

Thiago Silva now PSG's

Football

AGENCIES, Paris

Brazil centre back Thiago Silva has signed a five-year deal with Paris St Germain after leaving AC Milan, the Ligue 1 club said on Saturday.

The 27-year-old, regarded as one of the best defenders in the world, joined Milan from Fluminense in 2008.

"The Brazilian international Thiago Silva is joining Paris St Germain for five years," PSG said in a statement on their website (www.psg.fr).

PSG coach Carlo Ancelotti said he was delighted to have wrapped up a key signing.

"I am very happy with the arrival of Thiago Silva. He is a fantastic player. Everyone knows he is one of the best defenders in the world."

The club did not give any financial details of the deal but local media estimated the transfer fee at 40 to 45 million euros (48.98 to 55.10 million dollars).

Thiago Silva is PSG's second signing of the close season after the club from the French capital signed Argentina forward Ezequiel Lavezzi from Napoli earlier this month.

Last season, they strengthened their squad by signing Argentina playmaker Javier Pastore, Brazil defender Alex and Italy's Brazilian-born central midfielder Thiago Motta.

Qatar-backed PSG have also been widely reported by local media to be in talks with Zlatan Ibrahimovic's agent to buy the Sweden forward from Milan.

"There is no agreement as yet -- we are still working on when everything is sorted out we will have a press conference," Ibrahimovic's agent Nino Raiola told AFP.



Paris Saint-Germain's Argentine signing Ezequiel Lavezzi (L) races past a CSKA Moscow player during a pre-season friendly in Hartberg, Austria on Saturday. The match ended 2-2.

Messi fumes over 'dumb' tag

INTERNET

Lionel Messi is considering the possibility of taking legal action against a Hungarian magazine after the publication that his teammates in Barcelona thought he was 'dumb'.

Messi had been quoted as saying by Kepes Sport that his colleagues in the Catalan side's youth ranks, including Cesc Fabregas and Gerard Pique, initially believed he had problems as a teenager.

"That interview never existed," Messi stated to Teleam. "I would like to deny having made that interview."

"I reserve the right to take legal action [against Kepes Sport]."

Rubin win Russian Super Cup

AFP, Moscow

Two-time Russian champions Rubin Kazan, last season's cup winners, won their second national Super Cup beating reigning champions Zenit St Petersburg 2-0 at Samara on Saturday.

Rubin, Russian 2010 Super Cup winners, looked more confident from the start and their Italian defender Salvatore Bocchetti gave them the lead in the 20th minute heading home Roman Eremenko's corner.

Garcia KOs Khan

AFP, Las Vegas

American Danny Garcia won the WBA light welterweight belt with a stunning fourth-round victory over Amir Khan in a unification title fight here on Saturday.

Garcia knocked Khan down three times with the end coming at 2:28 of the fourth round when referee Kenny Bayless stopped the bout.

Garcia, who already had the WBC title, now has 24 wins and no losses. He kept his perfect record intact by surviving the early rounds before using a perfectly-timed left hook late in the third round that caught Khan flush on the ear.

Khan, of Great Britain, suffered just the third loss of his career.

Isinbayeva eyes new height AVB at it again

AFP, Moscow



Russia's pole vault world record holder Yelena Isinbayeva is confident of soaring to new heights at the Olympics after suffering a series of setbacks in the last three seasons.

Isinbayeva heads to London boosted by gold in the 2012 World Indoor Championships and happy she has regained her fighting spirit after the 2009-2011 seasons were blighted by the rare but bitter taste of defeat.

Reunited with her childhood coach Yevgeny Trofimov -- a man who she affectionately calls her second father -- Isinbayeva believes she has recovered the form that made her unbeatable up to 2008.

"I can say that I've regained that joyful feeling being in flight over the bar," the double Olympic champion said.

"Now I just love everything that I'm doing and I really appreciate every minute which I spend in training and competition."

Accustomed to being the unchallenged queen of her event, Isinbayeva failed to record a height in a tear-stained 2009 World Championships in Berlin, came fourth in the 2010 world indoors and just sixth in the 2011 Worlds in Daegu, South Korea.

But Isinbayeva said that she was not afraid of the competition at the Olympics, saying if she comes into the Games in top form nobody can stop her.

"If I manage to keep my form and avoid injuries there'll be no rival for me in London except myself," she said.

The 30-year-old Volgograd-born pole vaulter added that the recent winter athletics season confirmed that she and coach Trofimov have chosen

the right way to prepare for the Olympics.

"I managed to earn a perfect record this winter winning all five tournaments where I competed and set a new indoor world record. It's a very good result for the winter season," she said.

"I believe it's a clear sign that together with my coach we've chosen the right direction and I'm really happy that our joint work paid off."

Isinbayeva started her sporting



YELENA ISINBAYEVA

career as gymnast in Volgograd but she had to change sports at the age of 15 because she was considered too tall to be competitive in gymnastics.

Isinbayeva, who holds both the world outdoor record of 5.06m and indoor mark of 5.01m, also said that she almost restored her technique of the 2005-06 period which she and her coach considered to be the best in her career.

"I'm really close to it. Now my

technique is completely different and much closer to perfection than what I was showing in those five years," she said.

"Now I'm not just jumping over the bar but flying over it again. And I hope I'll be able to fly really high."

Isinbayeva, who parted her ways with her first coach Trofimov in 2005 to join Vitaly Petrov, the coach of legendary Sergei Bubka, said that the move was a mistake as it ended a complete fiasco at consecutive major events.

She added that the decision to reunite with Trofimov in 2011 was the key to her comeback.

"I made a mistake when I parted with Yevgeny. But luckily I corrected that mistake and it was the best ever decision in my life as he is my coach, my friend and maybe even my second father."

"I believe now I can see my previous achievements in proper perspective and every new victory makes me much more happy than it was in the previous years."

Isinbayeva, who has set 28 world records during her career so far, added that she was still dreaming of beating Bubka's achievement of 35 world records before her retirement.

"It was my main target since the very beginning of my career to make it 36 records. It's still in my mind and I believe I can achieve it."

Meanwhile, she confirmed her firm intention to retire after the 2013 athletics world championships in Moscow.

"I will quit after the Moscow worlds. It's the right time to quit when you're 31," she said.

"Besides, I decided to retire at my peak. For the moment every competition is a great occasion for me but it becomes more and more hard to train

AFP, London



Andre Villas Boas's bitterness at his sacking by Chelsea last season surfaced again on Sunday as he said at his new club

Spurs they did not seek out scapegoats if they were going through a bad patch.

The 34-year-old Portuguese -- who lasted just 256 days at Chelsea before owner Roman Abramovich lost patience after a run of just one win in six Premier League games and sacked him -- said Spurs chairman Daniel Levy had a better feel for football than Abramovich.

"I met the (Spurs) chairman (Daniel Levy), and saw the way he goes about his business at the club," said Villas Boas, who arrived at Chelsea on the back of a stellar season at Porto guiding them to several trophies including the league title and the Europa League.

"He knows what he is doing, approaching the market in a different way. He is a person of great football understanding and he had the effect of giving me the assurances I wanted in terms of building something."

Villas Boas, who was named Spurs coach on July 3 succeeding Harry Redknapp, said that Spurs style of adventurous football should suit him down to the ground.

He said he wanted to emulate the achievements of legendary coach Bill Nicholson who in a 16 year reign (1958-74) delivered a domestic double (1961) and two further FA Cups as well as the 1963 Cup Winners Cup (now defunct) and 1972 UEFA Cup (now the Europa League).

"Tottenham are linked with great football in the past," said Villas Boas, who earlier in the week claimed he should have got some credit for Chelsea going on to win

the FA Cup and Champions League under his replacement Roberto di Matteo.

"It is something they have always valued highly. There is a wonderful history of attractive football, and Bill Nicholson left these messages of football well played and doing things in style, which is what I want to achieve as well."

"The structures that surround Tottenham are extremely good. There are competent people in and around the football club. The club is driven towards success, and everybody knows they must play a part in achieving that success."

"They are not looking for certain scapegoats, and when so many people are striving forward, it makes your job easier."

Villas Boas, whose side ironically will have to contest the Europa League as Chelsea's win in the Champions League saw them take Spurs place in next season's premier European club competition, said he had not received the promised backing for his project at Chelsea.

"Words did not meet the actions of what we were doing [at Chelsea] in terms of the project, so I think I was cut short," he said.

"This club (Tottenham) is much more important than me and what I have to do is try to take them to success and not make it a personal issue."

Villas Boas said that in terms of players he was willing to let Croat star Luka Modric go but not Dutch playmaker Rafael van der Vaart.

"With Van der Vaart, at the moment I am absolutely counting on him," he said.

"It is a totally different situation from Luka (Modric), who has been chased by different clubs in the past two seasons and is continuing to drag interest."

"We have to make sure the club's interests are met and it is up to the chairman to decide that."

Rio calls Cole a 'choc ice'

AFP, London



The fallout from John Terry's acquittal on a charge of racially abusing Anton Ferdinand widened in bizarre fashion Sunday after the latter's brother Rio Ferdinand had to defend a tweet accusing Terry's Chelsea teammate Ashley Cole of being a 'choc ice.'

Chelsea captain Terry was found not guilty of racially abusing rival player Anton Ferdinand at the end of a five-day trial at Westminster Magistrates Court in London on Friday.

However, he may yet face disciplinary action from the Football Association (FA) following allegations he racially abused Anton Ferdinand during a game last October.

Rio Ferdinand defended his response to a tweet sent Saturday in response to a comment sent to his Twitter account which referred to Cole, a defence witness in the trial, as a "choc ice", insisting the term is not racist but rather slang for "someone who is being fake".

The tweeter wrote: "Looks like Ashley Cole's going to be their (Chelsea's) choc ice. Then again he's always been a sell out. Shame on him."

The choc ice term is widely understood to mean black on the outside, white on the inside.

Rio Ferdinand replied with a tweet which read: "I hear you fella!"

"Choc ice is classic! hahahahahahaha!"

On Sunday, Rio Ferdinand tweeted: "What I said yesterday is not a racist term. It's a type of slang/term used by many for someone who is being fake. So there."

Cole, 31, had told the trial that Terry, his Stamford Bridge captain and friend, was not racist.

Cole Saturday issued a statement through his lawyers which read: "Ashley Cole has been made aware of the discussion following comments appearing on Twitter and wishes to make it clear that he and Rio Ferdinand are good friends and Ashley has no intention of making any sort of complaint."

"Ashley appreciates that Tweeting is so quick it often results in off-hand and stray comments."

Blatter defends bribery stance

Football

AFP, Zurich

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has defended his stance on bribery after Swiss court documents accused his predecessor Joao Havelange of taking bribes.

Blatter, who succeeded Havelange as the head of world football's governing body in 1998, insisted in midweek he did not have the power to punish Havelange after the accusations against the Brazilian.

Court documents released revealed that Havelange, now 96 and FIFA president for 24 years before Blatter replaced him, pocketed at least 1.5m Swiss francs (986,000 pounds) and FIFA executive committee member Ricardo Teixeira at least 12.74m.

The bribes, made by International Sport and Leisure (ISL), were detailed in documents made public by Switzerland's supreme court and published by the BBC on Wednesday.

FIFA's discredited Swiss-based marketing partner collapsed in 2001 with debts of around 300 million dollars.

Blatter insisted Thursday he was power-

less to sanction his predecessor and added that such payments were not illegal under Swiss law at the time.

On Saturday, Blatter told Swiss newspaper Sonntagsblick in an interview for publication Sunday: "I did not know until later, after the collapse of ISL in 2001, about the bribery."

"When I now say that it is difficult to measure the past by today's standards, this is a generic statement. To me bribery is unacceptable and I neither tolerate nor seek to justify bribery. But this is what I am accused of now."

"The Swiss Federal Court has this week proven wrong all those people, who for years have accused me of having taken bribes."

"Now it is on record what I have always said: I have never taken nor received any bribes. Now the same people are trying to attack me from a different angle: Okay, he has not taken any bribes but he must have known."

"Once again I only knew after the collapse of ISL years later. And this is because we instigated the whole matter. The people who attack me now know this is the case but still they persist. They want me out."

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
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Time: 2:30pm
Azad Sc v Bangladesh SC
Time: 4:15pm
Venue: Maulana Bhasani