

Neymar, Suarez, Messi worth billions to Manchester clubs

Manchester clubs all in for Barca stars

Transfer Talk devotees will have noted in recent months that much speculation has focused on Barcelona, and whether the Spanish giants can afford to keep their ridiculously talented trio of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez at Camp Nou given their financial constraints.

The Blaugrana have repeatedly said they do not intend to sell any of the three players, but both Manchester clubs will test the Catalan club's resolve next summer in a "£1 billion battle," according to The Sun.

The paper reports that United's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward is "desperate to land Neymar," while "Woodward's rival at City, Khaldoon Al Mubarak, is working just as hard to pull off the biggest transfer coup in history for Messi." With "money no object" for either Premier League club, it will apparently be a straight competition between City and United as to which side can tempt one of MSN away from Spain to England.

The figures on offer – a total outlay of £195m for Neymar and £550m for Messi if he also decides to join City's sister club, New York City FC, in the MLS after a stint at the Etihad – are mind-boggling. But The Sun insists the sums "really do stack up" when factoring in huge new TV rights deals and sponsorship agreements. With managers Pep Guardiola and Carlo Ancelotti also up for grabs, Manchester could be the centre of world football's next transfer battle extraordinaire.

Paper Round

Ozil eyes huge contract

Mesut Ozil has graced these pages of late with reports that Real Madrid want to re-sign the German playmaker following his stunning form for Arsenal, though Los Blancos fans may be denied a reunion if the Gunners act fast.

The Sun reports that Ozil has begun talks with Arsenal regarding a new contract, with the 27-year-old World Cup winner wanting a £20,000-a-week increase to hit £160,000 a week. An Arsenal source is quoted as saying that Ozil's fine form is a result of "being played in the No. 10 role on a consistent basis." Who would have thought it?!

However, Arsene Wenger's hopes of landing Spanish forward and Barca target Nolito seem to be off after the 29-year-old was quoted as telling Marca: "The truth is that I am happy in Vigo and that is why, some minor details pending, I will be renewing with Celta soon."

Nolito picked up a knock during Saturday's 1-0 Primera Division victory over Espanyol and is expected to miss up to a month.

All change in Manchester

As if talk of Messi and Neymar wasn't enough for fans of both Manchester clubs, the futures of Louis van Gaal and Manuel Pellegrini are decidedly unclear, as well. Free-scoring Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez has revealed that he was unceremoniously booted out of Old Trafford by Van Gaal, and The Sun reports that the Dutch coach has now "started to lose the dressing room ... as players have begun to openly question his tactics."

Pellegrini may be sitting pretty in the last 16 of the Champions League in comparison to his neighbours' Europa League draw, but The Sun suggests that City "are on tenterhooks over Pep

Guardiola,” and will go “all out” to land the Catalan coach should he decide to leave Bayern Munich next summer – that’s regardless of whether Pellegrini guides the club to another Premier League title.

What’s more, former Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld has told Swiss paper Blick: “My reading is that Pep will leave Bayern because City will loosen the purse strings even more.” Tough break, Manuel.

More misery for Mourinho

Jose Mourinho is now merely surviving at Chelsea on past glories, with Monday’s defeat at league leaders Leicester City cementing just how far the defending champions have fallen. The Daily Star reports that despite Mourinho suggesting his players have “betrayed” him, Roman Abramovich “has no intention of splashing out again in January’s transfer window” to allow the Portuguese coach to “buy his way out of trouble.” The Sun suggests that mutiny is in the air with a “frosty atmosphere” and players “turning on each other and Mourinho.”

Worse still, the Daily Mail reports an “emergency board meeting” has been prepared for Wednesday. Abramovich could always use Mourinho’s potential £40m payout on John Stones instead, with the Express reporting that Chelsea will lodge a bid of that figure with Everton in January to beat Man United to the centre-back. However, Toffees boss Roberto Martinez has emphatically stated: “It doesn’t matter if Chelsea come back in for him ... January doesn’t come into consideration.”

Meanwhile, The Sun reports that Juventus are keen on Oscar, but are “willing to wait” until next summer in order to secure both the Brazil international as well as Juan Cuadrado – currently on loan at the Bianconeri from Stamford Bridge – in a double deal.



Leicester City’s Algerian midfielder Riyad Mahrez (2R) shoots and scores past Chelsea’s Cesar Azpilicueta (R) and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois during the English Premier League football. Photo: AFP

Klopp faces fight for Serbian starlet

Jurgen Klopp is busy looking for players to join him in saluting the Anfield crowd after heroic home draws against West Brom, though the Liverpool coach is apparently facing competition for Marko Grujic.

The Mail reports that the 19-year-old Red Star Belgrade midfielder has held talks with Anfield officials regarding a £4.3m offer which would see Grujic stay in Serbia on loan until the end of the season, although Stuttgart are said to have launched a £5m offer plus bonuses.

With Inter Milan also reportedly after the player, Klopp may need to work his considerable charm to try to push through a deal in the face of such interest.

Tap-Ins

-The good news, Leicester fans? Riyad Mahrez says he will not leave the Foxes in the January transfer window. The bad news? The 24-year-old star does not think the club will win the title.

-Pablo Dani Osvaldo has, like any good hipster, shunned conformity for a career on the edge.

But one club who seem more than happy to accommodate a large ego and extra locker space for bespoke tailored outfits are Boca Juniors, with president Daniel Angelici saying of their former loan star: "We are going to bring in a forward and the priority is Osvaldo."

-Regarding negotiations for highly rated 22-year-old striker Jonathan Calleri to join Inter Milan, Angelici added: "It is almost a done deal. The negotiations are very far along."

-Aston Villa need changes fast, and The Times reports that club captain Gabriel Agbonlahor could be out in January after "falling foul" of new coach Remi Garde.

-Where next for Andros Townsend? The Sun reports that Southampton are the latest club to consider saving the England winger from his "Tottenham hell" – a fate the damned are presumably forced to endure by sitting down and watching football for thousands of pounds a week.