

Shanghai could lose star duo

REUTERS, Undated

Former Chelsea strikers Didier Drogba and Nicolas Anelka could be sold by China's Shanghai Shenhua due to an escalating equity stake row among shareholders, local media reported.

Chairman Zhu Jun, who holds a 28.5 percent stake, would only pay his share of the club's daily costs if his demands for greater control were not met, according to the China Daily.

Zhu currently controls the Chinese Super League club along with five state-owned enterprises after becoming a shareholder in 2007.

The agreement was that if he invested \$23.6 million over two years, his stake would increase to more than 70 percent, the newspaper reported.

The Oriental Sports Daily reported that Zhu had ploughed more than \$94 million into the club in the past five-and-a-half years, while the state-owned companies had spent nothing.

The transfer of shares stalled in 2009 and again last year, a source told the Oriental.

"It is annoying and has had a bad effect on many of our tasks," a club official said. "The biggest problem is that the operation and financing work of the club cannot be carried out normally."



Real Madrid's latest signing Croatian midfielder Luka Modric controls the ball during his official presentation at Bernabeu on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Win or bust for Real

Football

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid go into Wednesday's Spanish Super Cup second-leg against rivals Barcelona knowing a victory is the only option if they are to take the first title of the season.

Anything less will add to a disappointing start to a campaign in which Madrid are yet to win in 3 games, including the 3-2 defeat to Barca in the first-leg at the Nou Camp last Thursday.

The 2-1 defeat at Getafe on Sunday night, their first league defeat in 2012, means Real have a single point on the board in the league and are already five behind Barca, who won 2-1 at Osasuna on the same evening.

Jose Mourinho called the defeat 'unacceptable' while refusing to blame refereeing decisions for the defeat, as he had done in the first-leg claiming Barca's first goal to be offside.

He is looking for a response from his players, especially at dead balls where they have conceded goals in both their league games to date.

"In the last games we have worked more than ever on defending dead ball situations, with only two days to go until the next game (against Barca) we can't do anymore, it's up to the players to do their jobs," he said after Sunday's defeat.

One piece of good news for Madrid was the end of the summer-long transfer saga involving Luka Modric's move to the Spanish capital from Tottenham Hotspur.

Modric was finally presented to Madrid fans on Monday, perhaps too late to make an appearance in Wednesday's game, but the player himself has not ruled out making a debut.

"I feel good, I still have to train with the rest of the team but I'm ready to play against Barca. I have not had games but I have

trained with the fitness coach and worked hard and I had one game for Croatia. Hopefully I will need (only) a couple of games to get fit," he said.

Another player that may or may not feature is Barca captain Carles Puyol, who suffered a fractured cheekbone for the fourth time in his career on Sunday in a clash with the Osasuna player Roland Lamah.

Puyol, who played with a specially fitted mask a few seasons ago when carrying the same injury, may still be fit to play with protection.

His central defensive partner Gerard Pique will definitely feature and he knows the importance of the first title of the season for his side.

"It's more for the title than the idea of winning it in the Bernabeu, it's a trophy and the tie is finely balanced so either side can win it. Although we are going there to try and win it, I don't think it will influence the league, which has a long way to go," he said.

On the poor start Madrid have made Puyol had the following to say:

"It's surprising, nobody expected us to be five points ahead of them after only two games, but it means nothing. They had gone lots of games without defeat and it's Madrid and they can go another 30 without losing. We are fighting against one of the best sides in the world so we have to be prepared.

"We just want to think about ourselves, we are ambitious and it would be our fourth consecutive Super Cup, and you need to win the league or cup to be in this competition so we know how important it is," he concluded.

Tito Vilanova, with his first title as Barca manager at stake, rested both Xavi Hernandez and Pedro Dominguez in Sunday's win and both should start on Wednesday.

One place still undecided in Barca's starting eleven, after a 3 match winning start, is the left-back position which new boy

Brazil won't tolerate hooliganism

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

With 10 months to go to the Confederations Cup and as the countdown starts to the 2014 World Cup, Brazilian officials said on Monday that they will not tolerate fan violence.

The country, which lasted hosted the World Cup in 1950, is setting up a specialist police investigation centre to deal with cases of hooliganism, secretary for security affairs for Rio state, Jose Mariano Beltrame, told reporters, adding it would be based in the swish suburb of Leblon.

The news came on the heels of several outbreaks of fan violence at club level, with 21 knuckle duster-wielding fans of Fluminense arrested on Sunday for attacking two fans of another local side, Vasco da Gama.

"We can no longer tolerate violence ... this is not an example of (the image) we wish to project at the World Cup. We must act with rigour," Marta Rocha of the civil police authority told O Dia daily.

The mother of one of those arrested told reporters: "I am ashamed of my son."

Police lieutenant-colonel Joao Fiorentini explained that the 21 had been thrown in the cells as "quite apart from the assault, there was theft and that is why they have been locked up. We are tightening the noose."

Leaders of the 'Young Flu' supporters club said those responsible faced being thrown out of the club.

Last week, a Vasco fan, Diego Leal, was killed by thugs supporting Flamengo and last April a Flamengo fan, Bruno Saturnino, was beaten to death by rivals from Vasco.



TEN Sports
US Open
First Round
Live from 9:00 p.m.
TEN Action
Spanish Super Cup
Real Madrid v Barcelona

No sports cars for under 23

INTERNET, Undated



Many of Manchester United's millionaire superstars have been banned from accepting free luxury sports cars as part of a lifestyle crackdown from hardline manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

The English Premier League club recently completed a lucrative sponsorship deal with car giant Chevrolet that will kick into place in two years time and will see the company's logo featured on United's club jerseys.

As part of the arrangement, Chevrolet has immediately offered the United squad free choice of its fleet of high-end vehicles. Several, including veteran Ryan Giggs, whose love of fast and expensive cars has been well documented, are expected to opt for top-of-the-range Corvettes.

However, only players above the age of 23 will be allowed to accept sports-car models, as Ferguson attempts to ensure his young squad members do not fall into the lifestyle traps that have disrupted many a promising career.

Daily Mail journalist Ian Ladyman revealed that younger players will have to check with Ferguson and receive the all clear before making their car selection.

"This means players such as young striker Danny Welbeck, 21, and defenders Phil Jones, 20, Chris Smalling, 22, and Rafael, 22, will be banned from driving anything not approved by Ferguson," wrote Ladyman.

The move could cause a little friction in the Old Trafford locker room as Welbeck, Jones and Rafael, despite their tender age, are all considered vital and senior members of the first team.

Eto'o calls for calm

AFP, Moscow

Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o, now starring with Russian top-flight side Anzhi Makhachkala, on Monday appealed for calm after episodes of fan violence in recent days sparked waves of arrests.

Police detained more than 100 fans after unrest in Moscow and in Saint Petersburg and former Barcelona star Eto'o felt moved to issue an appeal for better behaviour.

"We need the supporters and it is important for us that matches are held in a healthy atmosphere," Eto'o told the Anzhi club website, warning that even "a small scuffle" could have major consequences.

Hardcore fans of both Anzhi and champions Zenit Saint Petersburg have recently been involved in clashes with racist undertones -- notably when the teams met on August 18 in Makhachkala in Dagestan in the Caucasus region, leaving

Falcao buries Bilbao

AFP, Madrid



The Basque side were seeking revenge for the defeat in Bucharest but in a repeat of that game last May, the Atletico forward line and in particular Falcao came out on top.

Falcao hit a double in the 3-0 European final and got his first on Monday night after 20 minutes. He swivelled around Mikel San Jose and clipped the ball over the keeper Gorka Iraizoz from a tight angle.

There is a mood of uncertainty at Athletic Bilbao with the futures of Fernando Llorente and Javi Martinez in the air and the team appeared unsure of themselves especially in defence where Martinez did so well last season.

Both Martinez and Llorente have been excluded from the squad until a final decision is made on whether they stay or go.

Falcao headed over before adding his second before half time when he tucked the ball home at the far post from a deep cross from Diego Godin.

Athletic were in disarray after the break and a handball by Carlos Gurpegi in the area led to Falcao completing his hat-trick from the penalty spot. The home side had a hatful of chances but their only further goal came from substitute Tiago Cardoso.

Newly-promoted Valladolid continued their 100 per cent start to the season after two penalties gave them a 2-0 victory over ten-man Levante.

After a bright start from Valladolid, Angel Rodriguez had a couple of good openings to give the visitors the lead but the game turned on the 37th minute when defender David Navarro conceded a penalty for handball and was given his second yellow card.

Victor Perez made no mistake with his spot-kick and then shortly after the break he added a second again from 12 yards. This time it was Papa Diop the culprit who upended Julian Omar.

Although early days Barcelona's 2-1 victory over Osasuna on Sunday has put them top of the table on goal difference and they are already five points clear of

UEFA upholds Bendtner suspension

AFP, Paris

European football's governing body UEFA have upheld a one-match suspension imposed on Denmark striker Nicklas Bendtner for revealing the logo of an unauthorised sponsor at Euro 2012 in June.

Bendtner was fined 100,000 euros (\$125,000) for revealing underpants bearing the name of Irish book-maker Paddy Power after scoring in Denmark's 3-2 Group B defeat to Portugal in Lviv, Ukraine.

Paddy Power agreed to pay the fine, while Bendtner lodged an appeal against his one-match international ban for "improper conduct" which was rejected.

The 24-year-old, who plays his club football for Arsenal, will now miss Denmark's opening 2014 World Cup qualifier against the Czech Republic in Copenhagen on September 8.

Spurs close in on Hugo

Football

AFP, Lyon

Lyon are close to reaching an agreement with Tottenham Hotspur over the sale of their French international goalkeeper Hugo Lloris, OL president Jean-Michel Aulas revealed on Monday.

The transfer is expected to cost Spurs 15 million euros (£11.88 million, \$18.78 million), which was the minimum fee demanded by Lyon.

Lloris' departure is linked to the sale of Tottenham's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric to Real Madrid for a fee of around 30 million euros, which was announced earlier on Monday.

"The sale of Modric from Tottenham to Madrid is important, as is the amount of the transfer," said Aulas.

"It's true that on Sunday we had a lot of contact with (Tottenham chairman) Daniel Levy. Things progressed during these talks, both qualitatively and quantitatively, but nothing's concrete yet.

"I've informed Hugo of these discussions. We'll have to be a bit patient to find out. The decision belongs to Hugo, who, I

think, will be approached by Tottenham very soon. The clubs' positions have moved closer together."

Aulas also confirmed that French international striker Bafetimbi Gomis, who has scored 36 league goals since joining the club from Saint-Etienne three years ago, is the subject of serious interest from more than one Premier League outfit.

"There are concrete proposals from several clubs across the Channel," he said, with Fulham believed to be one of the sides in the running for his signature.

The Lyon president was speaking at the unveiling of new Lyon signings Steed Malbranque, who has joined on a one-year contract, and Fabian Monzon, who arrived from Nice in a swap deal involving Jeremy Pied on Sunday.

Prior to the arrivals of Malbranque and Pied, Lyon's only other summer signing had been Serbian defender Milan Bisevac from Paris Saint-Germain.

However, as the club seek to cut costs after missing out on Champions League qualification, several players have moved on, including Kim Kallstrom, Ederson and John Mensah, while left-back Aly Cissokho has joined Valencia.



PHOTO: AFP

Romania striker Adrian Mutu (L) poses with Ajaccio president Alain Orsoni (R) upon his arrival at the airport on Monday. Mutu joined modest French club Ajaccio on a two-year contract.