

LEAGUE ONE  
PSG upset  
Marseille

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint Germain's thrilling 4-2 victory at Marseille on Sunday night prevented the home side from grabbing top spot in the French league in their first victory at the Riviera club for five years.

The 24-year-old striker Guillaume Hoarau scored PSG's first and final goals with Peguy Luyindula and Jerome Rothen strikes sandwiched in between, though Marseille had been 2-1 ahead with goals from Mamadou Niang and Mathieu Valbuena.

It was PSG's first league victory at the Velodrome stadium since November 30, 2003 and condemned Marseille to their first league defeat of the season.

Marseille looked to have paid the penalty of leaving Hatem Ben Arfa on the bench while PSG's tactic of playing a second-string team in midweek UEFA Cup action paid dividends as their fresh legs dominated the second half.

Champions Lyon, who drew 0-0 at Auxerre on Saturday, top the table with 21 points after 10 matches, with second-placed Marseille on 19, and Le Mans, Bordeaux and Toulouse all on 18 points.

Bordeaux could have sneaked provisionally into second spot with a win at Nice but were held instead 2-2 after throwing away a two-goal lead.

Le Mans also drew 2-2 away, in their case at Rennes, while Toulouse drew 0-0 against Monaco.

Lille are eighth on 16 points after a brace from Ludo Obiang secured a 2-2 home draw with Caen, who remain in midtable.

Down at the bottom, Le Havre thanked two goals from Jean-Michel Lesage as they recovered from going a goal down inside a minute to win 2-1 against fellow strugglers Valenciennes while Lorient dragged former giants Nantes back down towards the mire with a 3-0 win in their Breton derby.

Napoli aim  
for UCL

AFP, Rome

Italian high flyers Napoli are aiming at Champions League qualification after a storming start to the season that sees them level on 17 points with champions Inter Milan and Udinese at the top of the table.

Napoli are third on goal difference but at the end of the season it is the head to head record between clubs that matters before the difference between goals scored and conceded -- as they have played neither Udinese nor Inter yet, they are in fact dead level with the pair.

And Sunday's 1-0 victory at Lazio, coming hot on the heels of a 2-1 home success over Juventus, has demonstrated that Napoli, while not quite returning to the glory days yet, are certainly a rising force in the division.

"No-one imagined we would be where we are in the table having played five away matches (out of eight) and come up against Roma and Juventus," beamed Napoli coach Edy Reja.

"This team has surprised even me. Lazio played at pace and with rhythm in the first half and then they tired and we profited."

Napoli's re-emergence has been impressive over the last three seasons. They won successive promotions from third and second divisions and then finished eighth last year, qualifying for the Inter-Toto Cup.

It may not quite be a return to the glory years during Diego Maradona's seven year spell at the club, when Napoli won the first division title in 1987 and 1990, but for a team that went bankrupt in 2004 and was relegated to the third division it is tantamount to a Phoenix rising from the flames.

And Reja thinks there is even more to come from this team.

"Last year we did well against the big teams and badly against the smaller ones. We need to improve on this and we could even qualify for the Champions League."

Figc to look  
into handball  
goal

AFP, Rome

The Italian Football Federation (Figc) said on Monday it will investigate the controversial goal scored by Fiorentina striker Alberto Gilardino against Palermo on Sunday.

Figc has asked sporting justice authorities to look at television footage of the incident and will make a statement in the afternoon.

Palermo president Maurizio Zamparini earlier called for Gilardino to be suspended for five matches for celebrating the goal.

## Real win Bilbao battle

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid moved a point behind leaders Valencia with a hard-fought 3-2 home win over 10-man Athletic Bilbao at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday.

Argentine striker Gonzalo Higuain scored twice, in the 28th and 58th minutes, to down Bilbao who had come back to level at 2-2 through a Jose Exteberria strike and an Andoni Iraola penalty after Wesley Sneijder had put Real in front on 12 minutes.

Bilbao had Fernando Amorebieta sent off for a crude foul 14 minutes from time while Real's Brazilian defender Marcelo was fortunate to escape a straight red for a brutal tackle at the end of the first half.

Fernando Llorente hit the post for Bilbao late on but Real, beaten 2-1 by Juventus in their midweek Champions League match, snatched the points.

"After Champions League games it is always more difficult so this victory is important," said Real coach Bernd Schuster. "It was important to win and be at the top among the leading teams."

Schuster largely answered questions with curt "yes" and "no" answers in the post-match press conference avoiding questions about the competency of the referee.

Real moved above Villarreal into third but are below Barcelona on goal difference while Valencia lead the standings after a 1-1 draw with Recreativo Huelva maintained

## TOP SCORERS

Leading scorers in the Spanish first division after the weekend's matches.

- 9 - Samuel Eto'o (Barcelona), David Villa (Valencia)
- 5 - Lionel Messi (Barcelona), Alvaro Negredo (Almeria), Gonzalo Higuain (Real Madrid)
- 4 - Florent Sinama Pongolle (Athletic Madrid), Rafael van der Vaart (Real Madrid), Raul (Real Madrid), Ruud van Nistelrooy (Real Madrid), Juan Mata (Valencia)

their unbeaten start.

Villarreal and 10-man Atletico Madrid served up the best game of the season with a thrilling 4-4 draw at El Madrigal on Sunday.

Atletico went two goals up after 22 minutes through Simao and Villarreal old boy Diego Forlan but the dismissal of Argentine Ever Banega after 37 minutes for a second yellow card turned the game on its head.

Villarreal scored three times in the first nine minutes of the second half with a Leo Franco goal followed by Marcos Senna's shot to creep in three minutes after the interval, before Jose Llorente equalised on 51 minutes.

Gonzalo Rodriguez then put the hosts ahead on 57 minutes and Giuseppe Rossi, on 68 minutes, added a fourth as Atletico collapsed.

But there was yet another twist as Simao pulled one back for Atletico with his second goal on 83 minutes and Raul Garcia equalised in the 85th minute to make it 4-4.

Gonzalo Rodriguez then put the hosts ahead on 57 minutes and Giuseppe Rossi, on 68 minutes, added a fourth as Atletico collapsed.

Valencia have collected 20 points with six wins and two draws better than in 2001/02, when they won the title under Rafael Benitez.

David Villa's hot streak continued with his ninth goal of the season cancelling out Javier Camunas's opener.

Barcelona had nudged Valencia, now a point ahead of the Catalan giants, from the top with a resounding 5-0 win over Almeria on Saturday with Samuel Eto'o scoring a hattrick in the first 23 minutes.

Sevilla tasted their first defeat of the season with a surprise 1-0 home loss at the hands of promoted Malaga and they fall three points behind Valencia in fourth.

"We didn't deserve to win but we certainly didn't deserve to lose," complained Sevilla coach Manolo Jimenez. "We certainly can't afford to get any more injuries at the moment."



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid striker Gonzalo Higuain is ecstatic after scoring against Athletic Bilbao during their Primera Liga encounter at Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday.

## Benitez calls for calm

AFP, London

SOCIERNET

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C

C