



Mainz goal scorers (from L-R) Andre Schurrle, Lewis Holtby and Adam Szalai celebrate after their Bundesliga match against TSG 1899 Hoffenheim at the Bruchweg stadium in Mainz on Saturday.

## Magnificent Mainz

AFP, Berlin



Minnows Mainz equalled the record for most wins at the start of a Bundesliga campaign with their seventh victory as they hammered 10-man Hoffenheim 4-2 on Saturday to maintain their perfect record.

Dark-horses Mainz are only the third side after Kaiserslautern and Bayern Munich to have won all seven matches at the start of the season and their young guns ran riot at home to Hoffenheim.

Coach Thomas Tuchel can scarcely believe his luck as his inexperienced side are growing in confidence with every game, especially after winning 2-1 at defending champions Bayern Munich last weekend.

They host Hamburg in their next league game on October 16 for their chance to make Bundesliga history with an eighth win, but Tuchel said he was not interested in records.

"During the game, I didn't even think about records, for me it is not even an issue," he said.

"In the first half, we were lacking in confidence and even the early goal gave us no security."

"Hoffenheim gave us big problems, but after the break we were better and always threatened their goal."

Both teenage striker Andre Schurrle, 19, and midfielder Lewis Holtby, 20, have produced performances to take them to the verge of the national side, according to Germany coach Joachim Loew, and the pair scored in the rout.

Loew singled out Holtby for special praise after his defence-splitting pass set up the opening goal.

"His pass was worth the entrance fee alone," said the impressed national coach. Mainz began both halves in style with a first-half goal by Tunisia striker Sami Allagui after just two minutes, while Hungary striker Adam Szalai scored their second right at the start of the first half.

Hoffenheim striker Demba Ba had put his side level just before the half-time break while Iceland midfielder Gylfi Sigurdsson came off the bench to smash in a free kick just a minute later to make it 3-2 with 64 minutes played.

But the second half belonged to Mainz as Holtby, who had been a constant threat all afternoon, scored from the right wing as his shot clipped Hoffenheim's Luiz Gustavo on 59 minutes.

Mainz then claimed the golden 21 points from seven games when Holtby was hauled down in the area by Hoffenheim's Josip Simunic on 73 minutes.

Simunic was shown a straight red card and Schurrle netted his fourth goal of the season to seal the win.

Freiburg are up to fourth in the table after their 3-2 win over Cologne on Saturday and Hamburg are seventh after they came from behind to beat Kaiserslautern 2-1.

Schalke's dreadful start to the season continued at Nuremberg as they suffered their fifth defeat when they went down 2-1 to stay second from bottom.

Ex-England manager Steve McClaren was denied his fourth straight win when his side were held 1-1 by Moenchengladbach.

### RESULTS

Freiburg 3 (Rosenthal 4, 11, Cisse 70)

Cologne 2 (Mohamad 22, Matsushyok 50)

M'gladbach 1 (Marx 65) VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Kahlenberg 27)

Hamburg 2 (Kacar 69, Choupo-Moting 84) Kaiserslautern 1 (Lakic 3)

Mainz 05 4 (Allagui 2, Szalai 47, Holtby 59, Schurrle 73) Hoffenheim 2 (Ba 41, Sigurdsson 64)

Nuremberg 2 (Frantz 62, Wolf 83) Schalke 04 1 (Huntelaar 74)

## MU continue poor run

AFP, London



Manchester United were left two points behind English Premier League leaders Chelsea after being held to a goalless draw away at Sunderland on Saturday.

Victory for Sir Alex Ferguson's men, in a match delayed by 20 minutes after a burst pipe caused the ceiling above the visitors' dressing room to collapse, would have seen them draw level on points with Chelsea ahead of the champions' London derby against Arsenal on Sunday.

"But they couldn't find a way past the defence of a Sunderland side who've lost just once at the Stadium of Light in 2010, to United. I think you've got to give credit to Sunderland," Ferguson told Sky Sports, praising the performance of a team managed by former United captain Steve Bruce.

"Their home record this season has been fantastic and we had to defend really well," added Ferguson, after United's fourth successive draw in as many away league matches this season. "My back four were fantastic."

A proud Bruce said: "That's as close as we are going to get (to beating United). We

needed to take one of our chances and maybe that's our Achilles heel."

At the other end of the table, Everton moved off the bottom and out of the relegation zone as they won 2-0 away to Birmingham City for their first league victory of the season, ending City's 18-game unbeaten run at St Andrews.

The Toffees' long-awaited success, allied to Wigan's 2-0 win over Wolves, saw Merseyside rivals Liverpool drop into the bottom three ahead of their match against top-flight new boys Blackpool at Anfield on Sunday.

"I'm very pleased, the

### RESULTS

Birmingham 0 Everton 2 (Johnson 54-og, Cahill 90)

Stoke 1 (Walters 48) Blackburn 0 Sunderland 0 Man Utd 0

Tottenham 2 (Van der Vaart 45, 75) Aston Villa 1 (Albrighton 16)

West Brom 1 (Morrison 78) Bolton 1 (Elmander 64)

West Ham 1 (Piquionne 51) Fulham 1 (Dempsey 33)

Wigan 2 (Gomez 65, Rodallega 85) Wolves 0

performance was really good as it has been for most of the games this season but the one thing we've not been able to get is that victory and we got it today," said Everton coach David Moyes.

Tottenham ended Aston Villa's winning run under Gerard Houllier with a Rafael van der Vaart double inspiring a 2-1 come-from-behind victory, while West Ham and Fulham shared the points in a 1-1 draw.

Villa, who'd won both their two previous league matches under French boss Houllier, took a 16th-minute lead at White Hart Lane after Marc Albrighton tapped in Emile Heskey's cross at the far post.

But Spurs were back on level terms shortly before half-time when van der Vaart headed home at the far post after Roman Pavlyuchenko's cross was nodded back across goal by Peter Crouch.

And the Netherlands midfielder, who scored and was sent off in Tottenham's mid-week Champions League win over Dutch club FC Twente, fired Spurs into the lead 15 minutes from time.

At the other end of the table, Everton scored their first away goal of the season when Leon Osman's cross was turned into his own net by Birmingham defender Roger Johnson in the 54th minute.

Australia's Tim Cahill sealed Everton's victory when he headed home in the 90th minute.

Clint Dempsey, who embarrassed England's

Robert Green at the World Cup with a shot that squirmed under the goalkeeper in a 1-1 draw in South Africa, put Fulham in front at West Ham with a 12-yard strike that gave the Hammers shot-stopper no chance in the 33rd minute.

But West Ham equalised in the 51st minute when Frederic Piquionne headed in Victor Obinna's cross. However, the Hammers went bottom after Everton's win.

Jon Walters gave Stoke a 1-0 win over Blackburn Rovers when he curled home his first Potters league goal in the 48th minute at the Britannia Stadium.

Victory saw the Potters climb from 15th to seventh in the table.

Johan Elmander put Bolton into a 64th-minute lead away to West Brom when he shot past Scott Carson at the Hawthorns before James Morrison headed the Baggies level with 12 minutes left in a 1-1 draw.

Earlier, Wigan rose out of the bottom three with a 2-0 victory over Wolves that plunged Mick McCarthy's men into the relegation zone following second-half goals from Jordi Gomez and Hugo Rodallega.

Fourth-placed Manchester City, who beat Chelsea last week, play Newcastle on Sunday.

## I was ready to quit: Melo

SOCCERNET

Juventus midfielder Felipe Melo has revealed he was on the verge of quitting football after Brazil's World Cup exit.

Melo, 27, was widely criticised after the World Cup this summer as Brazil exited to Netherlands at the quarter-final stage. Melo was initially credited with an own goal in the game - although it was later given to Wesley Sneijder - and was then sent off for stamping on Arjen Robben. "After the World Cup I no longer had the motivation to play," Melo told La Repubblica. "I had no joy in it anymore and had decided to leave football. I played a decent World Cup, but in Brazil everyone said we had gone out because of me."

"Those who understand football know that we were going to go out anyway. You just had to look in the eyes of the Dutch players before my red card to realise it. I am not an angel, but I understood that I could be hard without going over the top."

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## Sven new Leicester coach

AFP, Leicester

Second tier English Championship side Leicester on Sunday unveiled Sven-Goran Eriksson as their new coach on a two-year contract.

Eriksson, 62, attended Saturday's match against Scunthorpe at the Walkers Stadium and chairman Milan Mandaric got his man after sacking Paulo Sousa on Friday. Sousa was sacked after Leicester lost six of their opening eight league matches, including a heavy 6-1 defeat at struggling Portsmouth.

Former England boss Eriksson, who managed Manchester City and was director of football at Notts County last season, will begin work Monday, when the club leave for a week-long tour of Thailand.

Eriksson, who handled Ivory Coast at this year's World Cup, will become the Foxes' 15th manager since 2004.

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## Lyon escape trouble

AFP, Paris



Fallen French giants Lyon put last week's Rhone Derby defeat behind them and edged out of the relegation zone after prevailing in a five-goal thriller against Nancy on Saturday.

Lyon are flying high in Europe after a midweek defeat of Hapoel Tel Aviv in Israel left them top of their Champions League group and on target to make the knockout stages.

But it has been a markedly different story on the home front, with Claude Puel's side in the uncustomary position of having only two teams below them hitting the road to Nancy.

So it was a case of smiles all round as a first half goal from Argentina striker Lisandro Lopez and Jimmy Briand's second half double bagged a 3-2 win against their fellow strugglers.

Nancy made Lyon fight for the three points though as they twice came back to draw level with their goals coming from Andre Luiz Silva and Julien Feret. The victory, only their second of the cam-

paign, lifted Lyon out of danger but only just, going fourth from bottom above Nancy on goal difference.

One of the few sides that have endured more misery than Lyon this term has been promoted Arles-Avignon, who gave their new coach Faruk Hadzibegic no illusions as to the task he faces to keep them in the top flight after a 4-0 home crushing by Auxerre.

Auxerre, who had made Real Madrid fight for a 1-0 Champions League win on Tuesday, coasted to what was only their first win of the season with Alain Traore and captain Benoit Pedretti putting them two goals up before the break and Roy Contout and Slovenia striker Valter Birsa completing the rout.

Bordeaux's season, while not as wretched as Lyon's, has hardly been one of unfulfilled joy either and so their 1-0 win over Lorient will have been warmly received.

It was earned with the goal of the day, an audacious 30 metre lob from defender Mixhael Ciani which just ducked under the crossbar.

In other games Sochaux jumped to fifth with a 3-0 win against Lens. One point ahead in fourth are Brest, who are flying high thanks to a 1-0 victory at Monaco.

## Valencia reach summit

AFP, Madrid



Valencia bounced back from their Champions League loss to Manchester United with a 2-1 home victory over Athletic Bilbao on Saturday to move four points clear at the Spanish first division summit.

A third goal of the season from striker Aritz Aduriz on 10 minutes and a late strike from substitute Vicente made it 16 points from 18 from unbeaten Valencia who lead Villarreal and champions Barcelona.

It is too early to know if Valencia, league champions in 2002 and 2004 under Rafael Benitez, are genuine title contenders to Real and Barca who finished 28 points ahead of third-placed Valencia last season.

Barcelona host Real Mallorca on Sunday while Real Madrid, who have yet to be defeated, entertain strugglers Deportivo La Coruna on the same day looking to close a five-point gap on Valencia.

Valencia fell victim to a late goal in Wednesday's 1-0 Champions League home defeat to Manchester United but responded

with a narrow win over Bilbao to continue their fine start.

Aduriz linked up well with strike partner Roberto Soldado and planted a header home in the 10th minute for his third goal since joining from Real Mallorca in a four-million-euro summer move.

Vicente added a second goal a minute into stoppage time and it proved crucial as Igor Gabilondo pulled a goal back for Bilbao in stoppage time.

Earlier on loan French striker Florent Sinama Pongolle scored twice in five minutes as 10-man Real Zaragoza came from two goals down to draw 2-2 at home to Sporting Gijon on Saturday. Zaragoza stay bottom of the table despite the point but it could have been worse having trailed 2-0 with one player less after the dismissal of former Chelsea defender Jiri Jirosik two minutes after the break.

However, the hosts scored twice in five minutes to stun Gijon with former Liverpool striker Pongolle, on loan from Portuguese side Sporting Lisbon, scoring in the 56th minute and again in the 61st minute to change the course of the match as Zaragoza salvaged an unlikely point.

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## Pirlo rips Parma hearts

AFP, Rome



AC Milan went top of Serie A for a day at least as Andrea Pirlo scored the only goal of the game to earn a 1-0 victory at Parma on Saturday.

Several teams can go back above Milan if they win on Sunday but seeing the rossoneri go top this early in the season is an ominous sign for the rest of the division.

In truth the margin of victory should have been considerably wider as Milan, and Zlatan Ibrahimovic in particular missed a sackful of chances.

Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri was satisfied with his team's performance, although he admitted the last few minutes were uncomfortable watching.

"It's an important win because we had several important players out. We played well in the first half and created many chances," he said.

"Apart from the last 10 minutes we controlled the second half and I think we

deserved this win.

"We hardly gave away any chances but in the second half our tempo dropped, we went to sleep a bit and gave up a couple of chances."

"Maybe at the end we could have better managed the last five minutes."

Milan's combative midfielder Gennaro Gattuso brushed off the significance of

his team's going top at this stage of the season.

"Being at the top doesn't mean anything. It was our first away win and this was important," he said.

"We still have to improve a lot but I think we played some good stuff at times."

The defeat left Parma hovering above the relegation zone only on goal difference but they will likely drop down into the bottom three on Sunday.

Milan showed their intent from the off as Ibrahimovic got free in the box on two minutes and dragged his cross-shot wide.

Parma rarely threatened but they did have a great chance on 12 minutes as Angelo crossed for former Milan striker Hernan Crespo but he stooped so low to try to head the ball under pressure from Alessandro Nesta that he failed to get anything behind

his effort.

Milan were soon back on the attack as Ibrahimovic played a one-two with Clarence Seedorf but shot straight at Antonio Mirante.

The visitors had the lead on 25 minutes as Pirlo found space and crashed a stunning shot from 30 yards, that moved wickedly in the air, into the top corner.

The seven-time European champions found their swagger and Ronaldinho created a pair of chances, chipping over the backline for Ibrahimovic but Mirante came out well to block his shot while Ronaldinho repeated the trick for Robinho only for his countryman's header to lack power.

Ibrahimovic then shrugged off his marker to home in one-on-one on Mirante but incredibly he shot three times straight at the goalkeeper before the ball was cleared.

Full-back Luca Antonini got behind the Parma defence on the stroke of half-time from Pirlo's pass but no-one arrived to touch home his pull-back.

It was more of the same in the second period as Robinho miscued horribly when well placed and then Ronaldinho let fly from distance only for Mirante to come to the rescue again and tip the ball over the bar on 63 minutes.

Parma finally threatened 12 minutes from time as Blerim Dzemaili forced a sprawling save out of Christian Abbiati with a skidding daisy-cutter.

But on the counter attack Ronaldinho beat the offside trap but from the left curled his shot past the far post.

Earlier in the day Udinese finally won their first game of the season at the sixth attempt as Mehdi Benatia scored deep into injury time in a 1-0 success over Cesena, although Udinese remain bottom.



AC Milan midfielder Andrea Pirlo (L) celebrates after scoring a fantastic goal during their Serie A match against Parma at the Ennio Tardini stadium on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Rain might have marred New Zealand's scheduled second practice match, but they used that opportunity to do something else. Here some players are seen engaged in a shopping spree at a crockeries shop in Elephant Road yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN