

Ancelotti
in Paris

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint-Germain have confirmed that Carlo Ancelotti was at Parc des Princes on Wednesday, amid reports the 52-year-old Italian is poised to replace Antoine Kombouare as coach of the ambitious French club.

Pierre Octave Arrighi, head of operations at PSG, confirmed Ancelotti's presence after a day of fervent speculation in the French media and on social networking sites such as Twitter, but said no announcements would be made on Wednesday evening.

Arrighi would not tell reporters outside the stadium why the former Chelsea and AC Milan coach was there, but Ancelotti's installation as first-team coach now appears to be only a matter of time.

French dailies *L'Equipe* and *Le Parisien* had reported earlier on Wednesday that Ancelotti was due to be appointed as the new coach of the Ligue 1 leaders.

Ancelotti spent eight years in charge of Milan from 2001, twice delivering the Champions League, but has been out of the game since Chelsea sacked him at the end of last season after two years at the Stamford Bridge helm.

He is understood to have agreed a two-and-a-half-year contract with PSG and if reports of a salary of up to seven million euros (\$9m) a season are even close to reality, he would become the best-paid coach ever to work in France.

Doumbia voted
Russia's best

AFP, Moscow

Ivory Coast international striker Seydou Doumbia was on Thursday named Russia's player of the year.

The 23-year-old CSKA Moscow marksman collected a record haul of 591 points in an annual poll of the country's football journalists conducted by 'Football' weekly.

Doumbia has scored 24 goals in 32 matches of the Russian Premier League, which is currently on a winter break.

He also netted five goals in the group stage of this year's UEFA Champions League to help the Red Army side into the play-offs.

In February CSKA will clash with Spanish giants Real Madrid for a place in the quarterfinals.

Dynamo Moscow's Ukrainian international striker Andrei Voronin finished second in the poll (505) with Russian striker Alexander Kerzhakov third (129).



National cricketers Shahriar Nafees (L), Alok Kapali (C) and Mushfiqur Rahim alight from a helicopter at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday evening. The three Icon Players from the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League were flown in soon after their respective matches so that they could reach the Bangladesh Premier League logo launch at Hotel Radisson on time.

PHOTO: STAR

Lankan win comes finally



AFP, Durban

had match figures of nine for 128. He was named man-of-the-match.

Sri Lanka took the final three wickets in four balls to complete an historic 208-run win over South Africa on the fourth day of the second Test at Kingsmead on Thursday.

There were wild scenes of celebration on the pitch when Rangana Herath bowled Marchant de Lange in fading light with only nine balls remaining in the day.

The team reserves and management ran on to the field to join their triumphant teammates.

It was Sri Lanka's first win in South Africa on four Test tours and their first win of a previously bleak 2011. It was also the team's first win under Tillekeratne Dilshan's captaincy and levelled the three-match series at 1-1.

Set to make 450 to win, South Africa were bowled out for 241. Left-arm spinner Herath took five for 79 and

Herath trapped De Villiers leg before wicket and the last

three wickets fell rapidly.

Morne Morkel hit five runs before he was also lbw after missing a wild slog against Dilshan off the last ball of an over and Steyn fell to Herath off the next delivery, to be followed two balls later by De Lange.

South Africa's problems started when fast bowler Dilshara Fernando dismissed Graeme Smith for 26. The South African captain was surprised by a ball which lifted sharply for him to be caught at first slip off the shoulder of his bat.

Hashim Amla and Jacques Rudolph stabilised the innings with a second wicket stand of 51 but the match swung dramatically in Sri Lanka's favour in the first over after lunch when Rudolph fell to a spectacular diving catch at second slip by Mahela Jayawardene off Thisara Perera.

Jacques Kallis completed his first 'pair' in 149 Tests

when he was caught at short leg off Herath when he attempted a sweep, the ball skidding off a top edge onto his helmet and then up in the air to present Tharanga Paranavitana with an easy catch.

SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA: First innings 338
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 168

SRI LANKA: Second innings (overnight 256-7)

Paranavitana c Prince b Morkel 9

Dilshan c Smith b Steyn 4

Sangakkara c Smith b Imran Tahir 108

Jayawardene lbw b De Lange 14

Samaraweera c Imran Tahir 43

Mathews c Boucher b Steyn 3

Chandimal c Boucher b Steyn 54

Perera c Kallis b Steyn 12

Herath not out 8

Welededera c Amla b Steyn 10

Fernando c Prince b Morkel 3

Extras: (b-5, lb-3, nb-2, w-1) 11

Total: (All out in 78.2 overs) 279

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-20, 3-44, 4-138,

5-141, 6-245, 7-245, 8-262, 9-276

Bowler O M R W

Morkel 18.2 4 46 2

Steyn 20 3 73 5

De Lange 13 2 45 1

Kallis 11 1 43 0

Tahir 16 1 64 2

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings

Rudolph c Jayawardene b Perera 22

Smith c Jayawardene b Fernando 26

Amla run out (Welededera) 51

Kallis c Paranavitana b Herath 0

Prince c Paranavitana b Fernando 7

De Villiers lbw b Herath 69

Boucher lbw b Herath 7

Steyn lbw b Herath 43

Morkel lbw b Dilshan 5

Tahir not out 0

De Lange b Herath 0

Extras: (b-6, lb-1, nb-1, w-3) 11

Total: (All out in 87.3 overs) 241

Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-88, 3-97, 4-106,

5-116, 6-133, 7-232, 8-241, 9-241

Bowler O M R W

Welededera 16 5 33 0

Perera 13 0 48 1

Fernando 13 3 29 2

Dilshan 11 2 35 1

Herath 30.3 7 79 5

Mathews 3 0 9 0

Samaraweera 1 0 1 0

Result: Sri Lanka won by 208 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Rangana Herath.

Merte wants
striking duo

REUTERS, London

Thierry Henry, training with his former club Arsenal, would fit right back into the team according to German defender Per Mertesacker who says the club should also consider signing compatriot Lukas Podolski.

There were widespread reports in the British media on Thursday that Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has decided to re-sign Henry, the club's record goalscorer and former skipper, on a two-month loan deal from New York Red Bulls when the transfer window opens on Sunday.

Henry, 34, played for Arsenal from 1999 until 2007 and made a total of 369 appearances scoring 226 goals. He then spent three seasons at Barcelona before joining New York Red Bulls last year.

France's all-time record scorer is eligible to play for Arsenal on loan until the new Major League Soccer season kicks off in March and was at the Emirates Stadium on Tuesday.

FA punishes Suarez

AFP, London

Liverpool striker Luis Suarez has been banned by the Football Association (FA) for one match and fined £20,000 (\$31,300) for a gesture made towards Fulham fans in the 1-0 defeat at Craven Cottage earlier this month.

Suarez had admitted the latest charge of improper conduct, and Liverpool have also been fined £20,000 for failing to control their players in the same match -- a charge related to the dismissal of midfielder Jay Spearing.

The ruling, announced on Wednesday by the FA, comes little over a week after Suarez was hit with an eight-game suspension for racially abusing Manchester United's Patrice Evra during a match in October.

Suarez had denied the racism allegations and the decision angered Liverpool, who promised to stick by the player and issued a statement in support of the Uruguayan.

Suarez's new ban means he will miss Friday's home game against Newcastle

United in the Premier League.

His eight-game suspension is currently on hold, however, as Liverpool have 14 days to appeal once they have received the written judgement that heard the case.

Liverpool admitted the improper conduct charge relating to Spearing's dismissal, after a number of players remonstrated with referee Keith Friend, but they did not accept the financial penalty for the offence.

A statement from the FA read: "Liverpool Football Club have been fined £20,000 by The FA and warned as to their future conduct for failing to ensure their players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion during the league fixture at Fulham."

"The club admitted the charge, which was in relation to the dismissal of Jay Spearing, but did not accept the standard £20,000 penalty for the offence."

"However, at an Independent Regulatory Commission hearing today (Wednesday) the fine was imposed."



Real Madrid superstar Cristiano Ronaldo arrives in Dubai on Wednesday to attend the Sixth International Sports Council Conference.

PHOTO: AFP

L'pool face Magpies test

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish has leapt to the defence of Andy Carroll as the striker prepares to face former club Newcastle.

Carroll, 22, made a 20-minute substitute appearance in Liverpool's 3-0 victory over the Magpies in May.

But the England striker is sure to start against his old team, with Luis Suarez ruled out with a one-match suspension.

Carroll has split opinion since making a £35 million move to Anfield in January this year and the forward has managed just four Premier League goals.

He was criticised once again after missing a host of chances in the 1-1 draw with Blackburn on Monday.

Even England manager Fabio Capello has admitted to reservations about Carroll's lifestyle in the past, an aspect that continues to fascinate the English media.

But Dalglish maintains Carroll is on the right track and has adapted well since his expensive move to Liverpool.

He said: "I don't think self-belief is a problem for Andy Carroll and I don't see why it should be."

"I don't think there's any evidence

there to say he is short of self-belief and I don't see any evidence to see why he should be."

"For us he has come here and gone about his work very well. He is adjusting to life at a new club with new philosophies and a new way of playing."

"Football is the most important thing to him. That's what he enjoys most. He loves playing football, he loves scoring goals and loves being part and parcel of the team. That's the personality he is."

"He is adapting well to the change and we'll keep working with him because fortunately for Andy we've got much greater belief in him that a lot of people have that write about him."

Suarez, who is set to appeal against an eight-match ban he was given for racially abusing Manchester United's Patrice Evra, is absent after admitting a Football Association charge of improper conduct for a gesture made to Fulham fans after his team's 1-0 loss at Craven Cottage earlier in December.

Steven Gerrard, who came off the bench against Blackburn, is expected to continue his recuperation from an ankle problem as a substitute, while Jay Spearing is back from a ban.

Liverpool remain undefeated in the Premier League at Anfield but have

won just three and drawn six of their home matches.

Dalglish is confident that his Liverpool team can bring an end to their recent frustrations.

He added: "We want to move on and everybody wants the reward for the fantastic play they have produced."

"We need to improve the 'goals for' column so we'll continue to pursue that goal and I'm sure next year they will be better for the experience they have had this year."

"I think we deserve to be higher up the table than we are but you've got to earn that right and not talk about it -- but to be fair they have done a lot of talking on the pitch for us."

Alan Pardew's Newcastle trail the Reds by just one point ahead of Friday's fixture.

A key factor in Newcastle's impressive opening to the campaign has been the form of Ivory Coast international midfielder Cheik Tiote.

As well as Chelsea and Manchester United, Liverpool have been linked with a January move for Tiote, 25.

But the midfielder has given Newcastle a significant boost ahead of the trip to Anfield, by claiming he is happy where he is.

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