

Nuno Valente nearing Everton return Portuguese back in full training



It has been a tough season for Everton defender Nuno Valente, but the former Portugal international is close to full fitness after almost seven months on the sidelines.

Valente last appeared for the Toffees against West Brom on the second day of the Premiership season in August, since when a knee injury has kept the 34-year-old, who won 33 caps for his country, out of action at Goodison Park.

“I’m recovering well,” Valente said. “At this moment I am training and I don’t feel pain in my knee. I feel good. It is difficult being out for so long. I want to play. Every player wants to play, but these injuries happen in football.

“At this moment I feel happy and I feel well, and maybe I will be able to start playing again soon. It’s difficult every time you play and you see them team play very well. But it’s good to see the team win all the time and see them put out such impressive performances.”

Although unable to contribute on the pitch, Valente has been of some use to the club off the field. The former Porto left-back has been assisting recent signing, Brazilian striker Jo, adapt to his new surroundings, with Valente the only fluent Portuguese speaker within the Everton squad.

“Jo is a great player,” he said. “His performances have been very good. He’s scored three times now and I think he is a good player for the team. Now at this moment in time he seems to feel good with the team. Everton seems to be the right place for him.”

By Sean Gillen