PHOTO: AFP

Sevilla midfielder Alejandro Alfaro (C) scores the second goal against Valencia during their Primera Liga encounter at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan Stadium on Monday.

Subs lead Sevilla

AP, *Seville*

Substitutes Alvaro Negredo and Alejandro Alfaro scored second-half goals to lead Sevilla to a 2-0 win over 10-man Valencia on Monday.

Valencia were a man down from the 25th minute when midfielder Mehmet Topal was shown a red card for a tackle on Martin Caceres.

Unai Emery's team put up strong resistance until Negredo came on in the 53rd. One minute later, the striker jumped on the rebound from Careces' shot to score the opener.

Alfaro sealed the victory by heading in Mouhamadou Dabo's cross from the right in the 77th.

"We had the ball, but we couldn't find the space to attack with precision, but luckily the play of the goal arrived and I could score," Negredo told the Spanish television channel La Sexta. "Then Alfaro put the game away."

Sevilla is now level with fifth-place Valencia on 17 points, but is behind on goal difference.

Real Madrid stayed top with 26 points after continuing its 11-year unbeaten streak against cross-town rival Atletico Madrid with a 2-0 win on Sunday. Barcelona held on to second with 25 points after handing Getafe a 3-1 defeat, while Villarreal kept pace in third with 23 points with its 4-1 victory over Athletic Bilbao.

Sevilla has yet to lose at the Sanchez Pizjuan stadium this season, while Valencia is now winless in its last four outings.

Sevilla controlled possession early on and took advantage of Diego Perotti's speed on the right flank. The Argentine winger soon found Luis Fabiano, who tested goalkeeper Cesar Sanchez with a point-blank strike from close range in the 11th.

Even before Topal's sending off, Valencia only managed a shot by Juanma Mata that goalkeeper Javier Varas had to stretch his leg to keep out.

Gregorio Manzano's squad tried to press its extra-man advantage, but Cesar was well positioned to easily control a header by Luis Fabiano in the 29th and shots by Perotti and Koffi Romaric in injury time before the break.

Vicente Guaita replaced an injured Cesar in goal at halftime and soon had to deal with a long strike by Sevilla's Fernando Navarro.

Manzano's decision to add a third striker paid off immediately when Negredo slotted the ball between Guaita's legs.

Valencia coach Unai Emery said the decision to send-off Topal was "incorrect" and "conditioned the outcome of the game."

Sevilla pushed forward after the goal and Luis Fabiano hit the crossbar from a pass by Caceres in the 60th.

Valencia looked for the equalizer, and Aritz Aduriz forced Varas to go to the ground to stop his strike from the edge of the area in the 67th.

After Sevilla's second goal, the opposing 'keepers kept out clear opportunities by Valencia's Roberto Soldado and Negredo with the game wide open, and Sevilla's Diego Capel hit the post in injury time.

MU scent blood

AFP, *London*

A Premier League season that threatened to see Chelsea run away with the defence of their title resumes on Tuesday and Wednesday with teams at both ends of the table having plenty to play for.

Chelsea's 2-0 loss to Liverpool revived the title race and cut the Blues lead at the top of the table to two points over Manchester United, the only unbeaten side in the top flight.

Only five points now separate big-spenders Manchester City, currently fourth, from Chelsea while, further down the table Liverpool may now be ninth but a tally of 15 points leaves them just five clear of relegation-threatened Wigan Athletic, their opponents on Wednesday.

Chelsea will look to return to winning ways in a west London derby at home to Fulham on Wednesday with Blues captain John Terry insisting some good could come from their Liverpool loss.

"I don't think we ever take things for granted at this club but maybe this is the kick up the backside we all needed," said the England defender.

"We have another gear to find and we're still at the top of the Premier League, so we have to be encouraged by that, but we can't forget what has got us there in the first place," the centre-half added.

You have to go back to the late 1960s to find the last time a Manchester derby saw both City and United vying for the title but that's the situation the clubs find themselves in ahead of Wednesday's clash at Eastlands.

City will be without suspended striker Mario Balotelli for the derby clash and United manager Sir Alex Ferguson did his best to add to the pressure on his cross-town rivals by insisting the Blues had to win something this season given the millions of pounds lavished on players by the club's Abu Dhabi owners.

"We know the kind of money they're spending -- they've bought another five or six players in the summer -- and they'll keep doing that until they win something," Ferguson said.

"They're up there (challenging for the title), and you can't wait until tomorrow when there's something there today. I'm sure they're thinking that way themselves."

Arsenal meanwhile will look to bounce back from their 1-0 loss away to Newcastle against a Wolves side still smarting from conceding a late winner from Manchester United's Park Ji-Sung.

"We have to pick ourselves up," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said. "We are ambitious, and that is why we have to get our spirit on this (Wolves) game, focus again and come back with points."

Newcastle striker Andy Carroll, who scored the winner against the Gunners, will look to be on the scoresheet again against Blackburn.

Carroll has found his private life making as many headlines as his performances on the field and Magpies manager Chris Hughton is concerned the forward does not get distracted from his day job.

"With Andy, it's about making sure that all the headlines he is making are on the back pages," Hughton said.

"He is a young man, he has made mistakes, but he has got to make sure he learns from those mistakes, and I am quite sure he will."

Aston Villa play surprise package Blackpool on Wednesday when Bolton make the short trip to Everton and basement club West Ham face West Brom.

RESULTS

(1945GMT unless stated)

Wednesday

Aston Villa v Blackpool, Chelsea v Fulham, Everton v Bolton (2000GMT), Manchester City v Manchester United (2000GMT), Newcastle v Blackburn, West Ham v West Brom, Wigan v

Hargreaves out for five weeks

REUTERS *Manchester*

Manchester United midfielder Owen Hargreaves, who lasted just six minutes in his comeback from long-term injury at the weekend, faces up to five weeks out with a hamstring problem.

The 29-year-old England international, who has battled chronic tendinitis in his knees, made his first start in more than two years in Saturday's 2-1 victory at home to Wolverhampton Wanderers but soon left the field shaking his head at his misfortune.

Manager Alex Ferguson told local radio station Key 103 on Tuesday that the player was unlikely to play until mid-December.

"We're at that stage where we're sure his knee is okay," Ferguson said.

"His training performances in the previous eight or nine days were terrific. He had done really well, which is why we took the chance. But maybe the tension in the build-up for the lad was too much and he suffered because of it."

Fergie focused on derby

AFP, *Manchester*

Sir Alex Ferguson insisted on Tuesday that Manchester City's huge transfer spending does not make silverware an inevitability.

Ferguson takes his United side across town to Eastlands on Wednesday night for one of the most-anticipated derbies in decades.

The rivalry between the two clubs has reached new levels since the Abu Dhabi United Group took over at City in September 2008.

Since then, under Mark Hughes and Roberto Mancini, City have spent significantly in almost every transfer window to overhaul their squad at huge cost.

Their most controversial signing was taking Carlos Tevez from United in the summer of 2009 and there were also linked with a move for Wayne Rooney during the England forward's contract dispute.

But City were defeated in both Premier League derbies last season as well as losing out in the League Cup semifinals.

Mancini spent in the region of 130 million pounds to sign half a dozen players in the summer but Ferguson is adamant that will not necessarily translate to silverware like it did for Blackburn, who won the Premier League on the back of Jack Walker's spending in the mid-1990s.

Ferguson said: "It's a different league now. It's a really competitive league and if you look at the results from the weekend, they tell you everything.

"This is a really difficult league to win and points will be dropped between now and the new year and it'll build up to a really fantastic run in for the Championship and there will be points dropped in the run in too because that's the kind of league it is now.

"It's difficult to say. It's better than not having (money) but it's still a difficult league to win and they know that. City recognise that themselves."

Ferguson has been critical of City's approach in the past but insists he can not argue with their right to spend significantly in the transfer market.

He added: "If people have money to spend and want to spend it, they'll spend it.

"Chelsea did the same and Sunderland did the same back in the 50s.

"It's just a fact of life, it's availability. Clubs spend money through what they're going to get off the television every summer.

"They know they're going to get a certain amount of money from television and they spend it immediately in trying to improve their teams.

Although the injection of money at City has escalated the rivalry between the clubs, Ferguson is adamant the game will never be like the match against traditional rivals Liverpool.

He said: "It's a different type of derby to the Liverpool game.

"The Liverpool game is one of honours in terms of trophies won. Liverpool edge it in terms of European Cups and we edge it in FA Cups and World Championships that type of thing and that is undoubtedly the two most successful clubs in British football.

"When we meet it's a different type of derby game. Now the game between ourselves and City is one of great intensity.

"It's built up by the media explosion around what City are doing and trying to achieve in their own way and the fact we're both in the same City. There's an incredible intensity in the derby game now which wasn't there 10 or 15 years ago.

Ferguson admitted his plans for the match are still being hampered by a virus that is sweeping through his squad.

Genoa sack Gasperini

AFP, *Rome*

Gian Piero Gasperini was sacked as coach of Serie A side Genoa on Monday after four years at the helm, the president of the club Enrico Preziosi announced.

Gasperini - whose side slipped to 14th in the table after their second successive defeat by Palermo on Sunday - has been replaced by Davide Ballardini, who was sacked by Lazio in February.

Gasperini is the second Serie A coach to lose his job - Bologna sacked Franco Colomba just before the season started.

Pippo hints at exit

SOCCERNET

AC Milan veteran Filippo Inzaghi has hinted he may seek a January exit after falling down the pecking order.

Inzaghi, 37, is no longer guaranteed regular football at the San Siro, with Zlatan Ibrahimovic established as first-choice following his arrival from Barcelona.

Inzaghi showed he is still capable of making an impact when he hit a brace against Real Madrid in the Champions League last week, but he played no part in the 3-2 win over Bari that followed.

"I still want to be important," Inzaghi told Rete 4. "I have received two offers and I am happy that someone is still looking at me.

"I don't want to be employed only in moments of despair, but let's see in two months. I have an incredible affection for Milan but I still really want to play and I feel good."

However, Inzaghi signed a new deal in May to tie him to the club until 2011 and Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani says the player will not be allowed to move on.

"I have told Pippo that after the contract renewal there is no chance I am letting him leave."

Pressure on Inter

AFP, *Rome*

A quarter of the way through the Serie A season and there is a real sense in Italy that this will not be the Inter Milan procession of recent years.

Having lifted five scudetto crowns in a row, Inter have near monopolised the Serie A summit in recent years, but this season has so far given hope to the rest.

Inter sit third in the table after 10 games, a win behind leaders Lazio and a point off second-placed AC Milan, their city rivals.

It's not just the teams ahead that cause worry, though, as they are only a point ahead of Juventus and Napoli while Roma, who started the season in such disastrous fashion, have closed to just four points behind the champions.

It is all a lot tighter than Inter had been accustomed to in Jose Mourinho's two years at the helm.

But under new boss Rafael Benitez things have changed and goals, most notably, have become much harder to come by.

Despite the astonishing form of Cameroon forward Samuel Eto'o, who has smashed in 17 goals in 16 games in all competitions - one more than the whole of last season - Inter have struggled in front of the net.

Their tally of 12 in 10 league games is remarkable in that it is less than half the number - 26 - they had managed at the same stage last season.

In fact but for their 4-0 win over Bari earlier in the campaign, things would be even worse.

Eto'o has scored eight of those 12, meaning the rest of the team has yet to contribute significantly.

It is a similar story in Europe where he has bagged seven of their 11.

Last year's top scorer Diego Milito has only two goals while other attacking players Goran Pandev, Coutinho, Jonathan Biabiany and even Wesley Sneijder have yet to find the net in the league.

Their other great problem ahead of Wednesday's long trip south-east to Lecce is injuries, something affecting their backline more than their forwards.

Goalkeeper Julio Cesar is missing while Walter Samuel has just been ruled out perhaps for the rest of the season with a cruciate knee ligament problem that requires an operation.

Right-back Maicon also limped out of Saturday's 1-1 home draw with Brescia meaning Inter could be without three of their first-choice back five.

Their biggest problem until the weekend was midfield where Dejan Stankovic, Thiago Motta, Muntari Sulley, McDonald Mariga and Esteban Cambiasso were all missing against Brescia.

It's something that has gradually seen Inter's rivals gain confidence.

"Inter have many injuries, they won everything last season but the season after a World Cup is always complicated," said Milan's Massimiliano Allegri.

"However, they will still be fighting for the title right to the end."

Despite their many problems, Benitez has faith things will come good later in the season.

"It's not right to talk about a crisis now, the team is playing well and always gives its all," he said.

"The luck we're not having now we will have later on."

Milan host Palermo on Wednesday in a tricky game while Juve travel to Brescia.

Juve too have had their injury problems and coach Luigi Delneri had to pick youth team centre-back Frederik Sorensen against Cesena while also recalling out of favour veterans Fabio Grosso and Hassan Salihamidzic.

But their 3-1 win over Cesena has convinced Delneri that they're capable of big things.

"This proves that we're not reliant on anyone and we need to keep trying to get results," he said.

Leaders Lazio travel to Cesena while upwardly mobile Roma entertain Fiorentina.

RESULTS

Wednesday

AC Milan v Palermo, Brescia v Juventus, Cagliari v Napoli, Catania v Udinese, Cesena v Lazio, Chievo v Bari, Genoa v Bologna, Lecce v Inter Milan, Roma v Fiorentina

Thursday

India face early exit

AFP, *Guangzou*

Defending champions Qatar were given an almighty fright by India on Tuesday before sending them to the verge of elimination from the Asian Games tournament, with Bangladesh also looking at an early trip home.

India took the lead but the Qataris battled back to score twice in the last 10 minutes of their Group D game and secure a 2-1 win. It left the Indians with no points and virtually no hope of qualifying for the knockout rounds.

Singapore are also in trouble after crashing 2-0 to Kuwait, leaving them with just a point to show from their two games and a must-win clash with India on Thursday.

The Kuwaiti win, secured with first-half goals by Ali Almaqseed and Mashari Alazmi, ensured they booked their place in last 16.

Thailand also stayed on course with a 1-1 draw against Oman, but coach Bryan Robson, the former England skipper, was disappointed not to have clinched three points.

Bangladesh lost 3-0 to the United Arab Emirates.

In other games, Hong Kong's Wai Ho Chan struck a 60th minute winner to give them a crucial 1-0 victory over Uzbekistan, while the Maldives and Pakistan ground out a scoreless draw.

Qatar created the best of the first-half chances, but the champions were made to pay for their wastefulness when India snatched the lead in the 18th minute.

Qatar failed to clear a corner and Ravanan Dharmaraj managed to bundle the ball past goalkeeper Sofyan Ahmed.

The Gulf side, coached by former Ajax and Porto boss Co Adriaanse, put the brittle Indian defence under siege in the second half and their resistance was finally broken with 10 left when Ali Jaralla looped a header into the net.

Jaralla then grabbed the winner two minutes from time with a left-foot shot which found the corner of the net.

"The boys did their best," said India coach Sukhvinder Singh. "Qatar are a better side. We tried to minimise our mistakes but we had a problem with the defence."

Adriaanse insisted that being defending champions poses no problems for his side.

"We are not facing Brazil or Germany," he said.

Oman's Amer Al Shatri gave Thailand, who had crushed Pakistan 6-0 in their opener, a fifth-minute lead when he scored an own goal.

But Moatasim Al Mukhaini levelled just before the break for his second goal of the tournament.

Robson said there were elements of Thailand's game that needed to improve.

"We scored some fantastic goals against Pakistan and the players today got a bit carried away," he said.

"I must say I'm disappointed with the quality of the crosses."

Oman held on for a point despite having skipper Mohammed Al Jaber sent-off in the 20th minute for a foul on Anawein Jujeen on the edge of the box.

In the day's other early fixture, United Arab Emirates cruised past Bangladesh 3-0 with Abdalla Fawzi getting a brace and Ahmed Al Jenaiby scoring another in the second half.

The top two and four of the best third-placed teams from the six groups advance to the round of 16.

RESULTS

Qatar 2 (Ali Jaralla 80, 88) India 1 (Dharmaraj 18)
Kuwait 2 (Ali Almaqseed 11, Mashari Alazmi 24) Singapore 0
UAE 3 (Ahmed Al Jenaiby 46, Abdalla Fawzi 63, 82) Bangladesh 0
Uzbekistan 0 **Hong Kong 1** (Chan 60)
Thailand 1 (Amer Al Shatri 5-og) Oman 1 (Moatasim Al Mukhaini 44)

PHOTO: AFP

Saleem Bamasila of Oman (R) fights for the ball with Khapfa Boonmatoon of Thailand during their Asian Games clash in Guangzhou yesterday.