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# Fernando TORRES

## Factfile

- 1984:** March 20 – born in the Fuenlabrada neighbourhood of Madrid.
- 1994:** Wins trial with Atletico Madrid after scoring 55 goals in a season with his first eleven-a-side team, Rayo 13.
- 1995:** Joins Atletico Madrid
- 1998:** Is Atletico's leading player as they win Nike Europe Cup and is later voted best U-15 player in Europe.
- 1999:** Signs first professional contract with Atletico Madrid.
- 2000:** Suffers a broken leg and is forced out of action until December.
- 2001:** Becomes Atletico's youngest player with first-team debut against Leganes. Is top goalscorer and grabs only goal in final as Spain win U-16 European Championship where Torres is voted best player of the tournament.
- 2002:** Again finishes top goalscorer, best player and scores in the final as Spain win U-19 European Championship. Gains promotion back to La Liga with Atletico Madrid. Makes Spain U-21 debut.
- 2003:** Scores 13 goals in his first season in La Liga. Makes Spain debut against Portugal.
- 2003/2004:** Named Atletico's club captain aged just 19 and enjoys his most prolific season to date with 19 league goals in just 35 appearances.
- 2004:** Scores first senior international goal against Italy and features for Spain at Euro 2004.
- 2006:** Scores three goals in World Cup finals in Germany.
- 2007:** July 3 – Passes medical at Liverpool. July 4th – signs six-year contract at Anfield after flying back to Madrid to bid farewell to Atletico.





# THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INSIDE VIEW RICK PARRY



## Never mind the money, it's about the quality

LIVERPUDIANS are celebrating the capture of Fernando Torres who is a really exciting signing.

It was a tough one to negotiate, but then it always is at that level. Atletico Madrid did not want to let him go. They knew it would be a difficult one for their fans to accept.

It is the equivalent of Steven Gerrard when Chelsea came in for him. A lot of emotion surrounds these things, but the clincher was Fernando's desire to come to Anfield. This shone through from the moment we escalated things and it was absolutely vital to completing the deal.

A lot has been made, wrongly, about the fact that we needed a big signing.

The fact of the matter is that we needed the right signing. It's not about spending huge amounts of money for the sake of it just to demonstrate that you can sign big.

It's more about bringing in people who can add real quality and Rafa clearly believes Torres has a tremendous amount to offer.

Our strategy at the start of the summer was to get key players re-signed in the first instance. We have been working through this challenge in a methodical way with a lot of success. Steven Gerrard, Jamie Carragher, Xabi Alonso, Pepe Reina and Momo Sissoko have all put pen to paper and this has been extremely satisfying.

We have now moved smoothly into the acquisition stage and things are happening steadily on this front.

Obviously, the Torres deal should be seen as a further sign, if one was needed, that George Gillett and Tom Hicks are committed to taking us forward. Their ambitions for Liverpool FC continue to soar and reflect our own aims.

From my side, there are no extra

pressures when it comes to negotiating a £20m deal compared to a smaller transaction. You just have to make sure that the player is of the right stature and quality.

I think you could tell by Rafa's smile when he emerged onto the Anfield pitch for the photo call that he has no doubts about Fernando, who has got lots of different strengths as a forward of the highest class.

Obviously, the higher the fee, the greater the risk, but I repeat that it's not about big numbers, but rather buying the

right players and improving the quality. We are happy that Torres ticks all the boxes, not least having youth on his side.

I have been impressed with him. He is an intelligent boy who is genuinely excited about pulling on that famous red number nine shirt. He knows all about its history and tradition and he can't wait to get started. He speaks a little bit of English and that will improve quickly as we have seen with our other Spanish stars.

I know our fans are all looking forward to seeing him in action.



LUIS Garcia has returned to Spain to join Atletico and everyone at Anfield wishes him well. He made a great contribution while he was here, playing a key role in our Champions League and FA Cup successes.

Luis scored some massively important goals for us. I think instinctively about his strikes against Chelsea in semi-finals and also Juventus. These are the goals that immediately spring to mind, but there were many others.

When a player has his own special song invented by the fans, it means he has been accepted and that he is respected. We would all like to thank him for the contribution he made at Anfield and wish him well in Madrid.



# RAFA GETS HIS MAN

INTERVIEW by DAVID RANGLES

**R**AFAEL BENITEZ has talked before about the difference between signing players that we need and players that he wants.

In Fernando Torres, the Liverpool manager is content on both fronts and reveals an added bonus that played a big part in ensuring the transfer went through smoothly.

"He is a player that we want as well as need, but the key for me is that he is a player who wanted to come here," Rafa told LFC Magazine.

"When you talk about big names sometimes they talk of other clubs. Some of them will say they have three or four other clubs interested in them.

"That may be the case but we need to be sure that the player will be good for us in the future.

"Fernando made it clear to us that he wanted to come here.

"Although he knew Liverpool could be an option, we had to work without saying too much and then we found out the player really wanted to come here.

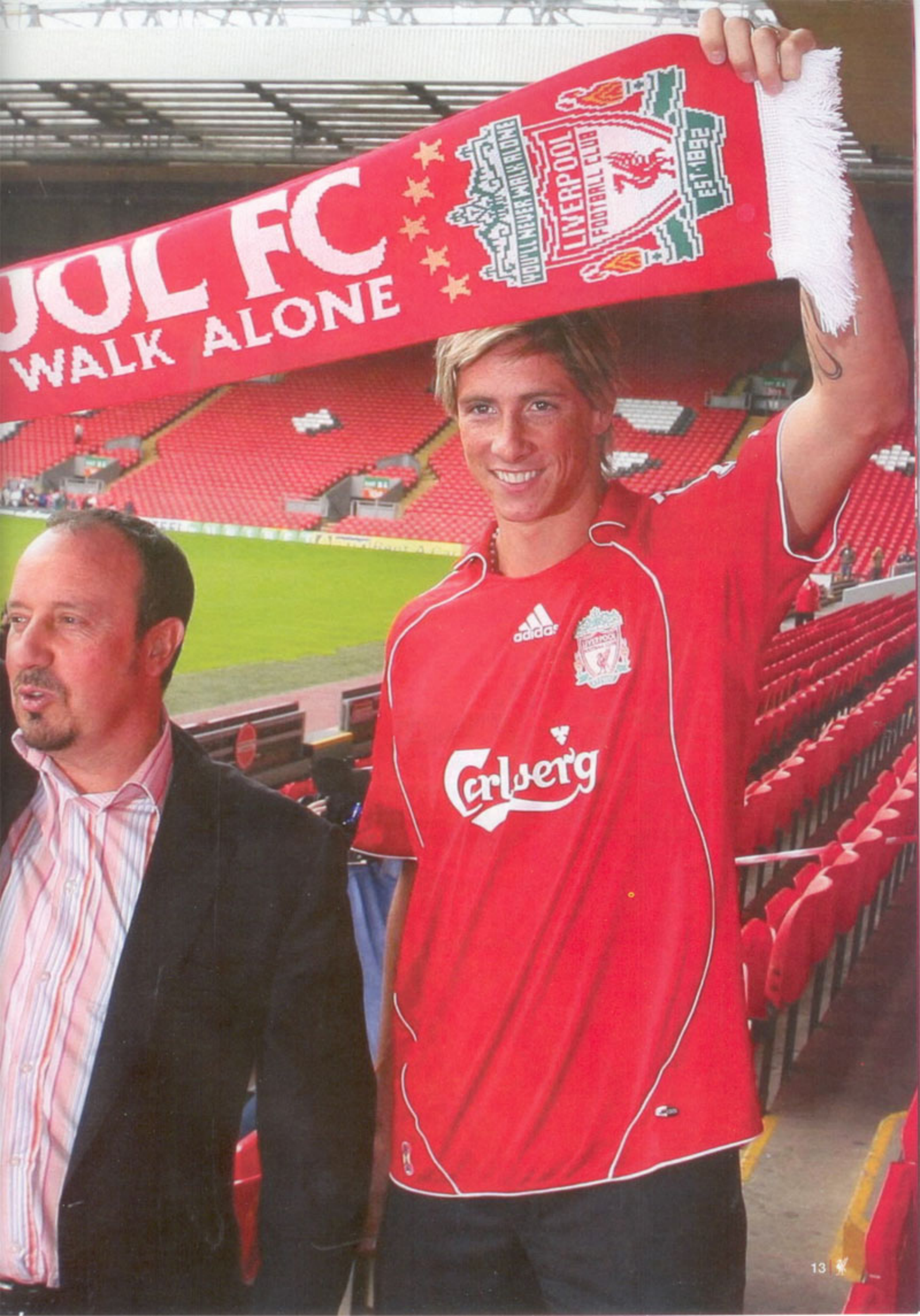
"I know Atletico received a bigger offer than ours but the player really wanted to join us and that is the key.

"As a boy, his club was always Atletico Madrid and so it was either them or Liverpool or nothing for Fernando."

After a fortnight of heightened speculation Rafa could not conceal









# LIVERPOOL



## RAFA GETS HIS MAN



►► his delight at finally landing his man.

The Reds boss reveals that although he had other players in mind this summer, Torres was at the top of his list of transfer targets.

"Of course, we had a list of names but not many with the quality of Torres," he says.

"After Andriy Voronin, who we already had an agreement with, he was the first option we were looking at.

"He was one of the big names mentioned in Europe this summer and so it was important for us to sign Fernando. We are happy to have him here with us.

"When you talk about top strikers there aren't too many available with the quality Fernando has. At just 23, he is one of the best young forwards in Spain and a lot of people were talking about him.

"His commitment to Atletico was fantastic and I think he deserved to be captain.

"He was the icon of the team and always played with the passion that the supporters wanted to see.

"I am sure he will also be a good player for our supporters. It won't take long for them to see that he can fight and work hard and give everything in every game."

Torres has been earmarked as a key player with the calibre that will assist in Liverpool's quest to close



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the gap on Chelsea and Manchester United at the top of the Premiership table.

"We needed something more up front and I think Fernando can give us that with his passion and power," continues the Reds boss.

"He is a player with pace, he is a good worker, he can score goals, he can fight against and beat defenders on the ground and in the air.

"He is a player who can do many different things. We have other players in Crouch, Kuyt and Voronin now who all bring different things. Fernando is different again but can play with all the others because he works hard.

"His power means he can play as a lead striker but also slightly off the shoulder of another target man. He could play with Crouch, for example, running between the lines, trying to win the second balls. He has many attributes to his game."

Liverpool smashed the club's transfer record to bring Torres to Anfield but Rafa insists the deal represents excellent business.

"His age was very important," he says.

"If you look at the price of some players who have been mentioned compared to their age, maybe 28 or 29, then we have a very good situation here.

"We needed to decide on all the

right details if we were to pay big money for a player like this.

"It is good business both in terms of the player on the pitch and also in terms of his age.

"He is only 23 but has been playing at a good level since the age of 17 so has experience too.

"If you look at the potential he has, that can only benefit us in the future."

**'He is a player with pace, he is a good worker, he can score goals, he can fight against and beat defenders on the ground and in the air. He is a player who can do many different things'**

Torres will take on Robbie Fowler's number nine shirt. It is the number he wore at the Vicente Calderon and also wears for Spain.

If he has half the joy that his predecessor enjoyed in the shirt, Fernando will be considered a success here.

"Maybe this number can inspire

him in front of goal," says Rafa.

"For him to wear the number nine is really good as it usually goes to the top striker.

"Of course, I want to see all the forwards scoring goals but if Fernando can get his share in this shirt it will be better."

Although only Chelsea's Didier Drogba managed it in the Premiership last season, talk of a 20-league goal a season striker is assumed as being essential to any club with title ambitions.

Although Rafa believes Torres can get closer to that figure with Liverpool, he admits it is not imperative to the success of the team.

"First we have to remember it is another league for him," says Rafa, "second, it is another team.

"But we create a lot of chances in a game so it may be easier for him to score than it was at Atletico Madrid.

"I am not worried about one player scoring 20 goals a season, though. I am more concerned about three or four players scoring 15.

"That will be better for the team.

"We will continue working now to see where else we can strengthen. We are really pleased with all the players we have brought in so far.

"We will see now if we can find other players to keep the balance that we need in the squad."



# FERNANDO Torres

## What they say...

### Radomir Antic



**F**ORMER Atletico Madrid manager Radomir (Raddy) Antic believes Liverpool have completed one of the summer's biggest transfers with the capture of Los Rojiblancos' skipper Fernando Torres.

Serbian Antic had three spells in charge at the Vicente Calderon stadium, Atletico's famous ground, and was the last man to deliver the La Liga title to Madrid's other club in 1995/96.

He revealed: "Liverpool have done a very good job in getting him because Torres is such a good player.

"I'm surprised Atletico have sold their captain. Since he started to play for them he's been a regular player and important for the team."

Born in the Madrid suburbs, Torres first came to the attention of the city's scouts aged 10 with a 55-goal season. He made his first-team breakthrough at a time when Atletico were down on their luck, out of the top division and struggling.

The fans needed someone to believe in, something to get them excited again and they got it in the shape of 'El Nino'. After making his first-team debut in May 2001 and guiding Atletico back to the top flight the following season, Torres has been their favourite son.

He looks angelic, but Atletico legend Antic believes the Liverpool new boy will be more than a match for even England's toughest defenders.

"England is a good place for his qualities. He has a strong personality, but he's also quick and strong physically," he said.

"He's also a very skilful player, especially in one-on-one situations, which will be something different for Liverpool up front.

"They have not had a striker who can take the ball and beat opponents.

"In the last few years at Atletico, he was a striker without any support from midfield. Atletico played that way because his movement meant he could run on to forward passes."

It's also the right move at the right time for the player.

"He needs a new challenge to improve his game, and I think Torres has done a good thing to come to England."

### Guillem Balague

**M**OST of us have spent the past few weeks watching YouTube clips of our new number nine to establish just how good he is. But one Spanish football expert is already convinced that Fernando Torres is an excellent signing.

Guillem Balague has closely followed the striker since he made his Atletico Madrid bow at the tender age of 17 and believes he has the talent to become a top class striker.

"He is only 23 now and is still a work in progress," Balague said recently. "He's not the finished product but he is still an outstanding player. I would put him on the same level as Wayne Rooney and the stats bear out that comparison.

"Atletico Madrid has always been a club which relies on counter-attacking football. Obviously he fits very well into that system because of his explosive pace and his strength, and as a result he did very well, very quickly.

"But Fernando is much more than just a counter-attacking player. He is a very clever player, especially outside the penalty box, and I can see him forming very effective partnerships, especially with Dirk Kuyt.

"Fernando is prepared to do the dirty work outside the box, Kuyt is more effective inside, both are hard working,

both are mobile and both can drift wide to complement the other.

"There is one thing I think everyone is getting wrong," Balague continued.

"I've heard people say 'Why pay so much money for someone who doesn't score 25 goals every season?' But you don't need that to be a successful team. You need a team that can score goals and Fernando is much more than just a goalscorer.

"Of course he will need time to adapt. People will have to be patient. He has always played up front on his own in Spain. Now he will have to play a different system and in a different league.

"It might not even be his first season before we see his best. Like Didier Drogba at Chelsea, we may have to wait until the second season before he can make his biggest impact.

"But he is very clever, on and off the pitch, and he is very humble. People may have to be patient while he adapts to English football but I am so excited about seeing him play in front of the kind of atmosphere Anfield generates. The fans there will love him. I have spoken to Steven Gerrard and Jamie Carragher and they are both very excited.

"Torres comes from a working class family from a working class district of Madrid and he became a working class hero," Balague concluded. "The fans of Liverpool can relate to him and he can be a big success."



## What they say...

### *Pepe Reina*

**O**UR Spanish shot-stopper is delighted with the arrival of his international team-mate. "We need a player that scores 20 or 25 goals a season and Fernando Torres can be that man," said Pepe.

"Torres has many virtues. I am confident that he will do very important things for the team. It's true that the style of football is different in England. But we want him to be ready from the first minute and show the player he has been in recent years."

Reina also believes that the large number of Spanish speakers at Anfield will aid our new number nine's settling-in process.

"The fact that there are many Spaniards at Liverpool was one of the reasons why he chose to come here. I think this will help him adapt quicker."

### *Jamie Carragher*

**J**AMIE Carragher is a huge fan of Spanish football and is convinced that Fernando Torres has the quality required to be a success at Anfield.

"He has a great pedigree there," Carra said. "Torres is a young lad, very quick, which is good for the Premier League and I'm sure he will do very well."

# FERNANDO *Torres*

### *Robbie Fowler*

**"I** THINK he'll be a great player for Liverpool," Robbie Fowler said when he heard who was set to inherit the number nine shirt.

"His record has been fantastic in Spain. His record is 82 goals in about 200 games for Atletico and he has scored goals for his country as well."

"To be honest I'm a Liverpool fan and I hope he brings the championship to Liverpool."

"Since I've been playing, we've never won that, and as I said, I'm a fan, so I want Liverpool to win everything."

"Signing players of this calibre will only help the club to get in a position where they can challenge for titles."

'His record has been fantastic in Spain. His record is 82 goals in about 200 games for Atletico and he has scored goals for his country as well'

