



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero is ecstatic after opening the scoring against Fulham during their Premier League clash at Craven Cottage on Sunday.

MU crush Chelsea Levante stun Real

AFP, London

Manchester United maintained their perfect start to the Premier League season with a 3-1 win over title rivals Chelsea, while Manchester City surrendered their 100 per cent record as Fulham fought back from two goals down to draw 2-2 on Sunday.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side blew Chelsea away thanks to three goals in the first half from Chris Smalling, Nani and Wayne Rooney.

Fernando Torres reduced the deficit soon after half-time with only his second goal for Chelsea, but later missed an open goal and United could have won by a greater margin as Rooney wasted a second half penalty.

United's victory equalled a club record of 18 consecutive home wins and moved them two points clear of second placed Manchester City at the top of the table and five ahead of third placed Chelsea.

It was Chelsea's first loss under new boss Andre Villas-Boas, who tasted defeat in a league game for the first time since April 2010 when Benfica beat his Academica de Coimbra team.

United, who have made their best start since 1985, took the lead in the eighth minute when Smalling was left unmarked from Ashley Young's free-kick and the defender headed past Petr Cech despite Chelsea's appeals for offside.

Portugal winger Nani increased United's advantage in the 37th minute, cutting in from the right wing before smashing a ferocious 20-yard strike into the top corner.

There was an element of good

RESULTS

Fulham 2 (Zamora 55, Murphy 75) Man City 2 (Aguero 18, 46)
Man Utd 3 (Smalling 8, Nani 37, Rooney 45) Chelsea 1 (Torres 46)

fortune about United's third goal as John Terry's attempted clearance cannoned off Nani into Rooney's path and the England forward slotted home from close-range.

Torres gave Chelsea a glimmer of hope in the 46th minute when he flicked a fine finish over David de Gea.

They had another boost when Rooney slipped while running up to take a penalty, awarded for Jose Bosingwa's trip on Nani, and saw his effort fly wide in an echo of the Terry

spot-kick miss that helped United win the Champions League in 2008.

Torres should have pulled Chelsea to within one goal in the closing stages, but the £50 million striker produced an early candidate for miss of the season as he rounded De Gea and somehow scuffed wide with an empty net at his mercy.

At Craven Cottage, Roberto Mancini's men, who had won their first four matches, were forced to settle for a point after a second half meltdown.

Sergio Aguero has been in sublime form since joining City from Atletico Madrid for a club record £38 million in pre-season and the Argentina forward fired the visitors into the lead as he met David Silva's pass with a clinical finish in the 18th minute.

Aguero seemed to have put City in total command when he steered home Edin Dzeko's flick in the 46th minute for his eighth goal of the season.

But Bobby Zamora got one back for Fulham in the 55th minute with a curling shot from the edge of the area and Danny Murphy completed the fightback when his long-range shot deflected in off Vincent Kompany in the 75th minute.

AFP, Madrid



Ten-man Real Madrid crashed to a 1-0 defeat at modest Levante on Sunday, a morale-sapping setback coming just 24 hours after bitter rivals Barcelona had staged an eight-goal masterclass against Osasuna.

Real rested Cristiano Ronaldo and Mesut Ozil as they looked to maintain their 100 per cent record and keep pace with leaders Valencia, who beat Sporting Gijon 1-0, and Real Betis, who defeated Athletic Bilbao 3-2, to keep up their own perfect starts.

But the loss left Jose Mourinho's side in fourth spot, three points behind Valencia and Betis, and one back from Barcelona.

Real had plenty of possession but Levante defended resolutely.

Kaka missed an early chance and Karim Benzema was a danger but Real's task became a lot harder following the dismissal of Sami Khedira for a second yellow card.

Ronaldo was brought on after the break but Real still were unable to create clear-cut chances and instead they were caught on the break through Arouna Kone who grabbed the only goal in the 68th

minute.

Radamel Falcao fired a hattrick as he led Atletico Madrid to a 4-0 victory over Racing Santander.

New signings Falcao and Diego were combining well, and the Colombian started the rout slotting home clinically after 23 minutes. He then sent the keeper the wrong way with a penalty before half-time and completed his hattrick ten minutes into the second half.

Substitute Adrian Lopez scored 12 minutes from the end for a resounding win.

Luis Garcia hit both goals, including a last-minute winner, as he helped Zaragoza to a 2-1 victory over his former club Espanyol.

The visitors' Javi Lopez equalised Garcia's opener and the match appeared to be heading for a draw until Zaragoza won a penalty three minutes from time.

Garcia saw his spot-kicked blocked by 'keeper Cristian Alvarez but there was still time for him to make amends and score the winner in injury time.

An early Michu header gave Rayo Vallecano a 1-0 Madrid derby victory at Getafe in Sunday's early game.

It was the first time that the two lesser lights of the Spanish capital had met in the top flight and Rayo, carrying a greater threat in front of goal, came out on top.

Jose blasts dirty tactics

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho, stung by a shock 1-0 loss to Levante, accused the winners of acting and said his own players aren't comfortable with the "dirty side" of football.

Mourinho, whose side played much of the game with only 10 men after Sami Khedira got sent off for a second yellow card, blasted the referee, his own players and most of all the Levante style of play.

"I don't want to take anything away from Levante's merit," the Portuguese told a news conference after the away defeat, Real's first of the season, which leaves them in fourth place, three points behind leaders Valencia and Athletic Bilbao and one back from Barcelona.

"As always, here at their home they let them do as they want and they do it very well," Mourinho charged.

"I only have to congratulate them for being clever because they know how to provoke, they know how to fake it, they know how to gain time, they know how not to give the ball, they know all this which is also football. And here I can agree that our players are not at ease in this environment."

Santon have knee treatment

AFP, London

Newcastle's Italian international full-back Davide Santon underwent treatment in London on Monday to have fluid drained from his injured knee in an attempt to avoid surgery.

The 20-year-old, who had been in line to make his first-team debut for the club at Aston Villa on Saturday, damaged his right knee in training last week, but manager Alan Pardew is hopeful he could return to training within days.

"He has gone to London today (Monday) and will have his knee drained of a little bit of fluid that's on it, and then we are hoping that he will train," said Pardew.

"If that doesn't work, probably at some stage, we will have to look at some keyhole surgery in there to make sure that this fluid doesn't appear again."

Santon's absence is a blow for Pardew, who signed him from Inter Milan last month to replace Jose Enrique following the Spaniard's move to Liverpool.

Cavani destroys Milan

AFP, Rome



A hattrick from Edinson Cavani gave Napoli a 3-1 comeback win over defending champions AC Milan on Sunday and top spot in Serie A.

Napoli have a perfect six points from two matches and lead the way on goal difference from Juventus, Udinese and Cagliari, while Milan, with just a point from two games, are fourth from bottom.

The champions took the lead in Naples when Alberto Aquilani rose to head in a precise cross from Antonio Cassano after 11 minutes.

But Uruguayan star Cavani pulled Napoli level two minutes later by cheekily nudging the ball between the legs of goalkeeper Christian Abbiati.

He then combined with international team-mate Walter Gargano to put Napoli in front in the 36th minute.

Cavani added the third in the 52nd minute when Ezequiel Lavezzi pounced on an error by Alessandro Nesta and crossed for the striker nicknamed 'Matador' to complete his hat-trick.

Juventus also maintained their perfect start to the season with a 1-0 win at Siena on Sunday, in a match that saw the Turin club's new coach Antonio Conte get one over on the team he left in the summer.

Conte cut his teeth as an assistant coach at the modest Tuscan club and returned last

year to lead them to promotion back into the top flight.

However, his new-look Juve team -- fresh from thumping Parma last week -- spoiled Siena's first home game of the campaign by running out 1-0 winners at the Artemio Franchi stadium.

Alessandro Matri got the game's only goal nine minutes into the second half after Mirko Vucinic had done the spadework.

After two disappointing seasons in which Italian football's most successful club have finished in a lowly seventh place, excited supporters are now hoping to see their team end the Milan clubs' domination of the Scudetto.

However, Conte was eager to play down expectations afterwards.

Udinese made it two wins from two as they got the better of Fiorentina at Stadio Friuli.

Antonio Di Natale got the breakthrough for the hosts from the penalty spot eight minutes in before Mauricio

Isla doubled the lead prior to the half-hour mark.

A disappointing result for the visitors was compounded by what looked like a potentially serious knee injury to striker Alberto Gilardino.

Giuseppe Sculli gave Lazio the lead against the club he left in January but Genoa fought back in the second half to secure a 2-1 victory courtesy of goals from Rodrigo Palacio and Juraj Kucka.

RESULTS

Atalanta 1 (Denis 34) Palermo 0
Bologna 0 Lecce 2 (Giacomazzi 37, Grossmuller 60)
Catania 1 (Maxi Lopez 45+2-pen) Cesena 0
Lazio 1 (Sculli 11) Genoa 2 (Palacio 54, Kucka 72)
Parma 2 (Giovincio 24, 90+2) Chievo 1 (Paloschi 80)
Siena 0 Juventus 1 (Matri 54)
Udinese 2 (Di Natale 8-pen, Isla 30) Fiorentina 0
Napoli 3 (Cavani 13, 36, 51)



Napoli forward Edinson Cavani celebrates his goal against Milan during their Serie A encounter at the San Paolo Stadium on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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