

# BARCELONA

## appoint Enrique

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona on Monday appointed their former captain and outgoing Celta Vigo manager Luis Enrique as their new coach to replace Gerardo Martino after a disappointing trophyless season, the club said.

Enrique, 44, scored 109 goals in 300 appearances for the Catalan team in eight years after joining from rivals Real Madrid in 1996, and also had great success in three seasons as Barca B coach.

Now Barca's board is betting on him bringing the 2012-2013 title holders back to glory after they ended this season without a major trophy for the first time in six years, forcing Martino to quit after just one season in charge.

As part of the overhaul, Barcelona also confirmed on Monday that 22-year-old German international Marc-Andre Ter Stegen will join them from Borussia Monchengladbach next season, replacing Spain's Victor Valdes as first-choice goalkeeper.

Enrique will sign a two-year deal as new first team coach and be officially presented on Wednesday, the club said in a statement on Monday evening.

His pedigree as an old Barcelona hero raised excitement after the disappointment over Martino, who was hired just two weeks before the latest campaign began following the late Tito Vilanova's sudden resignation due to cancer.

As a player, Enrique "soon became a firm favourite with the fans for his competitive attitude. In addition, his versatility, knack of scoring big goals and technical ability made him a key member of the team", Barcelona said in its statement.

In his first three seasons he won two league titles, two Spanish cups, a European Cup Winners Cup and a European Super Cup.

Enrique succeeded Pep Guardiola as Barca B coach in 2008 and led them back to the second tier of Spanish football for the

first time in 11 years in his second season, with a record-breaking points haul.

He went to manage Roma in 2011 but left after one season when the Italian side failed to qualify for any European competition.

He joined Celta Vigo in June 2013 and coached them to ninth in La Liga this season, their highest finish in eight years.

Barcelona narrowly missed out on winning La Liga on Saturday in a 1-1 home draw to Atletico Madrid, who took the title for the first time in 18 years in a dramatic decider.

With a new goalkeeper and two players returning from spells on loan, Rafinha Alcantara and Gerard Deleofeu, the team now seeks to restore hope to the Camp Nou under the attack-minded Enrique.



LUIS ENRIQUE

Goalkeeper Jose Manuel Pinto will join Valdes in leaving Barcelona after six-and-a-half seasons with the club, while Stegen "is one of the first additions at Barca for the 2014/15 season," the club said in a statement Monday.

"The board of directors would like to publicly thank the professionalism and dedication shown by Jose Manuel Pinto during his years at the club," said sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta after announcing the 38-year-old would not be offered a new contract.

Ter Stegen has long been indicated as the man to replace Valdes since the Spanish international announced his intention not to renew his contract 18 months ago.

Capped four times by Germany, Ter Stegen has become an undisputed starter in the Monchengladbach goal over the past three seasons making 108 appearances in the Bundesliga in total.

His finest moment on the international stage came in saving a penalty from his new Barcelona teammate Lionel Messi in a friendly against Argentina in August 2012.

However, he conceded a horror own goal as an experimental German side lost 4-3 to the United States in June last year and hasn't been included in Joachim Loew's provisional 30-man squad for next month's World Cup.



PHOTO: AFP

Italy star Mario Balotelli takes part in the team's first training session in Florence yesterday ahead of the upcoming World Cup in Brazil.

## Real trio sits out training

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid's star attacking trio of Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema sat out training with their teammates on Tuesday just four days before the Champions League final against Atletico Madrid in Lisbon on Saturday.

Bale and Benzema, who was substituted with an abductor injury in Real's 3-1 win over Espanyol at the weekend, missed the session completely, whilst Ronaldo completed an individual workout with one of the Real physios.

Ronaldo pulled out of the game against Espanyol in the warm up after feeling the recurrence of a thigh muscle injury which forced him to miss the 2-0 defeat away to Celta Vigo the week before.

Bale, Benzema and Ronaldo have scored 95 goals between them this season.

## Quaresma third time unlucky

REUTERS, Lisbon



Fiery striker Ricardo Quaresma missed out again as Portugal named their final 23-man squad for the World Cup on Monday.

Thirty-year-old Quaresma, who was overlooked in both 2006 and 2010, had made the provisional list of 30 announced last week but was among the unlucky seven to be axed by coach Paulo Bento.

Quaresma, in his second stint at Porto, has also played for Barcelona, Inter Milan, Besiktas and United Arab Emirates side Al Ahli in his controversial career and had a brief spell on loan at Chelsea.

Besiktas terminated Quaresma's three-year contract six months early after a troubled stay at the Turkish club in which he clashed with then manager Carlos Carvalho.

Nicknamed "the magician" or "Harry Potter" because of his unpredictable dribbles and technique, he has won 35 caps and was included in the squads at Euro 2008 and Euro 2012.

Forward Nani made the cut despite an

unimpressive season with Manchester United.

"The position of national team coach carries a lot of prestige and is not immune to criticism," Bento told a news conference. "I have to accept that people will question my decisions."

"Nani has difference characteristics to Quaresma."

## PORTUGAL SQUAD

**Goalkeepers:** Rui Patricio (Sporting), Beto (Sevilla/ESP), Eduardo (Braga)

**Defenders:** Andre Almeida (Benfica), Bruno Alves (Fenerbahce/TUR), Fabio Coentrao (Real Madrid/ESP), Joao Pereira (Valencia/ESP), Neto (Zenith St-Petersburg/RUS), Pepe (Real Madrid/ESP), Ricardo Costa (Valencia/ESP)

**Midfielders:** Joao Moutinho (Monaco/FRA), Miguel Veloso (Dynamo Kiev/UKR), Raul Meireles (Fenerbahce/TUR), Ruben Amorim (Benfica), William Carvalho (Sporting)

**Strikers:** Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid/ESP), Eder (Braga), Helder Postiga (Lazio/ITA), Hugo Almeida (Besiktas/TUR), Nani (Manchester United/ENG), Rafa (Braga), Varela (FC Porto), Viegria (Wolfsburg/GER)

## Striker dies after kick to stomach

AFP, Jakarta

A Indonesian striker playing in one of the country's top leagues has died after a goalkeeper kicked him in the stomach during a recent match, an official said Tuesday.

The death of Akli Fairuz, 27, is a further blow to the reputation of Indonesian football.

Fairuz sustained serious injuries after the challenge during a game on May 10 in Banda Aceh, on western Sumatra island, said Mahfudin Nigara from the Indonesian Football Association.

Video footage showed the player, from club Persiraj Banda Aceh, run into the box of the opposing team, PSAP Sigli, to take a shot after the ball rebounded off the goalkeeper.

But the goalkeeper ran out and kicked him in the stomach as he took the shot, knocking him to the ground.

## Atletico sweat on Costa

AFP, Madrid

Atletico Madrid boss Diego Simeone has said he will give Diego Costa and Arda Turan every chance to prove their fitness ahead of the Champions League final against Real Madrid on Saturday.

Both players were forced off with injuries inside the first 25 minutes as Atletico claimed their first La Liga title in 18 years with a 1-1 draw away to Barcelona at the weekend.

Spanish media reported on Monday that Costa will miss the final after suffering the recurrence of a hamstring problem, whilst Turan has a hip injury.

"We are just starting the week. There are still a few days to go and we are not going to jump the gun because I think

it is too early for such an important game, but we need the players to be in the right condition.

"We will wait to see how Costa and Arda recover until the end of the week and we will look for alternatives if they don't recover."

Atletico go into the game full of confidence having ended Real and Barcelona's 10-year domination of La Liga and having lost just twice in 10 meetings against the two this season.

However, Simeone played down the influence winning the league could have in Lisbon.

"Winning is always good, but you have to move on straight away. We need to be 100 percent concentrated and I am sure the players will respond as they have always done in the biggest games."

Victory on Saturday would deliver the fifth trophy of a glorious two-and-a-half year spell since Simeone took over in December 2011.

And the Argentine dispelled rumours that he could leave the club at the end of the season.

"I am very happy where I am. There has been a great progression. We won the Europa League and the European Supercup then the Copa del Rey final and reached the Champions League. Now we have won La Liga and the team continues to grow."

"If we maintain a competitive team we are going to fight with the best despite the economic differences. I will stay here next year."

Both sides are likely to be weakened as Real also have doubts over the fitness of Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema.

## Cole set to leave Chelsea

AFP, London

Former England defender Ashley Cole announced Tuesday that he will leave Chelsea when his contract ends in a few weeks.

Cole, 33, said in a Twitter statement that he is looking for "another journey" after a season in which he has become a fringe player in Jose Mourinho's squad.

It has been a traumatic few weeks for Cole, long a lynchpin of the Chelsea and England teams, who announced this month that he is retiring from international duty after failing to make the England World Cup squad.

"I am weighing up my options for playing next season with my agent and sadly it does not look like Chelsea will be one of them," Cole said in series of Twitter comments.

## Apologetic Messi signs new deal

AFP, Madrid



AFP, Madrid

Barcelona striker Lionel Messi put pen to paper on his new contract with the Catalan club on Monday.

Messi agreed to the new deal worth a reported 20 million euros (\$27.4 million) net a year last week.

However, the four-time World Player of the Year has said he will only stay at Barcelona long as the club's fans felt "affection" for him.

Messi was booed by certain sections of the Camp Nou crowd as Barcelona narrowly missed out on winning La Liga on Saturday in a 1-1 home draw to Atletico Madrid, who took the title for the first time in 18 years in a dramatic title decider.

"It is the people of (Football Club) Barcelona who will decide my future but my decision is to continue since I still sense that they feel affection for me," the Argentine star wrote on the Chinese online messaging platform Weibo.

"But if that were not the case I would look for a solution, because I will always want the best for this club."

## Conte staying at Juventus

AFP, Florence

Juventus have confirmed that coach Antonio Conte will stay with the newly-crowned Serie A champions for next season.

Conte, who led Juventus to a third consecutive title, had reportedly been set to leave if he did not receive assurances over player investment for next season.

But Juve posted a brief message on the club's Twitter page on Tuesday which suggested the 44-year-old will stay on for another season at least.

"Season 2014/15: manager Antonio Conte," read the post. No other official announcement has been made by the club.

Former Juventus player Conte led the club to their 30th league title with two games to spare, but in recent weeks had been linked with a move away from Serie A.

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