

SPORTS



Brazil announces Ancelotti deal

Overachieving Italian coach charged with leading five-time world champion at 2026 World Cup

Carlo Ancelotti will leave Real Madrid following the conclusion of the La Liga season this month to become Brazil's first full-time foreign coach in a century. AP / REUTERS

Coach Carlo Ancelotti will leave Real Madrid and take over Brazil through the 2026 World Cup.

The Italian — Brazil's first full-time foreign coach in a century — will officially take charge on May 25 after La Liga ends, the Brazilian Football Confederation said on Monday. Details of the deal were not released.

"Bringing Carlo Ancelotti to coach Brazil is more than a strategic move. It is a statement to the world that we are determined to recover the top of the podium," CBF president Ednaldo Rodrigues said.

"He is the greatest coach in history and now, he will be with the greatest national team on the planet. Together, we will write new glorious chapters of Brazilian soccer."

There was no immediate comment on the move from Ancelotti or Real Madrid.

The CBF added that "Ancelotti starts his mission this week," meeting with coordinator-general Rodrigo Coutinho and former defender Juan, the confederation technical coordinator so he can pick his squad for the next World Cup qualifiers against Ecuador and Paraguay in June.

Ancelotti is expected to announce the squad himself in Rio de Janeiro on May 26, the CBF said.

Desperate for Carlo

Brazil — a five-time world champion — was under pressure to sign a new coach who could revitalize the team, which is in fourth place in South American qualifying for the World Cup. Neymar is struggling to return to top form after an ACL injury in 2023. The top six teams secure direct spots to the tournament, while the next six are hosted in United States, Mexico and Canada.

Ancelotti, 65, will replace Dorival Junior, who was the coach for 14 months before being fired in March after a 4-1 defeat to continental archrival Argentina.

Brazil's TV Globo reported Ancelotti has already called Neymar and midfielder Casemiro to discuss the team's future.

A CBF source told reporters that Ancelotti will live in Rio and travel to Europe whenever he sees fit. The source spoke on condition of anonymity due to a lack of authorization

to discuss the matter publicly.

"He already knows the players in Europe. He wants to know more about those in Brazil making it to the national team," the source said.

The source added there's no clause in Ancelotti's contract assuring the deal will be extended to the 2030 World Cup, though "that is a possibility."

Ancelotti's contract with Madrid ends next year, but Rodrigues said he confirmed his departure from Bayer Leverkusen.

Real Madrid reportedly wants Ancelotti in place in time for the Club World Cup in the United States, which starts on June 14.

Ancelotti's future at Madrid had been in question amid a mediocre season by the club's standards. The Champions League title defense ended in the quarterfinals. It has lost all four games to rival Barcelona this season, including the Copa del Rey final and the "Clasico" on Sunday that crushed Madrid's hopes of retaining the league title.

Leadership in flux

Ancelotti's signing ends a turbulent time on Brazil's bench since the departure of Tite after the 2022 World Cup quarterfinals elimination against Croatia.

Under-20 coach Ramon Menezes and Flamengo's coach Fernando Diniz took charge for several matches, as Rodrigues courted Ancelotti. Menezes and Diniz fared poorly, and Ancelotti extended his deal with Madrid.

Dorival Junior was chosen in 2024 to take the team to the World Cup, but he was also fired after the same lack of success.

Al-Hilal coach Jorge Jesus, a 70-year-old Portuguese who won several titles with Brazil's Flamengo in 2019, was the favorite to take the Brazil job until Madrid was knocked out of the Champions League by Arsenal in April. Local media also reported that Neymar's father and agent had a role in stopping his son's former coach in Saudi Arabia from taking over.

Some Brazilian media pundits have expressed doubt, wondering whether Ancelotti's signing has come too late. Former Brazil striker and 1994 World Cup winner Luis Muller said the Italian's CV was great, but that doesn't mean it will have an impact.

"It is too close (to the World Cup). Brazil doesn't have a team, and Ancelotti won't have time to develop a formation like he did at his clubs," Muller said. "It is a coach who carries a lot of weight, but a team that is lightweight. He has won much more than all these Brazil players. I don't think his CV will have an impact amid our very poor form these days."

Ana Thais Matos, one of TV Globo's main pundits, approved of Ancelotti's signing, but, if he took over, he will have a big challenge facing the mentality of the national team. "I don't believe in the psychological potential of this generation of players," Matos said. "It is a fragile generation, they don't have much self-confidence."

A rare appointment

Brazil will be Ancelotti's first international experience as a full-time coach. He was an assistant to Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi at the 1994 World Cup.

As a player — a creative midfielder — Ancelotti won Serie A titles with Roma and AC Milan and two



Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti issues instructions during a Spanish La Liga match against Barcelona at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona on Sunday. AP

European titles with the latter. His last professional match was in 1992 against Brazil, playing for AC Milan. The match, a celebration for the host winning that season's Serie A title, was won by Brazil 1-0 thanks to a goal by Carneiro.

Ancelotti started his full-time coaching career in 1995 at Italy's Reggina.

He's won titles in Italy, England, Spain, France and Germany. He's the only coach to have won five Champions League titles; two with AC Milan and three with Real Madrid.

It is highly unusual for Brazil to be coached by a foreigner.

Uruguayan Ramon Platenco coached Brazil in the 1925 South American championship, the predecessor of the Copa America, for just 19 days and four matches.

Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus took over Lima, known as Joreca, exiled from Brazil by Joao Paulo Costa in two friendly victories over Uruguay in 1944. In 1965, Argentine Filipo Nunez coached Brazil for one day. Nunez was Palmeiras' coach, and Brazil officials chose the Sao Paulo-based club to play with national team shirts in a friendly against Uruguay at the opening of Mineirao Stadium in Belo Horizonte.

Ancelotti will be the second man to coach Real Madrid and Brazil. Vanderlei Luxemburgo worked with Brazil from 1998-99 and led the Spanish giant in 2005, both stints without much success.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA

Why Carletto can succeed with Brazil

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti, fondly known as Carletto in his native Italy, will take the reins of the Brazil national team on May 25, aiming to lead the team to World Cup glory next year for the first time since 2002.

Previous Selecao coach Dorival Junior was sacked in March after a 4-1 thrumping by rival Argentina in qualifying.

Here are three key reasons why he could prove successful with the record five-time world champion.

Calm character

Ancelotti, who has written a book titled *Quiet Leadership*, is known for his calm and warm character, making him an ideal candidate for one of soccer's highest pressure jobs.

The overachieving Italian has demonstrated his ability to succeed in similar environments with some of Europe's biggest sides, including Real Madrid, Chelsea, Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain.

With Brazil's fastest rival Argentina reigning world champion, the pressure on Brazil to succeed at the 2026 World Cup, being held in the United States, Canada and Mexico, will be higher than ever.

Ancelotti is also set to be the first foreign manager to lead Brazil into a World Cup.

However, if anyone is out to out to thrive in — or despite — the heavy scrutiny from fans and national media, it is the unflappable, avuncular Ancelotti.

"Everybody will be ideal because everyone, including opponents, respects him," said Brazil great Zico in 2023.

Who knows football and is aware that players are more important than tactics."

Ancelotti is considered a superb manager, which will allow him to get the best out of a national team rich in talent.

Strong relationships

With Neymar turning 34 ahead of the World Cup, there is a strong chance that the forward — and talisman of the Brazilian generation — might not feature.

He has made only nine appear-

ances since rejoining Santos from Saudi club Al-Hilal, continuing to struggle with injury problems.

Instead Vinicius Junior will likely be Brazil's key figure, a player who has developed brilliantly under Ancelotti at Real Madrid.

The Italian has helped the 24-year-old turn from a figure of fun, because of his inconsistent end product, into one of the Spanish league's biggest stars.

Rodrigo has also won two Champions League titles with Ancelotti at Madrid, as has defender Edmundo. Teenage forward Endrick, who has already scored three goals for Brazil this season, netting seven times in all competitions.

Personal challenge

Ancelotti is the only coach in history to win all five of Europe's biggest leagues and will lead a new challenge in international soccer.

The World Cup is the final puzzle piece left for Ancelotti to complete his glittering managerial career.

Ancelotti won the Champions League twice as a player with AC Milan, and twice more as a coach there, along with three other wins while in charge of Real Madrid — five triumphs put him two ahead of any other manager.

The 65-year-old seemed to have fallen out of the elite after taking charge at Everton in 2019, but Madrid's surprise move to reappoint him in 2021 has been fruitful for both the coach and the club.

Now Ancelotti has his sights on glory with Brazil, and completing his personal trophy cabinet.

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MANCHESTER, England — An "embarrassed" Ruben Amorim raised doubts about his Manchester United future after another poor performance from his team in a 2-0 home loss to West Ham on Sunday.

Three days after United reached the Europa League final, it was brought back under to earth by another lowly side, as the Hammers recorded their first top-flight win at Old Trafford since 2007.

Tomas Soucek and Jarrod Bowen scored the visitors' goals as United, sporting an undisciplined kind of English soccer, suffered a 7th defeat in 36 league games this season to sit 16th.

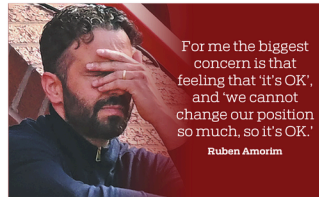
This latest lackluster display angered Amorim, who has already given his team several public dressing downs since replacing the sacked Erik ten Hag as United manager in November.

"For me the biggest concern is that feeling that 'it's OK,' and we 'know' our position so much, so we 'know' OK," Amorim said.

"That is the biggest problem in our club in this moment, because we are losing the feeling that we are a massive club and it's the end of the world to lose a game at home."

The 40-year-old Portuguese coach, previously in charge of Sporting Lisbon, said it was "the most dangerous feeling that you have in a big club," with United having not won the Premier League title since celebrated manager Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

Amorim, asked how he felt to see his side lose to the Premier League, replied: "How a manager of Man-



Manchester United's Ruben Amorim reacts during an English Premier League match against West Ham at Old Trafford in Manchester on Sunday. APF

For me the biggest concern is that feeling that 'it's OK,' and we 'know' our position so much, so it's OK."

Ruben Amorim

chester United is supposed to feel in that position — embarrassed, and his hard to accept."

He added that a Europa League final, with fellow English struggler Tottenham in Bilbao on May 21 should not distract from United's domestic woes.

"Everybody is thinking about the final," said Amorim. "The final is not an issue at this moment for our club. We have to have a better manager (about), and we have to change a lot of things at the end of the season."

Amorim, who has overseen just six league wins, said United "needs to change a lot of things during the summer," and questioned his own future. He can't oversee a significant improvement.

"I don't want to talk about players," Amorim said. "I'm talking about myself and the culture in the club and the culture in the team."

"We need to change that, and we need to be really strong and to be brave, because we will not have a next season like this. I've started like this, or if the feeling is still here, we should give the space to different people."

For the Hammers, victory ended an eight-game win drought.

"Very pleasing result, especially in the context of what we've been seeing here," said Hammers manager Graham Potter. "It's been a tough couple of months, because results have not been what we wanted."

"Performances haven't been as bad, but if you don't get the results, you have to suffer, and that's what we did."

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