

Aguero buries Wigan

Gunners bounce back

AFP, London



Sergio Aguero struck a hat-trick to shoot Manchester City to the top of the Premier League on Saturday as Arsenal scored their first win of the season against Swansea.

Argentinian international Aguero took his tally for the season to six as Roberto Mancini's City outclassed Wigan 3-0 at Eastlands with a mesmerising display of attacking football.

The victory maintained City's perfect start to the season and saw them leapfrog to top spot ahead of Manchester United, who play Bolton Wanderers in Saturday's late kick-off.

In other results Saturday, Arsenal bounced back from their humiliating 8-2 defeat against Manchester United in their last outing to score a badly needed 1-0 win over Swansea at the Emirates.

An Andrei Arshavin goal on 40 minutes secured victory for Arsenal, the Russian international punishing a dreadful blunder by Swans keeper Michel Vorm to finish from a tight angle.

Chelsea moved up to second place after recording their third win in a row with a 2-1 win over Sunderland at the Stadium of Light.

Blues skipper John Terry drove a deflected shot into the net to put Chelsea ahead on 18 minutes after Sunderland failed to clear.

Chelsea doubled their lead on 51 minutes when striker Daniel Sturridge latched onto a ball over the top from new signing Raul Meireles to score.

Sunderland's South Korean international Ji Dong-Won gave the Black Cats hope with a goal in stoppage time but Chelsea held on.

Liverpool's recent revival ground to a halt as they crashed to an unexpected 1-0 defeat at Stoke.

The Merseysiders appeared poised for a fruitful afternoon after dominating throughout the early exchanges at the Britannia Stadium.

But Stoke edged ahead against the run of play on 21 minutes after Jamie Carragher was adjudged to have hauled down City striker Jon Walters in the box.

Walters duly stepped up to convert the penalty and although Liverpool continued to carve out openings, including a glaring last-gasp miss by Luis Suarez, Stoke held on for the win.

Tottenham recovered from their 5-1 home mauling by Manchester City with a 2-0 victory over Wolves at Molineux.

Debutant Emmanuel Adebayor scored the opening goal as Tottenham Hotspur belatedly got their season in gear with a 2-0 win at Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday.

Adebayor, a loan signing from Manchester City, was teed up by fellow new recruit Scott Parker in the 67th minute, before Jermain Defoe netted Tottenham's second.

The result ended Wolves' fine unbeaten start to the season and gave Spurs their first points, after Harry Redknapp's side lost 3-0 at Manchester United and 5-1 at home to Manchester City in their opening two fixtures.

Everton and Aston Villa shared the points in a 2-2 draw at Goodison Park.

Everton took the lead on 19 minutes, Leon Osman applying the finish from 10 yards after a neat cutback from Tim Cahill.

Bulgarian international Stilian Petrov levelled for Villa on 63 minutes but Leighton Baines rifled home from the penalty spot six minutes later to put the Toffees on course for all three points.

The last word belonged to the visitors however, Gabriel Agbonlahor equalising seven minutes from time for Villa.

RESULTS	
Arsenal 1 (Arshavin 40)	Swansea 0
Everton 2 (Osman 19, Baines 69-pen)	Aston Villa 2 (Petrov 63, Agbonlahor 83)
Man City 3 (Aguero 13, 63, 69)	Wigan 0
Stoke 1 (Walters 21-pen)	Liverpool 0
Sunderland 1 (Ji 90)	Chelsea 2 (Terry 18, Sturridge 51)



Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero is ecstatic after netting the opening goal against Wigan Athletic during their Premiership match at the City of Manchester Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tevez loses captaincy

AFP, Manchester

Carlos Tevez's 'love-hate' relationship with Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini took another turn for the worse on Saturday as the Argentinian was permanently stripped of the captaincy.

Tevez - who has recently spoken of his turbulent relations with Mancini - has been replaced by Belgian central defender Vincent Kompany, skipper in their three Premier League matches this season.

"Carlos wanted to leave for family reasons. I respected his opinion but Carlos is still here because we didn't find a solution," said Mancini.

"I decided in the summer that Vinnie (Kompany) was the captain."

Mancini, though, said that 27-year-old Tevez would still be an integral member of their squad as they approach the Champions League group stages, their debut appearance in European club football's premier competition.

"He's a fantastic player for us, someone who can score 20 goals a season," said Mancini.

Leverkusen in the goals

AFP, Berlin

Bayer Leverkusen warmed up for Tuesday's Champions League trip to Chelsea with a 4-1 win at promoted Augsburg that leaves Robin Dutt's side provisionally top of the Bundesliga.

Augsburg came into the weekend still chasing a first top-flight win and they got off to a flying start, taking the lead after just five minutes when Japanese midfielder Hajime Hosogai turned the ball home at the backpost.

However, the home crowd were still celebrating when Leverkusen hit back at the other end, Sidney Sam firing past Simon Jentzsch to equalise.

An excellent Renato Augusto assist set up Stefan Kiessling to put last season's Bundesliga runners-up in front midway through the first period.

Augsburg were full of energy and endeavour, but Leverkusen's greater class shone through after the break as Sam got his second before substitute Eren Derdiyok converted the loose ball after his initial effort had been saved.

Leverkusen, for whom Michael Ballack played an hour before being replaced by Andre Schurrle, move top of the table on ten points, a point ahead of Bayern Munich.

Lazio new-boys shine

AFP, Rome



Champions AC Milan were held to a 2-2 draw by Lazio at the San Siro to kick off the new Serie A season on Friday following the player strike that postponed the original start two weeks ago.

Miroslav Klose and Djibril Cisse both scored on their Lazio league debuts to give the visitors a dream start but Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Antonio Cassano struck back to snatch a point for the hosts.

Lazio proved their summer spending has vastly improved their forward line and could be contenders while Milan showed through their fight-back that they're not going to give up their title easily.

Lazio went ahead on 12 minutes when Stefano Mauri crossed for Klose, whose first touch with his right was brilliant to beat Alessandro Nesta before he finished crisply with his left.

Cisse then pounced on a mix-up between Gennaro Gattuso and Nesta but after Christian Abbiati parried his fierce shot, Klose on the stretch poked wide.

Lazio didn't have to wait long for their second, though, as on 21 minutes Mauri was given time to swing in a cross and Cisse, running across the backline, got ahead of Nesta to flick a header beyond Abbiati.

The visitors were full of verve, panache, energy and desire up front but they proved vulnerable at the back as Milan's own forwards started coming into the game.

On 29 minutes Aquilani played the

ball down the inside right channel to Cassano, who teed up Ibrahimovic for a simple tap-in.

Kevin-Prince Boateng almost surprised Bizzarri at his near post but from the resulting corner Cassano held off his marker to head home from close range on 33 minutes.

By the start of the second period Lazio's bright start had lost its steam.

Cassano had a good early chance but shot just wide of the far post.

That sparked Lazio back into life and Cisse scampered through the middle to dink the ball past Abbiati but a dogged Nesta got back in time to hack the ball behind for a corner.

Milan almost produced a grandstand finish five minutes from time as Ibrahimovic got behind the Lazio backline but Bizzarri again did well to block his shot.

Diego doesn't watch Argentina



Football

AFP, Madrid

Argentina legend Diego Maradona says he has never watched the national side since he was dismissed as coach last year, and has no desire to return to manage them.

The 50-year-old was manager of Argentina at last year's World Cup in South Africa, but was sacked after they lost 4-0 to Germany in the quarterfinals.

Last May, he was appointed coach of Dubai's Al-Wasl of the United Arab Emirates domestic league.

"Since I left, I have never seen the Argentina team... And I think I will not see them again," he told Spanish sports daily AS pub-

lished Saturday, when asked if he had watched the team's recent wins over Venezuela and Nigeria.

Asked if he would like another chance to coach Argentina, he replied: "I am not looking at that, I am looking at doing something great at Al Wasl... I want to work quietly, I want to be far from those ill-tempered people."

Since losing his job, Maradona has several times hit out at Julio Grondona, head of the Argentine federation since 1979, dubbing him "old" and "corrupt".

Since coming to Al Wasl, Maradona said he has "not missed one minute of training. And that is in 54-degree (129 F) heat. But I'm not complaining, I am happy with the Arab people, with the guys that we have on the staff."

Wenger went thru' hell

AFP, London



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger confessed that the last few traumatic weeks have been like living in hell.

The 61-year-old Frenchman's close season and early part of the campaign has been the most turbulent period in his 15 years in charge, with even his future at the club cast into doubt after the 8-2 hammering by Manchester United a fortnight ago.

The long drawn-out sagas of selling captain Cesc Fabregas and Samir Nasri did not help and he was also viewed to have made some panic transfer deadline day acquisitions as he swapped his policy of buying young players for bringing in several more mature heads.

"In my job, you expect to suffer. So that's why when I go to hell one day, it will be less painful for me than you, because I'm used to suffering," said Wenger, who has failed to deliver a trophy to Arsenal since the 2005 FA Cup.

"I could write a book about the summer. It was the most disturbed we have had since I have been here.

"The book would be quite an interesting read. Not because of me, but because of all that happened. It was unbelievable."

Wenger, who has guided the Gunners to three league titles but is still in search of a Champions League success, admitted that the United match had taught him something -- that he needed to change his transfer policy.

"When you sit at Man United and you experience what we did, and you only have players without experience to come on, you have to change," said Wenger.

"In a storm like that, if you bring on players of 18 like (Alex) Oxlade-Chamberlain, it doesn't help them.

"It's too much to put young players on in a game of that magnitude without experience."



PHOTO: AFP

Lazio forward Djibril Cisse (R) celebrates his goal with teammates during their Serie A encounter against Milan at San Siro on Friday.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Should Sachin Tendulkar quite ODI cricket?

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TEN Cricket

Sri Lanka v Australia

Second Test, Day 4

Live from 10:30am

Zimbabwe v Pakistan

Second ODI

Live from 1:30pm

ESPN & STAR Cricket

England v India

Fourth ODI

Live from 3:15pm

STAR Sports

English Premiership

Fulham v Blackburn

Live from 8:55pm

TEN Sports

US Open

Women's Singles Final

Live from 10:00pm

TEN Action

Serie A