

Gunners fire at Anfield

AFP, Liverpool



Lukas Podolski and Santi Cazorla ended Arsenal's barren start to the Premier League season in an impressive 2-0 victory at Liverpool on Sunday that condemned the hosts to their worst start in 50 years.

One point from the opening three games under new manager Brendan Rodgers represents the worst opening to a league campaign since 1962-63 for a Liverpool team which was not helped by a mistake by goalkeeper Pepe Reina which gifted Cazorla his goal.

Arsenal's first league goal in 211 minutes of the new campaign came in the 31st minute at Anfield and was a devastating example of the art of the counter-attack.

Podolski started the move inside his own half, taking a pass from his back line, and moving the ball on to Cazorla before starting a sprint into the Liverpool area.

The German forward timed his run to perfection, arriving on the end of Cazorla's angled pass to beat Reina from 12 yards.

That was also the first real chance of a drab opening between two clubs long considered among the true giants of the European game but currently struggling to maintain their status among the English elite.

Liverpool appear to be in the greater trouble and might have been in further trouble before the interval from another Arsenal break that ended with a superb pass from Abou Diaby to Olivier Giroud which the Frenchman shot woefully wide from eight yards.

Liverpool showed more ambition upon the restart, but that allowed the Gunners to play on the counter-attack and Reina was soon required to save well, parrying a shot from Kieran Gibbs at his near post after Podolski played him in.

These were warning signs which Liverpool failed to heed and the same pair of Arsenal players combined to carve out their second goal after 67 minutes.

Spain midfielder Cazorla played a short pass to Podolski before taking the return and scoring with a shot which passed straight through Reina.



Arsenal striker Lukas Podolski fires home the first goal in Arsenal's win over Liverpool during their Premier League match at Anfield on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Dortmund held as Frankfurt run riot

AFP, Nuremberg



Champions Borussia Dortmund had to come from behind to draw 1-1 at Nuremberg on Saturday, while promoted Eintracht Frankfurt routed nine-man Hoffenheim 4-0 to

top the Bundesliga table.

With Bayern Munich hosting VfB Stuttgart on Sunday at the Allianz Arena, Dortmund had to settle for a point in Franconia after a lively performance from Nuremberg.

"I had the impression that we had more of the game, especially in the first half, which I liked, but we were missing the final punch," admitted Dortmund coach Jurgen Klopp.

"We didn't play enough in the last third and when we did, we were too hurried.

"I wasn't happy with the referee, it's not easy when everything is whistled away," he added.

Dortmund fell behind when the home side's Czech Republic striker Tomas Pekhart rose highest at the far post and headed past goalkeeper Roman Weidenfeller on 31 minutes.

The champions responded nine minutes later with the equaliser when Ivan

Perisic's shot clipped the crossbar and Poland captain Jakub Blaszczykowski -- known as Kuba for short -- fired home.

Dortmund defender Mats Hummels had a chance cleared off the line in the second half but, having won the Bundesliga title for the last two seasons, the champions do not look as smooth in attack as they have over the past two years.

Elsewhere, newly-promoted Frankfurt backed up last Saturday's 2-1 win at home to Bayer Leverkusen with a 4-0 hammering of Hoffenheim, as the hosts finished with nine men.

"I would be disappointed if we aren't German champions now," Frankfurt coach Armin Veh -- who led Stuttgart to the title in 2007 -- quipped with his side top of the league after two matches.

Dutch midfielder Rafael van der Vaart, who has rejoined Hamburg from Tottenham Hotspur, could only watch as his new teammates lost 2-0 at Werder Bremen in the north German derby.

Having turned down a move to Zenit St Petersburg in midweek, Greek centre-back Kyriakos Papadopoulos opened the scoring for Schalke in their 3-1 win at home to Augsburg with a 33rd-minute header.

Leverkusen got back to winning ways with a 2-0 win at home to Freiburg thanks to goals in each half from Gonzalo Castro

All it took was one call from 'father'

AFP, Madrid

Ghana midfielder Michael Essien described Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho as being "like a father" to him on Saturday after agreeing to move to the Spanish capital on a season-long loan from Chelsea.

Essien was delighted to be reunited with Mourinho, who brought him to Stamford Bridge from Lyon in 2005 as the pair won the Premier League title, the FA Cup and the League Cup together before the latter's controversial departure in the autumn of 2007.

"I am very happy to be here. The call from Mourinho was more than enough for me," said the 29-year-old all-action midfielder, who passed a medical in Madrid despite struggling with several serious knee injuries in recent years.

"I only wanted to play football. He is like a father to me, he knows me very well and I know him too; we understand one another perfectly. He called me and I said yes."

Essien assured that the knee problems that blighted his last season at Chelsea were now behind him.

"It is true that I have had some problems, but now I am in great shape, I feel very strong."

"Real Madrid would not have taken me on if I were not prepared."

Old boys inspire

REUTERS, London



Manchester City again splashed the cash on transfer deadline day but it was old hands Yaya Toure, Edin Dzeko and Carlos Tevez who secured a 3-1 Premier League victory over Queens Park Rangers on Saturday.

New Tottenham Hotspur signing Moussa Dembele came off the bench to score on his debut although coach Andre Villas-Boas was left waiting for his first win in charge after Robert Snodgrass's late goal earned Norwich City a 1-1 draw at White Hart Lane.

Spurs, who have two points from their three games this season, were jeered off.

Ivorian Toure fired Manchester City, who memorably needed two stoppage-time goals on the final day of the season against Rangers in May to win the top-flight title for the first time since 1968, ahead at Eastlands.

The hosts then needed Dzeko's header on 61 minutes, which quickly cancelled out Bobby Zamora's equaliser, to restore control.

Tevez sealed the points in stoppage time with a scuffed effort that sank a new-look Rangers team.

"We played well in the first half but we have one problem at the moment - when we have a chance to score we don't score and the game can change," City manager Roberto Mancini told ESPN television.

"In the second half we didn't play well. We were too slow but in the end it's important that we took the three points."

Abu Dhabi-owned City, the world's richest club, spent more than 37 million pounds (\$58.77 million) in the final 24 hours

of the transfer window, bringing in Javi Garcia, Matija Nastasic, Scott Sinclair and Maicon on Thursday and Friday.

None of the quartet figured on Saturday as Roberto Mancini's side moved up to fourth in the table.

Swansea City, despite a fourth goal in three league games for Spanish striker Michu, missed a chance to go top when the Welsh side were held 2-2 at home by Sunderland.

Everton also lost their 100 percent record after goals from Shane Long and Gareth McAuley secured a 2-0 victory for West Bromwich Albion at The Hawthorns.

Chelsea, who are not in league action this weekend after losing 4-1 to Atletico Madrid in the UEFA Super Cup on Friday, are top with a maximum nine points followed by Swansea, West Brom and Manchester City all on seven.

Striker Andy Carroll enjoyed a bitter-sweet debut for West Ham United after joining on loan from Liverpool, helping set up a first-minute goal in a 3-0 demolition of Fulham.

West Brom, who beat Liverpool on the opening day, notched a notable city double by proving too strong for Everton.

Belgian playmaker Dembele lifted Tottenham's spirits with a fine goal after moving across London this week from Fulham but fans filed out of White Hart Lane in despondent mood after Snodgrass won a deserved point for Norwich.

Dembele rifled past keeper John Ruddy on 68 minutes but Spurs substitute Tom Huddlestone was then sent off and the final whistle was greeted by a chorus of boos.

RESULTS

Manchester City 3 (Y.Toure 16, Dzeko 61, Tevez 90) **QPR 1** (Zamora 59)
Swansea 2 (Routledge 45, Michu 66) **Sunderland 2** (Fletcher 40, 45)
Tottenham 1 (Dembele 68) **Norwich 1** (Snodgrass 85)
West Brom 2 (Long 65, McAuley 82) **Everton 0**
West Ham 3 (Nolan 1, Reid 29, Taylor 41) **Fulham 0**
Wigan 2 (Maloney 5-pen, Di Santo 49)

Malaga still flying high

REUTERS, Madrid

Malaga celebrated qualifying for the Champions League group stage for the first time with a 1-0 victory at Real Zaragoza that put the Qatar-owned club a point clear at the top of La Liga on Saturday.

Manuel Pellegrini's side were deserved winners at the Romareda thanks to Ignacio Camacho's near-post header from a corner in the 56th minute.

They have seven points from three matches, one ahead of Barcelona, Rayo Vallecano and Real

RESULTS

Celta Vigo 2 (Aspas 69, Bermejo 90+4) **Osasuna 0**
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Riki 6) **Getafe 1** (Barrada 26)
Real Mallorca 1 (Victor 75) **Real Sociedad 0**
Real Zaragoza 0 Malaga 1

Valladolid who all play on Sunday.

Malaga have managed to shrug off institutional instability and the departure of key players like Santi Cazorla to make a solid start to the season and came through their Champions League playoff at Panathinaikos on Tuesday.

They were drawn in Group C of Europe's elite club competition along with AC Milan, Zenit St Petersburg and Anderlecht.

Pellegrini and his players have maintained their focus despite widespread media speculation that owner Sheikh Abdullah Al-Thani, a member of the Qatar royal family, had put the club up for sale after only two



PHOTO: AFP

AC Milan striker Giampaolo Pazzini celebrates his second of three goals in their win over Bologna during their Serie A clash at Bologna on Saturday.

Pazzini bleeds red

REUTERS, Rome



Giampaolo Pazzini grabbed a hat-trick on his first start for AC Milan to inspire his new team to a 3-1 triumph over Bologna on Saturday, their first win of the Serie A season.

The forward, who joined Massimiliano Allegri's side last week in a swap deal with Inter Milan involving Antonio Cassano, dragged his new club to victory in a match where Bologna may have felt unfortunate not to have picked up a point.

"This is a good sign for me and those who believed in me," said Pazzini as he clutched the match ball after the game. "I'm very happy. I scored goals for the team in a difficult match."

"I couldn't have asked for better than this. There are lots of good sides but Milan will definitely try to win the title."

Elsewhere, Torino picked up their first victory by beating 10-man Pescara 3-0.

Milan opened the scoring at Bologna after 16 minutes when Pazzini raced through on goal and was controversially adjudged to have been brought down in the area by Nicolò Cherubin.

Television replays showed both players tugging at each other's shirts but Pazzini

dusted himself down and smashed home his first Milan goal from the penalty spot.

Bologna responded by taking the game to Milan, with the impressive Alessandro Diamanti at the heart of their attacking play.

The home team's pressure was rewarded four minutes before halftime when Antonio Nocerino clumsily brought Diamanti down in the area.

Diamanti then smashed the penalty past keeper Christian Abbiati to equalise.

Kevin Prince Boateng drove Milan forward in the second half but Diamanti also continued to cause the visitors problems with his passing and movement.

Pazzini put Milan back in front with 13 minutes left when Federico Agliardi dropped a cross at the striker's feet.

The new striker, who made his debut as a second-half substitute in the 1-0 home defeat by Sampdoria on Sunday, clinched victory in the 85th minute, when he touched in a wayward Nocerino shot.

Torino swept Pescara aside in the day's other game after the visitors had Christian Terlizzi sent off in the 27th minute.

Terlizzi was dismissed for bringing down Rolando Bianchi in the box and the striker missed the resulting penalty.

RESULTS

Bologna 1 (Diamanti 41) **AC Milan 3** (Pazzini 16, 77, 85)
Torino 3 (Sgrigna 34, Brighi 57,



STAR Cricket

India v New Zealand
Second Test, Day 4
Live from 10:00am

TEN Sports

US Open
Men's 4th Rd & Women's Qtrs
Live from 9:00pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

TEN Cricket

Australia v Pakistan
Third ODI