

LAMPARD CANCELS OUT TORRES STRIKE Controversy at Anfield

AFP, Liverpool



Fernando Torres marked his first appearance at Anfield with an impressive debut goal for Liverpool but it was not enough to earn his club all three points as referee Rob Styles handed Chelsea a controversial second-half penalty in Sunday's 1-1 draw.

Liverpool's record 26.5 million-pound Spanish striker had made a dream start to his home career but Styles harshly judged that Steve Finnan had pushed over Florent Malouda as he attempted to meet Shaun Wright-Phillips' 61st minute cross.

Frank Lampard needed no second invitation to convincingly equalise from the spot.

To add to Styles' unpopularity, in the eyes of Liverpool fans, he also appeared to book Chelsea a midfielder Michael Essien for a second time midway through the second half without brandishing the red card that should have automatically followed.

Under the watchful eye of England manager Steve McClaren, Steven Gerrard made light of the fractured toe that will almost certainly exclude him from playing for his country against Germany in midweek by setting up Torres' debut goal in the 16th minute.

The Liverpool captain gathered Xabi Alonso's tidy header and sent Torres chasing away down the right

with a superb pass.

It still appeared that Chelsea defender Tal Ben-Haim would deal with the danger but the Spaniard showed an electrifying example of his pace and power to surge away from his marker and beat Peter Cech with a perfect right-foot finish.

The game had already been nicely set up by Manchester United's early afternoon defeat at Manchester City, a result greeted pre-match with great enthusiasm by both sets of supporters.

The early goal merely served to add to the intensity of a fixture that has become one of the set-piece occasions in the English football calendar.

After going a goal behind, Chelsea's midfield began to exert a degree of control.

Alonso's foul on Malouda gave Liverpool an anxious moment at the midway point of the first half but Didier Drogba's free-kick was deflected harmlessly behind.

Salomon Kalou appeared to have a superb shooting opportunity but took one touch too many and was halted by Gerrard's superb sliding tackle and Wright-Phillips sped past Alvaro Arbeloa a little too easily for comfort before his cross was headed over by Drogba.

For the third time in as many games this season, Chelsea found themselves a goal down but their spirited fight back raised the temperature of the contest yet further.

Styles did little to endear himself to the Anfield faithful as he yellow-carded Kuyt, Jermaine Pennant and

Gerrard in quick succession, the Liverpool trio joining Essien and, later, Ashley Cole, Lampard and John Terry in the book.

Chelsea's improved play continued after the restart, Lampard's early corner being flicked on by substitute Claudio Pizarro for John Obi Mikel whose far post header flew over the bar before another dangerous right-wing run by Wright-Phillips ended with a centre which Pizarro, reaching at full stretch, could only head wide.

At the other end, Liverpool were slowly stringing together some more promising moves with Pennant reaching the by-line just before the hour and picking out Alonso on the edge of the area only for the Spaniard to send his strike disappointingly off target.

However, the penalty altered the complexion of the game with Chelsea, possibly, content to settle for a valuable away point.

They might not have emerged with that had Risse's spectacular volley, from Pennant's 67th minute pullback, found its mark.

The last chances of an entertaining game fell to Kuyt, who rose to meet Finnan's right-wing cross but steered his effort inches over the crossbar, and substitute Ryan Babel who unleashed a ferocious long-range drive into the side-netting.



PHOTO: AFP

Liverpool's Spanish striker Fernando Torres (2nd R) heads the ball in front of Chelsea goal during their high-voltage Premier League clash at Anfield on Sunday.

Kanoute hattrick routs Real

Football

AFP, Madrid

Frederic Kanoute hammered a hat-trick as Sevilla beat league champions Real Madrid 5-3 to clinch the Spanish Super Cup on a 6-3 aggregate Sunday.

The result added to the problems of new Real coach Bernd Schuster just a week ahead of the new league season.

Real had lost the first leg of the Super Cup 1-0 and in five pre-season friendlies they have won just

three with two coming against lower-league opposition.

Sunday's match was a personal nightmare for 30-million-euro defender Pepe with the Brazilian giving away a penalty for hand ball which led to one of the goals and then getting sent-off in the closing stages of the match at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Dutch defender Royston Drenthe scored in the 23rd minute for Real to equalise Renato's opener but Renato restored Sevilla's lead in the 28th minute.

Mali international Kanoute then made it 3-1 on the night from the

penalty spot following Pepe's indiscretion before Italian World Cup winner Fabio Cannavaro pulled one back for Real on the stroke of half-time.

Sergio Ramos made it 3-3 on the night in the 79th minute before Kanoute completed his hat-trick in the last 10 minutes.

Sevilla, who had defeated AEK Athens 2-0 in a Champions League qualifier in midweek, also managed to ruin the debut of Real's Dutch international Wesley Sneijder with their free-scoring performance.

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