



Inter Milan players fight for the ball during a training session in Los Angeles on Monday. Inter will play their first game against Club America in San Francisco on Sunday.

Fabiano wants Milan move

AFP, Rome

After Kaka, Samuel Eto'o and Ricardo Carvalho, Luis Fabiano has become the latest player to reject Manchester City's advances by claiming he only wants to join AC Milan.

The Brazil striker, who top scored at last month's Confederations Cup, is currently in negotiations to join the Italian giants from Sevilla.

But despite the lure of the millions of pounds on offer from Manchester City's billionaire owners, the forward has his heart set on a switch to the rossovero, according to his agent Jose Fuentes.

"It's true that Manchester City have made an offer but I am 100 percent behind a move to Milan and the player is also 100 percent behind a move to Milan," he told Italian website calciomercato.it.

"Right now there is no news, everything's blocked. Officially I don't know if there's a meeting planned between Milan and Sevilla in the next few days but I believe Milan will get in touch with Sevilla again this week to make a new offer."

"I want to think positively and hence Luis Fabiano going to Milan is the only thing I want to think about at the moment."

City, who have been linked with almost every available player on the market, have had a frustrating summer in their bid to recruit the kind of top quality player needed to help their push for a top four finish in the Premier League next season.

While Kaka chose Real Madrid and Eto'o seems more interested in a switch to their cross town rivals United, City have also come up against stiff resistance in their bid for Chelsea captain John Terry.

Despite constant speculation Carlos Tevez is also yet to put pen to paper and now Luis Fabiano has become the latest player to snub the Citizens.

Spurs offer Vieira deal

AFP, London

Tottenham Hotspur have offered a one-year contract to former Arsenal star Patrick Vieira, whose club Inter Milan are prepared to release him, the Daily Mail reported on Tuesday.

The Mail reported that Spurs would offer the 33-year-old Vieira a pay-as-you-play deal worth around 35,000 pounds (45,000 euros) per week.

Vieira is understood to feel a move would benefit his chances of starring with France at next year's World Cup.

Spurs' English Premiership rivals Sunderland are also believed to be interested in Vieira, who also is on the radar of Paris St Germain and Lyon.

City sign Tevez

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester City on Monday said they had signed Argentine striker Carlos Tevez, who left Manchester United at the end of the season, amid reports they also want Arsenal's Emmanuel Adebayor.

Tevez, 25, has agreed terms with City and is set to sign a five-year deal, his new club said following weeks of rumours regarding his future.

No fee was mentioned but City were expected to have to shell out in the region of 25 million pounds (35 million euros) for the player they have coveted all summer.

"It is terrific news," said City manager Mark Hughes.

"Carlos is an international player of the highest class who possesses all the attributes that will help drive this club forward," Hughes told the club's official website.

"He is not only outstanding technically but he is a reliable goal scorer and someone who will contribute fully to the team ethic. He gives us another exciting, attacking dimension."

Last week City said they were giving up on plans to sign Barcelona star Samuel Eto'o, but having secured Tevez's services they are now also hoping to net Togolese forward Adebayor, even though he signed a new Arsenal contract

at the Emirates Stadium, media reports indicated late Tuesday.

City said in a statement on Tevez: "Personal terms with the 25-year-old have been concluded and the deal has been ratified by the Premier League and the Football Association."

City added that Tevez, who will wear the number 32 shirt next season, will have the mandatory medical check and then link up with the squad on their pre-season tour of South Africa.

Tevez spent two years with United, scoring 34 goals in 99 appearances after joining from West Ham, winning two English Premiership titles and the 2008 Champions League crown.

He started out with Boca Juniors before joining Brazilian side Corinthians in 2005.

Earlier Monday, United manager Sir Alex Ferguson he realised weeks ago that Tevez would not stay at Old Trafford, despite his cult status with fans.

"I half expected Carlos Tevez would be going a long time back. I think he maybe did a deal around January because I spoke to him and gave him an offer on the night we played Inter Milan and he never came back to me," Ferguson told reporters.

"I phoned him on holiday and he never got back to me and I texted him twice and he never got back to me then either, so obviously he had made his mind up a long time ago."

"He was a good player and did well for us. But he obviously assessed the situation and wanted to go somewhere else."

Valencia to sale Villa for 50m euros

AFP, Madrid

Valencia have set a minimum price of 50 million euros for the sale of their international centre-forward David Villa, sports newspaper Marca said on Tuesday.

Since the end of May, the 27-year-old has been the subject of attention from super-spending Real Madrid and Barcelona as well as Manchester City in the English Premiership.

Villa's agent Jose Luis Tamargo had a meeting with Valencia management on Monday to decide whether he should stay at Valencia for whom he scored 28 goals last season. It was made clear during the discussions that the player should stay unless a really big offer came in.

Obtaining Villa's services is believed to have become less of a priority for Real Madrid since French international Karim Benzema was recruited from Lyon and the focus has switched to Barcelona, Marcasaid.

Joan Laporta, chairman at the Nou Camp, was recently quoted as saying Barca were hunting a new striker to cover for Samuel Eto'o, whose commitment to the Spanish champions is currently in doubt even though he has been offered a contract extension.

Several clubs are interested in the Cameroon international, scorer of 30 goals last season, but have been put off by the massive price tag involved.

Among the leading suitors have been Manchester City and AC Milan but in recent days both the English and Italian clubs have made alternative arrangements, with City recruiting Carlos Tevez from Manchester United and Milan wooing Seville's Brazilian striker Luis Fabiano.

Donovan indicated that he was not shocked when the excerpts from "The Beckham Experiment" published last week in Sports Illustrated caused a stir.

"There were no surprises," Donovan said. "I'm generally a pretty honest person, but that doesn't mean I need to share things with everybody."

Beckham and Donovan handled inter-galactic matters without incident at practice.

"I don't know if it's buried or not, but for them to carry any of that is silly," Galaxy midfielder Chris Klein said.

Beckham went on loan to AC Milan for five months of last season and will meet his former Italian side here on Sunday in an exhibition match.

"It's going to be strange, funny and exciting," Beckham said. "It's good when teams of that class, and the players that they have, come over. It's about preparing yourself and it's about also the excitement of having such great players here."

Beckham, who can buy out the remainder of his US contract after this season, said that talks about a return to AC Milan will begin in the next few months.

Police was unable to comment on reports that the attack was linked to a row earlier in the evening outside a nightclub in the centre of Manchester.

Real now look to sell

Football

INTERNET, Madrid

Real Madrid's historic spending spree has been suspended, at least for the time being, as they turn their attention to selling some unwanted players. The Spanish giants took Planet Football by storm in June, spending around 210 million euros (292.96 million dollars), on Cristiano Ronaldo, Kaka, Karim Benzema and Raúl Albiol.

Now, according to sports dailies AS and Marca on Tuesday, Real president Florentino Pérez has made it clear that there will be no new signings until at least five of the club's many unwanted players have been sold.

AS said that Pérez has given the club's general director Jorge Valdano until July 27 to offload at least some of handful of the misfits from a bloated squad currently containing 32 players.

At the top of Real's list of unwanted players, apparently, are Dutchmen Klaas Jan Huntelaar, Rafael Van der Vaart, Royston Drenthe, Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Arjen Robben.

Huntelaar is close to signing for Germany's VfB Stuttgart, with AS Roma also rumoured to be interested.

New coach Manuel Pellegrini said he would like Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder to stay, at the same time as asking for a new full-back and two more midfielders.

Other players unwanted at the Bernabeu include veteran defenders Michel Salgado and Gabriel Heinze, plus anchorman Mahamadou Diarra.

However, most of the players on Valdano's "hitlist" are reluctant to leave Madrid because of their lucrative Real salaries, salaries that other clubs - for example Stuttgart with Huntelaar - are unwilling to or simply can not match.

So far, Valdano has only been able to sell third-choice goalkeeper Jordi Codina (to Getafe) and unwanted reserve striker Javier Saviola (to Benfica).

Marca hinted that Valdano might try to tempt new Bayern Munich coach Louis Van Gaal into taking some of Real's unwanted fellow-Dutchmen, possibly in exchange or part-payment for winger Franck Ribéry.

Ribéry, mysteriously injured at the moment, has made it clear that he wants to leave Bayern for Real, but Pérez is unwilling to pay the 80 million euros that Bayern are demanding for the Frenchman.

Not even Pérez has an unlimited supply of ready cash and credit, it seems, after having spent so freely in June.

Owen still has desire

Football

AFP, Manchester

Michael Owen insisted Monday he still has the desire to prove himself at the highest level.

Owen joined Manchester United last week on a two-year deal - with an option for a third season - following the conclusion of his contract at Newcastle United.

After a sensational start to his career for both Liverpool and England, Owen's form has been in gradual decline due to a succession of serious injuries in recent times.

He has suffered numerous hamstring problems as well as undergoing major surgery three years ago after rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament at the 2006 World Cup.

Those injuries robbed Owen of the lightning pace that had been such a crucial part of his armoury and in his four years at Newcastle United, he scored 30 goals in just 78 appearances.

However, despite the opinion that Owen's injuries have curtailed his impact at football's highest level, Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has placed faith in him and offered him the opportunity to prove his doubtless wrong.

Owen said: "I feel like I belong at a top club and I am delighted to be here. I am hungry to do well and if this challenge doesn't create a hunger and put a spring in your step and a smile on your face then nothing will."

"I am as hungry as ever and I don't think I

need to prove it to the people who have asked that."

"Obviously when a club and manager like this comes in for you that says it all for me."

"I honestly believe I can still do well in a top team like Manchester United."

And Owen was eager to defend his recent record and refutes the idea that he is an injury prone footballer.

He added: "There is no doubt that I have had injuries in my career but then most people have."

"You continually see over the last two years that I have been 'continually plagued' with injuries but there is no facts in that whatsoever."

"I played 33 and 32 games in the last two years."

"We were not in Europe at Newcastle nor did we have any long cup runs and there's only 38 games in a Premier League season so playing 33 and 32 games is not too bad."

"In the two years previous to that I was injured but it was nothing to do with being injury prone."

Ferguson praised the desire of Owen to prove his critics wrong and is confident the 28-year-old can rediscover the scoring touch that made him one of Europe's most feared strikers.

The United manager said: "His experience is vital and with Michael he will give us the experience he will give us in the penalty box."

"There is no question that he will score a lot of goals for us and he has been great for years and years."

"You always have to be aware of him in the last third."



Marseille players Stephane Mbia (L), Taye Taiwo (C) and Lucho Gonzalez (R) run during a training session in Marseille on Tuesday.

Football understands no crises

INTERNET, Barcelona

Real Madrid keeper Iker Casillas is not surprised by the very high prices that his club paid this summer for superstars like Cristiano Ronaldo and Kaka, and he argued that they are necessary because "football understands no crises."

"Perhaps it's that football understands no crises. If those amounts of money are paid, it is because perhaps there is that money in the world of football. We should not really make a great fuss about it. I think (Ronaldo) is worth that, and if he later justifies it on the pitch then the money is well paid."

"It is the usual thing. Almost six years ago they also paid a lot of money for Figo. So this shouldn't scare us now. I think Cristiano Ronaldo is a great player and he'll be good for us, and we are delighted with his arrival, really,"

Casillas said in an interview published by the magazine Don Balon Monday.

Real Madrid paid 94 million euros (131.3 million dollars) for Portuguese winger Ronaldo and 65 million euros (90.7 million dollars) for the signing of Brazilian

playmaker Kaka, generating great debate both within Spanish society and in the world of football at large.

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"It's clear that if we want to compete with Barcelona this year, we have to bring the best players," he stressed.

The Spain captain was generous in his praise of Real Madrid's arch-rivals.

"From my point of view, not that of a Real Madrid fan but that of a person who likes football, they were the best team last year. In the end they deserved the three titles because they played exquisite football," he said.

Casillas asked for "calm" in the face of great expectations around Real Madrid's luxury squad this season.

The keeper virtually ruled out his own exit from the Spanish giants.

"I am under contract until 2017. I signed a pretty long contract and I have been at the club since I was nine. The truth is that my exit from Real Madrid is quite difficult, unless someone arrives at the club who does not want me."



SEE PAGE 18 COL 1