

Striker Sam Kerr joins Women's Super League leader Chelsea

By Rob Harris
The Associated Press

LONDON — Australia striker Sam Kerr will play for a European club for the first time after Women's Super League (WSL) leader Chelsea signed one of the game's most prolific scorers.

The 26-year-old Kerr joins the London club on the back of scoring 19 goals in 23 games for the Chicago Red Stars in the National Women's Soccer League.

Kerr is not only the all-time leading scorer in the United States but also her homeland where she recently played for Perth Glory after splitting her year between two clubs on two continents.

But she is joining Chelsea on a two-and-a-half-year contract and is due to start playing in the second half of the WSL season from January when the mid-season transfer window opens.

"The WSL is the best league in Europe," Kerr said. "I want team success and I don't want it to come easy. I feel Chelsea have been building something special over the years and I want to be a part of that. I want to lift some trophies."



Chelsea had a one-point lead over defending champion Arsenal going into the sixth game of the WSL campaign against Manchester United over the weekend.

Kerr is not set to link up with her new teammates until late December. Competition for a starting place up front includes Bethany England, Fran Kirby, and Ramona Bachmann.

"The fact she chose Chelsea when she could have gone to any club in the world is a testament to the players and the staff here, because she saw this is the best place for her to grow and take the next step in her career," Chelsea manager Emma Hayes said. "That's a wonderful compliment to us all."

Kerr has scored 38 times for Australia since making her debut at the age of 15.

PROLIFIC PLAYER. Australia striker Sam Kerr will play for a European club for the first time after Women's Super League leader Chelsea signed one of the game's most prolific scorers. Pictured is Kerr playing in a match for the Chicago Red Stars of the National Women's Soccer League at Providence Park. (AP Photo/Jan Landis, File)

That includes five at her third World Cup in June where she captained Australia in the run to the Round of 16.

Kerr, the youngest of four siblings, grew up in an Australia rules football family. Her father, Roger, and Daniel, one of her two brothers, played professionally.

Kerr started focusing on soccer after she had to stop playing in the Australian Football League (AFL) when she was 12 years old because there was no women's league for the hard-hitting sport.

With Kerr completing her transfer to England, the Football Association (FA) secured a deal for Australian broadcaster Optus Sport to air games from the WSL, which is Europe's only fully professional women's football competition.

"This is our first deal in the Asian region and demonstrates the ever-increasing global appeal of the league," FA senior broadcast manager Tom Gracey said.



GREEN GIFT. Members of Arizona's Sikh community gather in Phoenix for a group photo after a ceremony dedicating 550 trees they donated to be planted in low-income neighborhoods. Planting of elms, Arizona ash, and other drought-resistant trees has already started in some downtown neighborhoods. It's part of a worldwide observance of the birth anniversary of the founder of the Sikh tradition. (AP Photo/Anita Snow)

Arizona Sikhs give 550 trees for Phoenix neighborhoods

PHOENIX (AP) — The Arizona Sikh Community has donated 550 trees to low-income Phoenix neighborhoods.

Local Sikh leaders gathered with mayor Kate Gallego and other officials for a tree dedication ceremony.

Planting of elm, Arizona ash, and other drought-resistant trees has already started in some downtown neighborhoods.

The gift worth about \$68,000 is part of a worldwide observance of the birth anniversary of Sikh religion founder Guru Nanak, who was born in 1469. There were similar tree-planting campaigns in countries including Germany, Canada, and Myanmar earlier this year.

More trees are especially welcome in Phoenix, which suffers from an urban heat island effect that raises already high temperatures in areas covered by heat-retaining asphalt and concrete.

Phoenix has planted thousands of trees in recent years in hopes of offsetting the effects.

Sour grapes: Trade war puts cork in U.S. wine sales to China

By Terence Chea and Paul Wiseman
The Associated Press

LIVERMORE, Calif. — Caught in the crossfire of President Donald Trump's trade war with China, U.S. vineyards are struggling to sell Syrah in Shanghai and Chardonnay in Shenzhen. They risk losing their foothold in one of the world's fastest-growing wine markets.

The 16-month dispute between the world's two biggest economies has nothing to do with wine. The Trump administration accuses China of stealing U.S. technology and forcing American companies to hand over trade secrets and has slapped tariffs on more than \$360 billion worth of Chinese imports. China disputes the allegations.

When the Chinese hit back with retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods, they put a bull's eye on American wine.

Since June, China has been imposing 93% tariffs and taxes on American wine, up from 48% before the hostilities began, according to the Wine Institute, a trade group for 1,000 California wineries and related businesses. Unless the two countries reach a ceasefire — and they're working on it — the levies on U.S. wine in China will ratchet up to 106% on December 15.

By contrast, Chinese levies amount to 41% on wines from the European Union and 23% on those from Australia, Chile, and New Zealand.

"We could no longer compete, especially with countries with free trade agreements like Chile and Australia, our two largest competitors," said Michael Parr, vice president of international sales at Livermore, California-based Wente Vineyards, one of the first U.S. winemakers to export to China 25 years ago.

Parr said that Wente has "not shipped a single bottle of wine to China" since the latest Chinese tariffs took effect in June.

Overall, U.S. wine exports to China



SOUR GRAPES. Cabernet Sauvignon wine grapes that are almost ready for harvest are held at Wente Vineyards in Livermore, California. American wine producers are being squeezed out of the fast-growing Chinese market, thanks to U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war with China. Since the trade dispute began last year, China has raised tariffs on American wines three times in retaliation for U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods. Those Chinese tariffs have made U.S. wine much more expensive, leading to a steep drop in sales. Among the casualties is California's Wente Vineyards, a family-run wine business that was among the first U.S. winemakers to export to China 25 years ago. (AP Photo/Terry Chea)

fell 25% in 2018, measured by volume, according to the Wine Institute. Calculated by dollars, the picture is just as ugly: U.S. Department of Agriculture figures show that U.S. wine exports to China fell 25% last year to \$59.2 million and are down another 48% so far this year compared to January-September 2018.

"China continues to be an important market for California wines, but exceptionally high tariffs put our products at a price disadvantage," said Robert Koch, president of the Wine Institute.

Over the past 25 years, China's rapid economic growth has created a middle class with a taste for luxuries and the country has come out of nowhere to become the No. 5 export market for U.S. wine. In 1994, U.S. wine exports to China barely registered at \$123,000. From there, they rose mostly steadily, peaking at \$81.5 million in 2016, then dipping to \$78.7 million in 2017 before plunging last year after the tariff war broke out.

California, home to Napa Valley and other famous wine-growing regions, produces about 95% of U.S. wine exports.

Wente exports wine to more than 70 countries, and China is among its top 10 export markets, Parr said, so the tariffs are hurting overall sales.

"Short term, it amounts to loss of revenues," Parr said. "But long term it was lost opportunities. All the time, the money that we have spent building that market."

Chinese wine lovers are also feeling the pinch. Wen Xin, who runs a wine shop in Beijing, said American wines used to sell very well, but sales have fallen steeply because of the tariffs.

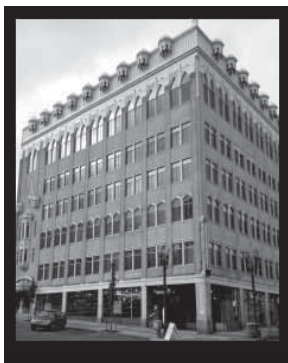
"California is great wine country," Wen said. "But because of recent trade issues, they raised the tariffs. So now American wines are very expensive. They cost one-third to two-thirds more expensive than before. So, sales have fallen a lot."

Paul Wiseman reported from Washington. Dake Kang and Fu Ting in Beijing contributed to this story.

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The staff at The Asian Reporter wish you and your family a safe and happy Thanksgiving!