

Platini 'loves' Mourinho

Football

AFP, Madrid

UEFA boss Michel Platini says he loves Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho even if he said "stupid things" about favouritism that led to a three-match ban.

"I have a special affection for him. I love Mourinho," Platini said in an interview with Spanish sports daily La Marca published Thursday.

"I like the man. His personality and as a coach. That does not take away the fact that the UEFA disciplinary bodies are going to deal with him," he said in Nyon, Switzerland.

"He said stupid things. That is why the disciplinary committee acted and decided to sanction him."

Real Madrid's appeal against the three-match ban handed to 48-year-old Mourinho for his comments after the first leg of Real's Champions League semi-final defeat by Barcelona will be heard on July 29.

European football's governing body gave a three-match European ban to Mourinho, with one match suspended, after he made allegations of favouritism towards Barcelona during the April 27 game.

He was also ordered to pay a 50,000-euro (72,000 dollars) fine.

"I know that you in the newspapers have written or will write that Platini intervened (in the sanction)... it is not true," Platini said. "I don't deal with disciplinary matters or referees," he added.



Lille's new recruit Dimitri Payet controls the ball on his chest during his side's training session in Camphin yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Birmingham owner charged

AFP, Hong Kong



Birmingham City owner Carson Yeung, a one-time hairdresser turned football tycoon, appeared in court in Hong Kong Thursday charged with money-laundering, a day after being arrested by police.

A sombre-looking Yeung, 51, declined to comment as he pushed his way through a scrum of reporters to a waiting minivan after being released on HK\$7 million (\$900,000) bail following a brief appearance at the magistrates court.

The millionaire, whose club was relegated from the Premier League last month, was required to surrender his passport and report regularly to police as part of his bail conditions.

Yeung was arrested on Wednesday after narcotics bureau officers

searched two locations and seized documents.

The charge sheet detailed "five counts of dealing with property known or believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence", but the nature of the alleged offence was not clear.

Prosecutors said investigations had revealed around HK\$720 million (\$92 million) passing through accounts connected with Yeung.

His lawyer, Daniel Marash, cast doubt on the allegations.

"He has two bank accounts with a lot of money in them but all they're saying is that he has got a lot of money and hasn't paid a lot of tax," he told reporters outside court Thursday. "You cannot assume it's taxable."

The fact prosecutors declined to identify the allegedly criminal origin of the money showed the weakness of their case, he added.

"I think if they could specify it, they

would," Marash said.

The next hearing was set for August.

Yeung took control of Birmingham in October 2009 in an 81 million pound (\$130 million) takeover from David Sullivan and David Gold, now the co-owners of West Ham.

The club revealed late on Wednesday that Yeung was assisting Hong Kong police in relation to criminal investigations.

Birmingham's acting chairman Peter Pannu insisted the inquiries did not affect the Midlands club's parent company, Birmingham International Holdings, whose Hong Kong-listed shares were suspended from trading Thursday.

The company's lawyers had informed Pannu that the police inquiries "have nothing to do with the operation of BIHL in Hong Kong and therefore nothing to do with the operation of the club, and relate to other matters", he said.

Mexico soar in rankings

AFP, Paris

CONCACAF Gold Cup winners Mexico have soared 19 places in the latest FIFA world rankings published on Wednesday.

Jose Manuel de la Torre's side are now ninth in the rankings -- the first time they have been in the top 10 since 2007.

TOP TEN

1. Spain
2. Netherlands
3. Germany (+1)
4. England (+2)
5. Brazil (-2)
6. Italy (+3)
7. Portugal (+1)
8. Croatia (+2)
9. Mexico (+19)
10. Argentina (-5)

FIFA slates Uche

Football

AFP, Berlin

Football's governing body FIFA on Wednesday criticised Nigeria coach Eucharia Uche for branding homosexuality as 'dirty' and admitting she forced lesbians out of her team.

"FIFA is against all forms of discrimination," Tatjana Haenni, FIFA's head of women's competitions, told German television channel ARD.

Haenni said FIFA will be talking to Uche about her comments and reminding the coach of the governing bodies statutes.

In a mission statement, FIFA says it wants to use the sport in 'overcoming social and cultural obstacles for women with the ultimate aim of improving women's standing in society'.

"We are here at a FIFA event and will point out that it would be best to express oneself neutrally," said Haenni.

Uche sparked controversy in a New York

Times interview ahead of the women's World Cup, which started last Sunday, in which she called homosexuality 'dirty' and insisted it was 'spiritually and morally very wrong'.

After Nigeria lost their opening Group A game 1-0 to France on Sunday, Uche said she has acted to remove any lesbians from the Super Eagles.

"Yes, the lesbians in our team were really a big problem," she said having taken over as Nigeria's coach in 2009.

"But since I'm coach of the Super Falcons, that has been cleared up.

"There are no more lesbian players on my team.

"I can not tolerate this dirty life."

Defending champions and hosts Germany play Nigeria on Thursday in Frankfurt am Main and have declined to comment in Uche's remarks.

Germany reserve goalkeeper Ursula Holl is married to a woman and first-choice shot-stopper Nadine Angerer is openly bisexual.



PHOTO: AFP

Birmingham City owner Carson Yeung, a one-time hairdresser turned football tycoon, leaves after appearing at the Eastern Court in Hong Kong yesterday.

Marseille close in on Diarra

AFP, Marseille

France captain Alou Diarra looks set to join Marseille from Ligue 1 rivals Bordeaux after the two clubs reached an 'agreement in principle' on Wednesday.

The 29-year-old midfielder - who was targeted by Marseille coach Didier Deschamps last year but the deal fell through because of insufficient funds - will cost 4.5 million euros.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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Second ODI

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Wimbledon Championships

Men's Semifinals

Live from 5:30pm

TEN Cricket

West Indies v India

Second Test, Day 4

Live from 8:00pm

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- Barrister Bodruddoza, alumnus of the University of London, and Secretary of the Supreme Court Bar Association, will provide an opening address.

Saturday 9 July 2011

9.30 am – 12.30 pm
and repeated 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm

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