

ROONEY ALWAYS HAD AN EYE ON MANAGEMENT

Wayne Rooney, fresh from signing a deal on Tuesday to become a player-coach at Derby County from next January, told reporters that he had always hoped to become a manager once his playing days were over. The 33-year-old, Manchester United and England's most prolific scorer, also said he had been excited to see former England teammates Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard make their way in a world usually dominated at the top level by foreign coaches. Rooney will be following most closely in the footsteps of Lampard, who last season took the team he is set to join all the way to the Championship playoff final. Lampard has now taken over at Chelsea, while Steven Gerrard is in charge of Scottish side Rangers. "It's great to see them going into management. But it's not just because of that, I've always had an ambition to go into management," Rooney told reporters.

—REUTERS



Wearing the jersey of his new club Sao Paulo, Brazil national team captain Dani Alves poses for photographers during his official presentation at the Morumbi Stadium on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Allegations against Squash federation GS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bringing allegations of financial misappropriation, irregularities and autocracy against Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation (BSRF) general secretary Jahangir Hamid Sohel, executive member Hedayetullah Turkee requested authorities concerned to launch an investigation against the GS and dissolve the federation's ad-hoc committee, which was formed in May, 2015.

Turkee, also an assistant registrar of Jagannath University, brought 29 allegations against Hamid, with the major allegations being misappropriation of fund, keeping the federation office closed, travelling abroad at federation's expenditure, using federation employee for personal purposes, not attending National Sport Council or sports ministry meetings, nepotism in selecting national squad, providing less money to athletes of SA Games camp, participating in foreign tournaments without BSRF president's approval and government order, submitting budget for Mujib Year without any approval from the executive committee.

"We have an office at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium, but it has been opened only once in last four years. An office employee named Gopal is being used for Sohel's personal purposes, but taking remuneration from the federation regularly," said Turkee at a press conference at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Turkee was accompanied by Bangladesh Squash Players' Association president MA Gani, general secretary Bholal Lal Chouhan, squash player Jobayer Ahmed and coaches of different clubs.

"NSC allocated Tk 12 lakh for talent hunt programme in 2016 but the training was conducted in cantonment areas in

Jashore, Cumilla, Rangpur, Ghatail for two or three days while in 2019, training was conducted in two cadet colleges. However, the expenditure was submitted for five cadet colleges with fake documents because there was no expenditure for accommodation, transport for the cadet students," alleged Turkee. "Players took part in different international tournaments at their own expenditure but the GS toured four countries this year with federation's money."

MA Gani alleged, "As a player I have seen there is disorder in selecting players and it is very disappointing that new players are not coming up. There is no consistent programme to develop squash. An unelected person becomes autocrat if he holds a key post for 16 years."

Hamid, son of prominent sports organiser MA Hamid and chess player Rani Hamid, however denied all allegations, terming those as hilarious, baseless and unacceptable. However, he welcomed any investigation against him.

"I don't know why he brought such allegations against me. The issue of financial irregularities is not right because the 2019 programme is still ongoing and I haven't yet submitted anything to the NSC. It is baseless that I am sending the squad without permission of the president," said Sohel.

"It is true that there is a lack of manpower at the federation. Is it possible to hold a post if no one likes me? But I myself also want someone else to take charge of the federation," said the former squash champion.

It is mentionable that BSRF organises four to five tournaments each year and the sport won bronze medals in men's team event in the last two editions of the South Asian Games.

City, Liverpool ready for heavyweight battle

AFP, London

Manchester City have Premier League immortality in their sights as they start their title defence this weekend, but Liverpool's burning desire to get their hands on the trophy will fuel a heavyweight battle for supremacy.

In the blue corner, treble winners City are at the peak of their powers and look capable of enjoying a period of sustained dominance not seen since Manchester United earned three successive Premier League titles from 2007 to 2009.

But in the red corner, European champions Liverpool, chasing a first English title since 1990, have more than a puncher's chance of ending City's reign after pushing Pep Guardiola's side all the way to the final day last season.

The first blows will be landed this week as Liverpool kick off the new Premier League campaign against promoted Norwich at Anfield on Friday, before City head to West Ham on Saturday.

Sunday's no-holds-barred Community Shield clash showed the growing rivalry between England's pre-eminent teams, with City beating Liverpool on penalties following a 1-1 draw that underlined how little there is to separate the sides.

Adding Atletico Madrid's Rodri for a club-record £63 million (\$77 million) gives Guardiola an even greater embarrassment of riches.

With five major trophies over the past two seasons -- including Premier League crowns clinched with unprecedented hauls of 100 and

then 98 points -- City are the bookmakers' favourites to become only the second club to win a hat-trick of English titles in the past 35 years after United did it twice.

Guardiola is a keen student of football history and has revelled in City's record-breaking feats, so the opportunity to further bolster his team's credentials as one of England's all-time greats will not be lost on the Spaniard.

Although City have never won the Champions League and Guardiola last lifted it back in 2011 with Barcelona, he said domestic bliss remains his preferred passion.

"To maintain the health and focus of the team, the most important thing is the Premier League," Guardiola said.

"It is the standout competition because it is every weekend. In the Champions League, many things can happen in one or two games.

"We will be closer to achieving in Europe when we have more Premier League titles. That is a nice process and the right process to do at Manchester City.

"If I could have one thing this season, right now, it would definitely be the title."

It would be a surprise if Liverpool do not make City sweat right to the finish once again after bouncing back from last season's agonising near-miss in the title race by winning their sixth European Cup.

No team has ever gathered more points without winning the Premier League than second-placed Liverpool did last season with their tally of 97.

Jürgen Klopp's side lost just once in their 38 league games -- crucially that defeat came against City -- but their 2-0 Champions League

final win over Tottenham ensured there was no title hangover.

Liverpool had the Premier League's meanest defence last season and boast an attack featuring two of the campaign's three leading scorers in Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane.

Despite that wealth of talent, Liverpool midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum admits making a fast start is essential to stop City establishing a stranglehold at the top.

"You just have to collect as many points as possible, especially in the beginning, and try to build a team who will be even better at the end of the season," Wijnaldum said.

"We can try and do even better than last season. Basically it starts now because now we have the whole team together."

Challengers to City and Liverpool are likely to be thin on the ground.

Since winning the Europa League, Chelsea have lost star playmaker Eden Hazard to Real Madrid and hired an idolised but inexperienced new manager in Frank Lampard, who is working under the club's transfer ban.

Guardiola suggests Manchester United are contenders after making £80-million-man Harry Maguire the world's most expensive defender and landing young talents Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Daniel James.

But it is hard to imagine United, who ended 32 points adrift of City in sixth place, bridging that gap this season.

Arsenal have the look of pretenders rather than contenders, while Tottenham have not invested enough to satisfy boss Mauricio Pochettino despite a paying a club record of around £54 million for Lyon's Tanguy Ndombele.



Bayern Munich's record 80-million-euro signing, French defender Lucas Hernandez warms up during a training session in Rottach-Egern, southern Germany on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Zidane snubs Bale again

AFP, Madrid

Gareth Bale's stand-off with Real Madrid continued on Wednesday after the forward was left out of Zinedine Zidane's squad to face Red Bull Salzburg in a friendly.

Bale has only played in two of Real Madrid's five pre-season games so far, coming on as a substitute against Arsenal and Atletico Madrid, and has now been left out completely for a third fixture in a row.

James Rodriguez and Mariano Diaz, who are both expected to be sold, were also not included for the match in Austria.

Zidane has made clear that Bale is not in his plans as he looks to rejuvenate Real Madrid following their miserable season last term.

The club are keen to sign Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba, with Tottenham's Christian Eriksen and Ajax youngster Donny van de Beek potential alternatives.

But Madrid first need to raise funds, after already spending around 300 million euros (\$336 million) this summer.

Zidane said last month that Bale being sold would be "best for everyone", while Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett told AFP: "Zidane is a disgrace - he shows no respect



GARETH BALE

for a player that has done so much for Real Madrid."

Bale is in no rush to leave the Santiago Bernabeu, where he has a contract until 2022, worth around 18 million euros a year.

He agreed terms with Chinese Super League club Jiangsu Suning last month but the move was called off after Madrid failed to agree a fee for the 30-year-old.

Bayern Munich retain an interest but any deal would be hugely expensive, making it increasingly likely Bale will remain at Madrid for the start of the La Liga season next weekend.

Forlan calls it quits

REUTERS

Former Uruguay striker Diego Forlan has announced his retirement, bringing to an end a 21-year career in which he played club soccer on three different continents.

Forlan, who started his career in South America with Argentine club Independiente, played for major European teams such as Manchester United, Villarreal, Atletico Madrid and Inter Milan before ending his career in Asia.

Forlan, 40, was also instrumental in Uruguay's run to the 2010 World Cup semifinals, where he was awarded the Golden Ball for best player at the tournament and finished as one of the tournament's top scorers with five goals.

"After 21 years I made the decision to end my career as a professional footballer," Forlan said in a statement.

"A beautiful stage closes full of great memories and emotions but another of new challenges will begin. Thanks to all who in one way or another accompanied me on this path!"

Forlan won the Premier League and FA Cup with United before moving to Spain where he helped Atletico win the Europa League in 2010 with a double in the final against Fulham.

He also led Uruguay to the Copa America title in 2011, grabbing another two goals in a final, when they beat Paraguay 3-0.

After a short stint in the Indian Super League with Mumbai City in 2016, he last played for Hong Kong Premier League side Kitchee Sports Club last year, wrapping up a career where he scored over 250 goals for club and country.

Hernandez starts Bayern training

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich's record signing Lucas Hernandez took part in his first squad training session on Tuesday, four months after a serious knee operation, the Bundesliga champions reported on their website on Wednesday.

The 23-year-old French World Cup winner has yet to feature for Bayern since his 80 million euro (\$89 million) move from Atletico Madrid in March.

His medical showed damage to the medial collateral ligament in his right knee that required an immediate operation.

Hernandez is unlikely to be ready for the opening game of the season against Hertha Berlin on August 16 but it is good news for his new teammates and manager Niko Kovac.

"I think the most important thing for the time being is that he's properly fit and starts to settle in," German international Leon Goretzka told the Bayern website.

The defender's return coincides with a media broadside aimed at the club by

striker Robert Lewandowski who has called on Bayern to bring in at least three new players.

"In attack we lost three players in the shape of Franck Ribery, Arjen Robben and James (Rodriguez)," Lewandowski told Sport Bild on Wednesday.

"And for the moment we have no new recruits for these positions."

While Robben has retired, Franck Ribery is out of contract and seems likely to be heading to Saudi Arabia while James has come to the end of a two-year loan period and has returned, for the moment at least, to Real Madrid.

Veteran defender Rafinha has also left in order to return to Brazil.

So far this summer, Bayern have only reinforced their defence with French world champions Hernandez and Benjamin Pavard while promising 19-year-old striker Jann-Fiete Arp has arrived from Hamburg.

The German champions have also been trying for weeks to attract Leroy Sane from Manchester City but no announcement has yet been made.