

Barca, Gunners through

Eto'o treble sinks Panathinaikos



REUTERS, London

Barcelona and Arsenal swayed through to the last 16 of the Champions League on Wednesday but Manchester United's hopes hang in the balance after another dramatic defeat.

United's 1-0 defeat by Lille in Paris intensified the pressure on manager Alex Ferguson and threw Group D wide open.

Cameroun striker Samuel Eto'o hit a sparkling hat-trick in Barcelona's 5-0 thrashing of Panathinaikos which assured them of qualification from Group C.

Dutchman Robin van Persie scored twice as Arsenal maintained their 100 percent record in Group B with a 3-0 home win over Sparta Prague but Bayern Munich's hopes of qualifying on the night were dashed after a 2-1 loss at Juventus in Group A.

On Tuesday French side Olympique Lyon and nine-time winners Real Madrid confirmed their places in the last 16.

United are in danger of not reaching the knockout phase after their defeat, combined with Villarreal's win at Benfica, left all four teams still in contention to qualify.

Marcos Senna's long-range effort eight minutes from time gave Villarreal, who visit Old Trafford next, a 1-0 win in Portugal and they top the group on six points, with Lille and United on five points and Benfica on four.

United arrived in Paris, where Lille are playing their home matches due to ground redevelopment, still in shock after a 4-1 weekend thrashing by Middlesbrough.

Lille profited after 38 minutes when Slovenian Milenko Acimovic raced through a hole in the centre of United's defence and crashed the ball home to register the French team's first goal in the Champions League this season.

United hit the bar in the second half but Lille could also have added to



PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona's Camerounian striker Samuel Eto'o (R) celebrates with teammates Brazilian Ronaldinho (C) and Argentinian Leo Messi after completing his hat-trick against Panathinaikos during their Champions League encounter at the Nou Camp Stadium in Barcelona on November 2.

their tally and Ferguson has much to ponder before Sunday's home match against English champions Chelsea.

In the Nou Camp Barcelona scored in the opening minute and quickly swamped their Greek opponents.

Dutchman Mark van Bommel lobbed them in front and Eto'o grabbed two either side of 18-year-old Lionel Messi's effort to make it 4-0 at halftime.

Eto'o completed his hat-trick just past the hour with a beautifully curled shot and with 10 points from their four matches, the Catalan club cannot fail to finish in the top two in their group with the three other teams on four points.

One of those is German side Werder Bremen, who breathed life into their campaign with an extraordi-

nary 4-3 home win over Udinese.

The Italians recovered from 3-0 down early in the second half to level at 3-3 with three goals in six minutes before Johan Micoud's second of the night clinched the points for the Germans.

At Highbury substitute Van Persie added two well-taken goals to Thierry Henry's majestic opener midway through the first half, a right-footed curler into the corner of the net after some neat inter-passing.

Arsenal have a maximum 12 points, five more than Ajax Amsterdam who increased their grip on second place with a dramatic 4-2 win at Swiss side Thun.

Stoppage time goals by Nigel de Jong and Nordin Boukharai gave the Dutch side victory and they are now

four points clear of third-placed Thun.

Group A is much tighter after a David Trezeguet double earned Juventus revenge for their defeat at Bayern by the same score two weeks ago.

The French striker's goals came either side of a Sebastian Deister goal for Bayern, lifting Juve to the top of the group on nine points, the same as the Germans.

However, Juve's night was soured when Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic was sent off in the last minute for kicking out at an opponent.

Belgian side Club Bruges remain in contention on six points after a 3-2 home win over Rapid Vienna, who had taken the lead with a goal after only 26 seconds by Marek Kincel.

Russian title CSKA's

REUTERS, Moscow

CSKA beat Dynamo 2-1 in a heated Moscow derby on Sunday to clinch the Russian premier league title with a game to spare.

CSKA defender Alexei Berezutsky opened the scoring from close range in the 55th minute and Brazilian playmaker Daniel Carvalho added the second when he beat Dynamo's Portuguese keeper Nuno with a neat lob 18 minutes later.

Defender Denis Kolodin pulled one back for Dynamo in the seventh minute of added time but it was too little too late to prevent the army side from celebrating a deserved victory.

The win gave UEFA Cup holders CSKA an insurmountable four-point lead over last year's champions Lokomotiv and their Moscow rivals Spartak with just one round of matches remaining.

Lokomotiv crushed already relegated Terek Grozny 3-0 while Spartak captain Yegor Titov scored midway through the second half to give his side a 1-0 win over Saturn Ramenskoye.

Eng batting

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six in the first match at Rawalpindi.

Asif then removed Marcus Trescothick in his fourth over, sending the experienced opener's bats airborne with a sharp cutter. Trescothick, who made a fighting unbeaten 124 and 38 in the first match, made just eight.

Kevin Pietersen, whose form is a worry on the tour, fell to Nazir in the 13th over when he miscued a drive and was caught by wicketkeeper Rehan for four.

Asif then dismissed captain Michael Vaughan (17) and Paul Collingwood (0) - both caught in the slips in his seventh over - to have England reeling on 4-34.

In his next two overs, Asif sent Geraint Jones (0) and allrounder Andrew Flintoff (9) back to the pavilion in a remarkable spell of 11 overs, taking 5-43.

Ashley Giles (21) and top-scorer Shoaib Udal (23) added 34 invaluable runs for the eighth wicket but Asif returned for a second spell after lunch to dismiss Udal and last man Steve Harmison to wrap up the innings.

Hoggard then matched Asif blow for blow as he removed opener Taufiq Umer (six) in his third over and followed it up with the wickets of Faisal Athar (0), Shahid Yousuf (10) and Imran Farhat (23) in his spell of six overs.

Henry, Arsenal go along

Football

AFP, London

The Arsenal revival that has coincided with Thierry Henry's return from injury gathered pace on Saturday as the Gunners swept bottom club Sunderland aside to climb to third in the English Premiership table.

Henry claimed Arsenal's second and third goals in a 3-1 win at Highbury to make it five goals from four starts for the club captain since his return from a six-week lay-off.

The Frenchman's recent goalscoring exploits have been matched by Dutch winger Robin van Persie, who also made it five from four starts after running on to a Sol Campbell through ball to put his side ahead in the 12th-minute.

Centre-back Alan Stubbs gave Sunderland some hope 15 minutes from time but Henry stilled any fightback with his second goal of the afternoon with eight minutes left.

Defender Liam Ridgewell was judged to have wrestled Peter Crouch to the ground but O'Leary insisted the Liverpool player was doing just as much grappling.

Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez rejected O'Leary's view of the spot-kick. "For me it is clear," he said.

Top-flight debutants Wigan continued to confound the pre-season odds by claiming their sixth straight league victory at Fratton Park.

Man-of-the-match Pascal Chimbonda headed in a 48th-minute corner and then set up Jason Roberts to tap in the second 11 minutes from time.

Blackburn ended Charlton's 100 percent away record with an impressive 4-1 win at Ewood Park.

The home side were quickly out of the traps, Australia midfielder Brett Emerton unleashing a swerving drive from 20 yards to give them a second-minute lead that was shortly doubled by Paul Dickov's header.

Brian Hughes gave the visitors hope with a close-range effort but Rovers secured matters when Morten Gamst

Liverpool claimed their first away win of the season by overcoming Aston Villa 2-0 in Birmingham.

Steven Gerrard's penalty and Xabi Alonso's drive both came in the last five minutes and Villa boss David O'Leary was left fuming over the spot-kick that turned a match that had appeared destined to end goalless.

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Teddy Sheringham's fourth Premiership strike of the season was enough to give West Ham victory over visitors West Bromwich at Upton Park.

The 39-year-old former England striker pounced in the 57th minute to keep Alan Pardew's side firmly ensconced in the top half of the table.

Newcastle made it four wins on the trot with a 1-0 win over Birmingham at St James' Park.

The visitors resisted the combined firepower of Michael Owen and Alan Shearer for over an hour.

But Steve Bruce's relegation-threatened side finally succumbed to their eighth defeat of the season when Turkey midfielder Emre Belozoglu fired in a 78th-minute shot that found the net with the help of a deflection off Owen.



Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard (R) goes past Gareth Barry of Aston Villa during their Premiership fixture at Villa Park in Birmingham on November 5.

PRIMERA LIGA

Osasuna surprise still on

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Osasuna tightened their grip at the top of the Primera Liga when they inflicted a first home defeat of the season on Real Sociedad with a 2-1 win at Anoeta on Saturday.

Javier Aguirre's modest outfit are now five points clear of Barcelona at the top after 11 matches but the champions can narrow the gap to two points with a win at high-flying Getafe on Sunday.

Former Mexico coach Aguirre refused, however, to get carried away with his side's spectacular start to the season.

"We still need another 18 points or so to achieve our aim which is to avoid relegation," he said.

Villarreal climbed to third, level on points with Barca, after a first-half strike from Argentina's Luciano Figueroa gave them a 1-0 win at home

to regional rivals Valencia.

Figuerola, deputising for the injured Diego Forlan, poked the ball past goalkeeper Santiago Canizares after Valencia's defence failed to deal with Marcos Senna's lofted pass into the area.

Villarreal's Mariano Barbosa preserved their lead with a string of top-drawer saves in the second half, including a stunning one-handed effort to block a vicious David Albelda drive.

Former Spain boss Javier Clemente was denied a winning start to his third spell at Athletic Bilbao when Espanyol midfielder Ferran Corominas snatched a late equaliser to earn a 1-1 draw in a nervous bottom-of-the-table clash at Montjoi.

The draw leaves Bilbao anchored to the foot of the table with Espanyol just two points above them.

Leaders Osasuna dominated the early exchanges against Sociedad but they only took the lead 11 minutes

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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