

- 1. CRISTIANO RONALDO (POR):** 94 million euros from Manchester United to Real Madrid in 2009
- 2. ZINEDINE ZIDANE (FRA):** 75 million euros from Juventus to Real Madrid in 2001
- 3. KAKA (BRA):** 67.2 million euros from AC Milan to Real Madrid in 2009
- 4. EDINSON CAVANI (URU):** 64 million euros from Napoli to Paris Saint-Germain in 2013
- 5. LUIS FIGO (POR):** 61.7 million euros from Barcelona to Real Madrid in 2000

84m dollar man

AFP, Paris

Edinson Cavani was on Tuesday officially unveiled as Paris Saint-Germain's latest mega-signing, the striker joining the French champions for a Ligue 1 record 64 million euros (\$84 million) from Napoli.

The 26-year-old Uruguayan international, Serie A's top scorer last season with 29 goals, has joined Laurent Blanc's expensively-assembled Qatari-backed side on a five-year contract.

The deal makes Cavani the fourth most expensive player in history, behind Cristiano Ronaldo, who moved from Manchester United to Real Madrid in 2009 for 94 million euros, Zinedine Zidane and Kaka.

The previous highest French transfer was set earlier this year, when Colombia forward Radamel Falcao signed for Monaco from Atletico Madrid for a figure estimated at nearly 60 million euros.

"I'd like to thank everyone who made this transfer possible, it's a great project," a delighted Cavani, nicknamed 'the Matador', told a press conference.

"I'd also like to thank the people in Napoli who went out of their way to make it possible," added the player who arrived

in Europe in 2007 on a near five million euro move to play for Palermo.

"I come here with lots of joy, lots of confidence, lots of hunger and lots of motivation to win major trophies," he said.

"My message to everyone in this city and to the (PSG) fans is that I'm here with an enormous appetite to reach these aims."

Elaborating on why he chose PSG Cavani commented: "It's a very rich and very ambitious project, and I'm like that too. It's going to help me grow as a player."

"This club is one of the top sides in the world, it's one of a group of sides that can win the Champions League."

Sitting alongside him was PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi who said: "Everyone wanted him, but today he signed for us."

"He was the highest scorer in Italy, I hope he's going to do even better for us this season."

Al-Khelaifi went on to single out the club's outgoing sporting director Leonardo for his instrumental role in securing the services of the Serie A sharpshooter.

"A big thank you to 'Leo', he's done a great job here for the past two years," Al Khelaifi told the press conference to announce the headline deal.



Cisse pulls out of tour

BBC ONLINE

Papiss Cisse has pulled out of Newcastle's pre-season tour to Portugal after refusing to wear club sponsor Wonga's logo on religious grounds.

The Senegal striker, a Muslim, told club officials he was not prepared to promote the money-lending company.

But the 28-year-old did offer to wear an unbranded shirt or one bearing a charity logo instead.

It leaves Cisse's future in doubt, with sources describing the relationship between the parties as "strained".

Negredo joins Man City

AFP, Madrid

Sevilla sold their star striker Alvaro Negredo to English Premier League runners-up Manchester City on Wednesday, the Spanish Liga side said.

"It is now official: Alvaro Negredo is a new Manchester City player, pending a medical," the club said in a statement, announcing a farewell ceremony for him later on Wednesday evening.

Spain international Negredo, 27, follows winger Jesus Navas, signed last month from Sevilla by the English club.

Chelsea bid for Rooney

AFP, Bangkok



Chelsea said Wednesday they had made a bid for Manchester United star Wayne Rooney, which has reportedly been rejected despite growing signs the England striker is unhappy at Old Trafford.

The London club took the unusual step of confirming a bid -- for an undisclosed sum -- after British reports said Juan Mata or David Luiz had been offered as a make-weight.

"Chelsea Football Club can confirm that yesterday it made a written offer to Manchester United for the transfer of Wayne Rooney," said a club statement sent to AFP.

"Although the terms of the offer are confidential, for avoidance of doubt and contrary to what is apparently

being briefed to the press in Sydney, the proposed purchase price does not include the transfer or loan of any players from Chelsea to Manchester United," it said.

The wording of the statement takes an apparent swipe at Manchester United, who are currently in Sydney during their pre-season tour with a large contingent of British journalists.

It follows reports that Chelsea offered £10 million (11.5 million euros, \$15.1 million) for Rooney, with either midfielder Juan Mata or defender David Luiz thrown in.

Rooney's future has been the subject of considerable speculation since May, when departing United manager Alex Ferguson said he had asked for a transfer. The statement was denied by Rooney.

However, the England striker has also refused to confirm his plans and the rumour mill went into overdrive when he left United's Asian tour on the first day after picking up a minor hamstring injury.

Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho poured fuel on the fire by admitting he admired Rooney "very, very much", forcing Manchester United manager David Moyes to repeat his assertion that the player is not for sale.

"It's hard to keep repeating myself but I will do -- Wayne's a Manchester United player and will remain that," Moyes said.

But on Tuesday Rooney was reported to be "angry and confused" about separate comments from Moyes indicating that he would be used as back-up to fellow striker Robin van Persie next season.

HELICOPTER SHOT Dhoni's friend passes away

ANI, New Delhi



India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's close friend and former teammate Santosh Lal, who taught him the famous 'helicopter shot', breathed his last here on Wednesday.

Lal, who played Ranji Trophy matches with Dhoni, was undergoing treatment for pancreatitis at the Apollo Hospital here.

Lal, who was earlier admitted in an unconscious state at a Ranchi Hospital, was airlifted to the national capital for treatment at Dhoni's behest. Dhoni provided all possible help to his friend.

One of Lal's close friends expressed his shock on hearing of the demise.

"Santosh was like a guardian to his entire family. God should not have been so rude. Dhoni and his other friends provided all support that was needed," he told Asian News International in Ranchi.

Practice matches for hockey team

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is trying to arrange four practice matches this month for the national team on home soil as part of their preparation for the upcoming Asia Cup. The initiative came after Pakistani head coach Naveed Alam had expressed his desire to play a few warm-up matches in Malaysia.

The BHF has invited a few Indian club sides -- Punjab National Bank, Air India and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) -- to play practice matches against the Bangladesh national team at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium and one of them will come here to play four matches, informed BHF member Mamunur Rashid.

Blake out the of Worlds

AFP, Kingston

Reigning 100-metre world champion Yohan Blake has withdrawn from next month's World Athletics Championships in Moscow with a hamstring injury.

The 23-year-old Jamaican has been bothered by a sore hamstring since April when he competed in the Utech Classic in Jamaica.



Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola (L) presents latest signing midfielder Thiago Alcantara at their training ground in Munich on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Messi 'not worried'

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona star Lionel Messi on Tuesday said he was unconcerned about accusations of tax avoidance on income generated from the sale of his image rights and was confident his lawyers will solve the case.

Last month the 25-year-old and his father Jorge Horacio were ordered by a Spanish court to appear for questioning in September as part of an investigation into alleged tax fraud.

"I'm not worried, I'm always on the sidelines of all of that, just like my dad. We have our lawyers and our advisors who handle these things. We trust in them and they will

solve the issue," he said.

"I don't understand anything about all of that, this is why we have people who handle these issues," he added at a news conference at the club's training ground.

Spanish financial crimes prosecutors filed papers with a court on June 12 accusing Messi and his father of defrauding the tax office of over four million euros (\$5 million, £3.4 million) in income related to the use of his image from 2006-2009.

Messi and his father aimed to deceive the state by ceding the player's image rights to companies based in tax havens such as Belize and Uruguay so they would pay no tax in Spain, according to the prosecutor's complaint filed at a court in Gava.

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