



(L-R) Pep Guardiola, Sinisa Mihajlovic, Rafael Benitez and Mauricio Pochettino – coaches of Bayern Munich, AC Milan, Real Madrid and Tottenham Hotspur – pose with the Audi Cup at a press conference in Munich on Monday, ahead of Tuesday night's tournament opener. PHOTO: AFP

ADIDAS DEFENDS 'SEXIST' MAN UTD SHIRT

Manchester United kit maker Adidas has defended its controversial new shirt designed specifically for female fans, which came under heavy criticism for having a much lower neckline than the men's version. One United fan, @MUnitedGirl, posted on Twitter: "Seriously Adidas? Why is the V-neck so low compared with the men's one? Some of us don't like to show cleavage." Responding to the criticism, Adidas said: "Based on research from fans, we also offer a women's shirt as part of our lifestyle range of products. This range has a slightly different design and fit to



Torres scores with first touch

AFP, Shanghai



Fernando Torres scored with his first touch as Atletico Madrid cruised to a 3-0 exhibition match victory over Sven-Goran Eriksson's Shanghai International Port Group (SIPG) in China on Tuesday.

The former Liverpool and Chelsea striker came on at half-time and scored just seconds after the restart with a neat header from Yannick Carrasco's looping cross.

In an open and attacking game played in very humid conditions at Shanghai Stadium, Atletico had opened the scoring in the ninth minute when Antoine Griezmann latched onto a long forward pass to slot the ball past SIPG keeper Sun Le.

Moments before conceding, SIPG playmaker Dario Conca – the third highest paid player in the world when he signed for

Guangzhou Evergrande in 2011 – could have scored. But the Argentine's low drive did not trouble Atletico keeper Jan Oblak.

SIPG, currently leading the 16-team Chinese Super League, were without four first team regulars currently on international duty with China at the East Asia Cup in Wuhan. But they did not look out of place against their more illustrious opponents.

However, in the 24th minute Atletico extended their lead when the ball fell to Griezmann on the edge of the box. The Frenchman scored his second of the night when his tame shot evaded SIPG keeper Sun to make it 2-0 to the Spanish giants.

Atletico's Lucas Hernandez should have put his side further ahead in the 28th minute when the French defender crashed a header off the bar from close range.

Torres scored the final goal of the match just after half-time, after which the pace of the game dropped considerably.

No Ronaldo fallout, says Benitez

GOAL.COM

Real Madrid coach Rafael Benitez says Cristiano Ronaldo's absence from his Audi Cup squad is due to injury rather than any fallout between the pair.

"He's a great professional and someone who is very competitive, he wants to win every single small game or situation," Benitez said.

"I'm really pleased to work [with] him, [I'm] sorry because he's not here, but [there's] no problems between us. I said before, he's a very competitive player so I am pleased with that. "He had a lower back problem so we decided to leave him there."

Chamberlain hits back at 'selfie' jibe

AFP, London

Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain has slammed claims by Roy Keane that Arsenal's players are more interested in selfies and six-packs than winning trophies.

When asked about Keane's comments, Oxlade-Chamberlain said: "It is a new era, isn't it? Some people do it, some don't. We are serious about winning trophies."

"Personally, and I can speak for the rest of the squad, we have been serious every single year I have been at the club about winning trophies. You can see that on the pitch when we are playing, through the season."

"We have always wanted to win trophies and in the last years we have won a few. This season we want to go that one better."

'Messi criticism unbelievable'

GOAL.COM



Argentina boss Gerardo Martino believes Lionel Messi played his best games for his country during this summer's Copa America.

Messi was slammed by critics and some supporters following the Albiceleste's final defeat on penalties to host nation Chile, with the Barcelona star having scored just once during the competition.

However, the 28-year-old was named in the team of the tournament and was reported to have turned down the prize for best player, with Martino adamant his performances were of a high calibre.

"In my opinion, Messi's Copa America performances were his best in an Argentina shirt," he told Radio Uno.

"I shouldn't even respond to this type of criticism, because it's unbelievable. It

wouldn't stand up to analysis and has no basis."

Martino was also clear that Messi has not ruled himself out of September's clash with Mexico and says he cannot imagine the four-time Ballon d'Or winner calling time early on his international career.

"Messi has not made himself unavailable for the Mexico game. You will see that when I name my squad next week," said the former Barcelona boss.

"As an Argentine, I would be hugely disappointed because nobody can imagine not having the best player in the world available for selection."

"No one imagines a national team without Messi."

Martino added that he still finds it tough to look back at the reaction of his Argentina side after their loss to Chile.

The head coach said: "It hurt me a lot to see the lads' faces after the defeat. They had

Rafael joins Lyon

REUTERS, Paris

Brazil defender Rafael will join Olympique Lyonnais on a four-year deal from Manchester United after both clubs reached an agreement, the Ligue 1 side said on Monday.

"Olympique Lyonnais inform that they have found an agreement with Manchester United over the transfer of Brazilian international defender Rafael da Silva who will sign a four-year deal in the coming days," the club said on their official website (www.olweb.fr).

Rafael, who won two caps for Brazil, made 109 Premier League appearances and won three league titles following his debut in 2008.

"I want to thank Manchester United fans for all the love during those 8 years," Rafael, 25, said on his official twitter account.

"Since I signed with the club I lived incredible moments, after all were 8 years wearing the shirt of one of the biggest clubs of the world. Now it's a new path, a new challenge, God bless me!"

Khedira out for two months

GOAL.COM

Sami Khedira has been sidelined for two months with a thigh injury, Juventus have confirmed.

The midfielder has struggled with fitness and form for the last couple of seasons, culminating in him leaving Real Madrid for the Scudetto holders on a free transfer this summer after spending much of 2014-15 on the bench.

Khedira suffered the latest blow on Saturday when he was stretchered off in the first half of Juve's 2-0 defeat to Marseille, and Massimiliano Allegri had confirmed the he would at least miss the Supercoppa Italiana on August 8.

However, the Champions League runners-up have now confirmed the injury will see Khedira miss a lot more than just the clash between Juventus and Lazio this coming Saturday, ruling him out of the first seven Serie A matches of 2015-16.

"Sami Khedira will be sidelined for approximately two months after medical examinations revealed a second-grade myotendinous tear of the rectus femoris muscle in his right thigh," the Bianconeri said in a statement on their website on Monday.

"The German midfielder sustained the injury during Saturday's pre-season friendly against Olympique Marseille at the Stade Velodrome."

'Di Maria will regret failing at Man Utd'

ESPNFC.COM



Angel Di Maria will regret his failure to make a success of his career at Old Trafford, according to former Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand.

The 27-year-old is closing in on a move to Paris Saint-Germain with the Argentine reportedly set to undergo a medical in Doha, Qatar.

Di Maria, 27, was viewed as a key signing for United boss Louis van Gaal when he gave the green light to a club-record £59.7 million deal to bring the winger to Old Trafford last summer, but one season of indifferent performances look likely to be his legacy in the Premier League.

Six-time Premier League winner Ferdinand told ESPN FC at the launch of BT Sport's Premier League coverage in London

that he will lament his solitary season as a United player.

"He will now always have on his CV that he was a failure at Man United," Ferdinand said. "As a professional, I wouldn't want something like that on my record. If I could rectify it by staying and trying to prove myself, I would have done that."

"As a fan, I would have liked for him to stay there and prove he can perform for Man United. That is what we all wanted to see when the club paid so much for him last summer, but that isn't happening, it seems."

"I can understand why some fans are disappointed that he is leaving so soon, but this is a business. United may have looked at it this summer and Van Gaal has probably come to the conclusion that he doesn't fit into his system for whatever reason. At that point, you have to cash in."



One of the members of the Bangladesh under-12 football team, who will be leaving for South Korea today to participate in the Asian Youth Football Fiesta, takes photographs of his teammates at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

'Schweini was never fit'

ESPNFC.COM



Pep Guardiola believes Bastian Schweinsteiger will impress at Manchester United -- but only if the former Bayern Munich midfielder puts his "injury problems" behind him.

Schweinsteiger, 31, signed for United from Bayern this summer for a reported fee of £14 million to bolster Louis van Gaal's central options ahead of the new season.

The Germany international made 15 Bundesliga starts last season due to injury issues, and Bayern manager Guardiola has admitted to his concerns about Schweinsteiger's battle to be fit.

"When he does not have injury

problems, I am completely convinced he will do very well at Manchester United," Guardiola said in The Times.

"He is a top, top player. Unfortunately, the last three years he was never in good condition. He is going to play really well there [at United] -- I really hope that is going to happen."

United begin their 2015-16 Premier League season at Old Trafford on Saturday against Tottenham, who are in Munich along with Real Madrid, AC Milan and hosts Bayern for this week's pre-season Audi Cup tournament.

Meanwhile, Guardiola said on Monday he has no doubt that Barca forward and United target Pedro can be successful "with any club in the world."



Manchester United's new signing Bastian Schweinsteiger went out for a meal in Manchester on Monday night with Ana Ivanovic. The former Bayern Munich man split with his former partner Sarah Brandner last year and is currently dating the Serbian tennis star. PHOTO: INTERNET

SA GAMES PREPARATION CAMP BOA finalises 396 athletes for now

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) on Monday finalised a list of 396 athletes for 15 disciplines for the preparation camp of the upcoming South Asian Games, which will be held in Guwahati and Shillong next January.

Over the last couple of weeks, the BOA held discussions with these 15 federations before finalising the list for the camp, which started from August 2, even though the number of disciplines that Bangladesh may participate in could be 20.

BOA initially selected archery, boxing, badminton, table tennis, kabaddi, shooting, swimming, volleyball, taekwondo, weightlifting, wrestling, cycling, basketball, handball and athletics for the preparation camp. The BOA officials said they will bring football and hockey teams under preparation after getting more financial assistance from government.

"Footballers are busy with their league and Bangladesh Hockey Federation also claimed that their players are preparing so

we decided to bring them under training at a later stage." BOA's training and development committee member secretary Rafiqul Islam said on Tuesday.

Apart from the 396 athletes, the Bangladesh contingent currently comprises 61 coaches and 17 officials of 15 disciplines, but the number may cross five hundred after the inclusion of football and hockey players.

The National Sports Council initially provided Tk one crore for the preparation even though the BOA placed a budget of Tk 23 crore. BOA will provide Tk 625 to each of the athletes for food and daily allowance during the training, it has been learned.

The coaches will receive a daily remuneration of Tk 300 per day, which has caused some anger among them. BOA said they might increase the amount if NSC sanctions more fund.

Archers, boxers, taekwondo players and weightlifters started their camp from August 2 while the others will start their respective camps by August 13.