

Arsenal mull appeal

AFP, London



Arsenal will study UEFA's justification for handing Eduardo a two-match European ban for diving before deciding whether to appeal against the verdict.

European football's governing body opened disciplinary proceedings against the Croatia international for "deceiving the referee" after he tumbled theatrically to win a penalty in last week's Champions League play-off against Celtic.

Despite there appearing to be no contact with Celtic goalkeeper Artur Boruc, referee Manuel Mejuto Gonzalez awarded the spot-kick, which Eduardo converted himself to set Arsenal on their way to a comprehensive 3-1 win and into the lucrative group stages.

The dive caused a storm of controversy and UEFA took action against Eduardo on Tuesday. Arsenal are understood to have made a 19-page submission to UEFA ahead of the hearing, which clearly made little impact on the panel.

Everton sign Heitinga

AFP, London



Everton signed Dutch defender Johnny Heitinga from Atletico Madrid for six million pounds (6.8 million euros) just before the transfer window shut on Tuesday.

Heitinga agreed a five-year contract with the Premier League club and the move was announced in the final hour before the 1600GMT deadline.

The 25-year-old follows French defender Sylvain Distin to Goodison Park as Toffees boss David Moyes strengthens his back-four after Joleon Lescott's move to Manchester City.

Atletico could eventually receive seven million pounds (7.8 million euros) for the Holland international due to clauses in the terms of the deal.

On a relatively low-key transfer deadline day, Tottenham swooped for Portsmouth's Croatia midfielder Niko Kranjcar.

Tottenham boss Harry Redknapp moved for Kranjcar, who cost a reported 2.5 million pounds (2.8 million euros), after Croatian playmaker Luka Modric suffered a broken leg, which will keep him out for six weeks, against Birmingham on Saturday.

Aston Villa spent five million pounds (5.8 million euros) to sign Wales defender James Collins from West Ham and finally completed the signing of Republic of Ireland defender Richard Dunne from Manchester City from Manchester City for six million pounds (6.8 million euros) on Wednesday.

Portsmouth boss Paul Hart made a triple swoop for Watford centre-back Mike Williamson, Manchester City defender Tal Ben Haim and Benfica midfielder Hassan Yebda.

Israel international Ben Haim agreed a four-year contract and his free transfer will be rubber-

The Gunners have three days to lodge an appeal against the suspension which, if upheld, would rule Eduardo out of the Champions League group matches away at Standard Liege on September 16 and at home to Olympiacos on September 29.

The club is disappointed with UEFA's decision to suspend Eduardo for two Champions League matches starting with Standard Liege on September 16," a statement from Arsenal read.

"We have been informed that we will receive a 'reasoned decision' from UEFA by Thursday of this week.

"Once we receive UEFA's rationale, we will make a decision on the next steps.

"We have been deeply frustrated by the perfidious and apparently arbitrary process that UEFA has followed in this instance.

"We believe it is imperative that UEFA's explanation for its decision provides clear and comprehensive standards that will be consistently enforced.

"It is also critical that UEFA provides specific details of the processes it plans to adopt in reviewing all games under its jurisdiction."

stamped once he has been given a work permit.

The 27-year-old joins a team who are bottom of the Premier League after four successive defeats but he is determined to help them climb out of the relegation zone.

"It is a big challenge because after four games we have no points but I am ready for the challenge," Ben Haim said.

Hart could pair Ben Haim with Williamson, who cost three million pounds (3.8 million euros) from Championship club Watford and agreed a four-year contract.

"He's a young, hungry centre-half, a big lad who is uncompromising and does the basics first," Hart said of Williamson.

Hart also landed Yedba from Portuguese club Benfica. The 25-year-old French-born Algerian has moved to Fratton Park on a season-long loan.

David Nugent, a striker who has one England cap, left Pompey to join Burnley on a six-month loan with a view to a permanent deal.

Elsewhere, Stoke City signed defender Danny Collins from Sunderland for 2.75 million pounds (3.1 million euros), although the fee for the 29-year-old could rise to 3.5 million pounds (3.9 million euros).

Fulham manager Roy Hodgson brought in Swedish striker David Elm, 26, for an undisclosed fee from Kalmar on a one-year contract.

Bolton bolstered their forward line by signing Croatia striker Ivan Klasnic, 29, on a one-year loan from French club Nantes.

Wanderers boss Gary Megson said: "His goalscoring record is very good and he has an excellent pedigree at international level with Croatia and domestically in Europe."

Birmingham signed Finland midfielder Teemu Tainio, 29, on loan from Sunderland for the rest of the season.

Hull boss Phil Brown increased his defensive options by landing Senegal centre-back Ibrahima Sonko, 28, on a season-long loan from Stoke.

English tighten belts

AFP, London

in buying established Premier League players than from overseas."

Rawsley does not expect the picture to alter next year either even if, as expected, the top flight benefits from a big rise in the value of overseas TV rights.

He added: "Economic conditions may improve in 2010 and the Premier League is expected to secure enhanced values for international media rights generating higher revenue for Premier League clubs."

"However, without further significant capital injections from owners, transfer spending is unlikely to exceed the record level achieved in 2008."

Deloitte's analysis shows Manchester City's spending has been around 120 million pounds (136 million euros) representing 27 percent of the total spent, while Aston Villa, Liverpool, Sunderland and Tottenham have each spent more than 25 million pounds (28 million euros) on new players.

Rawsley said the necessity of the owners of Manchester United and Liverpool to make big interest payments on loans taken out to buy the club have also had an impact.

He said: "Having to pay interest can have a bearing on transfer budgets but that is not necessarily why United have spent more of the Ronaldo money."

"Some clubs may well have felt that thanks to the spending of Real Madrid and others such as Manchester City the transfer market has been too inflated."

Roma appoint Ranieri

Football

AFP, Rome

New AS Roma coach Claudio Ranieri on Wednesday vowed to ditch the club's attractive style of play for a more results-based system.

Ranieri was speaking at his official unveiling after replacing Luciano Spalletti, who resigned from his post on Tuesday.

Roma, who were known for their expansive and attractive style of play under Spalletti, lost their opening two matches of the season and Ranieri insists he will focus on winning games rather than weaving pretty patterns.

"Spalletti's Roma had a sparkling style of play, my philosophy is a little different," said the former Juventus and Chelsea coach.

"I will bring my pragmatism to the team. This team needs a jolt because it's a team that needs to react straight away."

"Maybe the players have lost a bit of conviction. Over the last four years this team did some great things playing some of the most attractive football in Europe."

"As a Roman I was proud to watch them play. And I can tell you I'm going

home with a great desire to do well."

Ranieri is a local who used to stand on the terraces to watch Roma before beginning his playing career with the club in 1973.

Spalletti, 50, joined the club in 2005 from Udinese. His contract was due to expire in 2011.

He initially enjoyed success at the Stadio Olimpico, taking the side to second-placed league finishes in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and back-to-back triumphs in the Italian Cup in 2007 and 2008.

Ranieri admitted he is not sure what system he will use but said the team most needs to tighten up at the back.

"I don't have any particular favourite (system) during my career I've often changed tactics," said the coach known as the 'Tinkerman' during his Chelsea days.

"But one thing's for sure, we need to concede fewer goals."

Roma's backline has been breached six times in two games already this season.

Ranieri, who was fired by Juventus two games before the end of last season after two years at the helm, said the team needs to get its confidence back.

"Five months ago this team were a half hour away from winning the title. Roma only lost confidence in themselves."

"A year ago this team was motivated and happy and believed in its project and we have to get back that conviction and strength."

Pele incites Maradona

INTERNET, Rio de Janeiro

Adding to the tension between Brazil and Argentina ahead of their clash in the 2010 World Cup qualifier, Pele put in his two cents.

"Beating rival teams like Argentina has a different feeling. However, we all know who Maradona is. We cannot take into consideration anything he says. He has all the abilities to be a great coach, but he'd better not plan on beginning in the game against Brazil," Pele said in an response to recent remarks by Argentine coach Diego Maradona.

Maradona said recently that Argentina has been going through tough times, but that they would beat Brazil due to will.

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No Ribery deal with Real

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge insisted Wednesday there is no deal with Spanish giants Real Madrid to sign French midfielder Franck Ribery for next season.

Throughout the summer, transfer speculation constantly linked the 26-year-old Ribery to a multi-million euros switch to Real and, as the transfer window closed on Monday, Rummenigge says no agreement is in place for the future.

"We do not have an agreement to sell Franck for next season to Real Madrid - that is a fact," Rummenigge told the Munich newspaper AZ despite claims in the German media a deal has been arranged for next summer.

Relations became strained between the two European super clubs during the summer while the Ribery saga rumbled on, but Rummenigge insists the signing of Arjen Robben from Real last week improved relations between the sides.

"Real were very helpful and supported us a lot. Our relationship is once again very relaxed and friendly," Rummenigge said.

Ribery came off the bench last Saturday to set up Robben for both of his second-half goals, but relations between him and Bayern are becoming increasingly strained.

Argentina coach Diego Maradona would give anything to be able to play in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Brazil, he said on Tuesday.

Argentina have been beset by injury worries before the game in Rosario, prompting Maradona to add 30-year-old midfielder Rodrigo Brana, 35-year-old striker Martin Palermo and 36-year-old defender Rolando Schiavio to his squad.

Schiavi and Brana are both uncapped and Palermo has not been called up for nearly nine years.

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"Yesterday, when I met up with the players, I said that I'd give anything to be 20 years younger and be able to play myself," Maradona told Radio Del Plata.

"But after all these problems we have to move forward. The ones who can't play will just have to wait for the next game and the ones who can will have to be decisive on the field."

"The truth is that it's been terrible. With each phone call from (team doctor Donato) Villani, I



PHOTO: AFP

Diego wishes to play

INTERNET, Buenos Aires

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