Owen's still got it

Football

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Michael Owen's predatory instincts are still intact. That's the message he sent after scoring debut.

The 29-year-old striker came on as a sec- David Beckham and Cristiano Ronaldo. ond-half substitute in United's opening game with five minutes left after Ryan Giggs had been honour. tackled in the penalty area.

Rooney and Nani had put them two goals in Trafford in the close season, said Sunday. front.

"You train for weeks in preparation for that has the experience to handle that honour. all-important first game and to score on your debut feels great," said Owen, who joined the club this month on a two-year deal after his an easy decision for me." contract at relegated Newcastle expired.

ticism by some after a series of injuries robbed the former Liverpool and Real Madrid star of which he executed his goal it could be a punt the lightening pace that had been such a crucial that pays off. part of his armour.

But he is optimistic that he can forge a suc- said. cessful partnership with Rooney and Dimitar Berbatov and confident Saturday's goal will be the first of many.

"It's always nice to get off the mark, not just when you join a new club but any time," he told have here, "he added. the club website.

dressing room afterwards and he feels the same take his goal."

way after getting off the mark for the season.

"It's obviously doubly good for me with it being my first goal for the club, and even though it won't really count in the grand scheme of things, it does make you feel better. Hopefully I can score a lot more."

Sir Alex Ferguson has handed Owen the the winning goal on his Manchester United club's famous number seven shirt, worn by star players such as George Best, Eric Cantona,

He said Owen had enough experience to of their Asia tour and pounced on a loose ball handle any baggage that may accompany the

"It's been worn by high-profile players at His decisive finish handed the team a 3-2 our club over the years," Ferguson, who saw victory over a tough Malaysian XI after Wayne both Ronaldo and Carlos Tevez leave Old

"But Michael is a high-profile player and he

"Not all our players would relish that challenge but it was no problem for him. And it was

Ferguson took a big gamble in hiring Owen, His move to Old Trafford was met with scep- with Hull and Stoke the only other clubs showing any interest, but judging by the manner in

"It was a typical Michael Owen goal," he

"When Ryan went through the first man to react to Ryan's penetration was Michael. It's a good start for him.

"Michael is different to the other strikers we

"He's always searching for that space in and "I was sat chatting to Wayne (Rooney) in the around the box and he reacted really well to

Hamburg sign starlet Berg

INTERNET, undated

German Bundesliga club SV Hamburg have hired promising Swedish striker Markus Berg from Dutch club Groningen. Hamburg said on their website that Berg, 22, joins them on a five-year contract until 2014. The transfer fee is estimated at around 10 million euros (14 million dollars).

Berg scored 32 goals in 56 matches for Groningen and also made headlines last month as top scorer (seven goals in four matches) and best player at the under-21 European championships in

his home country. "I am happy that the transfer has been completed. Hamburg are a Bundesliga top club. I want to help us to be as successful as possible with good showings and goals,"

Labbadia said: "I am delighted that we could sign Marcus Berg. He has the will to score goals."

Football

in a friendly match Saturday.

switch from AC Milan.

season.

final on May 30.

August 15 against Hull.

Teenager Daniel Sturridge wasted no time in

making his presence felt for Chelse, scoring

Chelsea's 2-0 victory over the Seattle Sounders

moving from Manchester City to Stamford

Bridge, and he helped make a winner out of

new manager Carlo Ancelotti following his

bequieted the 65,289 fans - most in Seattle

green - who turned out to see the first of two

friendlies against overseas clubs that the

since they defeated Everton 2-1 in the FA Cup

will also include matches against Italy's Inter

Milan, AC Milan and Mexico's Club America.

They'll open the Premier League season on

Sturridge's 12th-minute goal match

Sturridge, 19, was making his debut after

AFP, Seattle

said Berg.

'Rooney is maturing'

Football

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Wayne Rooney is starting to mature but still has plenty of room for improvement, according to Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

With Cristiano Ronaldo and Carlos Tevez leaving over the summer, the spotlight has turned on Rooney who will be competitions during the last campaign.

dent the 23-year-old can cope with the extra pressure.

"You are seeing maturity from Wayne now, which is what you expect from younger players, but there is a still a lot of improve-

"The expectation on Rooney is always high. It is a natural situation as it is the standard which he has set for himself."

who recently said he believed Rooney would be a more devastating striker by the time the 2010 World Cup kicks off in just under a

"Wayne is young and he can improve," Capello said. "I accept it is more a case of going upwards a little bit from 90 percent Hamburg coach Bruno rather than 70 percent but he can improve three or four percent and that is very important."

> Berbatov, new signing Michael Owen and fast-improving teenager Federico Macheda.

expected to score more goals this season after getting 20 in all He got his first in United's 3-2 friendly victory over a

Malaysian XI here on Saturday, and Ferguson said he was confi-

ment to come. He's not the finished article yet," he said.

His comments echo those of England manager Fabio Capello

Rooney will lead the United attack this year with Dimitar

off their warm-up bibs.

Chelsea solid as ever

Becks tips Chelsea

AFP, London

England star midfielder David Beckham insisted Sunday that he believes new Chelsea manager Carlo Ancelotti can bring the Premier League trophy to Stamford Bridge next season.

under former boss Jose Mourinho in 2005 and 2006 with subsequent managers Avram Grant, Luiz Felipe Scolari and Guus Hiddink failing to deliver.

Former Manchester United player Beckham worked under Ancelotti during a loan spell at the San Siro last season and is sure the Italian will be a success in the Premier League.

"Chelsea are so lucky because Carlo is a great man and a great manager," the LA Galaxy player told the News of theWorld.

"He can definitely make Chelsea champions again. No doubt about it. And I say that even though everybody knows I have Manchester United in

'Yes, it will be difficult because the Premier League is totally different to the Serie A but he has great experience and I am convinced he will be a great success in England, too.

"You don't do what he did at Milan and suddenly lose it overnight. So I say good luck to him, he deserves it."

"That's how he was at

he will be at Chelsea, leading

by example, leading the team.

He added: "The players can expect to work with the ultimate professional. He works so hard and is so organised

and dedicated. "Carlo will be the first on the training pitch and the last off it because he just loves working with the players himself.

Sturridge set up Chelsea's next goal just won't find him sitting in his office leaving it to someone else. He is very hands on. Milan and I'm sure that's how

PHOTO: INTERNET

Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard (R) slots home past the diving Seattle Sounders goalkeeper Kasey Keller (L) to score in their friendly match at the Qwest Field in Seattle, Washington on Saturday.

Several of their stars saw limited or no time. Didier Drogba and Michael Essien never took

Cech played just one half. The only Chelsea regular to play the full 90 minutes was Frank Lampard, who scored the English side's secone goal and helping create another in ondgoal The Sounders, in the midst of the MLS campaign, had to weigh upcoming matches

> elite visitors. Goalkeeper Kasey Keller and forward Nate Jaqua only played a half, while Swedish star and former Chelsea nemesis Freddie

> against putting on a good show against their

Captain John Terry, Ashley Cole and Petr

Ljungberg departed in the second. The Sounders showed their midseason fitness, but their porous defence and sloppy play meant they couldn't take advan-

Sounders are hosting this Major League Soccer tage of it. Sturridge capitalized in the 12th, collecting The match was Chelsea's first on-field test a pass from Florent Malouda near the top of the box, pausing as Seattle's Tyrone Marshall slid past and beating Keller with a right-footed Their four-match tour of the North America shot.

> over 20 minutes later, when his pass from near midfield found Nicolas Anelka, who delivered a ball that Lampard slotted past Keller.



Piracy hits Man City

Real Madrid midfielder Jose Maria Guti goes airborne to receive a pass during a training session in pre-season camp at Maynooth, Dublin yesterday.

Football

AFP, Polokwane sideline as Manchester City lost 2-0 to Orlando Pirates Saturday in the opening Vodacom good team." Chelsea last won the title Challenge tournament match.

> dangerous" to field Argentine Tevez and another close-season striking purchase Paraguayan Roque Santa Cruz in this northern 14 seconds after the kick-off. city as they lacked match fitness.

under pressure to break into the English Premiership "bigfour" after a close season spending spree that also netted England midfielder Gareth Barry, offered no excuses for the loss. "It was a good workout against a Pirates

team that played very well. I was pleased with the day, but not the result," he admitted after a goal in each half gave the "Buccaneers" a deserved victory before 20,000 spectators.

"We are in the conditioning phase of preseason preparations and today you could see that the players are at different levels. A few more games and they will all be up to speed.

"Carlos (Tevez) and Roque (Santa Cruz)

were not considered for this match as it would have been too dangerous given their level of pre-season fitness," stressed Hughes.

Pirates coach and former Netherlands World Cup star Ruud Krol had sympathy for New signing Carlos Tevez watched from the City: "They have just travelled from Dubai and this does not make it easy. Believe me, City are a

The English Premiership outfit lacked at City manager Mark Hughes said was "too least half its likely first choice line-up and were under pressure from the kick-off with goalkeeper Stuart Taylor forced into a low save just

Lucas Thwala put Pirates ahead on 36 min-Former Manchester United striker Hughes, utes from the penalty spot after Ben Mee was guilty of shirt tugging and City had Craig Bellamy and Martin Petrov booked during an opening half in which they wasted several scoring chances.

Botswana midfielder Phenyo Mongala added a second goal on 56 minutes as his cross flew over Taylor into the far corner of the net and although City made a number of substitutions they never threatened to wrest the initia-

City face Kaizer Chiefs Tuesday in the Indian Ocean city of Durban before meeting the winners of a play-off between the South African clubs in the Pretoria final next Saturday.

the forward, whom Arsene Wenger brought to

Arsenal for just five million euros from Monaco

wards in the Premier League since he arrived

from France and we are delighted he has agreed

to come and join us," Hughes told club website

in the last two windows he will greatly enhance

we are determined to augment the players we

have here with the best of international talent.

attack. He has everything a top forward needs.

He is versatile, powerful, quick and agile on the

our play. I have been a great admirer for a long

our ability to compete with the top sides.

"Emmanuel has been one of the top for-

"Along with the other signings we have made

"His arrival is another clear indication that

"He adds vital balance and power to our

"He will definitely add a new dimension to

Milan keen SOCCERNET

PHOTO: AFP

Milan have reportedly identified Sao Paulo midfield star Hernanes as their next summer signing.

The midfielder is viewed as the right man to fill the boots of Italy international Andrea Pirlo, who could leave the club to reunite with Carlo Ancelotti at Chelsea.

But Joao Paulo de Jesus Lopes, the technical director of the Brazilian team, mocked the Rossoneri's financial muscle last month, claiming that Hernanes would only be released for a fee in excess of •40million.

Press reports, however have suggested that Sao Paulo could settle for •25m, but the player's agent Frederico Pena is adamant there is room to negotiate a much lower price.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1 **Ivanschitz**

signs for Mainz

AFP, Vienna

Austrian international midfielder Andreas Ivanschitz is on his way to promoted Bundesliga side Mainz from Greek outfit Panathinaikos, the German team's manager Georg Stanggassinger said Saturday.

The 25-year-old former Austrian team captain will sign a three-year contract worth 1.5 million euro on Sunday.

Ivanschitz arrived at Panathinaikos in 2006 after playing for Rapid Vienna and Salzburg, but failed to feature last season.

In three years he has played some 50 league games.

Ivanschitz was national skipper from 2003 until early this year but has been sidelined from the side by new coach Didi Constanini.

Abu Dhabi beckons for Oliveira

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Brazil international striker Ricardo Oliveira has signed for the Abu Dhabi-based Al-Jazira club from Real Betis for a country transfer fee record of 14 million euros.

The fee for the deal move

believed to be between three

and four years will be split between Real Betis and Zaragoza, where the 29-yearold Oliveira played between 2007 and January.

Oliveira, who has 11 Brazil SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

Adebayor moves to City City coach Mark Hughes waxed lyrical about

in 2006.

www.mcfc.co.uk.

Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester City on Saturday said they had clinched the 25 million pound (35 million euros) signing of Togolese forward Emmanuel Adebayor from Arsenal on a five-year contract.

The 25-year-old Adebayor completed his medical test at Eastlands to become the latest big-money new face at City, after the recent captures of midfielder Gareth Barry and strikers Carlos Tevez and Roque Santa Cruz.

Hundreds of City fans greeted Adebayor, who said: "It made me feel really welcome and special and I can't wait to play for City's fans "That's his passion. You and show them what I can do.

"I was born to play football and that is what I want to do. I have come here to make history for ball.

this club and those supporters," he told reporters. "It is what the chairman and the manager told me that they want too and I can't wait to get time.

Football

AFP, Lyon

French left back Aly Cissokho is on his way to Lyon after agreement was reached between the French club and FC Porto, a source close to the dossier said Saturday.

The player is set to sign a five-year deal worth at least 15 million euros.

The deal was sealed on Saturday in Porto after Lyon team doctor Emmanuel Ohrant gave the player the all clear during a medical.

No complaints from Blues "He's obviously the type and calibre of

SOCCERNET

The Premier League have confirmed they had received no official complaint from Chelsea over Manchester City's pursuit of John Terry, as the England captain.

Terry, the Chelsea skipper, has been identified as his number one target and an offer of around £30m was recently turned down. "It's well documented that we put in a bid and

that was rejected," Hughes told BBC Radio Five Live's Sportsweek programme. "He's a player I know, I played alongside him at Chelsea and I admire him as a person and captain from afar.

player we need if we are going to progress and compete at the top level. "Chelsea have come out very strongly, in no uncertain terms, saying that he's not available, so we have to reflect that position because John

is very much a Chelsea player. "But we need to address the defensive Mark Hughes continued his public courtship of strength of our side and we'll look at all options." Hughes' latest public outpouring of admira-

tion for Terry is unlikely to go down well at Stamford Bridge, with reports suggesting the Londoners were ready to lodge an official complaint with the Premier League for alleged 'tapping up'.

Under Section K of the Premier League Handbook, club officials are not permitted to

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