

# Zamora stuns Arsenal

AFP, London

Bobby Zamora struck an injury-time winner as Fulham stunned 10-man Arsenal 2-1 to derail the Gunners' recent Premier League resurgence on Monday.

Zamora swept home the winning goal in the third minute of stoppage time at Craven Cottage after Steve Sidwell had struck an 85th-minute equaliser to cancel out Laurent Koscielny's 21st minute opener.

Arsenal paid the price for failing to capitalise on a dominant first half when they carved out a series of clear chances only to be denied by some superb keeping from David Stockdale.

Fulham's grandstand finish came after Johan Djourou was sent off for a second bookable offence 12 minutes from time, a red card which encouraged the Cottagers to swarm forward in pursuit of an equaliser.

The defeat was only Arsenal's second reverse in 13 games and saw Wenger's men drop down to fifth after Chelsea scored a dramatic late win at Wolves, Frank Lampard striking an 89th-minute winner in a 2-1 win.

A feisty encounter saw Chelsea take the lead through Ramires on 54 minutes, and Chelsea's players celebrated by racing over to embrace under-fire boss Andre Villas-Boas in a show of support for the Portuguese manager.

However Wolves looked to have grabbed a share of the points when Stephen Ward struck six minutes from time only for Lampard to rescue Chelsea at the death.

Elsewhere, Blackburn were brought down to earth following their away win over Manchester United at the weekend after suffering a 2-1 defeat to Stoke at Ewood Park, Peter Crouch scoring twice for the visitors.

Blackburn looked to have got off to a dream start only for Christopher Samba's early effort to be ruled offside.

Aston Villa's feelgood factor from their win at Chelsea was also shattered, with newly promoted Swansea scoring a 2-0 win at Villa Park.

Swansea went ahead after only four minutes, Nathan Dyer punishing some slack defending from Stephen Warnock to dart forward and finish past Brad Guzan.

Former Villa old boy Wayne Routledge then doubled Swansea's lead two minutes after the restart, punishing a poor clearance from Guzan after Danny Graham's shot crashed back off the post.

QPR captain Joey Barton was hero and villain at Loftus Road as Rangers crashed to a 2-1 loss to Norwich, a defeat that edged Neil Warnock's side ever closer to the relegation zone.

Barton shot Rangers ahead on 11 minutes, drilling in a low finish from Clint Hill's cross.

But Barton's joy turned to despair on 36 minutes, when the midfielder was sent off for an apparent head butt in a confrontation with Bradley Johnson.

It got worse for Rangers moments later, Anthony Pilkington netting his fifth goal of the season to level it for Norwich.

The knockout blow from Norwich came seven minutes from time, substitute Steve Morison grabbing the winner to end a desperate rearguard action from Rangers.

RESULTS

Aston Villa 0 **Swansea 2** (Dyer 4, Routledge 47)  
Blackburn 1 (Goodwillie 69)  
**Stoke 2** (Crouch 17, 45)  
**Fulham 2** (Sidwell 85, Zamora 90)  
Arsenal 1 (Koscielny 21)  
QPR 1 (Barton 11) **Norwich 2** (Pilkington 42, Morison 83)  
Wolves 1 (Ward 84) **Chelsea 2** (Ramires 54, Lampard 89)



Fulham striker Bobby Zamora celebrates his winning goal against Arsenal during their Premier League encounter at Craven Cottage on Monday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Fergie wants response

AFP, Manchester

Sir Alex Ferguson will be looking for a typical response from his Manchester United side when they head to Newcastle on Wednesday.

The Premier League champions suffered a surprise 3-2 home defeat on December 31 and although leaders City also slipped up with a defeat at Sunderland, Ferguson will still be deeply frustrated at the lost points.

United are still in the grips of an injury crisis and there will be plenty of attention on Wayne Rooney ahead of Wednesday's match.

The England striker missed the Blackburn game and has reportedly been fined, along with Jonny Evans and Darron Gibson, after an ill-timed night out following the 5-0 victory over Wigan.

Ferguson has acknowledged that the manner of United's defeats this season have been particularly painful.

After the 6-1 home loss to neighbours Manchester City in October, they were knocked out of the League Cup by Championship team Crystal Palace and also slipped out of the Champions League with a shock defeat in Basel.

Ferguson described the 3-2 home defeat to Blackburn, which came on his 70th birthday, as "a disaster."

But as he looks for his United team to bounce back once again, at least he can console himself with their impressive recent record at St James' Park.

United have not lost there since a 4-3 defeat in 2001 but they will be keen to make up for their 1-1 home draw with Newcastle in November.

Despite his team's ongoing injury concerns, Ferguson does not expect to dip into the transfer market this month.

The United manager has consistently

ignored the winter window in recent years and has not made any major additions since snapping up Nemanja Vidic and Patrice Evra in 2006.

"The reason there may not be many big signings in January is because the players clubs want are not available," Ferguson said.

"To be honest with you, who would want to sell their best player in January?"

"I don't see it happening. There are cases of players whose contracts are running out in the summer but they won't get the same money anyway.

It'll be well reduced."

Ferguson has already allowed young Italian striker Federico Macheda to join QPR on loan for the rest of the season.

But he insists he will bide his time before deciding on whether to allow any more youngsters to leave Old Trafford on a temporary basis.

"We don't need to do anything until the end of January. We can take our time with that one. We've got, say, three weeks before we can make up our mind on that issue," he said.

"I'd like to get one or two on loan, particularly the young strikers but, at the moment, we don't need to do anything and don't need to make a decision."

Evans, Rio Ferdinand, Chris Smalling, Ashley Young, Tom Cleverley and Michael Owen all look set to miss out once again, while Darren Fletcher and Vidic are long-term absentees.

Gabriel Obertan, who left Old Trafford for Newcastle in the summer, is likely to miss out against his former team after sustaining a foot injury in the 3-1 defeat at Liverpool.

Newcastle have raised plenty of eyebrows with their impressive start to the campaign - though their recent form has dipped - but their Dutch goalkeeper Tim Krul sees no reason why Alan Pardew's team can not maintain their good showings.

## Jose wants players to stay

REUTERS, Madrid

Jose Mourinho does not want any Real Madrid players to leave in the January transfer window, the La Liga club's coach said on Monday.

"I have not asked for any signings and I have been clear I wouldn't like it if anyone left," the Portuguese told reporters.

"The players know it, the board of directors too," said Mourinho ahead of Tuesday's King's Cup last-16 first leg tie at home to Malaga. "I would like to start and finish the season with the same players."

Some of the squad members at La Liga leaders Real that rarely get playing time have been linked in the media with moves to the English Premier League, including Spain centre back Raul Albiol and midfielder Esteban Granero.

Argentina striker Gonzalo Higuain, who competes for a place in the forward line with France international Karim Benzema, is a target for Chelsea, according to reports.

Turning to Tuesday's game, Mourinho said Malaga would want to prove their mettle after spending more than 100 million euros (\$130 million) on players since they were bought by a member of the Qatari royal family in June 2010.

# Wenger blames referee for loss

AFP, London



Arsene Wenger blamed referee Lee Probert following Arsenal's dramatic 2-1 defeat at Fulham and claimed his team have been unfairly denied penalties in four of their last five Premier League games.

The Frenchman believed his side should have been awarded spot-kicks against Manchester City, Aston Villa, QPR, and then early in the loss at Craven Cottage on Monday when Gervinho appeared to be caught by former Gunners defender Philippe Senderos.

Arsenal took the lead through Laurent Koscielny but were forced to play the closing stages with 10 men after Johan Djourou's dismissal, with Fulham taking advantage through goals from Steve Sidwell, a former Gunners midfielder, and Bobby Zamora in the final five minutes.

"The referee influenced the game completely the wrong way in my opinion," said Wenger after a defeat which, combined with Chelsea's 2-1 win at Wolves also on Monday, dropped his side into fifth place in the table.

"We cannot influence that," added Wenger, whose remarks about Probert could land him in disciplinary trouble with the Football Association.

"We had a good first half. In the second half, we were more tired and in the last 10 minutes we lost the game because we were down to 10 men."

Arsenal could have secured the points well before the late drama if Probert had awarded a penalty for Senderos's trip on

Gervinho in the 13th minute.

"I am surprised," Wenger said. "You want the right decision."

He added: "We had a penalty in the last game (against QPR), a clear handball. We had a penalty at Man City, we had a penalty at Villa Park."

"You should not ask me. I don't know."

Swiss defender Djourou's first booking was for a slide on Mousa Dembele and his second, which led to an automatic dismissal, came when he fouled Zamora.

"The first yellow card was not a yellow card, the second yellow card was a foul for us," Wenger said.

"It was 100 per cent a penalty for us in the first-half."

"It was bad for us, the fact we didn't take our chances in the first-half and it made the difference," added Wenger in a rare admission Arsenal had contributed to their defeat before saying Fulham had conspired to get Djourou dismissed.

"When Djourou got the first yellow, every time they went down to get him the second yellow and he did nothing at all."

"I saw it coming because when (Karim) Frei came on, the game was all (about) look for the second yellow card for Djourou and in the end, he got it."

Djourou's suspension gives Wenger another headache as Bacary Sagna, Carl Jenkinson, Kieran Gibbs, Andre Santos and Thomas Vermaelen are all injured, leaving Arsenal short of full-backs.

"He has done well, we are short, we have lost three left-backs and two right-backs. What can you do? You cannot buy 10 full-backs," Wenger said.

## Rooney set for return

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson is set to recall Wayne Rooney for the Premier League clash at Newcastle on Wednesday following the England striker's surprise absence against Blackburn.

Ferguson has revealed Rooney will be available after the forward did not even make the substitutes' bench for the champions' shock 3-2 defeat by relegation candidates Blackburn at Old Trafford on New Year's Eve.

It has been reported that Ferguson fined Rooney and United team-mates Jonny Evans and Darron Gibson, and forced them to train on their day off last week, after they were seen on a night out on Boxing Day.

But Ferguson seems willing to hand Rooney a recall at St James' Park, telling Sirius XM radio station on Monday.

### SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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#### STAR Cricket

Australia v India  
Second Test, Day 3  
Live from 5:30am (Thursday)

#### TEN Cricket

South Africa v Sri Lanka  
Third Test, Day 2  
Live from 2:30pm

#### ESPN

Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm



#### Premier Division Cricket

##### League, Round 2

Gazi Tank v Victoria  
Venue: Mirpur  
Abahani v Prime Doleshwar  
Venue: Fatullah  
Mohammedan v Surjo Tarun  
Venue: BKSP-2  
All matches start at 9:00am

##### Fed Cup Football

Abahani v Bangladesh Police  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium  
Soccer Club, Feni v Arambagh  
Venue: Kamalapur Stadium  
Both matches start at 3:00pm



AC Milan forward Robinho poses with an owl during a dinner party on a boat in Khor Dubai on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP