



SENIOR STRIKER. Kazuyoshi Miura of Yokohama FC heads the ball while his team plays Tokyo Verdy during a J-League match in Tokyo, in this May 3, 2013 file photo. One of the longest careers in soccer has been extended after 49-year-old striker Miura renewed his contract with second-division J-League club Yokohama FC. (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

49-year-old striker Kazuyoshi Miura extends contract for a 32nd season

TOKYO (AP) — One of the longest careers in soccer has been extended after 49-year-old striker Kazuyoshi Miura renewed his contract with second-division J-League club Yokohama FC.

Miura, who will turn 50 on February 26, will enter his 32nd season this year.

Miura played in 20 league games last year and scored twice. On August 7, he scored in a match against Cerezo Osaka to make him the J-League's oldest scorer at 49 years, five months, and 12 days.

Miura played for Brazilian club Santos and in Italy with Genoa early in his career, and represented Japan's national team 89 times, scoring 55 goals, but never played in the World Cup.

Ex-major leaguer Manny Ramirez to make comeback in Japan

TOKYO (AP) — Former major league outfielder Manny Ramirez has agreed to terms with the Kochi Fighting Dogs of Japan's independent Shikoku Island League. The team announced the signing on its official website.

The 44-year-old native of the Dominican Republic played for the EDA Rhinos of Chinese Professional Baseball in Taiwan in 2013, hitting .352 with eight home runs and 43 Runs Batted In (RBI).

The four-team independent league is based in Shikoku, the smallest and least populous of Japan's four main islands.

Ramirez finished his 19-season major league career with a lifetime .312 batting average, 555 home runs, and 1,831 RBI.



Justin Thomas holds on to beat Hideki Matsuyama at Kapalua

By Doug Ferguson
The Associated Press

KAPALUA, Hawai'i — Justin Thomas kept reminding himself that a one-shot lead with two holes to play is never a bad place to be on the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour.

Ignoring that his five-shot lead was nearly gone against Hideki Matsuyama, Thomas thought more about the great golf that had put him in this position at the SBS Tournament of Champions. He responded by hitting an 8-iron from 214 yards on a downhill lie that was so pure he stopped to admire it before it landed.

It plopped down in front of the pin and settled three feet away for a birdie.

Matsuyama three-putted for bogey and Thomas was on his way to a comfortable victory at Kapalua that moved him into the conversation of golf's young stars.

Matsuyama, going after his fourth straight victory worldwide, knew he needed to make his 30-foot birdie putt to stay in the game. He ran it eight feet by, missed the par putt coming back, and was out of chances when Thomas hammered another tee shot on the par-5 18th hole.

Thomas closed with a two-putt birdie for a 4-under 69 and a three-shot victory, his second of the PGA Tour season that moved him to No. 12 in the world. His other PGA Tour title was at the CIMB Classic in Malaysia.

Matsuyama, who made two soft bogeys on the front nine to fall five shots behind, made it more of a game than anyone expected. The 24-year-old from Japan holed a flop shot for eagle on the 14th hole, then Thomas hooked a 4-iron into the hazard on the par-5 15th hole and made double bogey.

Just like that, Thomas went from a five-shot lead to a one-shot lead, and Matsuyama had a 10-foot birdie putt on the 16th to tie for the lead. The putt narrowly missed, and Thomas answered with his 8-iron for birdie to end it. Matsuyama closed with a 70.

"My putter let me down there at 16, 17, and 18," Matsuyama said. "I tipped my hat to Justin. He played



GRIPPING GOLF. Hideki Matsuyama of Japan waves after making birdie on the 18th green during the third round of the SBS Tournament of Champions golf event at the Kapalua Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawai'i, on January 7, 2017. Fellow golfer Justin Thomas held on to beat Matsuyama at Kapalua. (AP Photo/Matt York)

well all day long."

Thomas is the only player to beat Matsuyama over the last three months. In his last six tournaments worldwide, Matsuyama had four victories and a pair of runner-up finishes — both to Thomas, in Kuala Lumpur and Kapalua.

Thomas, who finished with a 22-under 270, said his immediate thoughts were booking a return trip to Kapalua next year for the winners-only event.

"It changes things going forward because I know I'm coming back here," Thomas said.

Argentine soccer star Carlos Tevez signs \$40M deal in China

By Nomaan Merchant
The Associated Press

BEIJING — Argentine striker Carlos Tevez has signed to play for Shanghai Shenhua, becoming the latest in a procession of star players to join the Chinese Super League.

Shanghai Shenhua said it paid an \$11 million transfer fee to Argentine club Boca Juniors.

A person familiar with the negotiations said the 32-year-old Tevez would be paid \$40 million over two years. The source spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to divulge details of the transaction.

Tevez joins team training on the Japanese island of Okinawa this month. The next Super League season begins in March.

Chinese clubs have spent heavily over the past year to attract mainly South American stars. Also in late December, Shenhua's city rival, Shanghai SIPG, sealed a deal with Oscar from Chelsea. Other stars to join Chinese clubs include Brazilians Hulk, Ramires, and Paulinho, Colombian striker Jackson Martinez, and Argentine forward Ezequiel Lavezzi.

Tevez will be coached by Gus Poyet, the former Sunderland and Real Betis manager who became Shenhua's manager in November. Other internationally

recognized managers in the Chinese Super League include Guangzhou Evergrande coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, Shanghai SIPG coach Andre Villas-Boas, and Hebei China Fortune's Manuel Pellegrini.

China's government wants to turn the country into a football power, setting the goal of having a team capable of winning the World Cup by 2050. Leading the national team is Italian coach Marcello Lippi, who was signed in 2016 to a hefty contract of his own. China has also invested in youth soccer and building stronger pipelines to develop homegrown talent.

But the Super League's shopping spree has raised eyebrows and alarmed major European clubs who previously had no rival in attracting the world's top players. Antonio Conte, manager of Chelsea, said "the Chinese market is a danger for all."

Tevez has appeared in two World Cups for Argentina and previously played for Manchester United, Manchester City, and West Ham United in the English Premier League, as well as Italy's Juventus.

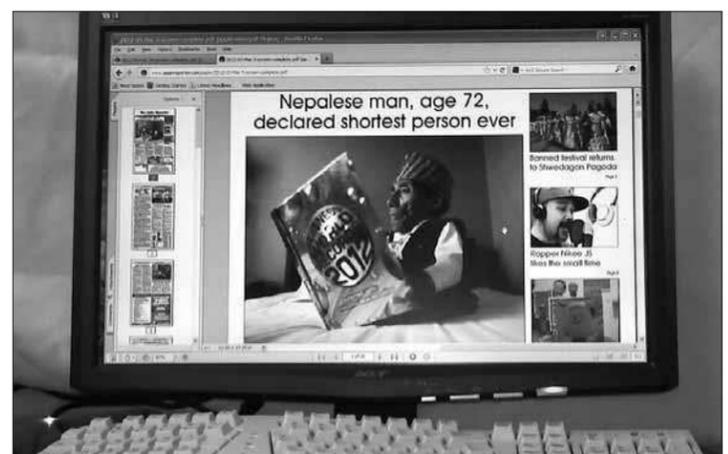
Tevez last year moved to Boca Juniors, the club where he began his senior career, after helping Juventus win its fourth straight Serie A title. But he was quoted in the Argentine press saying he was unhappy and even contemplating retirement.

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