



PHOTO: AFP
Brazil striker Julio Batista holds a lion cub at a reserve near Pretoria on Friday. Brazil take on Italy in a crucial Confederations Cup match tonight.

Tevez set to leave MU

Football

AFP, London

Argentinian forward Carlos Tevez's two-year loan deal was set to expire this month because United have been unable to agree a transfer fee with the group of investors who own the economic rights to the Argentine forward.

United offered Tevez a new five-year deal that would have made him one of the highest-paid players at Old Trafford, but said he turned it down.

A statement from Manchester United said: "Following contact received from Carlos Tevez's advisors last night, in advance of the

deadline the Club set for concluding negotiations, Manchester United announces that Carlos will not be signing a new contract with the Club.

"The Club agreed to pay the option price of 25.5 million pounds and offered Carlos a five-year contract which would have made him one of its highest paid players.

"Disappointingly however, his advisors informed the Club that, despite the success he has enjoyed during one of the Club's most successful periods, he does not wish to continue playing for Manchester United.

"The Club would like to thank Carlos for his services over the last two seasons and wishes him good luck for the future."

The decision paves the

way for Tevez, who has been linked to a number of top flight clubs in England including Liverpool and Manchester City, to relaunch his career in the Premier League. He has also been linked with a move to Real Madrid.

Despite playing a leading role in United's success last season the Argentine complained of not playing enough. He was regularly used as a substitute.

Tevez last put on a United strip for the Champions League final in Rome, but had to watch from the bench as Barcelona took a 1-0 half-time lead.

Ferguson eventually sent the Argentina forward on as a half-time substitute but the Spanish giants went on to score another goal to win 2-0.

FORMULA ONE Vettel grabs pole

AFP, Silverstone

German Sebastian Vettel grabbed the fourth pole position of his career on Saturday when he survived a powerful challenge from his Red Bull teammate Australian Mark Webber in qualifying for the British Grand Prix.

The 21-year-old tyro, who shot to prominence by taking pole and winning last year's Italian Grand Prix with the unsung Toro Rosso team, clocked a best time of one minute and 19.509 seconds in the top-ten shootout.

This lifted him clear of veteran Brazilian Rubens Barrichello in a Brawn GP car who took second ahead of Webber, who pushed hard to seize his first career pole. For Vettel it was a second pole in succession and his third this year.

Championship leading Briton Jenson Button in the second Brawn was sixth fastest after struggling for balance and tyre performance in the cold conditions.

Italian Jarno Trulli was fourth for Toyota and Japanese Kazuki Nakajima was fifth for Williams ahead of Button.

Vettel was out early on in the top-ten shootout Q3 and delivered a time of one minute and 20.863 seconds to go top for Red Bull before he was supplanted by Barrichello for Brawn GP and then Webber, who jumped clear by four-tenths of a second.

It was a hotly-contested session with little more than a second separating the top ten drivers midway through Q3 as they delayed briefly for fresh tyres in readiness for their final runs.

The Australian was unable to improve on his first hot lap and Barrichello and then Vettel took over at the top and despite giving it his all on his second run Webber had to settle for third.

On a cool and cloudy day, following overnight rain, the air temperature was only 16 degrees Celsius and the track temperature just 25 degrees.

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ITALY V BRAZIL

Lippi targets win

AFP, Pretoria



Italy coach Marcello Lippi has told his side they must show more initiative as the world champions prepare for a crucial clash with Brazil in the Confederations Cup on Sunday.

The Italians deviated from the script in their upset 1-0 loss to Egypt in Johannesburg on Thursday to leave them needing a victory against the South American champions to keep their tournament hopes alive.

They have three points in Group B, the same as Egypt who have a much easier task against the United States on the same day.

Brazil have six points after winning their opening two games with who goes through to the semis potentially being decided by goal difference.

"We are in a very difficult group, very different from the other group," said Lippi. Group A features Spain, Iraq, South Africa and New Zealand.

"We weren't very aggressive against Egypt," he added. "We didn't play like we had planned. When Egypt started to play and scored, it all unravelled and we stopped playing. We didn't go for the ball."

He knows they have a huge

task ahead of them against Dunga's team of superstars, aware that only a victory will do if they want to stay in the competition.

"We've simply got to win," he said. "We'll try to play positively from the first minute and try and take the initiative but we must also be prudent because the opponent is Brazil."

Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon said their problem was that they only picked up their game after conceding a goal, something he admitted must change against Brazil.

"I think our problem at the moment is our approach to matches, in that we often react only after moments of significance, like conceding a goal," he told reporters.

"Against Brazil, we have to play without making any calculations, in regards to what is happening elsewhere. We have to play to win."

"We must show that we can compete with one of the favourites for next year's World Cup."

After a lacklustre second half against Egypt in their opening 4-3 victory, which

coach Dunga blamed on tiredness, Brazil were back to their best in beating the United States 3-0 on Thursday, a display that oozed class.

"What changed (between Egypt and the US) was a lack of tiredness," said Dunga, who used several new faces such as Maicon and Miranda to good effect.

Four of Brazil's seven goals at the tournament have come from set pieces, something Lippi will have noticed and be working on at their training ground in Pretoria.

Dunga said his team worked hard on that aspect of their game, to good effect.

"Yes that's something we go over, we try and place the players in the best positions," he said.

"We move the ball around quickly as well which of course is a characteristic of South American football."

In an ominous warning to Italy, Manchester City's Robinho declared that Brazil were just getting started.

"We played well (against the United States) but we want to play even better in the games ahead."

RECENT MATCHES

2009 London	Brazil 2 - Italy 0
1997 Lyon	Brazil 3 - Italy 3
1994 Los Angeles	Brazil 0 - Italy 0
1989 Bologna	Brazil 1 - Italy 0
1982 Barcelona	Brazil 2 - Italy 3

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches played: 13
Brazil wins: 6
Italy wins: 5
Draws: 2

Real getting shirty

Football

INTERNET, undated

Real Madrid have made major headlines over the expensive signing of Kaka and the prospective purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo and Kaka, but the club is also facing the flip side of the same coin: mass sales.

By Friday, only veteran striker Raul Gonzalez, keeper Iker Casillas and defender Sergio Ramos are guaranteed their shirt numbers for next season.

Real Madrid launched Friday the sale of their new kit, but fans who went by the club shop to get the latest novelties found that only three shirts were available with numbers and names on them: Raul's number 7, Ramos' number 4 and Casillas' number 1.

The detail appeared to indicate that the rest of the first team's footballers are liable to being transferred this summer, which promises to be very active in terms of both signings and lay-offs.

Real Madrid currently have a 32-man squad, counting the signings of Kaka and Ronaldo, and managing director Jorge Valdano has said this week that there will be "no less than four or five further signings."

The count is clear: Real

Madrid would then have some 37 players in their squad, and new coach Manuel Pellegrini only wants 25. Real Madrid, that is, need to sell around 12 players.

The problem is of course made worse by the high salaries that Real Madrid players get by contract, and by how much they have become devalued in a season with generally poor results and in fact no titles at all.

One example is Argentine striker Javier Saviola, whose salary is above 4 million euros (5.5 million dollars) per year. That figure would be very hard to take on by almost any team that might consider signing a footballer who barely played at all over the past two seasons.

Real Madrid appeared to slow down their shopping spree for a few days and were focusing on sales. British media claimed Wednesday that all Premier League clubs had received a fax from the Spanish giants with a list of players on sale.

That list reportedly included all the Dutch players that Real Madrid signed in the past three years: Royston Drenth, Wesley Sneijder, Rafael van der Vaart, Ruud van Nistelrooy, Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Arjen Robben.

Robben's case was particularly striking: Real Madrid bought him off Chelsea for 36 million euros (close to 50.2 million dollars) two years ago.

In La Liga, he lived up to his reputation as a glass player, and the new Real Madrid president Florentino Perez are looking to offload the winger, and even resigned to the possibility of losing a lot of money in the transaction.

Another persistent candidate to leave the Santiago Bernabeu stadium is Mali midfielder Mahamadou Diarra, for whom Real Madrid paid Olympique Lyon 26 million euros (36.2 million dollars) three years ago.

He was injured for the whole of last season, and the Spanish club are trying to find a buyer for him in Italy in what seemed like a very tough task ahead.

Real Madrid would also seriously contemplate the sales of players like Gabriel Heinze, Fernando Gago, Javi Garcia, Miguel Torres, Christoph Metzelder and several others.

As Real Madrid sports director Miguel Pardeza warned last week, "there will be tears" on the way out of the Spanish giants.

However, the club too will have a hard time selling.

Bolt home burgled

AFP, Kingston

The home of triple Olympic champion Usain Bolt was burgled on Tuesday night while the Jamaican sprinter was competing in the Czech Republic, police revealed here on Thursday.

The burglars entered the property in the St Andrew area of Kingston between midnight and four o'clock in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

Bolt's half-brother, Sadeke Bolt, was asleep in the house at the time.

The thieves took around 1000 US dollars' worth of electrical goods, including a camera, a laptop and mobilephones.

The robbery was reported to the police by Sadeke Bolt and confirmed by Usain's mother, Jennifer.

"That's all they took," she said.

Bolt, the undisputed star of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, was in action in the Czech city of Ostrava on Tuesday and set a year's best time of 9.77sec in the 100 metres.

Mellberg going to Olympiakos

AFP, Athens

Greek champions Olympiakos on Friday said that Swedish international defender Olof Mellberg has agreed a three-year deal.

Greek press reports said that Olympiakos will pay his current club Juventus 2.5 million euros for the transfer, while the player will receive a yearly salary of 1.5 million euros plus bonuses.

Mellberg, 32, has captained the Swedish national team, earning 90 caps and scoring four goals.

At club level he has played for Swedish clubs Degerfors and AIK, Spanish side Racing Santander, English club Aston Villa - where he made 231 appearances and scored seven goals - and Juventus, where he spent last season.

Rennes snap up Inamoto

AFP, Rennes

Much-travelled veteran Japanese midfielder Junichi Inamoto signed for French First Division side Rennes on a two year contract from German side Eintracht Frankfurt, the club announced on Friday.

The 29-year-old - who spent a number of years in the English Premier League - rejoins coach Frederic Antonetti who he played under at J-League outfit Gamba Osaka back in 1998-99.

He will also be reunited with a former Fulham teammate Carlos Bocanegra.

Inamoto, capped 71 times, had spells in the Premier League with Arsenal (2001-2002) and Fulham (2002-2004) before moving on to Cardiff City (2004-2005) and then West Bromwich Albion (2005-2007).

He moved to Turkish giants Galatasaray before signing for Eintracht in 2007.

Jamie wants Xabi to stay

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher has pleaded with Spain midfielder Xabi Alonso to stay at Anfield.

Alonso has been linked with a 20 million pounds move to Real Madrid and has so far refused to rule out a switch to the Bernabeu.

Carragher knows Liverpool's American owners have suffered financial difficulties recently and could be willing to accept a big offer but the centre-back hopes Alonso will stay loyal to the Reds.

"He (Alonso) and Stevie Gerrard were probably our best two players last season. I think Stevie won Footballer of the Year, but if you asked the fans I think they would maybe say that Alonso was our best player last season so he is certainly someone we don't want to lose," Carragher told

Sky Sports News.

Carragher admits he is concerned that Alonso isn't the only player being touted for an Anfield exit. Alvaro Arbeloa is interesting Real, while Spanish goalkeeper Jose Reina has emerged as a target for Barcelona.

"I'm like any fan, I get excited about who we might bring in. The players are exactly the same as the man on the street, you pick up the paper hoping you are going to see you've signed someone," Carragher added.

"But there has been a bit of speculation about players moving on, so at the moment I'm hoping that doesn't happen rather than people come in. We have got a great side at the moment, and I'm sure the manager will make a couple of additions, but we don't want to lose anyone."

One player certain to remain at Liverpool despite reports of a transfer is Spain striker Fernando Torres, who is reportedly on Manchester

United's hit-list after they accepted a world record 80 million pounds bid from Real for Cristiano Ronaldo.

Carragher believes United will find it hard to replace Ronaldo and he expects Sir Alex Ferguson to buy several players to make up for losing the Portugal winger.

"He makes a big difference to Manchester United, even though they have a lot of other great players, and I think he was the one for them," Carragher said.

"But I'm sure Sir Alex Ferguson knows what he is doing and to have 80 million pounds to go and spend, that's a lot of money. It will be difficult to replace Cristiano Ronaldo, but maybe they will do it a different way and get two or three players."

"It's difficult to replace that, but I'm sure they will sort it out. Hopefully they won't bring in someone as good as Ronaldo!"

Terry slates bans 'Breakaway is realistic'

AFP, London



Chelsea captain John Terry on Friday criticised the punishments meted out to his teammates Didier Drogba and Jose Bosingwa for their reactions to the club's Champions League loss to Barcelona.

Ivorian striker Drogba was on Wednesday given a four-game European ban by UEFA, with two games suspended, while Portuguese full-back Bosingwa will have to miss three matches, with a further match suspended.

The pair were punished for their reactions to a 1-1 draw at home to Barcelona in the semifinals of the Champions League, when Andres Iniesta's injury-time equaliser for the Catalans sent the London club out of the competition on the away goals rule.

Norwegian referee Tom Henning Ovrebo rejected a string of penalty appeals from Chelsea during the game and at the final whistle Drogba, who had been substituted, stormed onto the pitch to abuse the official, branding what had happened a "f***ing disgrace" in front of watching TV cameras.

"What happened with Didier and the comments made after the game took the hype away from the referee a little bit," Terry told British radio station talkSPORT.

"It was a very bad performance from him (Ovrebo), we all realised that. There were three or four clear penalty decisions that we should have had that night and that's something as a fan and as a player you will never forget."

"It was disappointing. I would like the people in charge to take these things into perspective and realise that after the game Didier came out and apologised for his actions."

"I think he realises that kids were watching and he deserves a ban. But to that extent? I really don't think so. Maybe a two-match ban."

Bosingwa referred to the referee as a "thief" in a post-match interview before then retracting his comments and Terry felt that he, too, was harshly treated.

"Jose Bosingwa's ban, I don't know where that's come from," the England skipper said.

"Obviously every player was feeling what Bosingwa felt and thankfully nobody else said what he said. But he said what every fan and every player was thinking."

"Hopefully Chelsea can appeal and we can get that (the ban) down a little bit because we want those two players for the campaign next year."

AFP, Silverstone



Michael Schumacher on Saturday said he believed that the political schism that currently divides Formula One has made a breakaway series next year a more realistic prospect than ever before.

The seven-times drivers world champion said he hoped the current crisis in the sport can be solved - and quickly - but believes serious damage has already been done.

Writing on his own website the 40-year-old German said: "I find it extremely unfortunate that in Formula One recently there is so much talk about politics and so little about sport."

"I really hope those political games will soon be ended - they were already getting on my nerves during all my career."

"Because in the end, doesn't it all come down to one simple fact: motorsport is a great sport? Formula One has always been the best of it and has to remain the pinnacle."

Formula One has always

been the platform for the best drivers and the best teams. This is what is admired all over the world; this is what everybody wants to see.

"But if this is constantly put into question due to permanent uncertainty of rules it is maybe better to really defend that value, leave and establish it somewhere else in a reasonable way."

Schumacher said he was baffled by the fact that the teams, and the FIA, the ruling body, could not agree on rule changes that would have secured the long-term future of the sport.

"It is simply not understandable that all teams share their view on how to approach the reforms and the governing body still wants to implement something else," he said.

"Of course this seems unimaginable in the first moment, but this time all big teams stick together. This makes a new championship much more realistic. It is starting to be a real alternative to me."

"As a motorsport fan, I want to watch the best show which is where the best drivers and the best teams compete with each other."