



MARTIAL THE NEWCOMER OFF FRANCE'S FOOTBALL ASSEMBLY LINE

LES ULIS: Les Ulis is not a chic suburb of Paris but it deserves a monument as a nursery of French football talent, after producing Thierry Henry, Patrice Evra now Anthony Martial. It could have been different for the Manchester United star however as he prepares for the European Championship finals. A sign at the entrance to the Janvier tower, the public housing block where the Martial family lived, declares: "Ball games forbidden."

Now the district is a draw for football pilgrims. "That's where Anthony Martial lived," said Gaye Niakate, a neighbor who told of the regular visits. "Once it was three English journalists. I had to pass the phone to my wife who speaks English," he laughed. Martial has only been an international star for a few months. "But we have been talking about 'Toto' for a long time," added Niakate, using the teenager's childhood nickname. Niakate's brother, Mahamadou, is deputy sporting director of the Club Omnisport des Ulis. "He was always way above the others," the club official said of Martial's rise. And CO Les Ulis should know.

Before Martial brought the spotlight on the club, it produced French football legend Henry and Evra, who left Manchester before Martial's minimum 50 million euro (\$55 million) transfer from Monaco last year. Martial, 20, played at Les Ulis from 2001 to 2009 before signing with Lyon, then Monaco and now Manchester. "I'm not going to say that I expected him to go so quickly to such a club, but I am not so surprised," said Mahamadou Niakate, sat in Les Ulis club house amid jerseys worn by some of the most famous past players.

Martial is a "source of great pride for Les Ulis, an example of success for the young," said the town's mayor Francoise Marhuenda. The footballer has kept strong links to the town, just 30 kilometers (19 miles) southwest of Paris. He returned to Les Ulis to coach the new generation before its annual gala on May 23. Patrice Evra—who will also be at Euro 2016 — was also present and was the star draw. "Martial is young and has a long career ahead of him," said Niakate.

Football El Dorado

But even the club's assistant sporting director cannot explain how it produced as many stars with standing of Henry, Evra and Martial. Yaya Sanogo, another product off the Les Ulis conveyor belt, is at Charlton Athletic in England. Sega Keita is at Troyes in Ligue 1. "That is the big question," he said of the club's success. "There are football pitches everywhere in Les Ulis. But then there is the quality of the coaches and the club's family side. Everyone contributes and everyone knows everyone: the coaches, the players and the parents."

But they all knew that Henry, Martial and Evra were special. "The honest relations that we have with the parents means there is a climate of trust and they don't go looking elsewhere." Lyon made an accord with Martial so that he would not negotiate with other teams, said the Ligue 1 side's recruitment chief, Gerard Bonneau. "He was young so we let him stay at Les Ulis another year with special training, especially for school."

Bonneau said Martial was surrounded by "an extraordinary family atmosphere" with parents who were more worried about the youth "than his future career." Martial is the youngest child in a family of footballers. One brother Johan is a defender for Troyes. Dorian, is captain of the Les Ulis team in the regional league. "When he was smaller he had a special character, there was a lot of fuss," said Dorian Martial. "But our parents were behind us with their strict discipline. We know that he is sensible and anyway, my father and I are there to remind him about things." —AFP

FROM GOALKEEPER TO GOAL POACHER, KANE STANDS OUT

LONDON: As the young Harry Kane dominated the penalty area with a dazzling display, the future spearhead of England's attack presented his coach with a welcome thought: "fantastic I've got a goalkeeper." Hot on the heels of another brilliant season with Tottenham Hotspur, Kane heads to Euro 2016 established as one of the Premier League's most feared forwards and a key figure for his country. But the 22-year-old, who has scored 59 goals for Tottenham over the last two years, appeared set for great things in a completely different position when he took one of the first significant steps at Ridgeway Rovers, the junior club that helped David Beckham on the road to stardom.

Kane was born close to Ridgeway's base in Chingford, a modest commuter town located just beyond the urban sprawl of east London. So when Kane and his parents saw an advert taken out by Ridgeway in a local paper, he immediately set off to emulate Manchester United and England legend Beckham. But as Dave Bricknell, who was then Ridgeway's chairman and coach, recalls, it was not as a striker that Kane first caught his eye. "We had a trial when he was six or seven," Bricknell said. "We were doing a shooting exercise and I said does anyone play in goal and he put his hand up."

"I didn't know him so I said ok. He was making some unbelievable saves, to the right, to the left, punching the ball over the top, everything. I thought 'fantastic I've got a goalkeeper', because little kids never want to go in goal. "Then one of the parents came up to me and went 'he's not a goalkeeper, he plays outfield'. So he went outfield and he was scoring for fun."

Undeterred by dusty changing rooms that had not had a coat of paint since 1991 and pitches that often flooded due to lack of drainage, Kane emerged as a rough diamond amid the muck. And once Bricknell, who now works as a scout for Tottenham, got a prolonged glimpse of Kane in his preferred position, it became clear he had a unique talent on his hands. "You could tell straightaway even though he was young. He could strike a ball really well," Bricknell said. "I've been doing it for over 20 years and there's probably only a couple that stood out like that." — AFP



Harry Kane



VINCENNES: (From left) France's forward Anthony Martial, France's goalkeeper Benoit Costil and France's midfielder Morgan Schneiderlin walk at Vincennes racetrack in Vincennes. — AFP

UNLUCKY REUS LEFT OUT OF THE GERMAN SQUAD

SCHWEINSTEIGER, HUMMELS TO BE FIT FOR EURO

ASCONA: Winger Marco Reus was left out of Germany's final Euro 2016 squad on his 27th birthday yesterday over injury concerns, missing out on his second consecutive major tournament. Coach Joachim Loew also cut 20-year-old midfielder Julian Brandt along with his Bayer Leverkusen team mate Karim Bellarabi and defensive midfielder Sebastian Rudy. Borussia Dortmund's Reus, who was ruled out of the 2014 World Cup after sustaining an injury in the final warmup game, would struggle to get through a one-month tournament due to long-standing fitness problems, Loew said.

The 27-year-old, considered among the most talented German players of his generation, had another injury-plagued season with Dortmund and went into the German training camp nursing an adductor muscle injury. "The medical staff could not give a clear prognosis for Marco," Loew told reporters. "He has massive injury problems and the medical staff was very skeptical about his ability to last through the coming weeks and such a gruelling tournament. "It is a bitter decision and bitter for Marco," he said. Reus struggled throughout the season with muscle problems as well as a toe injury among other issues. "He can barely run straight at the moment and you have to be fully fit if you play in a European championship," team mate Sami Khedira said. "It is very bitter but I am confident he will get his chance on the big stage. "He was very calm and composed in accepting

the decision," Khedira added. The Germans, eyeing their fourth continental title and first since 1996, have been drawn in Group C along with Poland, Ukraine and Northern Ireland for the tournament in France starting on June 10. Loew kept faith with youngsters Leroy Sane, Julian Weigl and Joshua Kimmich and included captain Bastian Schweinsteiger and defender Mats Hummels even though both are nursing injuries. "Both will be ready for the Euro," Loew said. Germany lost 3-1 to Slovakia in a friendly last weekend and play Hungary on Sunday in their final warm-up game.

Full squad

Goalkeepers- Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich), Bernd Leno (Bayer Leverkusen), Marc-Andre ter Stegen (Barcelona); Defenders- Jerome Boateng (Bayern Munich), Emre Can (Liverpool), Jonas Hector (Cologne), Benedikt Hoewedes (Schalke 04), Mats Hummels (Borussia Dortmund), Shkodran Mustafi (Valencia), Antonio Rudiger (Roma); Midfielders- Julian Draxler (VfL Wolfsburg), Sami Khedira (Juventus), Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Toni Kroos (Real Madrid), Thomas Mueller (Bayern Munich), Mesut Ozil (Arsenal), Lukas Podolski (Galatasaray), Andre Schuerrle (VfL Wolfsburg), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Manchester United), Julian Weigl (Borussia Dortmund); Forwards - Mario Gomez (Besiktas), Mario Goetze (Bayern Munich), Leroy Sane (Schalke 04). —Reuters



ASCONA, Switzerland: Germany's midfielder Marco Reus arrives by bike to a training session as part of the team's preparation for the upcoming Euro 2016 European football championships. — AFP

MADRID AND ATLETICO PLAYERS VIE FOR FINAL EURO 2016 SPOTS

MADRID: Three players from Real Madrid and three from Atletico Madrid will compete for the final four spots in Spain's squad for the European Championship. Spain coach Vicente del Bosque yesterday announced a list with 19 players who will make it to France, leaving the final four spots available to the players who participated in Saturday's Champions League final between Madrid and Atletico.

Seven players from the Madrid clubs had been included in the preliminary list released two weeks ago, but Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal was ruled out of the tournament because of a muscle injury sustained in the final in Milan. The six players vying for the final four spots are Madrid's Sergio Ramos, Isco Alarcon and Lucas Vazquez, as well as Atletico's Juanfran, Jorge "Koke" Resurreccion and Saul Niguez. Juanfran and Ramos, who scored Madrid's goal in the Champions League final, are set to make the team. There are some doubts about Koke's fitness following Saturday's final, but he is also expected to be included in the squad.

The 21-year-old Niguez is likely to one of the players dropped, and the final spot would be filled by either Isco or Vazquez. Niguez was a surprise addition to the initial list released by Del Bosque, who left out veteran strikers such as Diego Costa and Fernando Torres. Spain, the winner of the last two European Championships, defeated Bosnia 2-1 on Sunday in the first of its three warm-up matches before traveling to training camp in France. It will still play South Korea in Austria on Wednesday and Georgia on June 7 in Getafe. Spain's first game at Euro 2016 is against the Czech Republic on June 13 in Toulouse. Its other Group D matches are against Turkey on June 17 in Nice and Croatia on June 21 in Bordeaux. — AP

BELLERIN IN SPAIN'S EURO 2016 SQUAD

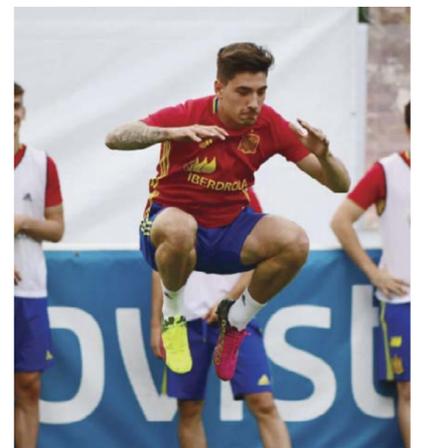
MADRID: Arsenal right back Hector Bellerin will be in Spain's Euro 2016 squad, the country's football federation said yesterday. The 21-year-old Bellerin and the other 18 players named to face South Korea in a friendly in Wals-Siezenheim, Austria today have been guaranteed spots in the European Championship squad. Bellerin was included after Real Madrid right back Dani Carvajal sustained a leg muscle injury in Saturday's Champions League final victory over Atletico Madrid. The Real Madrid and Atletico players in the squad will be named later on Tuesday when Spain coach Vicente del Bosque announces his final list.

"Del Bosque has confirmed that the 19 players from Wals-Siezenheim will be included on the final list," the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) said in a statement. Bellerin made his senior Spain debut in Sunday's 3-1 friendly win over Bosnia and enjoyed a strong season with his club Arsenal. Named in the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) team of the year, Bellerin made 45 starts in all competitions and helped his side finish runners-up to Leicester City in the Premier League. Spain, winners of the last two European Championships, play their first game against the Czech Republic on June 13 in Toulouse.

Spain squad

Goalkeepers - Iker Casillas (FC Porto), David de Gea (Manchester United), Sergio Rico (Sevilla); Defenders - Marc Bartra (Barcelona), Jordi Alba (Barcelona), Gerard Pique (Barcelona), Cesar Azpilicueta (Chelsea), Hector Bellerin (Arsenal); Midfielders - Sergio Busquets (Barcelona), Mikel San Jose (Athletic Bilbao), Cesc Fabregas (Chelsea), David Silva (Manchester City),

Thiago Alcantara (Bayern Munich), Bruno Soriano (Villarreal), Andres Iniesta (Barcelona); Forwards - Pedro Rodriguez (Chelsea), Alvaro Morata (Juventus), Aritz Aduriz (Athletic Bilbao), Manuel "Nolito" Agudo (Celta Vigo). — Reuters



SCHRUNS, Austria: Spain's forward Hector Bellerin jumps during a training session in Schruns, Austria. — AFP