



DAVID WOODS

IN THE KNOW, INSIDE THE GAME

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
BET VICTOR



FAVOURITE: Sturridge

No Swiss stroll for England

ENGLAND go to Switzerland on Monday for their first game on the road to France 2016.

The new format means England could finish third in their group and still qualify.

But on paper the game is the most difficult of the Three Lions will face in a qualification, given England are ranked 20th in the world and their opponents ninth.

Roy Hodgson's supposed new-look side showed promise against Norway but they did in Brazil as well before flattering to deceive.

So BetVictor have pushed them out to 9-5 for the trip to Basel with the hosts 17-10 and the draw 2-1.

Hodgson would probably take a point now but he feels there are goals in this England team and the Liverpool duo of

WOODSY'S WAGERS

BET VICTOR

Daniel Sturridge and Raheem Sterling can provide them.

Sturridge is 5-1 at BetVictor to open the scoring on Monday with Sterling 8-1 and their partnership is one that Liverpool and England fans can look forward to for some time. I also like the look of our quote of 11-10 for both teams.

New skipper Wayne Rooney bagged the only goal against Norway but it would be wrong to say he has hit the ground running in his new role as club/international skipper.

Rooney also had a shot blocked at Wembley, as Hodgson was at pains to tell us, but with the arrival of Radamel Falcao will Rooney's place be guaranteed in the starting XI at Old Trafford?

Falcao is 6-4 to be United's top Premier League scorer, with Rooney and Robin van Persie 7-4 and 16-1 bar.

Rooney remains 2-1 to be the top English goalscorer in the Premier League behind 5-4 Sturridge, but with Rickie Lambert 14s and Charlie Austin 20s, competition isn't exactly fierce.

Falcao was the big deadline day transfer and he has been popular at 20-1 (now 16s) to be the League's top scorer despite trailing 2-1 favourite Diego Costa by four after the Chelsea striker's fine start.

Waging war on money madness



YOU probably haven't have heard of Tsjalle van der Burg.

No, he's not a big Dutch centre-half Harry Redknapp tried to sign on deadline day. Van der Burg is an economics professor at the University of Twente. And he's come up with an idea to do something for the greater good out of the money madness corrupting the Premier League.

Der Burg, in his book *Football Business - how markets are breaking the beautiful game*, reasons that clubs pretty much splash out whatever they bring in, so why not tax them 10 per cent on their revenue?

It wouldn't make a jot of difference because football's now all about spend, spend, spend, so clubs would just splash out a 10th less and that cash could be directed to good causes.

Lower

"To avoid losses clubs have to reduce their spending on players," he argues. "The players will not stop playing, even though their salaries are slightly lower, and the quality of play will not be worse."

Let's face it, top-flight expenditure on players and wages is disgusting. A ridiculous £842m in the summer transfer window with panicking Manchester United the worst, forking out £59m on Angel Di Maria (below) and bringing in Radamel Falcao on £350,000 a week, at a time when Wayne Rooney gets £300,000.

Much of that money, ultimately, comes from fans, in the cost of a season-ticket, overpriced pie or beer at the stadium, expensive replica shirt or subscription to watch their team on Sky or BT Sport, etc etc.

It appears for many fans common sense goes out of the window when it comes to their club. They stump up whatever the cost.

Well, the tide could be turning. Last month hundreds marched on the Premier League in protest at season-ticket prices. And although much of the taunting of Sky Sports reporters on deadline day was show-offs trying to get on TV, there was a



SHIRT SALE: Radamel Falcao with Ryan Giggs when he joined United

more serious protest at Crystal Palace's training ground.

With an explicit anti-Sky Sports chant and carrying a banner which read 'Sky Sports - Killing our game since 1992' the mob, armed with fireworks, managed to stop Kaveh Solhekol broadcasting.

Of course such behaviour cannot be condoned, but surely the signs are emerging that football cannot go on in this gross fashion.

Yes, the Premier League is an exciting competition containing skillful players from all over the world. But Michael Hart, the respected Evening Standard chief football writer who penned Sir Geoff Hurst's autobiography in 2001, summed it up a few years ago when he left the London-based paper.

"The charm's gone out of the game," he said. Boy, was he right.

Football Business - How markets are breaking the beautiful game, is available from Infinite Ideas publishing.

IS WOODSY RIGHT?

Text DSSPORT followed by a space and your comments to 86611. Texts cost 25p plus your normal network rate. Or email me on david.woods@dailystar.co.uk



CHEVROLET

Roy's border-line

ROY HODGSON must surely go to Stamford Bridge tomorrow week to have a look at Swansea.

It is hard to fathom why first Leon Britton (right) and now Nathan Dyer, Wayne Routledge and Jonjo Shelvey can't get near an England squad.

Shelvey has one cap but Dyer and Routledge, genuinely pacey players ready to run at defences, merit a call-up. As England boss,

Hodgson hasn't once crossed the border into Wales to watch the Swans, who are flourishing under Garry Monk and face Chelsea in a second v first clash.

On the subject of the Three Lions, it would be great to hear from their sports psychiatrist Dr Steve Peters about why Wayne Rooney looked so bloody miserable against Norway in his first match as designated skipper.



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