

# Controversial Cesc leads comeback

AGENCIES



Barcelona struck twice in the final minutes to complete a controversial fightback as they beat 10-man Sevilla 3-2 to go eleven points clear of bitter rivals Real Madrid on Saturday.

Piotr Trochowski put Sevilla ahead after 26 minutes and when Alvaro Negredo doubled the advantage after the break it looked as though the Andalusians would achieve a double over the top two, having beaten Real a fortnight ago.

However, Barca fought back with Cesc Fabregas reducing the arrears after 53 minutes and then the talking point was the dismissal of Gary Medel for an apparent headbutt on Fabregas which led to him being red-carded with 18 minutes to go.

The Spanish midfielder insisted that he did not exaggerate his reaction. When a journalist quizzed him about the red-card incident, Fabregas said after the match: "If you want, I'll do to you what Medel did and you can tell me."

"I have been hit in the face and therefore it's a straight red card. I saw a penalty in the first half that was not given and the game balanced itself out.

"There's contact because he gets my face and in the world of football it's the intention that matters most. There's no reason to talk about it. In football these kind of plays are straight reds."

Barca pressed forward and it was Fabregas who equalised with a minute to go

before substitute David Villa got the winner in the fourth minute of injury time.

Barca coach Tito Vilanova felt it was right to send off Medel.

"If a player goes towards another and hits them in the head then the referee does the right thing to apply the law. That is a red card here or anywhere. It is difficult to referee

RESULTS
Valencia 2 (Feghouli 12, Viera 59) Real Zaragoza 0
Malaga 4 (Joaquin 13-pen, Saviola 28, Amaya 73-og, Isco 74) Real Betis 0
Real Sociedad 2 (Griezmann 62, Vela 72-pen) Athletic Bilbao 0
Sevilla 2 (Trochowski 26, Negredo 48) Barcelona 3

## Robbery?

AL-AMIN

There were only three minutes left on the clock for the best football team on the planet to salvage their pride and they did it in style with goals from Cesc Fabregas and David Villa. Barcelona completed a great Houdini act against Sevilla on Saturday night at the Sánchez Pizjuán with a 3-2 win. Barca maintain their 100 percent record intact in the La Liga this season thanks to two fantastic goals from Fabregas and an added-time winner from Villa in a match where the Catalan giants were 2-0 down till the 55th minute.

The above descriptions will certainly invoke a lot of pride among the loyal Barcelona fans around the world for not because it is something unique but because of their ability to overcome such adverse situation. But was that a fair reflection of actually what had happened in a pulsating match. Most will agree but those who watched the game would not buy the story.

What about a narrative like this? There were only three minutes left on the clock and a combative Sevilla were heading to floor the best football team on the planet two weeks after their fabulous victory against Real Madrid but only to be deprived by a couple of cruel refereeing decisions.

The saying is that only the losing team complains about refereeing decisions and it was partly correct after Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson blamed the

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and easy to make mistakes but not in this case," he said.

Sevilla's Ivan Rakitic had a tame shot from the edge of the area before, on another breakaway, Trochowski gave the home side the lead.

The ball came to him after Javier Mascherano tried to clear the danger and from the left-hand side of the area the Sevilla man slotted the ball into the corner.

Straight after the restart Sevilla got their second goal after Sergio Busquets gave the ball away in midfield. Medel found Negredo who clipped the ball over the keeper for a fine finish.

Barca went close through Pedro Rodriguez before Fabregas pulled a goal back with a shot from the edge of the area.

Medel was controversially dismissed for a headbutt on Fabregas and then, in the closing minutes, it was the former Arsenal man who ran through to beat Palop.

There was still time three minutes into injury time for Villa to latch onto a Messi pass for the winner.



Barcelona midfielder Cesc Fabregas celebrates after scoring the equaliser against Sevilla in their La Liga clash at the Sanchez Pizjuan on Sunday.

## Villa's skill undimmed

REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona striker David Villa, gradually coming back to full fitness after eight months out with a broken leg, showed he has retained his keen eye for goal when he came off the bench to snatch the winner in Saturday's 3-2 comeback victory at Sevilla.

With Barca in danger of dropping their first points of the campaign, the 30-year-old drove into the penalty area deep into added time and crashed a left-foot shot high past Andres Palop to complete a stirring fightback from two goals down.

The victory, in which Cesc Fabregas netted a double, extended the La Liga leaders' perfect record and equalled their best start to a domestic season of six straight wins.

It also meant they will be at least eight points ahead of Real Madrid - who host promoted Deportivo later on Sunday - when their arch rivals visit the Nou Camp next weekend.

"I am very happy to be able to help the team in this small amount of time in a very difficult match," Villa told reporters.

"A goal is always important but when it serves to help your team, like today, in the form of points, against a very tough opponent who was in front for a long time, it becomes even more crucial," added Spain's record scorer, who broke his leg at the Club World Cup last December.

"It's very difficult to win here, and all the more so to come from behind, but Barca battled and that's why we got three vital points."

## Rodgers hails Suarez class

AFP, Norwich

Brendan Rodgers hailed Luis Suarez for the hat-trick that helped Liverpool taste Premier League victory for the first time this season with a 5-2 win away to Norwich.

Uruguay international Suarez had also scored three times in the same fixture last term when Kenny Dalglish was still in charge of Liverpool.

On this occasion, Nuri Sahin and Steven Gerrard were the Reds' other scorers as they savoured a first league win under Rodgers.

"The quality of our play was outstanding," Rodgers said. "I remember Luis' goals here last year and I thought he gave another master-class in finishing, apart from the time when he was one on one and missed."

"His first goal was terrific as we played through the lines and the second one typifies him as he had just missed probably his easiest chance, the one-on-one."

"He didn't get disappointed and immediately he won the ball, produced an incredible piece of skill through the defender's legs and finished with the outside of his foot."

# Spurs hang on for history

REUTERS, London



Premier League leaders Chelsea beat London rivals Arsenal 2-1 while Tottenham Hotspur ended their Old Trafford hoodoo and beat Manchester United 3-2 there for the first time since 1989 to leave Chelsea three points clear on Saturday.

The two games started and finished a superb day of action with Liverpool ending their worst start to a season for over a century with Luis Suarez scoring a hat-trick as they won 5-2 at Norwich City for their first league win at the sixth attempt.

Champions Manchester City also trailed but hit back to win 2-1 at Fulham with a late winner from substitute Edin Dzeko pushing them up to fourth.

The most dramatic game was at Old Trafford where Spurs had not beaten United since a Gary Lineker winner 23 years ago - and not beaten them in any of their last 22 Premier League clashes home or away.

In that time they have led United on

a number of occasions and 11 years ago to the day were 3-0 up against them at half-time at White Hart Lane before losing 5-3.

So despite Jan Vertonghen putting Spurs ahead after two minutes and Gareth Bale making it 2-0 after 32 min-

RESULTS
Everton 3 (Osman 25, Jelavic 32, 38) Southampton 1 (Ramirez 6)
Fulham 1 (Petric 10-pen) Manchester City 2 (Aguero 43, Dzeko 87)
Manchester United 2 (Nani 51, Kagawa 53)
Tottenham 3 (Vertonghen 2, Bale 32, Dempsey 52)
Norwich 2 (Morison 61, Holt 87)
Liverpool 5 (Suarez 2, 38, 57, Sahin 47, Gerrard 68)
Reading 2 (Kebe 58, Hunt 62)
Newcastle 2 (Ba 59, 83)
Stoke 2 (Crouch 12, 36) Swansea 0

utes after a charging run and shot through the heart of the United defence, there was no taking victory for granted.

United, outplayed in the first half, controlled the game in the second after Wayne Rooney replaced Ryan Giggs

and they pulled one back when Nani touched in Rooney's cross six minutes after the break, the first of three goals in less than three minutes.

Spurs replied almost immediately in the 52nd minute when Clint Dempsey fired into an empty net when United keeper Anders Lindegaard saved from Bale - but Spurs' lead lasted only one minute before Shinji Kagawa wriggled through a static Spurs defence to make it 3-2.

United then bombarded Spurs goal for half-an-hour, hit the woodwork twice and had penalty appeals turned down, but could not force the equaliser as they slipped to their second league defeat of the season.

Manager Alex Ferguson told ESPN afterwards: "We made a poor start to the game and defended poorly. In the second half we were fantastic and should have got something out of the game but were very unlucky."

Spurs manager Andre Villas-Boas, whose team have not lost in seven matches in any competition since the opening day, said: "I thought we were tremendous today."

# Juventus rout Roma

## Milan continue struggle

REUTERS, Rome



Juventus scored three goals in the opening 19 minutes to destroy AS Roma 4-1 and move three points clear in Serie A on Saturday.

AC Milan's poor start to the season continued as they produced a patchy performance in a 1-1 draw at Parma, a result that failed to ease the pressure on coach Massimiliano Allegri.

Champions Juventus are now nine points ahead of Milan as their long unbeaten run continued. They have avoided defeat in their last 45 league matches.

Andrea Pirlo's deflected free kick gave them the lead after 10 minutes although Roma's players protested that the free kick should not have been awarded, with TV replays showing there was no contact between Rodrigo Taddei and Claudio Marchisio.

Juventus took advantage and doubled their lead five minutes later when confusion

in the Roma box led to Leandro Castan blocking Alessandro Matri's shot with his hand and giving away a penalty which Arturo Vidal calmly slotted home.

Three minutes later Matri took advantage of a sloppy defensive line to stride on to a Vidal through ball and lift a deft finish past Maarten Stekelenburg.

Antonio Conte's side could have easily added to their total with Marchisio and Mirko Vucinic both hitting the crossbar before the break.

Roma were given a lifeline after 65 minutes when Leonardo Bonucci brought down Mattia Destro after the Roma attacker played a neat one-two in the Juventus area with strike partner Pablo Osvaldo who sent Gianluigi Buffon the wrong way from the penalty spot.

However, Juventus were in no mood to allow Roma off the hook and Sebastian Giovinco put the icing on the cake in the final minute, racing on to an Andrea Barzagli through ball to round Stekelenburg to seal the points.

RESULTS
Parma 1 (Galoppa 66) AC Milan 1 (El Shaarawy 50)
Juventus 4 (Pirlo 11, Vidal 16-pen, Matri 19, Giovinco 90) Roma 1

## What to WATCH

- Bangladesh Television**
- ICC World T20
- New Zealand v West Indies
- Live from 4:00pm
- Sri Lanka v England
- Live from 8:00pm
- ESPN**
- English Premiership
- QPR v West Ham
- Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)
- STAR Sports**
- Primera Liga
- Getafe v Mallorca

## DAY'S EVENT

- KFC Women's Super League**
- First Semifinal
- Ansar & VDP v Narayanganj
- Time: 1:45pm
- Second Semifinal
- Tangail v Jessore
- Time: 3:45pm
- Venue: Bangabandhu

# Bayern still perfect

REUTERS, Berlin



Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich left it late to beat Werder Bremen 2-0 on Saturday with goals from Luiz Gustavo and Mario Mandzukic as they extended their perfect start to the season to six

wins in six matches. Brazilian Gustavo curled in an 18-metre shot in the 81st minute for the visitors and Mandzukic tapped in his sixth goal of the season two minutes later to lift Bayern to 18 points, five ahead of Eintracht Frankfurt who host Freiburg on Sunday.

Borussia Dortmund bounced back with an emphatic 5-0 demolition of Borussia Moenchengladbach and two goals from Marco Reus for their first win in three games to move up to third on 11 points.

The Bavarians have now won all matches in all domestic and European competitions they are in.

Champions Dortmund were eager to send a message to their in-form title rivals they were far from out of the race after failing to win their last two games.

Germany forward Reus, who joined

Dortmund this season for 17 million euros, opened his account against his former team with a fine solo effort and defender Neven Subotic drilled in a header as the hosts struck twice in a five-minute spell late in the first half.

Reus added another, surprising keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen with audacious shot from a tight angle in the 70th before late goals from Ilkay Guendogan and Jakub Blaszczykowski completed the rout.

The champions, playing Manchester City in the Champions League next week, are now up to third on 11 points. Hoffenheim, stunned by a car accident which left midfielder Boris Vukcevic in an artificial coma after he sustained life-threatening injuries on Friday, shared the spoils in their goalless draw at home to Augsburg.

Fans held banners with the 22-year-old's name while Hoffenheim were given the option to postpone the match but after consulting with Vukcevic's parents they decided to go ahead.

"That was no normal game," Hoffenheim coach Markus Babel told reporters. "The result is of no importance. I wanted to see a team that will fight for Boris and that is what I saw."

RESULTS
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Sam 50, 62) Greuther Fuerth 0
Werder Bremen 0 Bayern Munich 2 (Luiz Gustavo 81, Mandzukic 83)
Nuremberg 0 VfB Stuttgart 2 (Ibisevic 1, Harnik 75)
Hoffenheim 0 FC Augsburg 0
Hamburg 1 (Rudnevs 20) Hannover 0
Borussia Dortmund 5 (Reus 35, 70, Subotic 40, Guendogan 79, Blaszczykowski 85) Borussia

# Benzema edging towards best

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid and France striker Karim Benzema, who has struggled to hit the net in the opening weeks of the 2012-13 season, says he is starting to hit top form again.

"I have felt very good in the last few matches. I notice that I am making progress and that my legs are responding better. I am very pleased," the 24-year-old said in an interview published Sunday in sports daily AS.

"It was very good for me playing for France two times for the entire 90 minutes. It is important to play several matches in a row. I am also working a lot to get in top form," he added.

Benzema played a key role in France's 1-0 win over Finland in a 2014 World Cup qualifier as he set up Abou Diaby for the only goal of the game.

He also took part in in France's 3-1 win over Belarus four days later.

"I never lost confidence, I am always sure of myself and my game," Benzema said.

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