



Holland striker Dirk Kuyt (C) tries to evade challenges from Uruguay's Diego Perez (L) and Diego Lugano during a friendly at the Centenario Stadium in Montevideo on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Uruguay exact sweet revenge for WC loss

Football

AGENCIES, Undated

Liverpool pair Luis Suarez and Dirk Kuyt traded late goals as Uruguay and the Netherlands drew in Montevideo, before the hosts triumphed 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out.

Suarez, a 22.8million pound January signing for the Reds from Ajax, seemed to have given Uruguay victory when he scored with eight minutes remaining. But Kuyt's injury-time header levelled matters for the 2010 World Cup finalists in a game which was a repeat of the semifinal in South Africa, which the Dutch won 3-2.

Suarez though could still claim the bragging rights, though, as the South Americans prevailed 4-3 in the shoot-out to win the Fraternity Trophy.

The Netherlands were the brighter side in the opening quarter-hour, but had little to show for their efforts. Ibrahim Afellay curled a free-kick wide and then set up Kuyt, whose shot was held by goalkeeper Fernando Muslera. Suarez set up strike partner Edinson Cavani for Uruguay's first chance, but the Napoli man's header was blocked by

defender Erik Pieters.

Diego Lugano shot over for Uruguay before Diego Perez tried his luck with an audacious free-kick from inside his own half, which was held by Netherlands goalkeeper Tim Krul. Robin van Persie shot over and Afellay's effort was blocked by Muslera as the Dutch pressed in the closing stages of the first half.

The second period began uneventfully, with Krul claiming Diego Forlan's inswinging free-kick from the left in a rare moment of goalmouth action. Afellay shot over and Krul caught Suarez's header before the latter finally broke the deadlock.

Cavani squared the ball from the left of the penalty area and Suarez slotted home from 12 yards. Godin went close to a second when he headed Nicolas Lodeiro's corner over the bar but there was a sting in the tail for Uruguay.

The Netherlands forced a corner as the match ticked beyond the 90-minute mark and Stijn Schaars' delivery was nodded in by Kuyt for the equaliser.

That set up a shoot-out, with Van Persie and Eljero Elia, a very late substitute for Kuyt, off target for the Dutch to give Uruguay victory despite Krul saving from Lodeiro.

Signori denies fix allegations

AFP, Rome

Former Italy striker Giuseppe Signori denied any part of the latest matchfixing scandal to hit Italian football when he was interrogated by a judge on Wednesday.

The 43-year-old, who was one of Italy's top strikers in the 1990s and was top scorer in Serie A three times with Lazio, told the judge that he had not been involved in any skulduggery surrounding the Serie A match between Inter Milan and Lecce according to his lawyer.

Signori - the eighth highest scorer of all-time in Serie A with 188 goals - was among 16 people arrested for match-fixing in a co-ordinated sting by Italian police last Wednesday.

Amongst those targeted were ex Serie A players and current players from both Serie B and Serie C as well as club directors from the lower leagues, all suspected of being part of an organisation that rigged games to fix bets.

Eighteen matches are under investigation including the Inter Milan and Lecce clash.

Matches involving Siena and Atalanta, who both earned promotion to Serie A, are also under the microscope.

Palermo reject Abel bid

SOCCERNET

Palermo have rejected an offer from Tottenham to sign Uruguay international Abel Hernandez, according to the player's agent.

Reports in Italy claimed the Premier League side had made a 10 million bid to acquire the services of the 20-year-old forward.

When asked about Tottenham's offer, Hernandez's agent Vincenzo D'Ippolito said to calciomercato.it: "It's true. But for the time being I know (Palermo president Maurizio) Zamparini has turned down the offer, although I do not know what the figure was.

Lazio pull off Klose coup

Football

AFP, Berlin

Germany striker Miroslav Klose has signed a two-year deal with Italian side Lazio after failing to agree on a contract extension with Bundesliga giants Bayern Munich.

Klose, who turned 33 on Thursday, finally signed the deal late on Wednesday night and joins on a free transfer with his Bayern contract to expire at the end of the month after four years in Munich.

He endured a disappointing season for Bayern making most of his 20 league appearances from the bench and scoring just one goal while Germany team-mate Mario Gomez netted 28 goals in 32 Bundesliga games for Bayern.

Bayern confirmed on Monday that talks over a new deal had broken down and Klose, the top-scorer at the 2006 World Cup, has wasted no time in finding a new club.

"Miroslav Klose is a Lazio player," read a brief statement on the Lazio website and Klose completed the medical on Thursday before flying back to Germany to start his summer holiday with his family.

Klose has always said he wants to play on until Euro 2012, to be hosted by the Ukraine and Poland next June, which may well be his swansong, and the Germany coaches have insisted all national players must have regu-

lar football.

"I welcome the news," said Germany coach Joachim Loew, with Klose reported to have secured a guarantee of first-team football at Lazio.

"It's good for him if he plays at a club where he is used regularly again." Klose is currently nursing bruised ribs which kept him out of Germany's recent wins over Austria and Azerbaijan in Euro 2012 qualifiers.

With 61 goals in 109 appearances for Germany, he comes to Rome with a wealth of experience and is closing in on Gerd Mueller's all-time record of 68 goals for the German national side.

His record of 14 goals in World Cup finals is second only to Brazil's Ronaldo.

Having made his debut for Germany in March 2001, when he scored the winner in a 2-1 win over Albania, the Poland-born striker made his name at Kaiserslautern before joining Bremen in 2004 and then Bayern in 2007.

He helped Bayern win the German league and cup double in his first year at the club and played a key role as they reclaimed the league title in 2010 and reached the final of the Champions League.

After Karl-Heinz Riedle, Thomas Doll and Thomas Hitzlsperger, Klose becomes the fourth German to join Lazio.

Klose had been strongly linked to both Turkish side Galatasaray and Spain's Valencia before signing for Lazio.

Fabregas set to leave Arsenal?

AFP, Madrid

Arsenal have abandoned efforts to keep skipper Cesc Fabregas who could be set for a return to Spanish giants Barcelona, Spanish sports newspapers said Thursday.

Gunners coach Arsene Wenger has allowed his skipper to leave on condition he does not sign with another English team, the Barcelona-based daily Mundo Deportivo said, quoting a conversation between the two.

But it warned that "negotiations between the two clubs will not be easy."

Another paper, Sport, said "Arsenal believes that the player's departure is inevitable" and his representatives are expected in Barcelona on Thursday to hear the "demands" of the London club.

It said Arsenal could ask for up to 50 million euros for the 24-year-old midfielder, a star of Spain's 2010 World Cup-winning squad.

Wenger had insisted last month that he was determined to spend a second successive summer fighting off mighty Barcelona to keep Fabregas at the Emirates.

The Gunners turned down a bid from the Spanish champions last year for a player who spent his junior days at Barcelona before joining Arsenal at the age of 16 in 2003.

Neuer finally Bayern's

AFP, Munich

Beary-eyed after his trip from Baku, Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer signed a five-year contract with Bayern Munich on Wednesday having passed the medical examination.

Neuer was in goal for Germany's 3-1 win over Azerbaijan in a Euro 2012 qualifier on Tuesday in Baku, but after a night-flight went straight to Munich to finalise the deal which runs until June 30 2016.

"I am fit enough for the medical test, but I still didn't get enough sleep on the flight," said Neuer after a four-hour flight from Azerbaijan's capital to London and then a connecting flight to Munich.

"I am looking forward to the tasks ahead, the first training sessions and the training camp.

"I won't just be a visitor in Munich, I think I will feel comfortable here." When asked where he wanted to spend his summer vacation, Neuer's answer was simple.

"Far away, in any case," he joked.

Vidal going nowhere

Football

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich have had their alleged offer of ten million euros for Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Arturo Vidal rejected, according to Leverkusen's director of football Rudi Voeller.

"Our principle is that Arturo is too important to us and we want to keep him in any case, whether the offers come from Munich or Napoli, they are not high enough to force us into a rethink," Voeller told German magazine Kicker.

Voeller said there have been conversations with various interested parties for the 24-year-old Chile midfielder, but "that changed nothing in our attitude" with Vidal likely to be offered a contract extension soon.

With 28 caps for Chile, Vidal is under contract until 2012 and is a favourite of former Leverkusen coach Jupp Heynckes, who will take over as Bayern boss when pre-season begins on July 1.

Bayern are reported to be still trying to sign Manchester City defender Jerome Boateng with an offer of around 20 million euros said to have been tabled.

Meanwhile, Bayern's CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has said he is confident the Bavarian giants will sign Japan's attacking midfielder Takashi Usami from Gamba Osaka.

The 19-year-old enjoyed an impressive breakout season in 2010 and won the J-League's Best Young Player award.

"It looks good," Rummenigge told German magazine Kicker and Gamba's sporting director has confirmed the player has a release clause in his contract to an overseas club.

On Wednesday, Bayern completed the signing of goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who signed a five-year deal, while striker Nils Petersen has joined from Energie Cottbus and Brazil defender Rafinha from FC Genoa.

Martinez set for Villa role

Football

AFP, London

Wigan manager Roberto Martinez has emerged as a front-runner for the vacancy at Aston Villa after being given permission to hold talks with the club, it was reported Thursday.

Wigan owner Dave Whelan confirmed to the Daily Telegraph that the Latics had given a green light for Martinez to speak to Villa, who are seeking to replace Gerard Houllier after the Frenchman stood down for health reasons.

Martinez joins a long list of managers who have been linked to the post including former Fulham manager Mark Hughes, ex-England coach Steve McClaren, former Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez and Chelsea's Carlo Ancelotti.

Whelan said although he was happy for Martinez to speak to Villa, he was confident that the respected 37-year-old Spaniard would remain at Wigan.

"Aston Villa have acted above board and in a totally professional manner," Whelan told The Daily Telegraph.

"They wrote to me asking for permission to speak to Roberto. He was on holiday at the time and I granted Villa permission.

"He arrived back yesterday and I presume he has spoken to Villa. I have made it clear to him I will be extending his contract.

"I have never let him down on anything and he has never let me down. I know I can never say never in football, but I would be very surprised if he is Aston Villa's new manager."



SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Who do you think will challenge Mushfiqur Rahim?

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DAY'S EVENT



Bangladesh League

Sk Russel v Mohammedan

Time: 4:15pm

Venue: Bangabandhu