



Chelsea Transfers 2026: Palestra and Barco Arrive as Xabi Alonso Builds His Blue Revolution

Description

Chelsea’s summer transfer window under Xabi Alonso is taking shape in exciting fashion, with the Blues completing the signings of Italian international Marco Palestra and Argentine midfielder Valentín Barco as part of a bold rebuild ahead of the 2026/27 campaign. The **Chelsea transfers under Alonso** signal unmistakable ambition – Stamford Bridge is no longer content with being a work-in-progress, and the manager is making his vision plain for all to see.

Marco Palestra: The Serie A Defender of the Year Arrives at Stamford Bridge

When Chelsea announced the arrival of Marco Palestra from Atalanta for a fee rising to £47 million, it was clear Xabi Alonso had done his homework. The 21-year-old Italian international spent last season on loan at Cagliari, where his performances were so commanding that he was named Serie A Defender of the Year – no small honour in the home of tactical football.

Palestra is a modern full-back built for the wing-back role that Alonso favours in his 3-5-2 system – a structure he honed to devastating effect at Bayer Leverkusen before arriving in west London. The Italian can operate on either flank, offering Alonso genuine flexibility in how he sets up his backline. He made 37 league appearances for Cagliari last season and earned two senior caps for Italy in the process.

“A lot of things convinced me to join Chelsea, one of the best clubs in the world,” Palestra said upon signing his contract through to 2033. “I’m very excited to get started. I’ve felt the energy since the first day Chelsea wanted me. The manager has spoken to me about how he wants us to play, which is exciting, and we can’t wait to compete in the Premier League.”



Source: Chelsea FC official website (chelseafc.com)

Valentín Barco: Argentina's World Cup Dynamo Joins the Blue Revolution

Hot on Palestra's heels came the confirmation of Valentín Barco's move from RC Strasbourg. The 22-year-old Argentine midfielder is a player who has been on Europe's radar for some time – a Boca Juniors product who arrived in England with Brighton & Hove Albion before loan spells at Sevilla and Strasbourg refined his craft into something genuinely special.

At Strasbourg last season, Barco was a revelation – contributing to 12 goals in 43 appearances across all competitions and helping the club secure European football. His performances earned him a place in Argentina's 2026 FIFA World Cup squad, where he added to his five senior international caps. Chelsea have secured him on a seven-year deal through to 2033, a statement of intent about just how highly Alonso rates the midfielder.

Barco brings dynamism, direct running and a nose for goal from midfield – precisely the qualities Alonso demands from players who push into the half-spaces in his system. He will join up with his new team-mates later in pre-season after representing Argentina at the World Cup.

Alonso's Blueprint: Chelsea Built for the Premier League's Demands



Source: Chelsea FC official website (chelseafc.com)

Xabi Alonso officially took the Chelsea reins on 1 July 2026, and the man who guided Bayer Leverkusen to an unbeaten Bundesliga title in 2024 has wasted no time in stamping his identity on the squad. Speaking during Chelsea's pre-season tour – which has taken the squad through Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Malaysia – Alonso was characteristically measured yet driven in his assessment of what lies ahead.

“We want to build a competitive team and we are in that process,” he said. “We have great quality, great talent, and we need to know what it takes to compete in the Premier League. Sometimes that takes longer; sometimes it happens spontaneously quicker. But we are ready to try to develop the idea we have, this plan. So far, we have good feelings.”

Pre-season has included a 6-4 victory over Western Sydney Wanderers, fixtures against Tottenham Hotspur, Juventus in Hong Kong, and AC Milan in Jakarta. Chelsea arrive at the 2026/27 Premier League season – which kicks off on 21 August – with a squad that feels genuinely transformed. Palestra adds defensive rigour and attacking width from deep; Barco provides creative spark and energy in midfield. Together, they represent the kind of signings that signal real intent from a club with championship ambitions.

With the [2026/27 Premier League season shaping up as one of the most competitive in years](#), Alonso's Chelsea look ready to make their mark. For more on Chelsea's pre-season journey, read our earlier feature on [Xabi Alonso's Chelsea making their mark Down Under](#). Keep up with all the latest at our [Sports section](#).

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