

Dong's United adventure ended

Manchester United have terminated the contract of Dong Fangzhuo, the China forward, whom they signed to strengthen their position in the Asian market. Dong, 23, was bought in 2003, for £500,000, but he had to stay for more than two years at Royal Antwerp while awaiting a

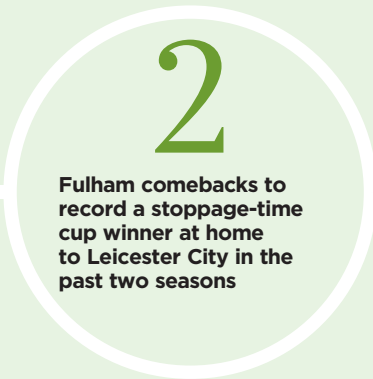
work permit. His only Premier League game was in May 2007, when United, having won the title, fielded a reserve XI against Chelsea. United deny that Dong was bought for commercial reasons, but he will probably be remembered as a cynical signing that did not pay off.

● Robinson stays on

Paul Robinson, the West Bromwich Albion left back, has signed a new two-year contract through to 2010. West Brom have also loaned out Jared Hodgkiss, the 21-year-old right back, to Aberdeen until January.

● Johnson 'can't wait for ever' for regular play

Adam Johnson, the Middlesbrough winger, has admitted that his desire for regular football "can't wait for ever". The England Under-21 player is rated highly by Gareth Southgate, his manager, who has turned down offers for the 21-year-old, but his path to the first team is blocked by Stewart Downing. "He is probably the best left winger in the country and I am behind him," Johnson said. "I have just got to be patient, keep working and see where it goes."



● Redknapp considers return to lone forward

Harry Redknapp, the Portsmouth manager, is pondering his team selection as he looks for a first point and a first goal of the season, away to Everton tomorrow. Jermain Defoe has a stomach bug and, if he is unfit, Redknapp could revert to last season's successful 4-5-1 formation. Kanu, Glen Little, Niko Kranjcar and David Nugent are unfit, while Jerome Thomas has a bad back. "He thinks it might be from sleeping in a different bed from what he's used to," Redknapp said.

● Davies's new deal

Kevin Davies has signed a new deal at Bolton Wanderers until 2011. The forward, 31, has scored 41 goals since joining from Southampton in 2003. Davies won the club's player-of-the-season award last year.

● And finally . . .

Ireland will play their opening World Cup qualifying group eight match against Georgia on September 6 in Mainz, Germany. Fifa, the world governing body, confirmed yesterday that the match had been

switched from Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, because of safety concerns. The Georgian FA had favoured a switch to Karlsruhe, but the German club were unable to stage the fixture at such short notice.