

## WHERE WILL POGBA FIT IN AT MANCHESTER UNITED?

**LONDON:** With Paul Pogba poised to complete his record-breaking return to Manchester United, manager Jose Mourinho must figure out how best to fit the France midfielder into his star-studded starting XI. Pogba excelled at Juventus on the left-hand side of midfield in a 4-3-3 formation, but Mourinho appears set to adopt a 4-2-3-1 system in his first season at Old Trafford.

It would oblige Pogba to adopt a deeper position, which could compromise Mourinho's ability to get the very best out of him. "Used in the right way in this United team, Pogba's long-range shooting and ability to get into the box will make him a massive threat," says former Liverpool midfielder Danny Murphy, now a BBC pundit. "He could be the difference between United winning the

title or not." Pogba was expected to undergo a medical at United on Monday as he closes in on a reported 89 million pounds (\$116.4 million, 105 million euros) return to the club he left in 2012.

The 23-year-old wore the coveted number 10 shirt in his final season at Juventus, but he will have to earn the right to be considered the chief creative talent at United.

Wayne Rooney is due to start the season in the number 10 role. New signing Henrikh Mkhitaryan can also play as a central playmaker and Mourinho has further options in the shape of Spanish midfielders Juan Mata and Ander Herrera.

In any case, as Oualid Tanazefi, the man who brought Pogba to his first club, Le Havre, told French sports daily

L'Equipe during Euro 2016: "Number 10 is really not his position."

Were Mourinho to make putting Pogba in his optimum position a priority, by reverting to a 4-3-3 system, it would create dilemmas elsewhere in the team. Mourinho has already vowed Rooney will not play in midfield, as he has for England, so a move to 4-3-3 would leave the United skipper vying with Zlatan Ibrahimovic for the lone striker's role.

### DESCHAMPS DELIBERATIONS

Pogba's principal strengths—dribbling, passing and long-range shooting—depend on him having the freedom to get forward. He provided a league-leading 12 assists in Serie A last season, but France coach Didier Deschamps strug-

gled to find the right role for him during Euro 2016.

He initially started on the right of a midfield three, but in an effort to replicate his role at Juventus, Deschamps experimented by moving Pogba to the left and shifting Blaise Matuidi to the right. However, a switch to 4-2-3-1 at half-time of France's last 16 encounter with the Republic of Ireland in Lyon saw Pogba drop back to the right-hand side of a midfield two alongside Matuidi.

He played there for the rest of the tournament, sparking only intermittently as the hosts reached the final, and Deschamps admitted that it was not his ideal role.

"I don't think any of you would say that the best position for Paul is in front of the defence alongside Blaise," he told

reporters. Pogba's coach at Juventus, Massimiliano Allegri, believes that he will end up playing as a holding midfielder, but not for a few years yet. When Pogba left United four years ago, it was because his path to the first team was barred by players like Michael Carrick, Paul Scholes, Ryan Giggs and Park Ji-Sung. Now it is he who will be putting squad-mates in the shade. Bastian Schweinsteiger is already thought to have been frozen out by Mourinho.

With either Carrick or Morgan Schneiderlin likely to partner Pogba in midfield, Marouane Fellaini and Herrera will also be bumped down the pecking order. But while Pogba's place in the team will be secure, the nature of his role could determine whether he flops or flies. —AFP

## ERVINE HITS CENTURY AS ZIMBABWE FIGHT BACK

**BULAWAYO:** Craig Ervine's maiden Test century allowed Zimbabwe to enjoy their best period of a difficult series, as they held New Zealand's bowlers at bay for much of the third day of the second Test yesterday.

Ervine made the most of the early life granted to him to score an unbeaten 115, taking Zimbabwe to stumps on 305 for six—just 78 runs shy of avoiding the follow-on.

Zimbabwe's batsmen showed that they had learned some lessons from the first Test, which they lost by an innings inside four days, although they were also assisted by the flat pitch at Queens Sports Club.

Having drawn a blank on the second evening when Zimbabwe reached 55 without loss, New Zealand put in a determined bowling effort on Monday but were thwarted by an increasingly dogged home side. While the tourists managed three wickets in the opening session of the day, Ervine found an able partner in debutant Peter Moor, who scored 71 in a 148-run partnership for the sixth wicket that took more than a session out of the game. Nevertheless, having declared on 582 for four in their innings, New Zealand remain confident that another result is within their grasp after dismissing Moor in the final half-hour of the day.

"It's only day three and we've got the runs on the board and have a lot of time in the game," bowling coach Shane Jurgensen

said. "We're down the bottom end of their innings. There were signs today that they carry is a bit lower and the pitch is taking a bit more turn." Zimbabwe's total might have looked very different had Ross Taylor held a regulation slip catch off the bowling of Tim Southee when Ervine was on just one. At that stage the hosts had seen opener Tino Mawoyo play on from the bowling of Southee and Sikandar Raza Butt get out with a loose shot to left-arm seamer Neil Wagner. Chamu Chibhabha reached his maiden Test fifty but then fell for 60 on the stroke of lunch, and after the interval Prince Masvaure was bowled by Mitchell Santner and Sean Williams was trapped lbw by legspinner Ish Sodhi whilst attempting a reverse-sweep.

However Ervine battled on, seeing off a threatening spell of reverse swing from Trent Boult as well as the second new ball, and reached his hundred in the final hour of the day.

"Since I was tiny a hundred in Test cricket was always a dream for me," he said afterwards. "I had to work really hard ball after ball after ball to keep the concentration going but in the end it paid off."

"There's still a long way to go with two days left in the game, so we've got to get as close to their score in this innings as possible because it's only going to get harder to bat on this pitch." —AFP



**CROMWELL:** Jim Furyk watches his drive on the 18th hole on his way to shooting a PGA record 58 during the final round of the Travelers Championship golf tournament in Cromwell, Conn., Sunday. — AP

## FURYK SETS A PGA TOUR RECORD AT TRAVELERS

**CROMWELL:** Jim Furyk has a place in PGA Tour history all to himself with a new magic number. Three years after Furyk became the sixth player on tour with a 59, he took it even lower Sunday in the Travelers Championship with a 12-under 58. The 46-year-old American bounced in an eagle from 135 yards on his third hole, ran off seven straight birdies around the turn and picked up his final birdie on the 16th hole with a putt from just inside 24 feet. He rolled in a short par putt on the final hole at TPC River Highlands, thrust his arms in the air and waved his cap to salute thousands of fans who had rushed to the amphitheater around the 18th green.

Furyk tied for fifth at 11 under, three strokes behind winner Russell Knox.

Furyk reached 11 under with his seventh straight birdie at No. 12. He missed a 12-foot birdie attempt on the 14th hole and, after nearly driving the par-4 15th, his 8-foot birdie putt lipped out. Ryo Ishikawa shot a 58 in The Crowns on the Japan Golf Tour in 2010. Shigeki Maruyama shot a 58 in US Open sectional qualifying in 2000. And just last week, Stephan Jaeger posted a 58 on the Web.com Tour in the Ellie Mae Classic at TPC Stonebrae.

Furyk had a 59 at Conway Farms in the second round of the 2013 BMW Championship with a bogey on his card. He's the only player with two sub-60 rounds. Knox saved par with a 12-foot putt on the final hole to beat hometown favorite Jerry Kelly by a stroke. Knox closed with a 68 for a 14-under 266 total. The 31-year-old Scot won for the second time on the tour, following his breakthrough victory in China in November in the World Golf Championships-HSBC Champions. Kelly, the 49-year-old former University of Hartford player, finished with a 64.

### 3M CHAMPIONSHIP

Joe Durant made a 10-foot eagle putt on the first hole of a playoff with Miguel Angel Jimenez to win the PGA Tour Champions' 3M Championship. The 52-year-old Durant won on the par-5 18th after closing with a birdie on the hole in regulation for a 9-under 63. After a double bogey on the par-4 14th, Jimenez birdied the last four holes for a 67 to match Durant at 19-under 197 at TPC Twins Cities.

Jimenez birdied the 18th in the playoff, too, before Durant rolled in the right-to-left winner. Durant won for the second time on the 50-and-over tour and the first by himself after teaming with Billy Andrade to win the Legends of Golf last year. Durant won the last of his four PGA Tour titles at Walt Disney World in 2006.

Two-time winner Bernhard Langer birdied six of the first seven holes in a 64 to tie for third with Kevin Sutherland (68) at 17 under. Langer has broken par in all 24 of his rounds in the event. Two-time defending champion Kenny Perry had a 68 to tie for 37th at 7 under.

### US WOMEN'S AMATEUR

South Korea's Eun Jeong Seong won the U.S. Women's Amateur at Rolling Green to become the first player to win the event and U.S. Girls' Junior in the same year.

The 16-year-old Seong outlasted Italy's Virginia Elena Carta 1 up in hot conditions in the 36-hole final, the first all-international championship match in 106 years.

The 19-year-old Carta, coming off her freshman season at Duke, overcame a dizzy spell that forced a 15-minute delay after the 31st hole. She was trying to become the second player to win

the tournament and NCAA individual title in the same year. Seong won her second straight U.S. Girls' Junior title last month at Ridgewood in New Jersey. The finalists earned spots in the U.S. Women's Open next year at Trump National in New Jersey, and the winner also traditionally receives exemptions into the ANA Inspiration, Women's British Open and Evian Championship—all only if still an amateur. Seong took the lead with a birdie on the par-5 25th hole and won the par-4 29th with a birdie for a 2-up advantage. Carta took the par-4 31st with a par to Seong's double bogey, and Seong rebounded with a par win on the par-3 34th. Carta won the par-5 35th with a 30-foot birdie putt, and Seong missed a chance to end it when her 10-footer burned the right edge. Seong ran in a 40-footer for birdie on the par-4 36th and conceded Carta's 25-footer to close out the match.

### PAUL LAWRIE MATCH PLAY

England's Anthony Wall won his first European Tour title in more than 16 years, beating Sweden's Alex Noren 1 up in the final of the Paul Lawrie Match Play. Noren was looking to win a second title in Scotland in the space of a month, after capturing the Scottish Open on

July 10, and was 2 up after two holes over the Archerfield links in the windiest conditions of the week. He didn't win another hole. The 41-year-old Wall's only previous title was at the Alfred Dunhill Championship in 2000 - 16 years, 204 days ago. He has struggled over the past three years with hip and back injuries.

### DIGITAL ALLY OPEN

Wesley Bryan won the Digital Ally Open in a playoff to earn an immediate PGA Tour promotion as a three-time winner this season on the Web.com Tour. The 26-year-old former South Carolina player became the 21st three-time winner in a season in tour history and the 11th to earn a three-victory promotion. Also the Louisiana Open and El Bosque Mexico winner, he will be fully exempt on the 2016-17 PGA Tour.

Bryan closed with a 4-under 67 to match Grayson Murray and J.T. Poston at 20-under 264 at Nicklaus Golf Club at LionsGate. Murray and Poston each shot 66.

Bryan won with a birdie on the par-3 18th, hitting a 6-iron from 194 yards to 3 feet. The three matched birdies on the par-4 18th on the first extra hole. Bryan earned \$117,000 to push his tour-leading total to \$449,392. —AP

## LEICESTER READY FOR ENCORE AFTER EPL TITLE TRIUMPH

**LONDON:** A day after masterminding the most unlikely title success in English football history, Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri was asked about his target for the next Premier League season. Would it be a top-four finish? Maybe even retaining the trophy?

Not even close. "We know very well," Ranieri said, "we have to fight for 10th position." Never have titleholders' ambitions appeared to be so low. These, though, are no normal champions. Leicester wrote a sporting underdog story for the ages by toppling the traditional heavyweights of England and winning the Premier League at pre-season odds of 5,000-1. A team widely tipped for relegation finished 10 points clear of second place.

Now for the encore. But it won't be with the same cast. Ranieri has lost his midfield dynamo, N'Golo Kante, to Chelsea for \$40 million. Another significant departure came off the field, with Steve Walsh, the head of recruitment with a record of unearthing unheralded players and making them stars, joining Everton. Speculation has been swirling in the offseason around the future of two more of last season's key players, Jamie Vardy and Riyad Mahrez. Vardy eventually signed a new deal but doubts remain about whether Mahrez will be at Leicester by the end of the transfer window on Aug. 31, with the winger heavily linked with Arsenal.

For this season, Leicester's title odds with British bookmakers range between 20-1 and 33-1. Pre-season games have been against Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona rather than Lincoln and Burton, which was the case in 2015. And part of the warm-up for the new campaign was a trip to Wembley Stadium for the Community Shield against Manchester United, which Leicester lost 2-1 on Sunday.

"Everything's different now," Ranieri said. "You imagine the big teams who didn't win, who didn't make the Champions League. They are

going crazy now, they want to kill now."

Proving that Leicester is operating at a completely new level, the team will be competing in the Champions League for the first time. Ranieri could rely on a core group of players last season - with no European involvement along with early exits from the domestic cup competitions - and was able to shed his "Tinkerman" tag.

That may return, given he must juggle domestic and European competition, and Ranieri has been busy strengthening the depth of his squad in the offseason. Nampalys Mendy is tasked with filling the void left by Kante in central midfield, Nigeria forward Ahmed Musa joined from CSKA Moscow and has a similar profile to Vardy, while center back Luis Hernandez (from Sporting Gijon) and goalkeeper Ron-Robert Zieler (from Hannover) appear able backups. With their mostly unheralded players and reliance on the counter-attack, the Foxes brought an element of surprise to last season and opponents underestimated them until it was too late. Even when opposition teams altered tactics and sat back more, Leicester still found a way to get results and finished the season with only three losses.

Why shouldn't they challenge for the title again? Taking into account the end of the 2014-15 season, when the team mounted a stunning escape from relegation under Nigel Pearson, Leicester has won 30 of its last 47 Premier League games and lost only four. The team spirit is strong, the King Power stadium is a tough place to visit, and Leicester has the perfect tactics for winning away games. Externally, there will be no pressure on Leicester to repeat its amazing exploits from the 2015-16 season and few are expecting it to. But this is a team that just loves defying the odds. It opens with a trip to Hull on Saturday. "The close-knit brotherhood is unbelievable," Vardy says, "and, for me, there's a lot of unfinished business here." — AFP



**BULAWAYO:** Zimbabwe's batsman PJ Moor (L) plays a shot during the third day of the second test in a series of two matches, where New Zealand lead hosts Zimbabwe 1-0, at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo yesterday. —AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe:** Scoreboard at the close of play on the third day of the second Test between Zimbabwe and New Zealand yesterday:

**New Zealand first innings** 582-4 dec (T. Latham 136, R. Taylor 124 not out, K. Williamson 113, S. Williams 1-62)

**Zimbabwe first innings:**  
 T. Mawoyo b Southee 26  
 C. Chibhabha c Williamson b Santner 60  
 Sikandar Raza c Williamson b Wagner 3  
 C. Ervine not out 115  
 P. Masvaure b Santner 2  
 S. Williams lbw b Sodhi 16  
 P. Moor c Guptill b Sodhi 71

G. Cremer not out 2  
 Extras (b8, lb2) 10  
 Total (for 6 wkts, 120 overs) 305  
 Fall of wickets: 1-65 (Mawoyo), 2-83 (Sikandar Raza), 3-107 (Chibhabha), 4-115 (Masvaure), 5-147 (Williams), 6-295 (Moor)  
 Still to bat: Donald Tiripano, John Nyumbu, Mike Chinouya  
 Bowling: Southee 24-12-64-1, Boult 21-10-37-0, Santner 31-5-102-2, Wagner 25-7-51-1, Sodhi 18-8-41-2, Guptill 11-1-0-0.

## MANCINI TAKES A BOW AS INTER CONFIRM EXIT

**MILAN:** Coach Roberto Mancini said his farewells to the blue and black stripes of Inter Milan yesterday after the club confirmed his exit, amid media reports the Serie A giants' new Chinese owners wanted fresh blood to rejuvenate the team.

"F.C. Internazionale Milano confirms that it has parted company with head coach Roberto Mancini by mutual agreement," the club said in a statement, adding it wanted to "place on the record" its thanks to the Italian coach. Mancini is tipped in the media to be replaced by Dutch coach Frank de Boer. The club's Chinese owners, the Suning group, had been out for Mancini after Inter lost 6-1 to Tottenham Hotspur in a friendly in Oslo on Thursday, Corriere dello Sport and Gazzetta dello Sport reported.

Mancini, 51, had been coach for two years, having previously led Inter to three league titles and two Coppa Italias during his first spell in charge between 2004 and 2008. The former Manchester City manager had been under contract until 2017. He was given severance pay of 2.5 million euros (\$2.8 million) net, and will take his entire staff with him, Corriere dello Sport said. "I want to thank the Nerazzurri fans, who have always supported me with passion and loyalty," Mancini said on Twitter. "I thank the players who in these past

20 months have been splendid and impeccable professionals," he said, wishing the club "a future full of satisfaction".

Mancini, first sacked by Inter in 2008, went on to manage Manchester City for nearly four years before coaching Galatasaray in 2013. Though he returned to Inter, he was unable to usher them back into the Champions League and finished fourth last season.

### TRANSFER TROUBLE

Mancini was rumoured to have fallen out seriously with the club's chiefs in July after they failed to snap up one of his transfer targets, Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure. While Mancini hoped Toure would boost performance at the San Siro after an inconsistent season, Inter refused to stump up the funds for the 33-year old, the reports said. His likely replacement, De Boer, the most capped outfield player in the history of the Netherlands football team, left Ajax at the end of last season. De Boer, 46, could be appointed within the day, media reports said. The Dutchman had been linked with Premier League clubs Southampton and Everton before those positions were filled. At Inter he will have under two weeks to sign more players before the Serie A season starts against Chievo on August 21. —AFP