

Tevez to stay at City

AFP, Manchester



Carlos Tevez is set to stay at Manchester City, according to manager Roberto Mancini.

The Argentina striker's future has been in doubt since he handed in a transfer request earlier in the season.

Even after captaining City to victory in last weekend's FA Cup final against Stoke at Wembley, Tevez suggested he might have to move back to South America for family reasons.

But Mancini, after seeing Tevez score twice in City's 3-0 Premier League win over Stoke here on Tuesday, said the forward was happy to stay put.

"He has a five-year contract and has told us he wants to stay," said Mancini. "He said that before. He never had any problem."

Tevez's double strike left the former Manchester United striker level with current Old Trafford forward Dimitar Berbatov at the top of the Premier League goalscoring table.

And upbeat Italian manager Mancini added: "Carlos has scored 20 goals this season. Every time we say Carlos is an important player. Carlos is Carlos. He is a fantastic striker and a fantastic player for us."

"I think he will stay here next year. He doesn't have a problem," he said.

"I spoke with him many times in the last 20 days. It is my opinion that Carlos stays here next season."

"In December he had a problem. But everyone can change his opinion."

"I don't know what his representatives think."

"Carlos is an important player here. The feeling for him is good."

City's victory saw them leapfrog Arsenal into third place with just one game of the Premier League season left and means that, if they stay there, they will go straight into next term's Champions League without having to play in the qualifying round.

And Mancini said the prospect of playing in European club football's leading competition would help persuade the 27-year-old Tevez to stay with north-west side City, bankrolled by their big-spending owners from Abu Dhabi.

"When we play in the Champions League, probably we will have a better squad. We can buy other good players," Mancini said. "Why should he change? I don't think this will happen."

"Carlos has scored 20 (league) goals this season. Every time we have said he is an important player."

"He is a fantastic striker and a fantastic player for us."



Manchester City star Carlos Tevez celebrates his goal against Stoke City during their Premier League encounter at the City of Manchester Stadium on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ba claims racist abuse

AFP, London



West Ham striker Demba Ba claimed Tuesday he'd been racially abused by a fan after police were called to the club's end of season dinner at a luxury London hotel.

Ba said the trouble at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Monday started when he was subjected to racist comments from an unhappy fan the day after the London club's relegation from the English Premier League was confirmed.

There had been reports tempers frayed when Senegal striker Ba, on loan from German club Hoffenheim, refused to sign an autograph.

However, Ba insisted he did sign and that both he and West Ham team-mate Danny Gabbidon had been subjected to racist abuse.

"It was a crazy situation," Ba told Talk Sport Radio on Tuesday. "This guy came to me when we were sitting at the table. There were two players per table and Manuel da Costa was with me."

"This guy came and asked for an autograph so I gave him his autograph. Then he asked me nicely how I was feeling so I just said I was tired from the game yesterday and that it was a tough game. And then he just replied 'Oh, we're tired watching you play every weekend'."

"I was surprised and told da Costa what the guy had said. Then the guy all of a sudden started screaming at me like crazy. I tried to calm him down but he didn't want to."

"He kept on screaming, then some players came and pushed me out of there. They just told me to walk away and tried to calm this guy but he didn't want to calm down and started smashing some tables and glasses."

"When he (the supporter) talked to me I didn't understand everything that he said but the people next to me said he was saying racist things and stuff."

"When Gabbidon heard these words he came and tried to talk to him but this guy didn't want to listen and started insulting Gabbidon as well."

Earlier, West Ham co-owner David Sullivan said the events at the £275 (\$450) per head event had been "blown out of all proportion".

Sullivan, speaking to Sky Sports, added: "It was one individual who had too much to drink, sadly a problem in British society."

"A player was racially abused by the same drunken supporter, which is not acceptable. Sadly one drunken supporter let the club down."

Police confirmed they were called to "reports of a disturbance" at the hotel.

Diego storms out

AFP, Berlin



Brazil midfielder Diego is unlikely to play for VfL Wolfsburg in the Bundesliga again having stormed out on his team before their crucial relegation battle, it was reported Wednesday.

The 26-year-old is currently on holiday, but is likely to find himself out in the cold should he return for training on June 23 after Wolves coach Felix Magath is reported to have decided he will not play for the first-team again.

According to a report in German

daily Bild, Magath met with Wolfsburg chairman of the board Dr Francisco Javier Garcia Sanz on Monday night to discuss the future of their bad-boy star, who is under contract until 2014.

Wolfsburg are reported to either want to transfer the midfielder for at least 10 million euros or banish him to the club's second team to play fourth division football.

"If a club wants to sign Diego, they need to get in touch with us," Magath told Bild.

Last Saturday, Diego stormed out of the pre-match team meeting after being told by Magath he had been left out of the starting line-up for their 3-1 win at Hoffenheim, which meant

Wolfsburg stay in the Bundesliga.

He then refused to travel with the team to the stadium, but reported for training on Sunday morning.

So far, no club has shown an interest in signing him, but as he has an Italian passport, he would be eligible to play for Wolfsburg's second team, as only EU citizens can play for reserve teams in Germany.

Wolfsburg paid 15 million euros for Juventus for the Brazilian last August and the ex-Werder Bremen star has largely disappointed on his return to the Bundesliga and picked up seven yellow cards in 30 league games last season.

Sagna rallies for Wenger

AFP, London



Arsenal defender Bacary Sagna insisted manager Arsene Wenger enjoyed the full support of the club's players on Wednesday after the Gunners season took another disappointing turn.

Arsenal's dismal year continued on Tuesday when Manchester City leapfrogged them into third place, meaning the Gunners may well miss out on automatic qualification to

next season's Champions League.

It came after Arsenal's players were booed from the pitch at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday after crashing to defeat against Aston Villa in their final home match of the season.

Sagna has ruled out any suggestion that Arsenal's players had lost confidence in Wenger however.

"Everyone is 200 per cent behind him. I think he is the right guy," Sagna told Sky Sports News.

"He made a lot for the team, for the players and for the club as well. So we

just want to keep working hard and give the maximum."

Sagna also believes midfielder Cesc Fabregas, repeatedly linked with a move to Barcelona, will remain an Arsenal player next season.

"Of course. He is under contract with the team. He is still our captain," Sagna said. "We need him badly because he is a good player, he is very talented and everyone knows what he can bring to the team."

"So I am looking forward to playing with him next year."



Miss Universe 2010 Ximena Navarrete hosts the FIFA U-17 World Cup draw ceremony at the Nezahualcoyotl Concert Hall in Mexico City on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Trio extends with Milan

AFP, Rome

Brazil centre-back Thiago Silva has signed a contract extension at AC Milan that will keep him at the club for another five years.

The 26-year-old joined Milan in 2009 from Fluminense in his homeland after previous unsuccessful spells in Europe with Porto and Dynamo Moscow.

Dutch veteran Mark van Bommel and third-choice goalkeeper Flavio Roma also signed extensions keeping them at the club until the end of next season.

But former Holland midfielder Clarence Seedorf said he is unsure about his future following his meeting with club bosses.

Seedorf is out of contract with Milan at the end of the season and has been linked with a move to Brazil.

He was one of nine players (including Van Bommel and Roma) whose contracts were running out this season with whom Milan have planned meetings to discuss their futures.

"The meeting went well, I don't know if I'll stay at Milan but it was a good meeting, very friendly," said Seedorf.

"We'll get together again next week because we want to finish the season with a win and then talk."

"Even if we don't continue our working relationship that will be fine, I've always had a good relationship with the club."

'I'm no Mourinho'



Football

AFP, Dublin

Porto manager Andre Villas-Boas says he should not be labelled as the new Jose Mourinho, even if he emulates his mentor by winning the Europa League final against Sporting Braga on Wednesday.

Villas-Boas has earned favourable comparisons with Mourinho during a record-breaking first season in charge of Porto.

And he will garner more rave reviews if he leads the Portuguese club to a repeat of the 2003 UEFA Cup triumph masterminded by Mourinho during his time at the Dragao Stadium.

The 33-year-old has intimate knowledge of Mourinho's methodology after spending eight years working as his compatriot's opposition scout at Porto, Chelsea and Inter Milan.

But Villas-Boas believes the comparisons end there.

Real Madrid coach Mourinho is never happier than when he is central to the drama of a big match -- even if he has to create a storm to steal the spotlight -- and he drills his players to conform to his cautious gameplans.

In contrast, the rather more humble Villas-Boas deflects the credit for his achievements onto his players.

"People focus a lot on the work of the manager and I don't see it that way," Villas-Boas said on Tuesday.

"I don't see myself as a one-man show. Football isn't won by one person but by collective competence. It is the quality of the players and the structure of the club."

"I just want to make my players give their most. I give them room to express themselves because that's how they develop."

"I promote their talent and let them make their own decisions. There are no dictators."

"We don't see the game as a tactical game."



ANDRE VILLAS-BOAS

If you are a dictator of choices, players won't be able to explore their possibilities to the full. You have to be able to free them."

Villas-Boas is reportedly no longer on close terms with Mourinho after deciding to leave the Special One's coaching staff to become a manager himself at Academica in 2009.

He plays down talk of a rift but pointedly ignored the chance to praise Mourinho for helping his development.

"I spent seven years with Jose and we were part of a very good technical staff. We went to top-class clubs at Porto, Chelsea and Inter Milan and worked with top players who gave us such a tremendous volume of success," he said.

"The position I had with him was a position he needed some help on. I understood my role from the beginning and tried to fulfil it with maximum professionalism."

"When I left him, he took on another person who I hope gives him the same level."

"Regarding why I left Inter, it was because I wanted the extra edge to fulfil my ambitions as a professional coach, so I took the risk to find my own job at Academica."

SPORTS POLL

In this season's EPL, who has been the best player?

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| Tevez | 42.2% |
| Hernandez | 28.4% |
| Bale | 11.0% |

TOTAL VOTES: 109

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think the BCB can hire the new head coach by June 15?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

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SET Max

Indian Premier League
Pune v Kolkata
Live from 8:30pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



Bangladesh League

Arambagh v Soccer Club, Feni
Time: 4:15pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Ctg Mohammedan v Ctg Abahani
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Cox's Bazar Stadium