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Klose ends int'l career

AFP, Berlin

German striker Miroslav Klose, the all-time World Cup top scorer, announced his retirement from international football on Monday.

The 36-year-old leaves the German national team as a World Cup winner after last month helping Joachim Loew's side to their first global crown since 1990 when they defeated Argentina 1-0 in the Rio-hosted final.

The Lazio frontman picked up his 16th goal, in what was his fourth World Cup, to surpass Brazilian Ronaldo as the tournament's leading scorer.

Klose, who won two German titles with Bayern Munich following spells with Kaiserslautern and Werder Bremen, said he had "fulfilled a childhood dream with the title in Brazil" and lived "unforgettable moments with the national team", according to a statement released by the German football federation.

"The success of the team stood and always stands for me in the highest place," Klose said.

"With the national team I achieved our greatest goal, a goal which we had together within the squad."

The Polish-born marksman scored five goals at the 2002 World Cup, where Germany were beaten 2-0 by Ronaldo's Brazil in the final, five in 2006 on home soil, four in 2010 at South Africa and two in 2014.

He broke the World Cup record for goals in July when he found the target for his 16th strike during the 7-1 semifinal rout of Brazil.

He is one of just three players, alongside Pele and Uwe Seeler, to score in four World Cups, and finishes his Germany career as the country's all-time leading scorer with 71 goals in 137 appearances.

Loew was quick to heap praise on Klose, saying: "For Miro it was always an honour to be called up into the national team. He's given everything for Germany."

"I have the biggest respect for his decision and for his incredible career in the national team, which will be a tough one to better."

Federation president Wolfgang Niersbach said Klose was "not only an exceptional player but also an absolutely exemplary man".

"With his 71 goals for the national team and his 16 goals in the World Cup, he has established two phenomenal records that will ensure him a place of honour in the history books."

Klose kicked off his international career against Albania on March 24, 2001, going on to enjoy a 13-year career with the Mannschaft, only Lothar Matthaus having won more caps (150).



Both teams win big

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's chess team blanked lowly-ranked Honduras by 4-0 points in the ninth round of the 41st Chess Olympiad in Tromso, Norway on Monday. The women's team, who had lost their eighth round matches by 1.5-2.5 points against lowly Puerto Rico, beat the Honduran players on all four boards with WIM Shamima AKter Liza, WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Nazrana Khan and WFM Zakia Sultana winning their respective boards.

Meanwhile, the men's team, who had drawn their 8th round against Philippines by 2-2 points, defeated Sri Lanka by 3-1 points in the ninth round yesterday. GM Niaz Murshed and IM Minhazuddin Ahmed won their respective boards while GM Enamul Hossain, GM Abdullah Al Rakib drew theirs.

Vermaelen not ready to train

AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona's new signing Thomas Vermaelen has an injured right hamstring and is not yet ready to start training, the Spanish club said Monday.

The 28-year-old Belgian international defender, who completed his move to Barcelona from Arsenal on Sunday, picked up the injury during the World Cup in Brazil, the club said in a statement.

Vermaelen will undergo physiotherapy, it added. "His presence in training sessions will depend on how his recovery progresses," Barcelona said.

Vermaelen, who had been at Arsenal for five years, and captain for the past two seasons, said during his presentation at the Nou Camp on Sunday that he wanted to draw a line under an injury-plagued spell.

"I want to put the injuries I have had behind me and look to the future. My aim is to play in lots of games and help the team," he said.

"Last year was tough, but I want to start from zero and I am sure I'll have a fantastic season here at Barcelona."

Vermaelen made only 21 appearances last season as niggling injuries and the form of Laurent Koscielny and Per Mertesacker limited his impact.

Tsonga shock for Federer

AFP, Toronto

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga won the Toronto Masters with a win over Roger Federer, two years after injuring himself at the same event in a freak collision with a fire hydrant.

French 13th seed Tsonga hit 11 aces and 26 winners to win Sunday's final 7-5, 7-6 (7/3) while Federer, two days after his 33rd birthday, was undone by 37 unforced errors.

"If you believe in something it can happen," said Tsonga. "I'm proud of what I've achieved this week."

"I played well all this week. I beat many good guys."

The 29-year-old Tsonga dropped just one set all week as he knocked out world number one Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray en route to the final.

It was Tsonga's second career Masters 1000 title, coming almost six years after his first at Paris Bercy in 2008.

He is just the second French player after Guy Forget to win two titles at the Masters level.

Tsonga spent just over one and three-quarter hours in constructing his upset over the man who had beaten him in both of their previous finals played in 2011.

Tsonga dealt with injuries for much of 2013 but is now fit and brimming with confidence.

The French player said his win Sunday had special significance because of his experience two years earlier.

Fresh off winning an Olympic silver medal in doubles in the 2012 London Games, Tsonga injured his right knee in Toronto after walking into a fire hydrant as he was out for a stroll. He had lost in the opening round of the Masters 1000 event in Toronto to Jeremy Chardy.

The injury required eight stitches and forced him to pull out of the Cincinnati Masters event the following week.

"This will stay in my heart forever," he said. "Two years ago here I had knee problems, now it's all changed. This win was something really special. I have a lot of respect for Roger."

"It was such a great week for me, I played so well, and I'm so happy. It's just incredible to be back on form like this."

"I knew I could play well again, this should help me for the rest of the season."

Federer, the second seed, had been bidding for his 80th career title and 300th win at a Masters.

The Swiss star was playing his sixth final of the season and has won titles in Dubai and Halle. He has also lost in the final at Wimbledon.

Agnieszka upsets Venus

AFP, Montreal

Third seed Agnieszka Radwanska toppled former world number one Venus Williams in straight sets Sunday at the WTA Montreal tournament to clinch her first title of the season.

Poland's Radwanska rolled to a comfortable 6-4, 6-2 victory over the American in just 81 minutes as she claimed her 14th career singles title.

"I am very, very happy," said Radwanska, who earned \$467,000 for the win. "Everything was working for me today."

The 25-year-old's last win was in Seoul in September. She reached the final at Indian Wells earlier this year, losing to Italian Flavia Pennetta.

Radwanska fired three aces, had two double faults and won 65 percent of her first serves in the hardcourt match on centre court.

The 2012 Wimbledon runner-up dropped the opening game of the first set, but then ran off four straight games to take control.

Williams broke back and drew within 4-3 only to see Radwanska win the set 6-4.

The former world number two then broke Williams to open the second set, but the Florida resident got back into it with a fourth-game break to even the set at 2-2.

Radwanska broke back in the fifth game to regain control.

James set for Real bow

AFP, London

World Cup sensation James Rodriguez is in line to make his Real Madrid debut when the European champions tackle Europa League winners Sevilla in Tuesday's all-Spanish UEFA Super Cup in Cardiff.

Madrid's 4-1 extra-time win over city rivals Atletico Madrid in Lisbon in May ended their 12-year wait for a 10th European Cup and they now look even stronger after a characteristically extravagant close-season recruitment drive.

Rodriguez, Toni Kroos and Keylor Navas arrived at the Bernabeu after impressing at the World Cup and all are in line to feature at the Cardiff City Stadium.

The first glimpse of 80-million-euro (\$108 million) playmaker Rodriguez in a Madrid shirt is keenly anticipated after he dazzled for Colombia in Brazil, scoring six goals to win the Golden Boot.

With the 23-year-old former Monaco playmaker joining Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale in the Spanish capital, Madrid now possess three of the four most expensive players of all-time.

The trio could grace a pitch together for the first time in Cardiff, but like Kroos, who arrived from Bayern Munich after starring in Germany's World Cup triumph, Rodriguez is short of fitness and unlikely to start.

Along with Costa Rican goalkeeper Navas, the pair only returned to training last week and coach Carlo Ancelotti has admitted that his players are some way short of peak condition.

"We had to give holidays to some players until August 5," said the Italian.

"Therefore, we haven't had much time to prepare for the game. We need to try our hardest in August to prepare the players in the best way possible for the new season."

The Super Cup is one of six trophies that Madrid could win this season, but they are still searching for their first pre-season victory after two defeats and a draw on their tour of the United States.

One player who seems certain to start is Welsh forward Bale, who was born and raised in Cardiff and went to school just four miles (6.4 kilometres) from Tuesday's match venue.

Scorer of the decisive second goal in the Champions League final, the 25-year-old found the net twice in the US and is relishing the prospect of playing in front of his home crowd.

"I knew the Super Cup would be played in Cardiff a good 18 months ago," Bale told Spanish newspaper Marca.

"When I came to Real Madrid it was always a dream of mine that if we could win the Champions League, we could play in Cardiff. Now that dream has come true."

Tuesday's opponents will carry special significance for Bale, for it was against Sevilla last October that he scored a brace in a 7-3 win that truly launched his Madrid career.

Ancelotti's side enjoyed less success in the return fixture, going down 2-1 in March in a game that fatally undermined their league title bid, so the reunion in the Welsh capital will also offer an opportunity for revenge.

Sevilla beat Benfica on penalties in the Europa League final in Turin to win the competition for the third time in nine seasons.

They have lost influential Croatian playmaker Ivan Rakitic to Barcelona, while Stephane Mbia -- scorer of a decisive injury-time goal against Valencia in the Europa League semifinals -- has returned to parent club Queens Park Rangers.

But Spanish forward Iago Aspas could make his debut against Madrid, having joined from Liverpool on a season-long loan.

Nyumbu takes five-for but SA in charge

AFP, Harare

John Nyumbu became the second Zimbabwean to record a five-wicket haul on Test debut but South Africa still put themselves in the driving seat on Day Three of the one-off Test on Monday.

Nyumbu sank to his knees and pointed to the heavens after taking figures of 5 for 157 in a South African total of 397 all out, which gave the tourists a lead of 141 on first innings.

Morne Morkel then dismissed opener Hamilton Masakadza before Zimbabwe reached stumps on 28 for one in their second innings, still trailing by 113 runs.

Only fast bowler Andy Blignaut had taken five wickets on Test debut for Zimbabwe, but Nyumbu chipped away throughout the day to add the scalps of Faf du Plessis, Dale Steyn and JP Duminy to the two wickets he had picked up on Sunday.

Du Plessis was out for 98 shortly before the lunch interval after a 264-ball innings, ending a 119-run stand with Quinton de Kock for the fifth wicket.

De Kock also missed out on a century when he chipped left-arm spinner Sean Williams to midwicket to depart for 81, having showed the most intent out of the South Africans.

His dismissal prompted extreme caution from the batsmen who followed.



Chelsea playmaker Cesc Fabregas (C) is congratulated by teammates after scoring the second goal against FC Ferencvaros at the Groupama Arena in Budapest on Sunday.

Mourinho hails Fabregas

REUTERS, London

Jose Mourinho heralded Cesc Fabregas as Chelsea's new playmaker in place of the departed Frank Lampard and urged fans to greet him and his squad before Tuesday's first home friendly in eight years on Tuesday.

Chelsea meet Real Sociedad at Stamford Bridge and plan to parade their full senior squad on the pitch before the sold-out match.

"Lampard is our history, but Fabregas is our future, Mourinho told the club website (www.chelseafc.com), adding that both he and his players believe the Spaniard is the right man to play in central midfield.

"Frank is the history of the club, history nobody can forget," said Mourinho. "Fabregas is the future. History is history, but the future is more important at the moment."

"My opinion, and the opinion of my players, is that Fabregas is the right player to occupy that central position in midfield."

Chelsea beat Ferencvaros 2-1 in Budapest in a friendly on Sunday courtesy of goals from Ramires and Fabregas, who impressed after his introduction at the interval.

"They (Ferencvaros) fought for a result until the last minute and that was good for us," said Mourinho. "They competed and that was important."

Fabregas' solo goal capped a fine display that convinced many observers that he will be a more than adequate successor to all-time Chelsea top scorer Lampard.

Lampard, 36, left Chelsea in June to join MLS outfit New York City. He is currently on loan with English champions Manchester City.

In another website message, the club said Mourinho requested that supporters going to the sold-out match at Stamford Bridge arrive in time to herald a parade of the entire first team squad.

"It is the first time we have hosted a friendly at our home since 2006 - and it promises to be a memorable evening, with the sold-out crowd given the opportunity to welcome each of the players," said the club.

After signing midfielder Fabregas, striker Diego Costa, left-back Filipe Luis and returning club legend, striker Didier Drogba, along with recalled loanees defender Kurt Zouma and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, Chelsea are tipped as favourites to depose Manchester City as Premier League champions.

The league starts on Saturday, but Chelsea are not in action until they visit promoted Burnley on Monday -- a fixture for which Mourinho is confident his team will be perfectly prepared.

"It's been a difficult pre-season because we started with seven players," said Mourinho. "After that, step by step, players were arriving after the World Cup and holidays."