

On Säbener Strasse

MAG/PA IMAGES



Guardiola and Ten Hag share ideas at Bayern training in October 2013

Haaland over injuries that 'limited' him

Ian Whittell

Pep Guardiola thinks that Erling Haaland has got over the injury problems that have "limited" him in recent seasons — hardly news that Manchester United will wish to hear before the Norway forward's first Manchester derby tomorrow.

The 21-year-old had been hampered by persistent hamstring and hip issues that required minor surgery before he joined City from Borussia Dortmund this summer.

Those injuries limited him to an average of only 20 league games per season over his past four campaigns with Red Bull Salzburg and Dortmund — although the "injured" Haaland still managed to score 78 times in those 81 appearances.

But Guardiola claims that the work led by Mario Pfundt, the City chief sports therapist who even accompanied Haaland when he played two full games for Norway recently, has cured him of his problems and that means the striker can now play every game.

"It's not weird, sending a physio," Guardiola said. "At events like World Cups and European Championships, many physios go with the players. Mario is an exceptional physio. I've

always said to the club that the most important department in the backroom staff is the physios.

"Erling struggled a lot in Dortmund last year with injuries and arrived here with small problems. He started to work with Mario and other guys and thanks to them — and his work ethic — he can play regularly now."

The statistics bear out Guardiola's claims with Haaland having started all 12 games this season for which he has been available for club and country and, having made only 24 Bundesliga appearances for Dortmund last season, he has made seven already for City this term, scoring 11 goals.

Against United, the 6ft 5in forward could be up against United's 5ft 9in centre half Lisandro Martinez, although Guardiola laughed off suggestions of a potential mismatch.

"Erling is taller, that is for sure," Guardiola said jokingly. "But I like when the people underestimate a football player just for his size. He can tell them, 'I am here, I am a good player. I can play everywhere.'"

"He's a fantastic player: incredible build-up, good mentality, aggressive. You see this in his behaviours. It is not the first time he has played against strikers who are taller than him. "In Holland [when he was with Ajax],

I am pretty sure there are big strikers and he handled it. Be intelligent, be brave and do it. But, of course, the crosses in that position, Erling is taller, that is right. We will see what happens."

City have not been so fortunate with fitness issues in other areas with Guardiola confirming that John Stones, who injured his hamstring on international duty, will be out for two weeks.

Aymric Laporte, out since the final game of last season with a knee injury, has returned to training and could be involved in the derby.

And there was also good news for England midfielder Kalvin Phillips, who underwent shoulder surgery during the break and now has a chance of being fit in time for the World Cup in November and December, according to his club manager.

Guardiola said: "He is feeling good. The surgery was really good, the mobility is getting better. It is really good. "He took the right decision, otherwise he could not move forward. Every training session, every two or three times it was out."

"Now it's solved, this problem, and as soon as he is ready he can come back — hopefully in time to go to the World Cup and after the World Cup come back with us."



SPORT NOTEBOOK
Martyn Ziegler
Chief Sports Reporter
SPORTS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

Qatar to have 'sobering tents' for drunk fans at World Cup

Fans who become drunk and disorderly at the Qatar World Cup will be put into "sobering tents" until they have recovered from the effects of the booze. It is understood that the tents will be used as a softly-softly approach to dealing with fans who have become intoxicated, inset.

Organisers expect that with up to 200,000 fans being in Doha, the capital, on any one day they will be faced with some challenging behaviour, and the sobering tents will be a way of dealing with drunk fans without them being arrested.

Those who are taken into the tents will be kept there until they have sobered up and will be sent on their way with a warning that being drunk in public in Qatar is heavily frowned upon.



Getting drunk will not be a cheap experience for fans however. Beer at the official Fifa fan festival, available after 6.30pm, is expected to be £5 or £6 for 500ml but it is twice that price in the few hotels which serve alcohol. Beer, wine or spirits cannot be bought in shops.

Some cities in England routinely use "drunk tanks" — supervised units which are places where revellers who have over-indulged can be allowed to sleep it off. In 2018, NHS England made up to £300,000 available over the festive period to fund dozens of the facilities.

The Qatar authorities will also follow previous hosts in setting up a system to deal with any other low-level offences swiftly, rather than fans ending up in a jail cell.

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Brief encounter for new minister

For the first time in decades, there was no official announcement by the government of a new sports minister — Stuart Andrew took over the role as minister for sports, arts and ceremonies last week with no fanfare, nearly three weeks after Liz Truss had won the leadership contest.

There wasn't even a record on the Department for Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS) website about which of the ministers was handling sport until it was pointed out to the department this week, and neither Andrew's Twitter page nor his website mentions his new brief. Meanwhile, one-time DCMS communications officer Tim Vine is leaving the Premier League, where he is director of public affairs, after 17 years.

Lowry sale will benefit players

The Players Foundation, the PFA's charitable arm, will be the beneficiary of the sale of LS Lowry's painting *Going to the Match*, which is expected to raise £8 million at auction.

The former PFA chief executive Gordon Taylor instructed the union to buy the painting for £1.9 million in 1999 but Maheta Malongo, his successor, wants to use the proceeds to provide support and services for players and former professionals. The separation of the union and the charity made it necessary to divide any assets and determine which one owned the painting.

Rush to market

The former Liverpool striker Ian Rush has been told by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) to make it clear when he is promoting products on social media.

Rush tweeted a promotion from Carlsberg without stating that it was an ad, prompting a complaint from Dr Alex May, a charity researcher. The ASA said it had received "assurances from Rush's agent that he will ensure future posts are correctly labelled".

Letting it ride

After Lance Armstrong's fall from grace in 2013, Sir Bradley Wiggins said he felt "angry" and had "no sympathy whatsoever" for the Tour de France dope cheat. Time is a great healer, clearly, as Wiggins and Mark Cavendish were pictured with Armstrong this week recording his podcast in Mallorca. Also there were Johan Brynneel, the former US Postal team director who was banned for life, and Jan Ulrich, the German rider who also received a ban.

The rule of law

Scottish Athletics announced a two-year sponsorship extension this week with the law firm Lindsays, and quoted the company's chief operating officer, Ian Beattie, saying that it was "hugely proud" of the association. Beattie also just happens to be the chairman of UK Athletics — he took over last September after nine years as the chairman of Scottish Athletics. His law firm has no connection with the UK body.