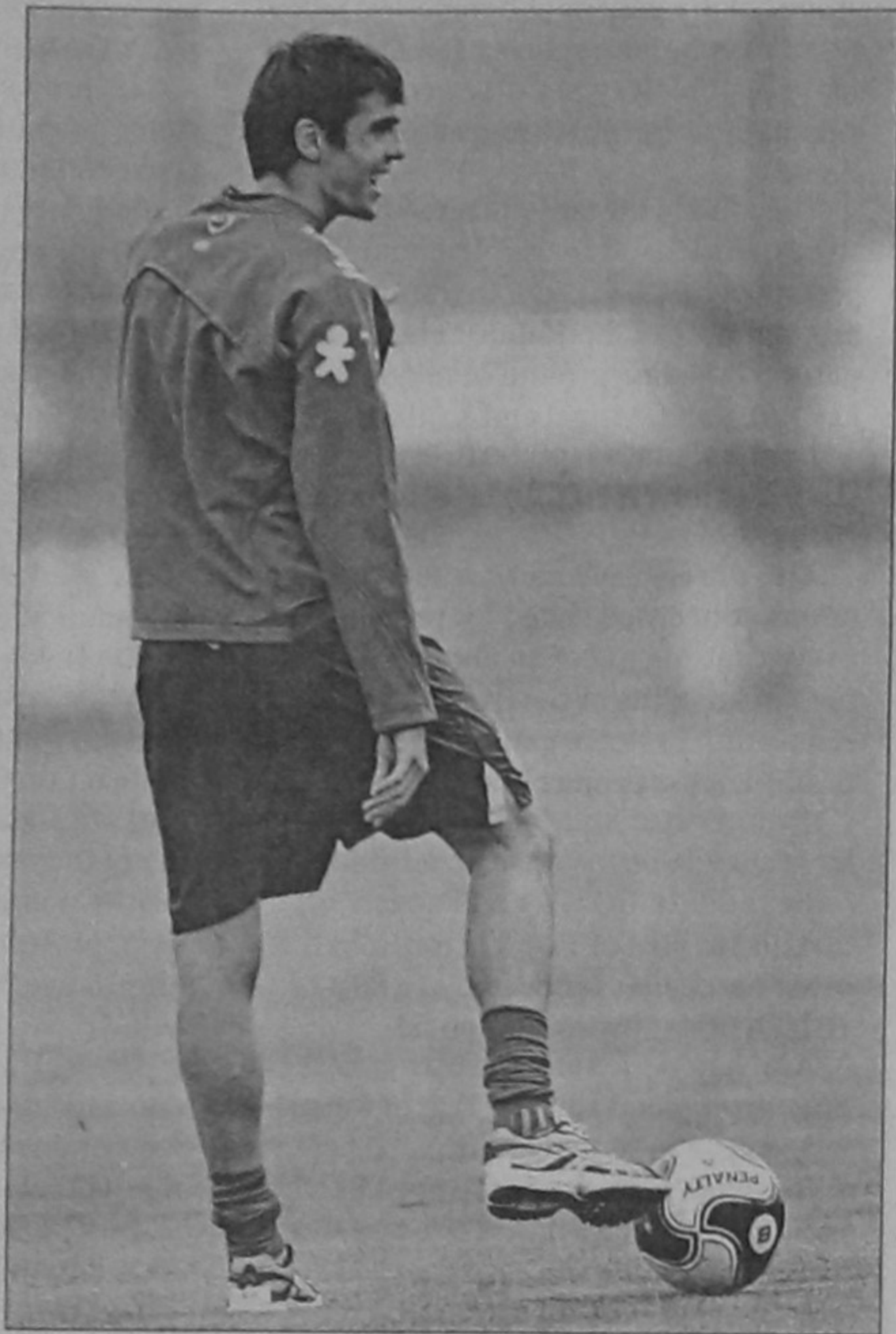


PHOTO: AFP

Brazil star Kaka controls the ball during a training session in Teresopolis on Tuesday.

## Spain at the zenith for a year

INTERNET, undated

European champion Spain completed a year atop FIFA's world rankings, while the United States moved into its best position in two years at No.14 in the latest monthly standings published Wednesday.

The Netherlands moved up one place to sit at No.2 for the first time since October 2005. Euro 2008 runner-up Germany fell to third.

World champion Italy is fourth, swapping places with No.5 Brazil despite the South American champions winning 2-0 when the two met in a February exhibition. Rankings are calculated on results from the previous four years.

England also rose one place to sixth, climbing above No.7 Argentina. Croatia, Russia and France rounded out the top 10.

Paraguay, which leads the South American qualifying group for the 2010 World Cup, climbed four places to No.13.

No.19 Ukraine and No.20 Serbia each climbed three places, while Denmark rose five to No.24.

Cameroon is the best-placed African nation at 21st, a fall of two spots, and Burkina Faso rose seven to a best-ever 50th.

Australia leads the Asian confederation, rising three spots to No. 29, with Japan moving up four places at No. 31.

A total of 21 exhibition matches were played in the past month and count toward the current rankings.

### FIFA RANKINGS

(last month's positions in brackets)

1. (1) Spain
2. (3) Netherlands
3. (2) Germany
4. (5) Italy
5. (4) Brazil
6. (7) England
7. (6) Argentina
8. (8) Croatia
9. (9) Russia
10. (10) France

## Elano claims Inter talks

INTERNET, undated

Inter Milan are in talks with Manchester City over Elano, according to the Brazil midfielder.

Elano has had a mixed season at Eastlands and has continuously been linked with a move away from the club after spending most of the first half of the season on the bench.

The 27-year-old found his form towards the end of the campaign but is likely to fall further down the pecking order following the arrival of Gareth Barry.

And Elano has issued a come-and-get-me plea to Inter coach Jose Mourinho.

"There are ongoing negotiations and I hope the Inter directors will go right to the end," he told Gazzetta dello Sport. "I want to wear the Inter shirt."

Elano signed a four-year contract at City when he moved from Shakhtar Donetsk in 2007.

## Hughes confirms Tevez interest

SOCCERNET

Manchester City boss Mark Hughes has confirmed his interest in signing Carlos Tevez, with his two-year loan deal at Manchester United expiring at the end of the campaign.

Tevez's future has been the subject of constant speculation and, although United have first refusal on signing the striker, they are thought to be reluctant to pay the reported £32m price-tag on the Argentine international's head.

Reports suggest City are ready to meet the asking price for the former West Ham forward and Hughes admits he would be interested in signing Tevez if he becomes available.

"Carlos Tevez is a good player. If good players become available then obviously every manager is interested," Hughes told Sky Sports News.

# Nigeria upset France

**Football**

AFP, St Etienne

France coach Raymond Domenech suffered another blow to his authority here on Tuesday as Nigeria beat France 1-0 in an international friendly.

Joseph Akpala scored the only goal of the game, the 22-year-old Club Brugge striker scoring in the 32nd minute after Ikechukwu Uche's shot had come off the bar and hit French goalkeeper Steve Mandanda's heel.

Domenech conceded that his side had lacked freshness, though he admitted the Nigerians had also had a long hard season, and that in the first-half especially his team had struggled to assert themselves.

"We suffered a little in terms of organisation in the first-half," said Domenech, who has come under increasing pressure since France went out of Euro 2008 at the first hurdle.

"We opted to play attacking football, to give the crowd pleasure without putting together a coherent strategy."

The crowd reacted furiously to the goal and started jeering and booing the French side, who had welcomed back from the international wilderness captain Patrick Vieira and Chelsea's Florent Malouda.

However, neither shone with Vieira especially static in midfield on what was a sad 107th appearance for the former Arsenal star.



PHOTO: AFP

French midfielder Yoann Gourcuff (L) makes an acrobatic volley during their friendly match against Nigeria at the Geoffroy-Guichard Stadium in Saint-Etienne on Tuesday.

# Terminator joins US WC bid

**Football**

AFP, New York

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has joined the bid committee trying to bring the World Cup to the United States in either 2018 or 2022.

"Soccer is the world's most popular sport and California has been home to some of its most exciting games, and I am proud to be a part of bringing the World Cup back to the United States," the former Hollywood star and bodybuilder said.

California venues have traditionally been used for major international matches in the United States.

The Rose Bowl in the Los Angeles suburb of Pasadena hosted the 1994 World Cup final and the 1999 Women's World Cup final.

The 2003 Women's World Cup final was held at the Home Depot Center in the Los Angeles suburb of Carson.

Six stadiums in California are among 58 venues in the United States under consideration to host World Cup matches in 2018 or 2022: the Rose Bowl, Stanford Stadium, Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego, Memorial Stadium in Berkeley and Oakland-Alameda County Stadium.

No other state has that many venues in the hunt.

"The millions of fans from around the

globe that will travel to the United States to cheer their teams will prove a great benefit for our state, our nation and the world of soccer," the Austrian-born Schwarzenegger said.

The United States is one of nine countries that have put their hats in the ring to host the World Cup in either 2018 or 2022.

Australia, England, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico and Russia, with joint bids proposed from Netherlands-Belgium and Portugal-Spain.

Qatar and South Korea have applied only as candidates to host the 2022 tournament.

All candidates must have their formal bid applications to FIFA by May 14, 2010. FIFA will award the tournaments in December of 2010.

# Gomez fires Germany

**Football**

AFP, Dubai

Mario Gomez inspired Germany to a thumping 7-2 victory over United Arab Emirates here on Tuesday in an international friendly with a four goal haul for his first international goals in 14 months.

The four goals from the new record 30million euros Bayern Munich signing - who had a disastrous Euro 2008 finals after going into it hailed as the man to watch for Germany - allowed the Germans to end their much criticised mini Asian tour with a resounding victory.

They had been held 1-1 by China in Shanghai last Friday. Initially it looked as if the Germans - who went on the tour without regulars such as Michael Ballack and Torsten Frings - would also struggle in this match against a side ranked a lowly 120th in the FIFA world rankings.

Manuel Neuer had shown two moments of great solo class on his debut but with no reward for it and the Germans had to wait till the 29th minute to open the score with defender Heiko Westermann hitting the back of the net.

From then on, though, the Emirates collapsed and the

Germans were 4-0 up by half-time as Gomez grabbed two of his goals and winger Piotr Trochowski also scored.

Gomez - who hadn't scored for the national side in 15 appearances since March 28 last year - rounded off the victory with two more goals in the second-half with the other

German goal an own goal.

The Euro 2008 finalists next international rendezvous is a 2010 World Cup qualifier against Azerbaijan in Baku on August 12 - the Germans presently lead their group by four points ahead of Euro 2008 semi-finalists Russia, though the Russians have a game in hand.

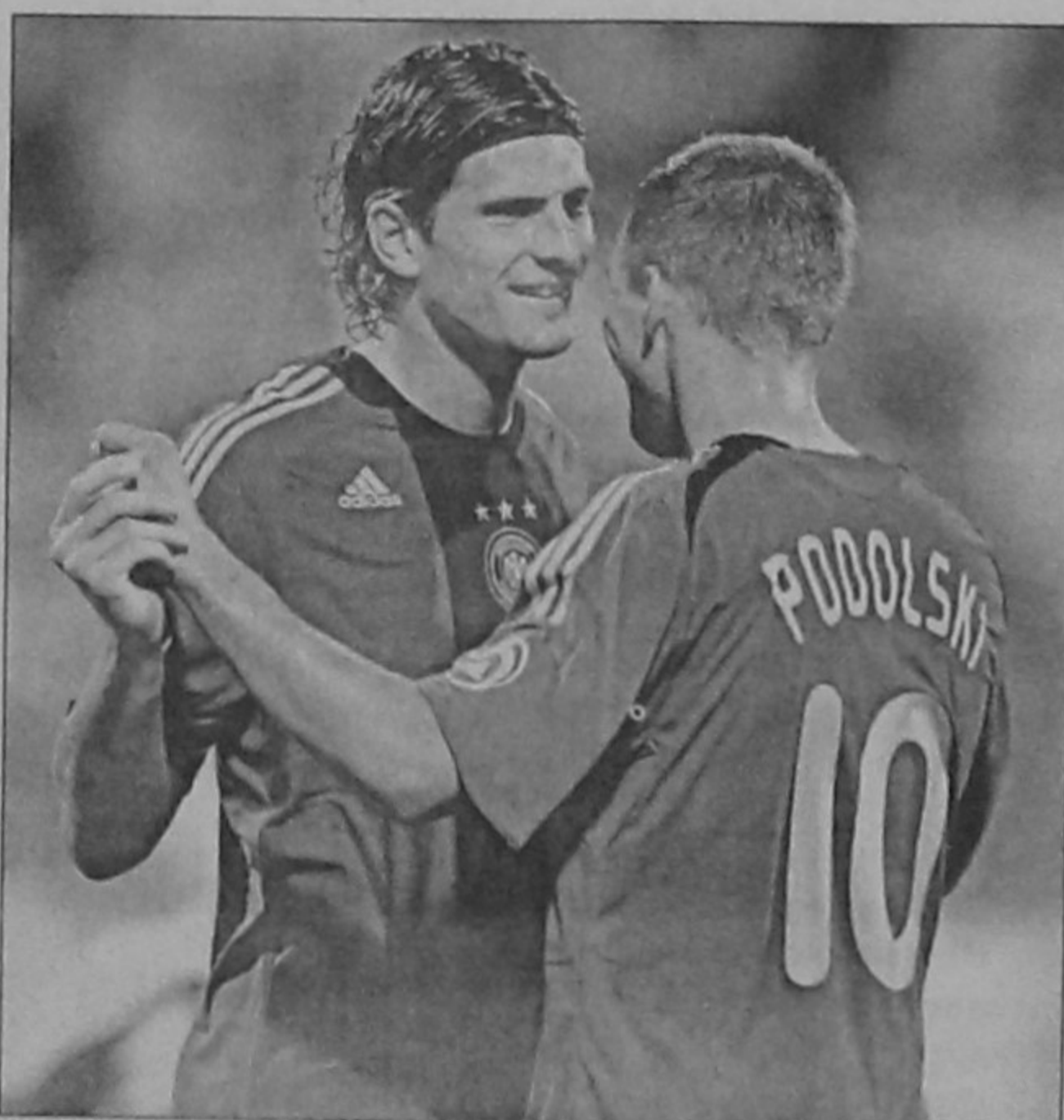


PHOTO: AFP

Germany striker Mario Gomez (L) celebrates his goal with teammate Lukas Podolski during their friendly match against the UAE in Dubai on Tuesday.

## Ze Roberto leaves Bayern

AFP, Berlin

Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto could be on his way to Manchester City after announcing on Wednesday he was looking for a new club following Bayern Munich's refusal to offer him a new two year contract.

"I'm leaving with one eye smiling and the other in tears," the 34-year-old told newspaper Munich tz.

"It's no secret that I wanted to sign a two year deal," added Ze Roberto, who was disappointed to be only offered a one year extension to his contract.

"The club have their reasons, I have to accept and respect them, and that's what I'm doing."

He added that he should know in the next few days where he will be playing next season with Manchester City one of his suitors.

"Right at the top of the list there is the interest shown by Manchester City," he told the paper.

"There are also two clubs in the Bundesliga who have shown interest in me, one of them has even offered me a three year deal."

"There is also a side in Saudi Arabia and clubs in the United States."

# City seal Barry deal

AFP, Manchester



Villa.

The 28-year-old England international signed a five-year contract at Eastlands on Monday after completing a successful medical.

"I'm delighted to be joining City," the former Villa captain, who is expected to be the first of a clutch of close season signings by the big spending Manchester outfit, told City's website on Tuesday.

Barry, who is with the England squad preparing for Saturday's World Cup qualifier in Kazakhstan, added: "It didn't take much persuasion from Mark Hughes, they are heading in the direction I want to go."

"There is great potential here, and I'm sure there will be a few more additions to the squad this summer."

Hughes commented: "I was looking to get a number of deals done as soon as possible and we have had a great start with Gareth joining us."

"I hope we can conclude some more so that when we come back for pre-season training we have everybody fit and well and set for a successful campaign."

City captain Richard Dunne welcomed Barry on board.

"I heard he was in talks with the club, he is a really good player and a player the Aston Villa fans will really miss," said the Republic of



PHOTO: AFP

Argentina striker Carlos Tevez (C) receives the ball during a training session in Ezeiza, Buenos Aires on Tuesday.