

# C'Ron begins payback

Football

INTERNET, undated

Cristiano Ronaldo began to pay off his world record transfer fee just before midnight on Tuesday. After 50 minutes of the Peace Cup match against Ecuadorian team Liga Universitaria de Quito, the expectant crowd in Real's Estadio Bernabeu were beginning to show signs of impatience with the 0-0 scoreline - and with Real's lack of fluency and imagination.

On Sunday Manuel Pellegrini's new-look outfit had been held to a 1-1 draw by Saudi Arabian side Al-Ittihad in their debut in the summer tournament, with Ronaldo turning in a flat display in his Bernabeu debut.

Another draw, against Liga Universitaria, would raise serious doubts about a team that had seen a record 220 million euros (312.99 million dollars) spent on it this summer.

In the 50th minute, however, Ronaldo finally began to repay his massive pricetag of 94 million euros. He cut in impishly from the left wing, skipped past three defenders - and was pulled down for a clear penalty.

He promptly got up and converted the penalty, his first goal for the Spanish giants.

The "can had been opened", to use a common Spanish football phrase - and Real went on to win 4-2. They face a tougher test on Friday, against Italian giants Juventus in the semifinals.

Ronaldo was given a standing ovation when he was substituted, surely the first of many he will receive in the Bernabeu.

Afterwards Ronaldo said that "I am very happy and content to have scored my first goal... But the most important thing is to get into form, game by game."

He added that playing out on the left wing was "an experiment" and that "we are just starting now, we have to be tranquil for when the league starts (August 29). The players are getting to know each other better and that is positive."

Real's other new signings are Kaka - who has still to make his debut - Karim Benzema, Raul Albiol and Esteban Granero.



Real Madrid's Portuguese star Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates his goal against Liga de Quito during their Peace Cup match at Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday.

## L'pool to sell Arbeloa to Real

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool will sell Spain defender Alvaro Arbeloa to Real Madrid after the Premier League club confirmed that they have agreed a transfer fee with the Spanish team.

Arbeloa, 26, began his career with Real and will return to the Bernabeu in a deal worth a reported four million pounds (6.5 million dollars).

A Liverpool spokesman on Wednesday said: "We have agreed a fee with Real Madrid for the transfer of the player, subject to him completing a medical."

Arbeloa is the latest pre-season signing for Real, who have already spent a world record 80 million pounds to lure Cristiano Ronaldo from Manchester United, as well as landing Brazil star Kaka from AC Milan, France striker Karim Benzema from Lyon and Valencia defender Raul Albiol.

Real also hope to sign another of Liverpool's Spanish contingent as talks continue over a 30 million pounds swoop for midfielder Xabi Alonso.

But Liverpool striker Fernando Torres has warned Anfield boss Rafa Benitez that it would be a major blow if Alonso is allowed to leave.

Torres told The Sun: "It would be a bad piece of work if Xabi left - he plays his cards close to his chest so I don't know what is going to happen."

"I'd put Xabi's own wishes ahead of everything else, of course, but he's got three years left on his contract with us and I'd love it if he stays."

"It would be a serious loss for Liverpool if he left."

## Argentina pick uncapped pair

AFP, Buenos Aires

Argentina squad for international football friendly with Russia in Moscow on August 12:

**SQUAD**

**Goalkeepers:** Juan Pablo Carrizo (Real Zaragoza/ESP), Mariano Andujar (Catania/ITA).

**Defenders:** Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan/ITA), Nicolas Burdisio (Inter Milan/ITA), Emiliano Papa (Velez Sarsfield), Nicolas Otamendi (Velez Sarsfield), Gabriel Heinze (Real Madrid/ESP), Daniel Diaz (Getafe/ESP), Martin Demichelis (Bayern Munich/GER).

**Midfielders:** Javier Mascherano (Liverpool/ENG), Fernando Gago (Real Madrid/ESP), Sebastian Battaglia (Boca Juniors), Mario Bolatti (Huracan), Maximiliano Rodriguez (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Jonas Gutierrez (Newcastle/ENG), Jesus Datolo (Napoli/ITA), Juan Sebastian Veron (Estudiantes La Plata).

**Forwards:** Lionel Messi (Barcelona/ESP), Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Carlos Tevez (Manchester City/ENG), Lisandro Lopez (Lyon/FRA), Diego Milito (Inter Milan/ITA), Ezequiel Lavezzi (Napoli/ITA).

## Fergie warns Real

AFP, London

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has warned Real Madrid that signing superstars like Cristiano Ronaldo and Kaka could unbalance their team.

The Spanish club paid a world record 80 million pounds fee to sign Ronaldo from United and splashed out 60 million pounds for AC Milan's Brazil playmaker Kaka.

Lyon striker Karim Benzema has also moved to the Bernabeu but Ferguson is unconvinced by Real's decision to sign so many high-profile players.

"There's a very good example of a team in the 1950s, Sunderland, who spent so much money it was known as the Bank of England club. They didn't win anything and in the end they got themselves relegated," Ferguson told The Times.

"I'm not saying Real Madrid will get relegated, but it's difficult and they will have plenty of problems with balance."

"I wouldn't want to be coach Manuel Pellegrini picking his first team with all those individuals. I told Ronaldo he will end up playing centre half because they don't have one."

# Eto'o denies Jose rift

Football

AFP, Rome

Cameroon forward Samuel Eto'o claimed he had nothing against new coach Jose Mourinho when he was officially unveiled as an Inter Milan player on Tuesday.

Eto'o was part of a swap deal that saw Zlatan Ibrahimovic leave the Italians and head to Barcelona with Eto'o, Alexander Hleb on loan and 46 million euros going in the opposite direction.

But before the 28-year-old could start training with his new team he first had to answer questions about comments he once made several years ago about Mourinho when he was coach of Chelsea.

Eto'o, who played for Barca, then said he would never play for a Mourinho team because he didn't like their style of football.

"I've never said anything against Mourinho, for many years I've wanted to work with him and now I can do so," insisted Eto'o.

"I'm proud to have him as my coach and I will work to repay him the faith he has shown in me."

Mourinho himself supported Eto'o's claim and said even if bad words had been exchanged in the past, that's all part of the game.

"Chelsea and Barcelona played each other six times in three years. I've never been interested in whether he spoke well or badly about me because he's like me," said Mourinho.

"He's someone who after a defeat goes home unhappy. The second year at Chelsea I wanted to buy him."

"But they told me no, like Inter did with Maicon. Both the squad and I are delighted that he is with us."

Eto'o proclaimed that he does not want to be compared to Ibrahimovic, who he is replacing.

"I'm Samuel Eto'o and I don't compare myself to anyone else, my past speaks for itself," said the only African player to have won the Champions League twice.

"Ibra is a great player and I wish him all the best in a team that I will always love."

## Sorin calls it quits

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Former Argentinian football captain Juan Pablo Sorin announced his retirement on Tuesday bringing to an end a 15-year career.

The 33-year-old - scorer of 12 goals in his 76 international appearances - revealed that he had decided to call it a day after suffering a succession of injuries.

"After 15 years of playing, it is difficult to speak," said Sorin, who played for Paris Saint Germain, Hamburg, Villarreal and Barcelona.

"But I am going to stop playing football. I have had a really good career. And I have always tried to give the best of myself."

Sorin had only been able to play six games for his present club, Brazilian side Cruzeiro, in the past seven months and explained that constant problems with his right thigh and left calf had resulted in his painful decision.

"My career appears to have gone really fast, but I truly believe that the moment has come to call a halt to it."

## Barca loan Keirisson to Benfica

AFP, Lisbon

Highly-regarded Brazilian striker Keirisson has been loaned to Portuguese outfit Benfica by Champions League holders Barcelona just a week after he signed for the Spanish giants for 14 million euros.

The 20-year-old had signed a five year contract with Barcelona from Brazilian side Palmeiras but on Tuesday Barca opted to loan him to Benfica for a season with the option of extending it by another season.

## Brazil name squad for friendly

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Brazil squad for international friendly with Estonia on August 12 in Tallinn:

**SQUAD**

**Goalkeepers:** Julio Cesar (Inter Milan/ITA), Gomes (Tottenham/ENG)

**Defenders:** Maicon (Inter Milan/ITA), Daniel Alves (Barcelona/ESP), Marcelo (Real Madrid/ESP), Andre Santos (Fenerbahce/TUR), Lucio (Bayern Munich/GER), Miranda (Sao Paulo), Juan (Benfica/POR), Luisao (Benfica/POR).

**Midfielders:** Gilberto Silva (Panathinaikos/GRE), Josue (VfL Wolfsburg/GER), Elano (Manchester City/ENG), Kaka (Real Madrid/ESP), Felipe Melo (Juventus/ITA), Julio Baptista (AS Roma/ITA), Kleber (Flamengo), Ramires (Benfica/POR).

**Forwards:** Luis Fabiano (Sevilla/ESP), Nilmar (Villarreal/ESP), Diego Tardelli (Atletico Mineiro), Robinho (Manchester City/ENG).

# Carlo's work cut out

Football

AFP, London

As Carlo Ancelotti put Chelsea's stars through their paces for the first time, the Blues boss quickly realised the way to win over his new charges.

It would have been understandable if even a manager as experienced as Ancelotti felt a little nervous when he arrived at Chelsea's state of the art training complex in the leafy Surrey countryside in early July.

Just weeks earlier the Italian had left the comfort zone of AC Milan, a club that had consumed his life for the last eight years, to coach outside Italy for the first time.

As if that wasn't daunting enough, Ancelotti must also have observed with some trepidation how several of Chelsea's senior players played a key role in Luiz Felipe Scolari's abrupt exit last season.

If a World Cup winner like Scolari could be treated with disdain, then even Ancelotti's credentials at Milan may not impress a squad still entranced by the magic of Jose Mourinho.

But it took Ancelotti just a few minutes of his first training session to understand that the way to the hearts of his new squad was to make them work and then more work some more.

Whereas Scolari's laidback regime infuriated players used to Mourinho's rigorous training, Ancelotti is schooled in the techniques of his former club's famous Milan Lab.

Milan's army of sports scientists and fitness gurus had helped extend the careers of, among others, Paolo Maldini, Alessandro Costacurta, Clarence Seedorf and Alessandro Nesta well into their 30s.

For Maldini and company in Milan, read Didier Drogba, Frank Lampard, Michael Ballack, Ricardo Carvalho and Nicolas Anelka in west London.

Just like his days at the San Siro, Ancelotti has found a group of players growing long in the tooth but still with a ferocious desire to suc-

ceed.

They are committed to sweating for the cause and Ancelotti intends to use the lessons learned in Italy to ensure they stay at the top for several years yet.

"I found a very good team with quality and a very good mental attitude to the job," he said. "They work and concentrate very hard. I like it and it is a surprise because I didn't expect to find it. I am very happy because teamwork is the most important thing to win."

"The training is very hard. Here the players run very hard. I will try to know them better."

All that hard work will count for nothing if Chelsea don't end Abramovich's quest to make his club champions of Europe.

After losing in the semi-final or final of the Champions League five times in the last six seasons, Europe's elite club competition has developed into something of an obsession for Chelsea.

Ancelotti's pedigree in Europe - he won the Champions League twice as Milan coach in 2003 and 2007 - convinced Abramovich that he was the man to continue Guus Hiddink's successful regeneration of a squad in danger of collapsing under the weight of too many egos last season.

However, Milan's lacklustre record during Ancelotti's last two seasons suggests Abramovich has taken something of a gamble giving the job to the 50-year-old.

Ancelotti must hope Abramovich remains in his corner if results are slow to come.

The Russian has gone through three managers since Mourinho left in September 2007, but his hands-on approach to persuading John Terry to snub Manchester City's big money offer is an indication that the tycoon is fully behind his new manager.

The emergence of City and Real Madrid as the close-season's transfer super-powers has made it harder than usual for Chelsea to corner the market in big spending.

But Daniel Sturridge, an England Youth striker snatched from City, and Russia midfielder Yuri Zhirkov have already made impressive contributions on the club's pre-season tour of America.

# Arshavin plans to improve

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal midfielder Andrei Arshavin is clearly a man of high standards.

"I will try and show that I am better this season," he said as he reflected on the start of his first full Premier League campaign with the Gunners.

That vow will provoke a few raised eyebrows in north London, not least among the sizeable percentage of Arsenal fans for whom Arshavin is already a bona fide terrace hero.

The Russian gave the lie to the old adage that foreign signings need at least a year to acclimatise to the unique demands of English football with his dazzling displays last season.

He may just have made 15 appearances following his January transfer window move from Zenit St Petersburg, but that was enough time to notch six goals and seven assists and deliver the season's stand-out individual performance in becoming the first visiting player to score four goals at Anfield since 1946.

Off the field Arshavin's popularity is already high enough to come second in a supporters' player of the year poll and see shirts bearing his name and number fly out of Arsenal's club shop quicker even than those of Cesc Fabregas and Robin van Persie.

They are the sort of achievements any player would be proud of after a full season; the fact that Arshavin was able to chalk them up in four short months explains why Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was content to break the habit of a lifetime and sign an established superstar, rather than a tyro

with promise.

Yet there is clearly still more to come from Arshavin.

By his own admission, he was not fully fit when he arrived in London, having not played for several weeks following the end of the Russian season.

That neutered him in his early appearances for his new club but there is no doubt the 28-year-old will be in peak condition when Arsenal open their league account against Everton on August 15.

Arshavin returned for pre-season training a week earlier than the club's other internationals to work on his conditioning and also asked to be included in their annual curtain-raiser against Barnet.

So while his fellow A-listers Fabregas, van Persie and Gael Clichy were resting their weary limbs, Arshavin was to be found pounding the turf at one of English football's tiniest outposts, scoring his side's opening goal in a 2-2 draw.

"For me it's very important to get a good pre-season," he added. "That is why I came to England one week earlier than the other internationals. I hope that will help me."

Whether being able to field a fully-firing Arshavin from the start of the season will be enough to turn Arsenal from also-rans into genuine title contenders, or even win a first trophy since 2005, is another matter.

The man himself has warned that it will take a monumental collective effort to achieve that goal - "one player can create one moment but he cannot create a result on his own," Arshavin suggested - but, either way, there is surely little doubt that the Russian will be one of the season's star turns.



PHOTO: AFP

Inter Milan's new signing Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o poses with his new jersey during his presentation at the club's training centre in Appiano Gentile on Tuesday.

# BMW set to pull out

INTERNET, undated



BMW is to pull out of Formula One at the end of the 2009 season, chairman Norbert Reithofer confirmed Wednesday at a press conference at the carmaker's headquarters in Munich. The reasons for the decision were neither the high costs nor the disappointing results, but a company-internal strategy change. The German carmaker is believed to be quitting only Formula One, and will remain active in other motorsports.

"The board decided yesterday that we would change our involvement in motorsport. The

BMW group will end its involvement with Formula One at the end of the 2009 season," said Reithofer.

"In the background of a sustained restructuring of the entire company, our involvement with Formula One doesn't coincide with the companies main objectives," said BMW-Sauber team principal Mario Theissen.

BMW took over the Swiss Sauber racing team in 2005 and debuted in the Formula One a year later. The BMW-Sauber racing team so far has celebrated only one victory, by Polish driver Robert Kubica in Montreal, Canada, in June 2008.

Before launching its own racing team, BMW developed engines for the Williams team.