



Sunderland striker Darren Bent (2nd from R) has every reason to go ga ga after scoring the late equalising goal against Arsenal during their English Premier League match at the Stadium of Light on Saturday.

# Bent at the death

AFP, London



Arsenal missed the chance to go top of the Premier League on Saturday after a Darren Bent goal in the fifth minute of injury time scrambled a 1-1 draw for Sunderland at the Stadium of Light.

After trailing to a freak Cesc Fabregas goal for most of the match, the Black Cats mounted a frenzied assault on the Gunners late on after the Londoners were reduced to 10-men following Alex Song's second-half dismissal.

Arsenal were also left ruing a missed penalty from Tomas Rosicky 15 minutes from time which could have wrapped up the points for Arsene Wenger's men.

Wenger was unhappy at the timing of Bent's 95th minute winner, which came after match officials had indicated only four minutes of stoppage time.

"I know it's a minimum of four minutes, but nothing happened in those four minutes to justify them adding more," Wenger said. "But there's nothing I can do... It's frustrating, but there are a lot of positives we can take from it."

The result left Arsenal one point behind league leaders Chelsea, who can open up a four-point lead at the top with victory over Blackpool at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

There was more bad news for Arsenal too with Fabregas -- who had netted on 13 minutes after an Anton Ferdinand clearance ricocheted off him into the top corner -- limping off injured in the first half.

Manchester United host Liverpool in a heavyweight clash at Old Trafford while Manchester City take on Wigan in Sunday's other games.

Elsewhere Saturday, Spurs fought back from a goal down at White Hart Lane to bag all three points with three goals in the final 13 minutes.

Steven Fletcher had fired Wolves into a shock lead on half-time but Spurs hit back with a spotkick from Rafael Van der Vaart before Roman Pavlyuchenko and Alan Hutton secured the points for the Londoners.

"It's three good points for us," Spurs boss Harry Redknapp said. "To come in 1-0 down at half-time you're thinking it's going to be a very

difficult game to win. I said to the players just keep playing. And I think we did that."

Newcastle bounced back from last week's home defeat to Blackpool to stun Everton at Goodison Park.

French striker Hatem Ben Arfa fired the Magpies into the lead with a 25-year thunderbolt on the stroke of half-time and the Toffees were unable to find a way back into the game as Newcastle held on for the win.

The defeat left David Moyes's side second from bottom but the Everton boss is confident his team can climb out of the relegation zone.

"We've been a good side over the years and I'm sure we'll show that by the end of the season," Moyes said.

Blackburn were forced to settle for a draw in their clash with Fulham at Ewood Park, which saw Rovers take the lead in controversial circumstances before the Cottagers hit back through Clint Dempsey.

Blackburn had gone 1-0 up after Fulham keeper Mark Schwarzer was bundled over by El Hadji Diouf to allow Chris Samba to head home Paul Robinson's punt. Dempsey's strike earned another point for Mark Hughes side.

Incoming Aston Villa boss Gerard Houllier watched from the stands as his new club were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Bolton.

Ashley Young had put Villa up with a curling freekick early on before Bolton striker Kevin Davies levelled for the visitors.

At the Hawthorns, Birmingham City boss Alex McLeish saw his delight at securing a new three-year contract turn to despair as the Blues crashed 3-1 to West Bromwich Albion.

The Blues went 1-0 up after a well-worked set-piece involving new signing Alexander Hleb. Hleb's floated free-kick was met by Scott Dann, who headed to the far post for Cameron Jerome to ram home.

But the Baggies hit back immediately after the restart when an effort from Peter Odemwingie deflected off Dann to put the home side on level terms.

Shortly afterwards Odemwingie pounced on a slack backpass by Lee Bowyer to put Roberto Di Matteo's men ahead before Jonas Olsson completed the scoring.

In the early game, bottom club West Ham secured their first point of the season with a hard-fought 1-1 draw at Stoke.

# Real Madrid go on top

AFP, Madrid



Cristiano Ronaldo scored a fortunate first goal of the season with his deflected 75th minute free-kick

proving the winner in a 2-1 win at promoted Real Sociedad as Real Madrid moved to the top of La Liga for the first time under Jose Mourinho.

Ronaldo saw his free-kick take a huge deflection off teammate Pepe and loop in 15 minutes from time and the world's most expensive player seemed embarrassed to celebrate the winning goal which handed Mourinho his first away win.

Argentine international winger Angel di Maria -- a 25-million-euro summer signing from Benfica -- scored a memorable first Real goal on 51 minutes only for veteran Raul Tamudo to equalise as Real conceded their first goal under Mourinho.

However, Ronaldo had the final say with his freak goal and Madrid rode their luck to go top -- a point ahead of Atletico Madrid and Valencia who have played one game less.

Despite the win, Mourinho was far from happy throwing his water bottle in the dug-out late on.

"It was great to get my first goal and the points in a tough match against a very good team," said di Maria. "Now we'll see what Atletico (Madrid) do against Barcelona."

Champions Barcelona are four points behind Real and travel to league leaders Atletico on Sunday.

It was Sociedad's first defeat of the season but the league



Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (L) leaves his marker behind during their Spanish league match against Real Sociedad at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian on Saturday.

newcomers tested Real to the limit in a sensational atmosphere at the Anoeta stadium and were denied a late equaliser at 2-2 by goalkeeper Iker Casillas.

Mourinho made just one change from the side that convincingly beat Ajax 2-0 at the Santiago Bernabeu in the

Champions League on Wednesday with Sergio Ramos replacing Alvaro Arbeloa. It was a special game for Madrid midfielder Xabi Alonso who began his career at hometown club Sociedad and was part of the Sociedad side that finished league runners-up to Real in 2003.

Real started on the front foot but it was Sociedad who had the best chances with French midfielder Antoine Griezmann guilty of two glaring misses.

In the fifth minute Xabi Prieto found Griezmann unmarked in the penalty area but he headed over the crossbar to the relief of Casillas.

Sociedad continued to attack and on 25 minutes

everyone was celebrating -- in particular Sociedad coach Martin Lasarte -- the opening goal only to realise that Griezmann had shot just wide.

The Frenchman was one-on-one with Casillas but contrived to shoot wide and let Madrid off the hook again.

Real had long distance efforts from Ronaldo, di Maria and Alonso to show for their attacks but then needed a last ditch intervention from Ricardo Carvalho to stop the hosts from scoring on 31 minutes.

Real were lucky to be level at half-time after Sociedad's missed chances, yet, Mourinho refused to change things for the second half and di Maria shot the visitors ahead on 51 minutes curling in with his weaker right foot for his first Real goal.

Sociedad showed real character to equalise 10 minutes later with Real failing to defend a fizzing cross and Tamudo was on hand to slot in the leveller.

However, Ronaldo's deflected free-kick 15 minutes from time sealed a fortunate win with Casillas pulling off a late save from the hapless Griezmann.

Earlier Danish coach Michael Laudrup enjoyed his first win in charge of Real Mallorca as the islanders recorded a 2-0 home victory over Osasuna.

Mallorca scored their first goal of the season with a Chori Castro penalty on 25 minutes and a first club goal from Dutch midfielder Jonathan de Guzman helping former Barcelona and Real Madrid star player Laudrup to his maiden league win.

"I can say the same thing as (Jose) Mourinho and that is that my teams play better in the second season," explained Laudrup.

# Diego to sing in China

AFP, Beijing

Football legend Diego Maradona is due in China in November for a charity tour that will see him lunch with fans and sing in a concert, the organiser said Sunday.

Maradona, who was dismissed as Argentina's national team coach in July, will travel to China with 11 players to raise money for a Chinese Red Cross Foundation project aimed at helping poor people who suffer from cancer.

"He will participate in a series of charity events including playing no less than 20 minutes in two football games," Wang Ling, head of Guojin Yihui (Beijing) International Culture Company, which is planning the trip, told AFP.

"Maradona sings very well and we are organising a concert for him in China," he added.

The football legend will also have lunch with the highest bidder of an auction due to take place before his arrival on November 3, Wang said.

According to the foundation's website, the meal will last two hours and the winner will be able to bring six friends.

Maradona and the players, whose names have not yet been revealed, will stay in China for 10 days on a trip that will also take in Liaoning province in the northeast and Anhui in the east.

# Mourinho not happy

REUTERS, Madrid

Jose Mourinho has said he was frustrated by what appeared to be Real Madrid objections to his temporarily coaching the Portuguese national team for two Euro 2012 qualifiers next month.

The Portuguese Football Federation have approached the two-time Champions League winner to see if he would take charge for the games at home to Denmark on October 8 and away to Iceland four days later.

"I don't understand why Real will not let me coach Portugal when I will have almost nothing to do in Madrid," Mourinho said after their 2-1 La Liga victory at Real Sociedad on Saturday.

"I will have nine days holiday in Madrid while there are international matches."

Real's director general Jorge Valdano moved quickly to clarify the club's position.

"There has not been an official request from Portugal so we have not declared our position," he said.

"It has been a huge story in the media so the president of the Portuguese federation rang (Real president) Florentino Perez, but this was to say they had dropped the idea."

"We took this to mean the issue was over. Mourinho is put out because everyone would like to help their country and this reflects well on him, but there isn't anyone to blame at the club."

# Inzaghi saves Milan

AFP, Rome



Filippo Inzaghi scored his 123rd AC Milan goal to rescue a point in a disap-

pointing 1-1 draw with Catania at the San Siro on Saturday.

After opening their Champions League campaign with a 2-0 win over French side Auxerre in midweek, Milan started without injured Brazilians Alexandre Pato and Robinho.

They fell behind to a 30-metre screamer from Ciro Capuano just before the half-hour mark after the Catania midfielder had collected a clearance from Andrea Pirlo.

Milan levelled just on the stroke of half-time when Ronaldinho set-up 37-year-old Inzaghi to side-foot home from six yards.

It gave the striker his 123rd goal in Milan's colours, just one behind the club record of 124 held by Dutchman Marco van Basten.

**RESULTS**

Fiorentina 1 (Ljajic 19-pen) Lazio 2 (Ledesma 32, Kozak 67)

AC Milan 1 (F. Inzaghi 45) Catania 1

The result put Milan into fourth place, two points behind leaders Chievo.

"We ought to win these games on home turf, but there's a long way to go yet," said Ronaldinho.

"It is always difficult when an opponent defends en masse. It could've been a good opportunity to win, but the important thing is to carry on working well."

"Now we've got to start winning with a certain level of consistency."

Fiorentina lost for the second successive time when

they were beaten 2-1 at home by Lazio, a defeat which sent them to 17th place in Serie A.

Fiorentina could even find themselves rock-bottom if AS Roma, Bologna and Udinese secure points this weekend.

The match started well for Fiorentina when 19-year-old Adem Ljalic opened the scoring with a 19th-minute penalty.

But Lazio levelled through Argentine Cristian Ledesma in the 32nd minute before Czech international Libor Kozak scored the winner after 67 minutes.



AC Milan forward Filippo Inzaghi roars after scoring the equaliser against Catania during their Serie A football match at the San Siro in Milan on Saturday.

# Bento to man Portugal

AFP, Madrid

Paulo Bento will on Monday be appointed coach of Portugal after Real Madrid refused to release Jose Mourinho to take up the role temporarily, the Madrid sport press reported on Sunday.

Sport daily AS claimed Real president Florentino Perez refused to "loan" Mourinho for Portugal's next two Euro 2012 qualifying matches during a telephone call with Portuguese Football Federation president Gilberto Madal.

Marca reported that former Sporting Lisbon coach Paulo Bento, who played for Benfica, Sporting and Spanish side Oviedo, will sign a two-year contract with the Portuguese federation on Monday.

Portugal have made a poor start to their Euro 2012 qualifying campaign, drawing 4-4 with Cyprus and losing 1-0 to Norway to leave them in fourth place in Group H.

# Wenger can't accept it

AFP, Sunderland



Arsene Wenger insisted there was no confrontation with fourth official Martin Atkinson as Arsenal were denied top spot in the Premier League thanks to Darren Bent's dramatic injury-time goal in a 1-1 draw at Sunderland.

England international Bent, who grew up as an Arsenal supporter, scored in the fifth minute of stoppage time after Atkinson had indicated a minimum of four would be added on, to spark a melee near the technical area.

"Take the pictures and look at it. I complained to nobody," Wenger insisted in a curt post-match press conference.

The Football Association are likely to probe the incident.

Alex Song was sent off early in the second-half for the Gunners, who were left to rue a late penalty miss by Tomas Rosicky.

Wenger had praise for his team, who trail Chelsea by two points after missing an opportunity to leapfrog the leaders.

The Frenchman, clearly still fuming at the circumstances in which his side were denied

two priceless points, refused to discuss the display of Phil Dowd, the referee.

The Arsenal manager added: "I don't comment on any decision by the referee. You saw the game like I did. Don't ask me to comment on any of the referee's decisions."

On the timing of Bent's fifth goal of the season to cancel out a freak early strike by Cesc Fabregas, who limped off before half-time with a hamstring injury to make him a doubt for Tuesday's League Cup meeting with north London rivals Tottenham, Wenger added: "If you have a watch you can control it. It's as simple as that."

Wenger refused to single out substitute Rosicky's costly miss as the turning point.

"We had problems at the start in the first-half, but the performance was good. In the second-half we controlled the game, even though we had 10 men," said Wenger.

"Unfortunately in the 95th minute Sunderland scored their equaliser but I was very pleased with the performance and we showed all the ingredients of a good team."