

Lucky United down L'pool

AFP, London



Ten-man Liverpool were left searching for their first Premier League win under new manager Brendan Rodgers as arch-rivals Manchester United came from behind to win 2-1 at an emotional Anfield on Sunday.

This was Liverpool's first home match since an independent report cleared their fans of any responsibility for the 1989 Hillsborough disaster where 96 of the Merseysiders' supporters were crushed to death during an FA Cup semi-final.

Liverpool played more than half the match a man down after Jonjo Shelvey was sent off in the 39th minute for a two-footed challenge on Jonny Evans.

But they still took a 46th minute lead when captain Steven Gerrard -- whose 10-year-old cousin, Jon-Paul Gilhooley, was the youngest fan to die at Hillsborough -- volleyed home from near the penalty spot.

However, United only had to wait five minutes for an equaliser when Rafael curled in a superb shot from the right-hand side of the Liverpool area.

And with 15 minutes to go United -- who had missed their last three penalties -- were awarded a spot-kick when Liverpool defender Glen Johnson brought down Antonio Valencia.

There was a delay of several minutes as Liverpool defender Daniel Agger received treatment for an injury before Dutch striker Robin van Persie beat goalkeeper Pepe Reina.

Victory saw United move to within a point of leaders Chelsea while defeat left Liverpool languishing in the bottom three.

Before kick-off, a potential flashpoint was avoided when Liverpool striker Luis Suarez and United defender Patrice Evra shook hands.

Suarez, banned for eight games for racially abusing Senegalese-born Frenchman Evra in the equivalent fixture last

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Manchester United forward Robin van Persie is about to bury home a penalty and win their Premier League clash against Liverpool at Anfield yesterday.

PHOTO:
REUTERS

HAMBURG end Dortmund streak

AFP, Berlin



Toni Kroos and Thomas Mueller fired Bayern Munich back to the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 2-0 win at Schalke while champions Borussia Dortmund saw their 31-match unbeaten run ended by Hamburg.

Bayern clinched a fourth win in four matches and reclaimed top spot on goal difference from Eintracht Frankfurt, who also have a perfect 12 points following their 2-1 win at Nuremberg on Friday.

Saturday marked the start of Oktoberfest in Munich, the world's largest beer festival, and Bayern celebrated in style despite missing French star Franck Ribery, sidelined with a thigh injury.

Both Bayern's goals came in the space of three minutes in the second half.

Kroos, who was on the scoresheet

RESULTS

Mainz 05 2 (Ivanschitz 10, Szalai 26) FC Augsburg 0
Hamburg 3 (Son 2, Ilicic 55) Borussia Dortmund 2 (Perisic 46, 60)
Fortuna Dusseldorf 0 SC Freiburg 0
Schalke 04 0 Bayern Munich 2 (Kroos 55, Mueller 58)
VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Olic 42) Furt 1 (Pogatetz 27-0)

in the 2-1 win over Valencia in the Champions League in midweek, found the target after 55 minutes with a right-foot drive.

Then Mueller doubled the lead in the 58th minute after a mazy run to delight veteran coach Jupp Heynckes.

"It's very gratifying to have a five-point gap (over Dortmund) but the

season.

The star for Hamburg was South Korea's Son Heung-Min, who scored twice.

Son grabbed the opener after just two minutes and a second -- his team's third -- just before the hour mark.

Ivo Ilicic had added a second for Hamburg in the 55th minute while Croatia's Ivan Perisic scored both of Dortmund's goals in the 46th and 59th minutes.

The champions now stand fourth in the table and coach Juergen Klopp lamented their poor early play.

"We made a very poor start -- that wasn't in the plan. And they made the most of their chances. But we will keep plugging away," he said.

Hamburg coach Thorsten Fink, who had been under pressure to deliver after three straight losses, said he believed his men may have turned the corner.

"We turned in an efficient showing today and it's great to get this boost," said Fink.

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Meanwhile, Dortmund's 31-match unbeaten run came to an end in a shock 3-2 loss at struggling Hamburg, who registered their first league win of

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Xavi at the death

AFP, Madrid



Substitute Xavi Hernandez scored a late goal to set Barcelona on their way to a 2-0 win over Granada on Saturday which maintained their perfect start and sent them 11 points clear of bitter rivals Real Madrid.

The Catalan side have now picked up a maximum 15 points from their opening five games.

But for most of this match they looked off-colour and appeared to be heading for a draw until Xavi's goal four minutes from the end, which was then followed by an own goal from Borja Gomez.

It was tough luck on Granada keeper Tono Rodriguez who had produced some excellent saves to repel the home side but in the end he was helpless to stop Xavi's excellent strike from the edge of the area which went off the crossbar.

Barca had Alex Song alongside Javier Mascherano in a makeshift defence with Carles Puyol and Gerard Pique both in the treatment room while the in-form Adriano Correia continued at left back despite Jordi Alba being ready to return.

Granada have struggled so far this season

but surprisingly they enjoyed plenty of possession early on.

Floro Flores took advantage of a misunderstanding between Song and Mascherano but shot weakly at keeper Victor Valdes after eight minutes and then Mikel Rico fired over from inside the area.

Barca had rested Xavi and with Andres Iniesta also out injured they were unable to play their usual flowing football and were guilty of giving the ball away cheaply.

Coach Tito Vilanova threw on Xavi and Pedro Rodriguez but despite a late avalanche of opportunities for Barca it looked as though they would not score.

Toni made excellent saves from Messi, Fabregas and Xavi until the latter produced a special shot to put Barca ahead.

Then, in injury time, Granada's misery was completed by an own goal from Gomez.

Earlier, Park Chu-Young became the first Korean to score in the Spanish league when he came off the bench to give Celta Vigo a 2-1 win over Getafe. Augusto Fernandez hit Celta's opener with Abelaziz Barrada equalising.

Zaragoza beat Osasuna 3-1 through goals from Helder Postiga, David Timor, who put through his own net, and Aponio, with a penalty. Emiliano Armenteros got the visitors' consolation.

No bust up with Villa, says Messi

AFP, Madrid

Argentine superstar Lionel Messi has insisted he is on good terms with Barcelona teammate David Villa after the two players had a heated exchange of words during their 2-0 victory over Granada on Saturday.

"I have absolutely no problem with Guaje (Villa's nickname), in fact it is quite the opposite. Do not look for problems where there are none," Messi told Barca TV.

Just before half-time in the Camp Nou clash, Messi blasted Villa for not passing the ball quickly enough, to which the former Valencia striker retorted in equally venomous fashion.

"These are the kind of things that happen during a match and there was a lot of pressure on us to score the first goal and make the match easier," continued Messi who leads the Liga scoring charts with six goals, but didn't find the net against Granada.

Shaking on it

AFP, London

Liverpool striker Luis Suarez and Manchester United defender Patrice Evra shook hands ahead of an especially charged match between the Premier League rivals at Anfield on Sunday.

This was Liverpool's first home fixture since an independent report cleared the club's supporters of any involvement in the deaths of 96 of their fellow fans during the 1989 Hillsborough Stadium disaster.

Uruguayan international Suarez, banned for eight games for racially abusing Senegalese-born French international Evra in the equivalent fixture last season, declined to shake the United man's hand before the clubs' last meeting in February.

What to WATCH

BT & STAR Cricket

ICC World T20

West Indies v Ireland

Live from 8:00pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News

Live at 8:30pm

STAR Sports

Primera Liga

Deportivo v Sevilla

Zenit in open revolt

AFP, Moscow

Russian champions Zenit Saint Petersburg were in danger of descending into civil war on Sunday after senior players protested at the signing of Brazilian superstar striker Hulk.

Hulk and Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel were signed earlier this month for a reported total of 100 million euros (\$130 million) from Portuguese clubs Porto and Benfica -- a sum underwritten by the state's enormous Gazprom gas empire that sponsors the team.

Stars such as leading scorer Alexander Kerzhakov and new Russian captain Igor Denisov reportedly boycotted training earlier this week and were ordered by coach Luciano Spalletti to train subsequently with the youth squad.

Kerzhakov had also expressed sympathy with Denisov's new wage demands.

"The truth is, all is not quiet with the team," Spalletti told reporters in a voice approaching a whisper late Saturday.

"Some players think that this sort of agitation is the right solution for the club right now," he added in comments that appeared to confirm rumours of a team revolt.

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Bayern Munich starlet Thomas Muller is ecstatic after scoring a fine individual goal during their 2-0 away win against Schalke at the Arena auf Schalke on Saturday.

Quagliarella keeps up form

AFP, Milan



Champions Juventus underlined their Serie A title credentials with a fourth straight win thanks to Champions League hero Fabio Quagliarella's brace in a 2-0 win over Chievo on Saturday.

Quagliarella had come off the bench to score the equaliser for Juve in their 2-2 draw at Chelsea on Wednesday.

And the big striker showed that his nutmeg of Chelsea keeper Petr Cech was no flash in the pan thanks to a brilliant all-round performance which was capped with two goals in the space of five second-half minutes.

Quagliarella lined up with Mirko Vucinic in Carrera's 3-5-2 and both came close early on before the Italian went on to finally find the net after the interval.

Chievo, also playing a 3-5-2 formation, were giving little space away and keeping it tight in the midfield but Juventus forged no less than four more chances before the interval.

Bendtner managed to set up Vucinic on the stroke of half-time but the Montenegrin striker's shot was wide of the post.

Sorrentino did well to parry Emanuele Giaccherini's

shot from a Kwadwo Asamoah cross but had to use both fists to punch away a fierce drive from the Ghanaian moments later.

Carrera brought on Vidal shortly after the interval but it was Quagliarella who broke the deadlock with an acrobatic effort which gave the keeper no chance on 63 minutes.

Five minutes later Quagliarella outfoxed defender Dario Dainelli to beat Sorrentino at his far post to claim his third goal in

four days.

Carrera made late substitutions with Stephan Lichtsteiner on for Marchisio, with Bendtner coming on to make his Serie A debut as Quagliarella left the field to a standing ovation.

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Roma have had a mediocre start to the season with just one win in their opening three games but would have started the match as favourites with Cagliari yet to win in the league.

an injury-time equaliser from the penalty spot at home to Fiorentina after former Italy striker Luca Toni handled in the box.

Roma want win awarded

AFP, Milan

Serie A club Roma have lodged an appeal to be awarded victory from their away match Sunday against Cagliari following its controversial postponement hours before kick-off.

The match was set to be played in an empty stadium because Cagliari's Is Arena stadium is still undergoing renovation work.

However club president Massimo Cellino invited supporters to attend the match regardless, forcing the prefect of Cagliari to call a halt to the league fixture over security fears.

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