

Jeremy Lin gets bought out, signs with Raptors

By **Tim Reynolds**
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Jeremy Lin is on the move again, with the veteran guard being waived by the Atlanta Hawks and signing with the playoff-contending Toronto Raptors.

The Hawks waived Lin on February 11 and Jim Tanner, one of his agents, confirmed Lin's plan to join Toronto, which was first reported by ESPN.

Lin and the Hawks worked out a buyout agreement.

"The future is bright for Atlanta!!! I truly mean that!" Lin posted on Instagram. "Everyone who knows me knows how big my dreams are and that I have so much left to give to the game. Hyped to join the Raptors!!!"

Lin thanked the Hawks, saying they helped him "become myself again on the basketball court and allowed me to experience the joy of hoops again!"

Toronto is Lin's eighth National Basketball Association (NBA) franchise, after stints with Golden State, New York, Houston, the Los Angeles Lakers,



Charlotte, Brooklyn, and this season Atlanta. He appeared in 51 games for the Hawks, all but one of those as a reserve,

averaging 10.7 points this season on nearly 47 percent shooting.

Lin gives the Raptors obvious depth at

LIN LANDS IN TORONTO. Guard Jeremy Lin (#17) of the Toronto Raptors is defended by Washington Wizards guard Chasson Randle (#9) and center Thomas Bryant (#13) during the first half of a National Basketball Association game on February 13, 2019, in Toronto. Lin played 25 minutes in his Toronto debut after signing earlier in the day. He received a brief ovation when he checked in for Norman Powell at 4:05 of the first quarter. Lin finished with eight points, five assists, and five rebounds. (Frank Gunn/The Canadian Press via AP)

both guard spots, and will likely spend time backing up point guard Kyle Lowry and shooting guard Danny Green. And he is needed soon, with the Raptors announcing that backup guard Fred VanVleet is expected to miss at least three weeks with a partial ligament injury to his left thumb.

The plan to enter into an agreement with Lin came one day after the Raptors finalized the conversion of two-way player Chris Boucher's contract to an NBA standard contract.

Lin has averaged 11.8 points in 458 career games. He has been part of three previous playoff runs, in 2013 and 2014 with Houston and in 2016 with Charlotte.

Iniesta teaming up with old teammate Villa in Japan

By **Jim Armstrong**
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO — Andres Iniesta's old teammate from his days at Barcelona is now his new teammate at Vissel Kobe.

Iniesta said the addition of David Villa will give the Japanese soccer team a major boost as it attempts to recover from a disappointing season.

Vissel Kobe finished 10th in the 18-team J-League standings last season. Not content with the results, owner Hiroshi Mikitani went out and signed Villa, who will team up with Iniesta when Kobe opens the season on February 22 against

Cerezo Osaka.

"He's a top quality player," Iniesta said. "We hope he'll bring a scoring touch, which is why he was brought here. His addition is a big jump in the quality of the team."

The 36-year-old Villa scored 59 goals in 98 appearances for Spain from 2004 to 2017, including five goals at the 2010 World Cup as his nation won its first title. He scored four goals for Spain en route to the 2008 European Championship title.

Before signing with Kobe, the Spanish forward spent four seasons with New York City FC, scoring 80 goals in 124 MLS appearances.

Iniesta joined Kobe after

last year's World Cup and said the transition wasn't easy. He scored only three goals in 14 matches and is hoping for better results this season.

"I've had more time to prepare this season," Iniesta said. "Last year, I needed an adjustment period but I'm in better condition this year and the team is in top form so hopefully we will have better results."

Soccer officials in Japan are hoping the presence of players like Iniesta and Villa will help raise the profile of the J-League as it competes with the Chinese league in the lucrative Asian market.

"We're hoping these world-class players like Iniesta can generate interest in the league not only in Japan but in Asia and the rest of the world," J-League chairman Mitsuru Murai said.

Villa started his career at Sporting Gijon in 2000 before stints with Real Zaragoza and Valencia. He joined Iniesta at Barcelona in 2010, where he won the Spanish league twice and the Champions League.

The 34-year-old Iniesta scored the winning goal for Spain in the 2010 World Cup final. He also was a key part of Spain's two European Championship titles in 2008 and 2012.

Kobe's connections to Spain don't stop with Iniesta and Villa. The team is coached by Juan Manuel Lillo, one of several Spanish coaches in the J-League.

"The Spanish coaches are able to bring a different style to Japanese football," Iniesta said. "It's a positive development if they can combine the best of Spain and Japan to achieve better results."



NWSL NEWS. Nahomi "Naho" Kawasumi (#36) will play the 2019 National Women's Soccer League season with Sky Blue FC. The Japanese international was traded by Reign FC to Sky Blue in January. (AP Photo/Jan Landis)

Naho Kawasumi traded to Sky Blue FC, Thorns announce preseason tourney

Nahomi "Naho" Kawasumi will play the 2019 National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) season with Sky Blue FC. The Japanese international was traded by Reign FC to Sky Blue last month.

Naho first joined the Reign in 2014 on loan from Japanese side INAC Kobe Leonessa, where she was the league's second-leading scorer and was named league MVP in 2013.

During Naho's first season in the NWSL, she scored nine goals, added five assists, and was named to the NWSL Best XI. Following Japan's silver medal earned at the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada and another two seasons with INAC, she signed again with Seattle in 2016. During the past three seasons with the Reign, Kawasumi appeared in 48 matches and recorded 14 assists, including a league-high nine assists in 2017.

"Nahomi has had over a decade of experience with the Japanese national team and her international experience alone is a huge asset for us," said Sky Blue head coach Denise Reddy. "In addition, she has had proven success in this league, success that we believe will transfer here to Sky Blue."

"The decision to trade Naho was made in conjunction with Naho and her representatives," said Reign FC owner and president Bill Predmore. "She expressed a need to maximize her playing time prior to the World Cup in 2019 and the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. We agreed that Sky Blue FC would be in the best position to

provide her that opportunity, so we worked hard to affect that outcome on her behalf."

Predmore praised Naho's leadership, professionalism, tireless work ethic, and extraordinary talent, and added, "Naho has always played with a joy that is infectious and a quiet intensity deeply respected by all her teammates. She will be missed."

Also in NWSL news, the Portland Thorns have announced details of the Thorns Spring Invitational, which is scheduled for the final week of March at the University of Portland's Merlo Field. The fourth-annual, four-team tournament features Thorns FC, the U.S. U-23 Women's National Team, Chicago Red Stars, and Reign FC.

The invitational kicks off on Sunday, March 24 with Reign FC facing the U-23s at 11:30am and the Thorns playing the Red Stars at 5:00pm. The mid-week matchups on Wednesday, March 27 pit Chicago against Reign FC at 1:30pm, followed by a 7:30pm match with the Thorns and U-23s. The final day, Saturday, March 30, features the Red Stars and the U-23s, with the evening match taking place at 7:30pm and highlighting the two Cascadia rivals — Thorns FC and Reign FC.

Tickets for the three preseason tournament matches featuring Thorns FC are general admission. Individual tickets are available for sale starting March 19 at <www.thornsfc.com>.

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Difficulty level: Easy

#26368

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last issue's puzzle

Puzzle #43347 (Hard)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

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