

# Ex-UEFA Chief Platini Arrested in 2022 World Cup Probe

PARIS (AFP) - The banned ex-UEFA chief Michel Platini was arrested Tuesday in connection with a criminal investigation into the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

The French football legend elected to lead European football's governing body in 2007 was taken into custody by French anti-corruption police investigating the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to the gas-rich Persian Gulf state.

Qatar was named to host the World Cup in a decision that triggered controversy over its suitability amid allegations of corruption that ultimately sparked FIFA's worst ever scandal five years later.

France's Financial Crimes Prosecutors Office (PNF) opened a preliminary investigation in 2016 into allegations of corruption, conspiracy and influence peddling surrounding FIFA's award of the World Cup to Qatar and also the 2018 tournament to Russia.

According to Blatter, Qatar won hosting rights as a result of a deal with the French, derailing FIFA's own "diplomatic arrangement" whereby hosting rights would go to Russia in 2018 and then to



Michel Platini, pictured in 2015, was arrested Tuesday in connection with a corruption investigation into the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar

the United States four years later.

The French investigation centers on alleged French intervention linked to Platini and former president Nicolas Sarkozy.

According to the specialist magazine France Football, a "secret meeting" took place on November 23, 2010 at the Elysee Palace in Paris between Sarkozy, Qatar's then-Prince (now Emir) Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and Platini, at that time both UEFA president and vice-

president of FIFA.

Just over a week later, FIFA awarded Qatar hosting rights for the 2022 tournament.

Platini has made no secret of his support for Qatar but denies he was influenced by Sarkozy, whose advisor for sport, Sophie Dion, was also arrested along with Platini.

"It was time to give them the World Cup. I am for that. It's my conviction," he said at the time.

Claude Gueant, Sarkozy's erstwhile chief of staff and former interior minister, was also called in for questioning Tuesday by France's Anti-Corruption Office of the Judicial Police.

The decision to award the event to Qatar ultimately led to a wider corruption probe that led to the overthrow of Blatter and Platini and the arrest of senior FIFA figures.

Platini, 63, led UEFA until 2015 when he was banned from football for four years for ethics violations including receiving a two-million Swiss francs (1.8 million euros, \$2 million) payment from the disgraced former head of FIFA Sepp Blatter.

Qatar has been accused of buying votes in its bid to stage the World Cup and a subsequent report by U.S. independent investigator Michael Garcia unearthed an array of suspect financial dealings, many linked to Sandro Rosell, the ex-Barcelona president who served as a consultant for Qatar.

Platini, a triple Ballon d'Or winner, was expected to succeed Blatter as FIFA president in 2016 before his fall from grace. He has been battling to clear his name ever since.

# Kyrgios Backs Barty to Pile Up Grand Slam Wins



Nick Kyrgios has backed fellow Australian Ashleigh Barty to add more Grand Slam titles to the French Open

LONDON (AFP) - French Open champion Ashleigh Barty has the talent to dominate women's tennis for years to come, according to fellow Aussie Nick Kyrgios.

Barty, who took a hiatus from tennis early in her career to play cricket, ended an eight-year wait for an Australian player to win a singles Grand Slam at Roland Garros earlier this month.

But Kyrgios is not surprised by the sudden rise of a player he has known since they travelled the world together as juniors.

Kyrgios, by contrast, is still waiting for his Grand Slam

breakthrough with a series of high-profile on-court tantrums undermining his talent.

The 24-year-old pulled out of the French Open, saying the tournament "sucks" in comparison to Wimbledon, where he reached the quarter-finals in 2014.

Rafael Nadal claimed a 12th title in Paris with the Spaniard, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic now combining to win the last 10 Grand Slam titles despite all three reaching their thirties.

Kyrgios, though, believes Wimbledon presents the best opportunity for the younger generation to snap that streak.

# Sagan Takes Overall Tour de Suisse Lead With Stage Three Win

PARIS (AFP) - Former three-time world champion Peter Sagan has taken the overall lead of the Tour de Suisse by powering to victory at the end of stage three on Monday.

The 29-year-old Slovak's show of force over the final 300 meters continues his superb run of results in Switzerland, where he has a record 17 stage wins, and at least one every year since 2011.

He took the yellow jersey 10 seconds ahead of previous leader in Denmark's Kasper Asgreen who failed to make the top ten in the run over rolling terrain to the medieval town of Murten.

Last year's Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas remains in eighth place in the general leader board but trails Sagan by 28 seconds.

The breakaway's biggest lead of three minutes over the peloton came with 130 kilometres to go and was cut down to 15 seconds with 10km left.

It was caught with 6km to go by a mass group of riders which included Sagan.

Trek-Segafredo's John Degenkolb pushed ahead with 300m remaining but was overtaken by Sagan. Italian Elia Viviani finished in second place, followed by Degenkolb.



Peter Sagan got back to winning ways at the Tour de Suisse on Monday

# Excluded Totti Resigns as Roma Director



AS Roma former player and technical director leaves an emotional press conference after announcing he is quitting the club.

ROME (AFP) - Roma legend Francesco Totti, who joined the capital club as a 12-year-old before retiring in 2017, has announced he was resigning as director.

"At 12:41pm on June 17, 2019, I sent an email... which was for me unimaginable: I handed in my resignation," Totti told the Roma website. "I never thought that this moment would come."

The 42-year-old World Cup winner said his resignation was driven by his lack of inclusion in important decision-making within the club, something he blamed on Roma's American owner James Pallotta.

"I was a weight for the club, I was

told I was too cumbersome, both as a player and a leader," said an emotional Totti.

"Now I'm leaving and it hurts."

The three-time Serie A winners said they had offered a new role to Totti.

"The club is extremely disappointed to learn that Francesco Totti has announced that he has decided to leave the club and not take up the position of Technical Director of AS Roma," a statement said.

Totti, who spent his entire professional career at Roma, added: "There are many things that made me think, they never let me take part. They only called me when they were in difficulty.

# Chile Begins Copa America Title Defense With Win Over Japan



Chile's Charles Aranguiz, left, and Japan's Shoya Nakajima vie for the ball during a Copa America Group C soccer match at the Morumbi stadium in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Monday, June 17, 2019.

SAO PAULO (AP) — Chile's experienced Copa America team proved too good for Japan's young squad.

The two-time defending champions opened their Copa America campaign with a 4-0 win over the Asian guests on Monday, with Eduardo Vargas scoring a pair of goals to become Chile's all-time leading scorer in the South American competition.

Erick Pulgar and Alexis Sanchez also scored for the titleholders, which are trying to become the first nation to win three straight Copa titles since Argentina in the late 1940s.

Vargas scored twice in the second half to reach 12 goals with Chile in the tournament, two more than Enrique Hormazabal.

The victory moved Chile to the top of Group C along with Uruguay, which opened with a 4-0 win over Ecuador on Sunday.

Japan, playing as a Copa America guest for the second time, brought to Brazil a young squad focused on the Olympic tournament at home next year. The Japanese youngsters struggled against the veteran Chilean squad which was in control from the start at the Morumbi Stadium.

# Schumacher's Ferrari F2002 to Be Auctioned in Abu Dhabi

BERLIN (Dispatches) - A portion of the proceeds from the auction of F2002 chassis #219 by RM Sotheby's will go to the Schumacher family's Keep Fighting, Never Give Up Foundation.

Schumacher used that chassis for three of his 11 grand prix wins in his dominant 2002 season.

It won on its first appearance in the San Marino GP at Imola, then again in the infamous team orders assisted victory in Austria - where Rubens Barrichello pulled aside within sight of the flag to let Schumacher win.

The car fell just shy of a Monaco win, as David Coulthard fended off Schumacher's pressure in that event to give McLaren its sole victory of the season.

But in France that July, Schumacher was at the wheel of chassis #219 as he took the win that clinched what was then his fourth world title, with six races to spare - a record for wrapping up a championship quickly that still stands.

Barrichello used the chassis for three races afterwards, including his Hungarian GP triumph.

RM Sotheby's car specialist Oliver Camelin described the chassis as "truly special; it represents one of the last Rory Byrne designed, V10 era cars and was like a guided missile in acquiring wins en route to a championship won with sheer racing dominance".

A Ferrari F40 signed by Sebastian Vettel is also being auctioned in the



Michael Schumacher's 2002 F1 title-winning Ferrari car will be auctioned during Abu Dhabi GP in association with RM Sotheby's.

event, which will take place on the Saturday of the Abu Dhabi GP weekend at the end of the season.

An F1 statement said the cars involved would be "paraded down the start/finish straight, and driven along the circuit's pitlane" before the auction.