winner's medal after helping AC Milan to overcome Liverpool FC in the final. The midfield terrier was not in peak form in Athens – a first-half yellow card possibly held him back – but he was a decisive figure in the semi-final victory over Manchester United FC. Milan noticeably lost their grip of the first leg at Old Trafford after he was carried off injured early in the second half, going from 2-1 up to 3-2 down, but at San Siro he was in supercharged form, the archetypal midfield warrior, winning almost every 50/50 ball, repeatedly hustling United out of possession and ensuring that the opposition could not get any foothold on the game. Another classic Gattuso display came in Italy's UEFA EURO 2008™ qualifier against Ukraine in Rome, on the occasion of his 50th international appearance.

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

ITALY
Major Honours – FIFA World Cup (2006)
Debut – 23/2/00 v Sweden (h, Palermo, friendly) (sub), won 1-0
First Goal – 15/11/00 v England (h, Turin, friendly), won 1-0
Caps 53; *Goals* 1
Major Tournaments – FIFA World Cup 2002; UEFA EURO 2004™; FIFA World Cup 2006

CLUB CAREER

Major Honours – UEFA Champions League (2003, 2007); UEFA Super Cup (2003); Italian Championship (2004); Italian Cup (2003)
Clubs: 94-97 Perugia Calcio; 97-98 Rangers FC (SCO); 98-99 Salernitana Calcio; 99- AC Milan

Theofanis GEKAS

Striker
Born 23/5/80, Larissa, Greece
Height 178cm, Weight 75kg

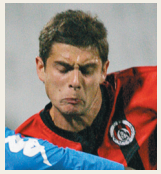
Transferred from Panathinaikos FC to newly promoted German Bundesliga club VfB Bochum after a proposed move to PAOK FC fell through, Theofanis Gekas could not have dreamt that he would make such a huge impact in his first season outside Greece. The Bundesliga's traditional yo-yo club were spared any fears of relegation thanks to the predatory instincts of their new striker, who topped the Bundesliga's scoring charts with 20 goals. Thirteen of those came in an astonishing eleven-game burst in the spring during which Bochum collected 22 of their 45 points. Coach Marcel Koller had earlier described Gekas's goals as the team's "life insurance" and he was right. But there would be no more premiums paid out to the 27-year-old in 2007/08 as he left for a vastly increased salary at Bayer 04 Leverkusen. Gekas crowned a wonderful season by scoring his first goal for Greece – in a UEFA EURO 2008™ qualifier against Hungary.

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

GREECE
Major Honours – none
Debut – 30/3/05 v Albania (h, Piraeus, WCQ) (sub), won 2-0
First Goal – 2/6/07 v Hungary (h, Heraklion, ECQ), won 2-0
Caps 16; *Goals* 1
Major Tournaments – FIFA Confederations Cup 2005

CLUB CAREER

Major Honours – none
Clubs: 98-01 Larissa FC; 01-04 Kallithea FC; 05-06 Panathinaikos FC; 06-07 VfL Bochum (GER); 07- Bayer 04 Leverkusen (GER)



Tsvetan GENKOV

Striker
Born 8/2/84, Mezdra, Bulgaria
Height 186cm, Weight 78kg

Albeit with the assistance of a double hat-trick in his final game of the season, a 9-0 win against hapless PFC Chernomorets-Burgas Sofia, Tsvetan Genkov made history by becoming the first player from PFC Lokomotiv Sofia ever to top the Bulgarian first division's goal charts. If two goals had been trimmed off his grand total of 27, he would have been tied with PFC Slavia Sofia's Todor Kolev, who could only manage five goals against the same opposition a couple of weeks earlier (in an 8-0 win). A former athlete, blessed with natural pace, Genkov also netted four UEFA Cup goals at the start of the campaign, so it wasn't just brittle Bulgarian defences that bowed to his prowess. In fact, his reputation spread all the way to Moscow, and no sooner had the Bulgarian season ended than he was whisked off to the Russian capital, where FC Dinamo Moskva signed him up on a four-and-a-half year contract.

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

BULGARIA
Major Honours – none
Debut – 17/8/05 v Turkey (h, Sofia, friendly) (sub), won 3-1
Caps 9; *Goals* 0
Major Tournaments – none

CLUB CAREER

Major Honours – none
Clubs: 02-04 FC Lokomotiv Mezdra; 04-07 PFC Lokomotiv Sofia; 07- FC Dinamo Moskva (RUS)

Steven GERRARD

Midfielder
Born 30/5/80, Liverpool, England
Height187cm, Weight 78kg

There would be no trophy-lifting for Steven Gerrard in 2006/07. After inspiring Liverpool FC to epic final victories in 2005 (UEFA Champions League) and 2006 (FA Cup), he could not complete the hat-trick as the Reds lost 2-1 to AC Milan in the 2007 UEFA Champions League final. The Liverpool skipper had an off night in Athens, missing one clear chance to equalise in the second half. Otherwise he had another

commanding season. He remained injury-free, and the only big game he missed was England's UEFA EURO 2008™ qualifier against Croatia, for which he was suspended. It was no coincidence that without him in Zagreb, England lost. They might have suffered an even more embarrassing result against Andorra in Barcelona had Gerrard not revived a dormant team with two timely goals – a game in which, significantly, Frank Lampard, the player he invariably struggles to connect with in central midfield, was absent.

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

ENGLAND
Major Honours – none
Debut – 31/5/00 v Ukraine (h, Wembley, friendly), won 2-0
First Goal – 1/9/01 v Germany (a, Munich, WCQ), won 5-1
Caps 57; *Goals* 12
Major Tournaments – UEFA EURO 2000™; UEFA EURO 2004™; FIFA World Cup 2006

CLUB CAREER

Major Honours – UEFA Champions League (2005); UEFA Cup (2001); UEFA Super Cup (2001, 2005); English FA Cup (2001, 2006); English League Cup (2001, 2003)
Clubs: 98- Liverpool FC
uefa.com team of the year: 2005, 2006

Ryan GIGGS

Left Winger/Midfielder
Born 29/11/73, Cardiff, Wales
Height 180cm, Weight 70kg

Ryan Giggs has played his last game for Wales. An international career that began back in October 1991 as Wales' youngest ever debutant concluded with a 0-0 draw against the Czech Republic in Cardiff on 2 June 2007. Like another Manchester United FC great, George Best, Giggs never played in a major international tournament. That he only picked up 64 caps over a 16-year stretch was down to a repeated absence from friendly internationals. Welsh fans who resented him for that may also feel aggrieved by the 33-year-old's early retirement given the majesty of his play for United in 2006/07. After a couple of patchy seasons Giggs returned to his dazzling best – often in an unfamiliar central role – and ended it with an English League-record ninth championship winner's medal (all in the Premiership) and club-record 23rd trophy for United. He also made his 700th United appearance in March and may yet pass Sir Bobby Charlton's long-standing milestone of 759.

INTERNATIONAL CAREER

WALES
Major Honours – none
Debut – 16/10/91 v Germany (a, Nuremberg, ECQ) (sub), lost 1-4
First Goal – 31/3/93 v Belgium (h, Cardiff, WCQ), won 2-0
Caps 64; *Goals* 12
Major Tournaments – none

CLUB CAREER

Major Honours – UEFA Champions League (1999); UEFA Super Cup (1991); World Club Cup (1999); English Premiership (1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2007); English FA Cup (1994, 1996, 1999, 2004); English League Cup (1992, 2006)
Clubs: 90- Manchester United FC (ENG)

Mario GOMEZ

Striker
Born 10/7/85, Riedlingen, Germany
Height 189cm, Weight 86kg

Many players of foreign origin – Brazilians, Africans, Poles – have infiltrated the German national team in recent years. Now, it seems, they will be counting on a young striker who is half-Spanish (as the name implies, on his father's side). Mario Gomez graduated from Germany's Under-21 team to the senior set-up and forced himself into coach Joachim Löw's UEFA EURO 2008™ plans by scoring three goals on his first two appearances. In between those matches Gomez spent several weeks recovering from knee ligament