

Lautaro, Thuram late?

Inter ready to use Taremi as new No. 9

Inter's first-choice strikers Lautaro Martinez and Marcus Thuram will take advantage of the 21 days granted by the club to all players involved in Copa America and the European Championship.

In the event of a double finals - Lautaro on July 15 in Miami to try for the third trophy in a row with Argentina, Frenchman Thuram on July 14 in Berlin to make up for the World Cup loss to his teammate - the two's vacation would come close to the official start of the season: Lautaro and Marcus would return to Appiano no earlier than August 5-6, about 10 days before the start of the Serie A season, on the 17th. Regardless of when they arrive, Mahdi Taremi will be there to welcome them: When Inter starts working on July 13, he will be there. And he will have a mission to complete: To use the entire preseason available to convince head coach Simone Inzaghi to focus on him immediately.

The timing with which they moved on Viale della Liberazione gave him the first assist, and Taremi col-



● FFIRI

lected it as he does in the penalty area. He started studying Italian to speed up the settling in process,

he passed through Milan on more than one occasion to look for a house (mission accomplished), above all he had

the opportunity to meet Inzaghi.

"The coach and I spoke," said the former Porto cen-

ter forward, adding: "Working with him will be exciting. Watching Inter on TV I had the impression of a

strong, compact team, with a good feeling between the group and the coach."

Inzaghi and his staff also got ahead with the work: Taremi was studied remotely and the video analyses confirmed that the insertion could materialize without too many difficulties. Because Mahdi can play as a pure center forward or as a second striker, he can provide depth or act as a reference in the area, he scores and makes others score. In other words, everything that Lautaro and Thuram pumped into Inter's engine during the Scudetto race.

And they will continue to pump up next season, of course. Because the starters in the attack will remain them, even when things start to get serious: Even if they start last (in the event of a double final in the national team), Lautaro and Thuram will have the legs, experience and tactical knowledge to help Inter get off to a good start.

Taremi, however, is the luxury option that Inzaghi couldn't afford last year: Neither Arnautovic nor

Sanchez offered enough guarantees to promote real rotations up front.

Taremi's hiring was born from this need: Simone expects to work with an extra starter in the department. And it is precisely for this reason that the Nerazzurri managers moved a year in advance: The operation turned out to be a deal from an economic point of view (the Iranian arrived without any transfer fees) and it could also become one from a technical point of view.

Provided that the former Porto player maintains his old habits: Always in double figures since he played in Europe, a goal every 185 minutes in the Champions League (better than Lautaro and Thuram, respectively a goal every 259 and 353 minutes).

"Other clubs in Italy, the Premier League and Spain approached me, but I immediately said yes to Inter," said Taremi. Inter now expects the Iranian to be just as quick on the pitch: Ready right away, goal right away.

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REUTERS - England's happiness at being on what is perceived to be the easier side of the knockout draw at Euro 2024 has been tested by Slovakia but what awaits them in the quarter-final today will be an even sterner examination. Opponents Switzerland have been beaten only once in their 18 matches since the World Cup, a dead rubber European Championship qualifier in Romania, and have lost outright in one of their last 14 games at the Euros dating back to 2008. Germany midfielder Toni Kroos was full of praise for the Swiss after the hosts needed a 92nd-minute equaliser in their final pool match to draw 1-1 while Italy's Bryan Cristante was candid after their 2-0 last-16 defeat. "They beat us physically and in terms of organisation," he said. For an England side that has found opening up opponents difficult in Germany, that presents another tactical challenge for manager Gareth Southgate. The Swiss have a settled back-

four but coach Murat Yakin is not afraid to make changes in the forward positions, and with several options across the front three, it makes it hard to plan for them. Switzerland's seven goals at Euro 2024 have come from different players, they are not reliant on an individual who can be contained, but spread the workload across the team, whether in attack or defence. They also work incredibly hard. Midfielder Rubin Vargas praised his side for how they suffocated Italy when out of possession. "We didn't give them time to breathe," he said. The Swiss are second bottom for number of tackles made (36) at the finals, but have conceded only three goals, which shows how they use their organisation and press to subdue opponents.

In fact, goalkeeper Yann Sommer has been forced to make only six saves in more than six hours of football, so well has he been protected by his defence.

No gloveman has been less busy at Euro 2024.

The Swiss are one of four teams at the tournament to have scored two goals from outside the box, along with Germany, Turkey and Romania. They have had more shots on target (18) than off target (15) at these finals, a claim only a handful of sides can make, and don't mind not having the ball with 48% possession spread across their games.

They do not use width much and are last of the 24 teams for crosses completed with five in four games, keeping their play compact in central positions. "When we put on our pressing, we won't let them (England) play. That's our job," Yakin told reporters. "We played well against Germany, we played well against Italy, so why shouldn't we beat England?"

➔ *Swiss players celebrate their last-16 victory over Italy in Euro 2024 in Berlin, Germany, on June 29, 2024.*
● EBRAHIM NOROOZI/AP

Swiss precision and press provide England with tactical challenge



➔ *Andy Murray reacts after defeat in the men's doubles first round in Wimbledon in London, Britain, on July 4, 2024.*
● PAUL CHILDS/REUTERS

Murray admits time is right to end tennis career

THE GUARDIAN - Andy Murray says the time has come to shut the door on his illustrious career after he and his brother, Jamie, were defeated in the first round of the men's doubles at his final Wimbledon.

"I'm ready to finish playing because I can't play to the level that I would want to any more," he said. "That's something that I guess is a bit out of my control. If I knew my body was going to be able to do it, I would play - there's nothing about the sport that I hate and I'm like, I don't want to do it any more for this reason. I like the travelling. I love the competition,

practising, trying to get better, all those things. Yeah, I know that it's time now. I'm ready for that."

On Thursday evening, Andy and Jamie Murray were defeated 7-6 (6), 6-4 on Centre Court by the Australians Rinky Hijikata and John Peers in what will be one of Andy's final matches of his career. Twelve days earlier, Andy had back surgery to remove a spinal cyst. Although the 37-year-old had been unable to recover in time to compete in the singles draw, Murray returned to play doubles.

After a 19-year career that has included three grand slam triumphs, Andy plans to retire from professional tennis at the end of

this summer. After this defeat, the All England Club held a presentation to commemorate his career. Numerous former champions and current players stood by the court to recognise Andy, including Novak Djokovic, Tim Henman, Iga Swiatek, John McEnroe and Martina Navratilova.

Andy will play for the final time at Wimbledon in the mixed doubles competition, in which he will partner Emma Raducanu. Andy, a two-time Olympic gold medallist, will then compete at the Paris Olympics, his fifth Olympic games, before retiring. Asked what he feels his legacy is, he said he is most proud of his enduring effort and discipline.

"I think the thing that I did a really good job of during my career was that, regardless of the highs and lows, whether it was winning tournaments, having difficult losses, an operation, a setback, that I was able to treat the next day like I always came into work with the same dedication, work ethic and passion, as I had the day before, regardless of the highs and lows that the sport kind of has thrown at me," said Murray. "I certainly didn't always get it right. Like on the match days, I was not perfect by any stretch, but I did always come into work and put in a good day. I gave my best effort. That's what I'm proud of."

