

TRANSFER SEASON ROUND-UP

After the dust has settled on the summer 2015 transfer window

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After a season of one-sided league campaigns and one team running away with the UCL title, this transfer window was one for the teams that fell behind to bridge the gap. These teams have splashed the cash to complete some interesting deals that has left fans excited for the new season.

Treble winners FC Barcelona had a transfer ban for 2015 but many would argue that won't hurt their bid to defend three major titles, because of their already strong squad. The departures of Xavi and Pedro, both integral parts of the team in this last, extremely successful decade, could hurt them but neither featured a lot last season. Anyhow, a very exciting signing has been made in Arda Turan, who'll give up six months of football to feature for Barca from January. Aleix Vidal will do the same; he comes in as replacement for another former Sevilla star, Dani Alves.

For Real Madrid, one of the many bad things about Barcelona winning the treble is it leaves them trophyless. As a result, their "La Decima" winning hero "King" Carlo Ancelotti has been sacked. In a way, Rafa Benitez's job will be to stop Barca winning the treble. They have bought Mateo Kovacic, the highly rated central midfielder from Internazionale along with Danilo from FC Porto, who'll strengthen the right-back area. David de Gea didn't move from Manchester United under bizarre circumstances, with both clubs blaming the other for being late with processing the deal. But they have bought Kiko Casilla from Espanyol to challenge Keylor Navas for the goalkeeping spot.

Juventus was the first among the Italian teams to break through in Europe in recent years. But their good season has been followed by the departure of Arturo Vidal, Andrea Pirlo and Carlos Tevez, among others. As a result, they've been extremely busy in the transfer window with almost 20 signings. The ones most likely to feature include centre forwards Paolo Dybala, Mario Mandzukic and Simone Zara, left-back Sandro, midfielders Hernanes, and Sami Khedira, and winger Juan Cuadrado on a loan deal. Juventus will look to follow up their near miss on the treble with a similarly successful season.

German champions Bayern Munich have been meticulous in the transfer window. They've signed Arturo Vidal from Juventus and Douglas Costa from Shakhtar Donetsk, both of whom are showing their worth in the Bundesliga. Stuttgart's Sven Ulreich comes in as a second choice to Neuer. Bayern's target this season will be to win the Champions League, something that becomes more vital with the Bundesliga starting to lose its competitive edge.

Over in England, champions Chelsea seemed assured about defending the league and challenging in Europe with their squad, bringing in Asmir Begovic as a direct replacement of Petr Cech. 21 year

old Baba Rahman was brought in to challenge Cesar Azpiliqueta for the left-back area. A shaky start to the season saw them making an almighty scramble for Pedro, who was the big money signing coming in for 22 million pounds.

Across the capital, Arsenal slumbered through the transfer window. The signing they made did turn out to be pretty exciting. Arsenal fans haven't been as assured with a goalkeeper since Jans Lehmann, and will be happy to see Petr Cech between the sticks, who cost only 10 million pounds. Otherwise, it's been a

solution to the remaining problems and were documented as targets, were whisked away by Manchester City and Chelsea respectively. In an apparent panic buy on deadline day, they splashed 36 million pounds to sign 19 year old striker Anthony Martial from AS Monaco, hoping to launch a title bid this season.

Manchester City unceremoniously fell away from the title run last season, and that woke up the sleeping dragon, if you may. They have spent over 150 million pounds for 5 major signings. Kevin de Bruyne is the most exciting one of the lot

end, but how they fare in comparison to the other teams is a different question altogether. In what might be Brendan Rodgers' last chance, Liverpool will hope that these players can gel in time.

In France, Paris-Saint Germain made a huge signing in Angel Di Maria. They have made a host of other signings to strengthen the squad, including German keeper Kevin Trapp and Tottenham's Benjamin Stambouli. Layvin Kurzawa and Serge Aurier will make both the full-back positions theirs to help PSG become the unassailable leaders in Ligue 1 and launch a serious bid to win



quiet window for Arsenal, with no other signings. Lukas Podolski did leave Arsenal for Galatasaray after a rather frustrating tenure.

At first, Manchester United looked super efficient this transfer window when Memphis Depay, Morgan Schneiderlin, Mateo Darmian, and Bastian Schweinsteiger all joined early, strengthening key positions. De Gea wasn't leaving and Sergio Romero signed for free. Things went wrong when Di Maria left and Nicolas Otamendi and Pedro, who seemed to be the perfect

and Raheem Sterling has started to warrant his 49 million pounds price tag with some good performances. Nicolas Otamendi, Fabian Delph and 18 year old Patrick Roberts will look to contribute to the team as they fight to regain the league title.

Liverpool's seventh place finish in the league has seen them going backwards after finishing second the season before. Strengthening the squad was important if they are to finish within the top four. The signings of Christian Benteke, Roberto Firmino, James Milner, Danny Ings and Nathaniel Clyne will all contribute to that

the Champions League. The relative inactivity in some of the teams at the top hints a possible shift in power in European football this season, an intriguing prospect. And if teams are punished for their mistakes in the transfer window, we could be in for some almighty spills throughout the very exciting new season.

When he's not obsessing over football, Azmin spends his time devising ways of not getting mugged, only to fail miserably. Give him advice at fb.com/azminazran