

# After Record Deal, Eto'o to Ready for First Match

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Eto'o undergoing a medical test. **Riccardo De Luca**

Anzhi Makhachkala said Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o would start training with the Dagestani club for a weekend match Thursday after luring him away from Inter Milan in a deal that could make him the highest-paid footballer in the world.

Eto'o will play his first match on Saturday against FC Rostov.

Eto'o underwent a medical exam on Wednesday, after which he was awarded a three-year contract, Anzhi said in a statement on its web site.

While the financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, reports in Italy say Eto'o will be paid 20 million euros (\$29 million) net per season, eclipsing the estimated 12 million euros that Cristiano Ronaldo earns at Real Madrid and the 10.5 million euros that Lionel Messi is paid by Barcelona.

After a week of negotiations in Milan, the transfer fee was reportedly set between 25 million

euros and 27 million euros.

At 30, Eto'o is still in his prime, but he has already won three Champions League titles — two with Barcelona and one with Inter — and is apparently excited about playing in the developing Russian league.

Anzhi is owned by Dagestani billionaire Suleiman Kerimov, whose net worth is estimated by Forbes magazine at \$7.8 billion, tying him for 118th place with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his family.

Anzhi's captain is 38-year-old Roberto Carlos, once a standout left back for Brazil.

Makhachkala is plagued by violence from insurgency that has spread across the North Caucasus after two separatist wars in Dagestan's neighboring region of Chechnya.

Anzhi players live and train at a camp outside Moscow and travel to Makhachkala for home games, flying about 2,000 kilometers 15 times a season.

*(AP, MT)*

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