

# No sentiment from Capello as 'pub' star

# Davies in and beach boy Becks out

By Matt Lawton



**P**ub players in, publicity seekers out. Fabio Capello might not quite see it like that but his first England squad sends out a clear message to players as well as punters and pundits.

He is here to win football matches, not popularity contests, and for that reason there is no room for sentiment or heady nostalgia. Not when the side he has inherited can no longer even qualify for major tournaments.

This is why David Beckham has been omitted for next week's friendly against

Credit has to go to Capello for ignoring the widespread clamour for Beckham's selection for what would have been his 100th cap. Even the Government called for the 32-year-old ex-captain to be given the chance to reach that particular milestone simply because it will enhance England's prospects of securing the 2018 World Cup.

'It would be good for the 2018 bid,' declared the Government's bid ambassador Richard Caborn. 'He has already said he will be as helpful as he can and to have someone on your

seasoned Capello watchers.

He is a hard-nosed individual and someone who looks to inspire rather than indulge his players, favouring a climate of fear to the comfort zone that has existed with England in the past.

Teams, Beckham knows from his days with Capello at Real Madrid, are not named until the afternoon of a game, leaving players to sweat on their places in much the same way Becks was made to sweat this week.

Contrary to what Caborn, Sven Goran Eriksson and so many others might think,



Switzerland and why someone like Curtis Davies has squeezed into Capello's provisional 30-man party. The England coach is judging players on their form for their clubs and right now Beckham's club is on holiday.

Davies may have been candid enough to compare himself to a pub player when he made a less than impressive debut for Aston Villa but he was excellent in the recent matches England's new coach attended. For that reason he is in and rightly so.

team who has reached the magical number of 100 caps can only be a good thing.' Not only that, he added: 'England fans would like him to get his 100th cap. He deserves it.'

Capello might possess only a basic grasp of English but he must have encountered a member of the Beckham lobby at every turn. In the media, in the many football club boardrooms he has entered these past few weeks. Perhaps even in his dreams. But he adopted a stance that comes as no surprise to

Beckham does not deserve to be in the squad when his last competitive match for Los Angeles Galaxy was back in November.

He does not deserve it when players like David Bentley, Shaun Wright-Phillips and Gabriel Agbonlahor are performing so consistently for their clubs. He does not deserve it when Aaron Lennon is selected for the Under 21s despite a dazzling display in front of Capello at Old Trafford last weekend.

And he does not deserve it when he is running along a

beach during a business trip to Brazil while his rivals on England's right side are flogging their guts out on the training pitches of England.

If he returns to LA and starts to excel for the Galaxy then perhaps he will be worthy of a recall and a chance to run out for what is sure to be a standing ovation at Wembley.

Now that Scotland have withdrawn from the friendly on May 28 because of the decision by Celtic and Rangers to take their players on end-of-season tours, it might even be a good way of getting bums on seats (not that the FA would ever dare suggest that to their £6million-a-year coach).

But if Beckham eventually wins his 100th cap he will do so on merit and that, knowing the man as well as we do, will be something he accepts and a challenge he relishes. As Beckham proved during Steve McClaren's disastrous tenure, he is no quitter and he deserves our respect for that.

Unlike McClaren, who marked the start of his own reign as England coach by dropping Beckham from the squad, Capello has left the door open. McClaren talked of a new era and an end to the old guard, dropping Sol Campbell and David James too. But 37-year-old James is in Capello's squad, and quite right too when he is the best English goalkeeper in the Barclays Premier League at this moment.

Beckham, and indeed any other player omitted on Thursday, has to recognise that Capello has at least been consistent. Paul Robinson is also missing, again because he has not been playing for his club.

At the same time those who have impressed him most are in. Jermaine Jenas has earned his recall to the squad after a string of outstanding performances for Tottenham. Glen Johnson, Matthew Upson and Chris Kirkland also return after catching the Italian's eye.

They might not make the cut when he reduces the squad to 23 tomorrow night but then again they could survive. And that kind of uncertainty is something Capello's England's players will quickly have to get used to.

## Defoe joy at £7m Pompey move



**J**ERMAIN DEFOE completed a deadline-busting £7million move to Portsmouth last night — to end a nightmare day on a high note.

The striker was gutted to be left out of Fabio Capello's England squad then learned Spurs had agreed to sell him. And his switch came despite Manchester City failing dramatically with a £9m swoop for Pompey frontrunner Benjani.

City finished his medical in time, even though flight delays meant he only arrived at their training ground at 11.10pm.

But the paperwork was delayed beyond the midnight deadline.

### I can't wait to play

Meanwhile, Defoe, who failed to hold down a first-team place at Spurs, said: "I can't wait to play for Portsmouth. I just want to get my boots on."

"I fully understand why I was left out by England. You can't expect to get picked if you're not playing regularly."

"Hopefully I can play football here. I just want to score goals."

Redknapp, who paid Charlton £1.6m to sign Defoe for West Ham in 1999, said: "He's a boy I know well and he will be a great signing for us."

"He wants to play and he needs to play."

The deal was only confirmed at 12.55am.

City boss Sven Goran Eriksson, aggrieved to miss out on Benjani, did at least seal a £5m deal with Swiss side Basel for Ecuador striker Felipe Caicedo, 19.

His agent Saif Rubie explained: "He's agreed a 4-year deal."

"He's over the moon and can't wait to get over here."

"It's taken the best part of two months to come together."

And on a busy day at Eastlands Eriksson completed a loan deal for Inter Milan starlet Filippo Mancini, 17, the son of the Italian giants' coach Roberto Mancini.