

## THE WEEK'S NEWS & GOSSIP FROM THE PREMIERSHIP

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Leeds United's new head coach Brian Kidd (centre) with manager David O'Leary (right) direct operations from the touchline against Manchester United.  
Courtesy Empics

**Leeds United** manager **David O Leary** injected extra spice into the build-up to Saturday's clash of the day against **Manchester United** by announcing the appointment of **Brian Kidd** as head coach at Elland Road. Kidd of course was **Sir Alex Ferguson's** assistant manager at Old Trafford for ten highly successful seasons, and is largely credited with nurturing the young talents of players like **David Beckham**, the **Neville** brothers, **Paul Scholes** and **Nicky Butt**.

Yet when Kidd was tempted to try his hand as a manager in his own right at **Blackburn Rovers**, Ferguson was scathing in his criticism of his former assistant's judgement and management credentials. The attack shocked Kidd, but after 11 months which included a relegation from the Premiership, Rovers sacked him leaving many to conclude that Ferguson's assessment had been accurate.

However, Kidd's talents as a coach – especially of youth players – remain highly regarded within football, and O'Leary had no qualms about appointing him as director of the Leeds youth development academy. As far as I'm concerned, I don't think there is a much better coach in this country, or in Europe," said O'Leary after promoting Kidd to the Leeds first-team bench. The elevation comes just in time for Kidd to face Manchester United – the club with whom he won a European Cup winner's medal as a player in 1968, and a host of trophies as assistant to Ferguson in the 1990s.

Ferguson himself, who now regards **Liverpool** and Leeds as the main challengers for the Premiership after his team crushed second-placed **Arsenal** last week, is celebrating being named Premiership Manager of the Month for a record 12<sup>th</sup> time. The award follows United's impressive record during February.

However, he may have been irritated by newspaper reports and pictures of his goalkeeper **Fabian Barthez** leaving a Paris night-club in the early hours of Friday morning surrounded by a bevy of attractive young women. Ferguson is unlikely to have regarded that as the ideal preparation for the big game against Leeds.

The United manager has also been monitoring the **Ruud Van Nistelrooy** situation. The **PSV Eindhoven** striker, whose proposed £18 million move to Manchester was abandoned last April when he collapsed in training with a serious knee injury, scored twice for PSV's reserves in his comeback game. However, Van Nistelrooy insists that he cannot afford to concentrate on United or anything else other than regaining full match fitness at the moment.

Two other players with injuries on their minds are **Keiron Dyer** and **Stephen Carr**. Dyer, reportedly a transfer target of both Manchester United and Leeds, must undergo surgery on a shin injury and will miss a number of games for both **Newcastle United** and England. Carr also needs surgery and will be out of the **Tottenham Hotspur** side for at least six weeks.

On the transfer trail, **Barcelona's Dani** has rejected a move to **Middlesbrough**, but the Teesside club appear to have persuaded **Bradford City** striker **Dean Windass** to join them.

Meanwhile **Tottenham** and England centre-back **Sol Campbell** has dismissed rumours linking him with a mover to **Bayern Munich**, while **Everton** midfielder **Stephen Hughes** is expected to join **West Ham United** on a free transfer.

**Arsenal**'s young centre-back **Matthew Upson**, having complained at not being given a chance by Gunners boss **Arsene Wenger** despite the recent injuries to **Tony Adams** and **Martin Keown**, has been granted his wish of first-team football. Upson has gone on a loan transfer to First Division **Crystal Palace**, for whom **Chinese star Fan Zhiyi** returns after injury. Another Chinese star, **Zhang Enhua**, is making an impact at **Grimsby Town**, for whom he has been on the score-sheet twice in recent matches.

Other loan deals have seen **Celtic** striker **Mark Burchill** moving to **Ipswich Town**, and Icelandic striker **Thordur Gudjonsson** joining **Derby County** for the rest of the season from Spanish club **Las Palmas**.

**Arsenal** and **Chelsea** have escaped punishment following the mass confrontation between their players during the FA Cup 5<sup>th</sup> round tie at Highbury, which the Gunners won 3-1. The FA wanted to study a video of the game to decide whether the clubs should be fined for failing to control their players. However, one result of the video evidence is that Chelsea's Nigerian full-back, **Celestine Babayaro**, has been charged with misconduct for stamping on Arsenal midfielder **Freddie Ljungberg**.



Manchester United target Ruud Van Nistelrooy, who made a scoring comeback for PSV Eindhoven's reserves after injury.  
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