

Drogba's outstanding display highlights Arsenal's lack of a central striker



by Rob Kelly

Following their 3-0 mauling at the hands of Chelsea in November, Arsene Wenger remarked that Didier Drogba "doesn't do much". This despite the Ivorian scoring twice, then his ninth and tenth goals in 11 matches against Wenger's men. If Drogba really "doesn't do much" in the eyes of the Frenchman, one shudders to think what his assessment of Gael Clichy, Manuel Almunia and Theo Walcott might be.

It is hard to fathom what Wenger felt he had to gain from his criticism of Drogba. All it was ever likely to do was spur the Ivorian on to greater deeds, and once again at Stamford Bridge on Sunday the Chelsea striker proved his credentials in emphatic manner. In the aftermath of Chelsea's destruction of Arsenal in November, I argued that Drogba was the most complete striker in world football, and while Wayne Rooney has since kicked on to grab a share of the limelight, the Ivorian has arguably got a narrow edge on his rival.

How Wenger could do with a talismanic striker in the mould of Drogba or Rooney. In the absence of the injured Robin van Persie, Arsenal have looked desperately short up front, both figuratively and literally. While the muscular Drogba stands at 6ft 3in and acts as the focal point of the Chelsea attack, Arsenal had to make do with the impish Andrei Arshavin, all 5ft 7in of him.



FOCAL POINT: Didier Drogba scored twice against Arsenal yet again.

Arshavin is a fine player (albeit not quite the coruscating presence of last season), but he is not a central striker and when presented with a glorious chance to equalise following Drogba's opener on Sunday, the Russian was denied by Petr Cech. It was typical of Arsenal: they dominated possession, yet lacked a cutting edge. While Wenger's men looked to the skies as yet another chance went begging, Chelsea looked to Drogba, a one-man wrecking ball.

Successive defeats against Manchester United and Chelsea have surely ended Arsenal's Premier League hopes, and Wenger must question his

role in his side's downfall, along with that of some of his key men. He had the January transfer window to add the striker that his side desperately need, yet the only addition of note was the re-signing of the 35 year-old Sol Campbell. January may not be the optimum time to buy, but when you are in a race for the league title and are short of a forward, you must move in the market. Wenger didn't and it has cost him.

Marouane Chamakh has revealed his preference to move to the Emirates Stadium this summer, so it appears that Wenger - who has been chasing the Moroccan for some time - may finally

have got his man. But at what price? Rather than holding on for a bargain (Chamakh will be available on a free transfer), Wenger may have been better advised prising open the purse strings and signing a forward who could help in the here and now.

Another trophyless season beckons for Arsenal, while Chelsea and Drogba look with relish towards a future laden with silverware. It is time for Wenger to act in the transfer market to plug the gaping holes in his talented squad.

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IPL-2010 to hit theatres across the country

The third edition of the Indian Premier League is all set to make its debut in theatres in around 1000 screens across the country, where the matches will be telecast live.

UFO Moviez, a digital satellite cinema network, has entered into a strategic alliance with multiplex chains like Cinemax, INOX, Fame and many single screen theatres across the country to show the Twenty20 matches.

In collaboration with Crown Infotainment, which holds the distribution rights for introducing IPL-III matches to theatres, UFO has signed over 550 screens so far, out of which about 200 are multiplexes.

"IPL is one of the most popular events in the world, but only few people can be a part of it as it is hosted in only nine cities in India. So our aim is to take it to a wide range of audience, giving them a stadium-like experience," Kapil Aggarwal, Joint managing Director, UFO Moviez India Ltd said.

"To provide the audience a carnival like experience, each of these theatres will have gifts, multi-cuisine food stalls, cricket-related merchandise etc.

"The matches will be screened in high definition format, which will provide 33 per cent extra than what is screened on television and without any commercial breaks.

"During the IPL, the theatres incur losses as no movie is released at that time. So this will serve a profitable revenue generating content for the exhibitors too," he said.

(PTI)

Serena wants to have a baby, but...



Serena Williams

Serena Williams, is not sure if she'll be a responsible mother as she once accidentally left her pet pooch behind after a training session on the tennis court, reports The Daily Star.

She says, "I would love to have a baby... But I have two little dogs I take care of and they're so cute, but sometimes I forget them. One time I was in the locker room... I was busy and I left and I was in the car driving home and I was like, 'Oops!' I definitely don't need any kids

because I forgot my dog."

She adds, "Every time I see a woman walking around pregnant, I'm like, 'Oh my god, I could never do that.' How are you walking? I look at them and my back starts hurting!

"That's as far as I've gotten with that (having kids) but eventually, maybe one day I'll get there. That would be awesome."

(C) The Telegraph Group, London, 2010

Capello wary of Swiss threat to England

by Jason Burt
in Warsaw

England were handed one of the toughest draws in qualifying for Euro 2012, Fabio Capello insisted on Sunday, although the bookmakers immediately installed them as emphatic 1-10 favourites to go through.

Group G was one of two, Capello said, he had hoped to avoid when the top seeds were finally drawn with Switzerland, Bulgaria, Wales and Montenegro. Capello marked it - along with Group A, which includes Turkey, Austria and Belgium - as the most competitive, although there will be a general consensus that things could have been a lot trickier.

"Every game will be really tough," Capello claimed. "It will be interesting. It will be impossible for us to play even one game relaxed. We'll have to stay focused as we will face really good teams."

Of Wales, who England beat twice in qualifying for the 2006 World Cup finals, he said: "Derbies are never normal games. It will be one of the most important games for me. Switzerland will be really tough."

Capello's first game as England manager was the 2-1 victory against the Swiss at Wembley in February 2008. "When we play Switzerland again, we will show that we have progressed since my first game in charge," he said.

Capello said he was nevertheless pleased that England were in one of the three groups with just five nations - meaning they play two fewer ties - with the campaign opening this September and culminating in November 2011.

John Toshack, the Wales manager, said that he had a young team but added: "I know Fabio Capello quite well, so will look forward to being able to pit our talents against a powerful England team later in the year. The two games with England at under-21 level recently were really terrific matches and I am sure these young lads will be motivated."

"They will relish the challenge although we realise that England are a top side and the favourites for the group and probably one of the favourites for the World Cup this summer."

Switzerland, who topped their group to qualify for this summer's World Cup finals, are 18th in the Fifa rankings,

Bulgaria are 30th, Wales 76th and Montenegro 72nd.

Bulgaria have never beaten England in eight attempts and their coach Stanimir Stoilov admitted: "England are strong favourites and because of that we are all hoping for second place."

Euro 2012 qualifying groups in full:

Group A: Germany, Turkey, Austria, Belgium, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan

Group B: Russia, Slovakia, Republic of Ireland, FYR Macedonia, Armenia, Andorra,

Group C: Italy, Serbia, Northern Ireland, Slovenia, Estonia, Faroe Islands,

Group D: France, Romania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Belarus, Albania, Luxembourg,

Group E: Holland, Sweden, Finland, Hungary, Moldova, San Marino,

Group F: Croatia, Greece, Israel, Latvia, Georgia, Malta,

Group G: England, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Wales, Montenegro,

Group H: Portugal, Denmark, Norway, Cyprus, Iceland,

Group I: Spain, Czech Republic, Scotland, Lithuania, Liechtenstein,

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Tiger Woods reunited with family

by Kate Loveys

Tiger Woods has been reunited with his children for the first time in more than a month, it has been reported.

The shamed golfer is said to have been picked up from an addiction clinic by his wife Elin Nordegren in time for their son Charlie's first birthday.

Miss Nordegren, who also has a two-year-old daughter by Woods called Sam, is believed to have given him six months to save their marriage.

His squeaky-clean image was destroyed by claims of affairs with a string of women, including cocktail waitresses and party hostesses.

The 33-year-old admitted to infidelity and issued an extraordinary public apology for his "transgressions," confessing "I have let my family down."



BEFORE THE TEARS: Elin Nordegren and Tiger Woods. Miss Nordegren has apparently given her husband six months to save their marriage.