

Arsenal take Amsterdam Cup

Football

INTERNET, undated

Robin van Persie netted the goal which won Arsenal the Amsterdam Tournament - but was then carried off against Ajax.

A match which was a physical, and often bad-tempered affair, was settled by finish from the Dutchman with just three minutes left.

However, the former Feyenoord player then had to be helped from the field following a heavy challenge from Johnny Heitinga, but was able to soon rejoin his teammates as they celebrated a second pre-season tournament win.

Manager Arsene Wenger had made some 10 changes from the side which beat Lazio on Thursday, and will have been happy enough with a determined performance.

However, although there were plenty of plus points, Wenger will be hoping Van Persie - clearly the Gunners' main goal threat - does not spend any more time on the treatment table following the extra attention he is bound to receive from defenders next season.

Midfielder Cesc Fabregas was a late withdrawal because of a throat infection, so Brazil teenager Denilson came into the starting XI.

However, there was no place for summer signing Eduardo da Silva, as Alexander Hleb was handed an advanced role just behind Van Persie.

It looked a useful tactic as Arsenal enjoyed the best of the opening exchanges.

However, keeper Maarten Stekelenburg was in fine form, somehow producing a reflex save to deny Kolo Toure from point-blank range following a deep free-kick from the right.

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PHOTO: AFP

New Arsenal recruit Bacary Sagna (L) tries to steal the ball from the surging Ajax winger Dennis Rommedahl during the Amsterdam Cup in Amsterdam on Saturday.

showed a lack of control when his late challenge earned a caution - and he then took a risk with a sarcastic hand-clap towards the referee, which went unpunished.

Van Persie - who missed the final four months of last season with a broken metatarsal - was in the thick of things as the half-hour mark approached, showing quick feet to nip into the right side of the area and cut the ball back across goal.

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the resulting free-kick, but Lehmann got down well to his right.

On the hour mark, tempers - which had been rising throughout the game - boiled over when Thomas Vermaelen appeared to catch Van Persie with a leading elbow as the pair jumped.

Following a brief display of chest-barging, calm was swiftly restored and the referee took no further action.

Eduardo replaced Rosicky, and Hleb moved out wide as Arsenal went with two up front.

Jurgen Collin was very fortunate to escape a red card when he needlessly slid in from behind on Clichy.

The match certainly had an edge to it, with William Gallas the next man to be cautioned for a tackle from behind on Klaas Huntelaar.

Wesley Sneijder was on target with

control to sidestep his marker and drilled a low shot towards the left corner - but Stekelenburg to make another brilliant save.

Huntelaar saw his close-range header skim the crossbar, but with just three minutes left, Van Persie won it for the Gunners.

A brilliant run from Clichy down the left - started in his own half - took the full-back to the edge of the Ajax area.

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