



Manchester City playmaker David Silva gets ahead of a melee of players to poke home and score during their 5-0 win over Aston Villa at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

City sneak into first No comeback for United

AFP, London

Unexpected defeats for Chelsea and Manchester United allowed champions Manchester City to stroll into first place in the Premier League on Saturday by crushing Aston Villa 5-0.

United's 1-0 loss in the late kick-off at Norwich City prevented them from returning to the summit, while third-place Chelsea have now gone four games without a win after losing 2-1 at West Bromwich Albion.

David Silva's scrappy 43rd-minute goal put City ahead at the Etihad Stadium, before penalties from Sergio Aguero and Carlos Tevez -- awarded for handballs by Andreas Weimann and Barry Bannan -- made it 3-0.

Aguero beat Villa goalkeeper Brad Guzan at his near post to claim his second goal in the 67th minute and Tevez then tapped home the fifth, as City warmed up for Wednesday's vital Champions League encounter with Real Madrid in style.

"In the last two games, I think we changed something. In our mind we found a good spirit, like last year," said City coach Roberto Mancini, whose side beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 last weekend.

The result dropped Villa into the bottom three and took City a point above former leaders United, who slumped to

their third defeat of the campaign at Carrow Road.

Javier Hernandez started up front for the visitors after inspiring last weekend's 3-2 win at Villa, but it was former United trainee Anthony Pilkington who claimed the game's only goal with an excellent 60th-minute header.

United's best chance of an equaliser saw Norwich goalkeeper John Ruddy produce a flying save to prevent Sebastien

Bassong from scoring an injury-time own goal, as Chris Hughton's side held firm to claim another prized scalp after last month's 1-0 win at home to Arsenal.

"We're disappointed to lose the game, but we give credit to Norwich for the way they fought and battled," United coach Alex Ferguson, who was without Wayne Rooney due to tonsilitis, told ESPN.

Meanwhile, Chelsea's early-season momentum appears to have fizzled out completely after their defeat at coach Roberto Di Matteo's former club left them four points off the pace.

Shane Long put West Brom ahead at the Hawthorns with a 10th-minute header and then teed up Peter Odemwingie for what proved to be the winner after Eden Hazard's header drew the visitors level six minutes before half-time.

RESULTS

Arsenal 5 (Mertesacker 24, Podolski 42, Giroud 45, Cazorla 60, Walcott 90) Tottenham 2 (Adebayor 10, Bale 71) **Liverpool** 3 (Suarez 47, 58, Enrique 65) Wigan 0 **Man City** 5 (Silva 43, Aguero 54-pen, 67, Tevez 65-pen, 74) **Aston Villa** 0 Newcastle 1 (Ba 90) **Swansea** 2 (Michu 58, De Guzman 87) **Norwich** 1 (Pilkington 60) **Man Utd** 0 QPR 1 (Holtby 49) **Southampton** 3 (Lambert 23, Puncheon 45, Ferdinand 83-og) **Reading** 2 (Le Fondre 51, 79-pen) Everton 1 (Naismith 10) **West Brom** 2 (Long 10, Odemwingie 1)

Heynckes content with a point

AFP, Berlin



RESULTS

Borussia Dortmund 3 (Lewandowski 3, 15-pen, Goetze 42) **Greuther Fuerth** 1 (Stieber 5) **Borussia M'gladbach** 1 (Stranzl 7) **VfB Stuttgart** 2 (Hamk 8, Brouwers 72-og) **Hanover** 9 1 (Abdellaoue 33) **Freiburg** 2 (Schmid 11, Rosenthal 56) **Nuremberg** 1 (Feulner 46) **Bayern Munich** 1 (Mandzukic 3) **Hamburg** 1 (Son 63) **Mainz 05** 0 **Eintracht Frankfurt** 4 (Moelders 7-og, Aigner 32, Meier 52, 75-pen) **Augsburg** 2 (Koo 40, Moelders 64) **Bayer Leverkusen** 2 (Scheuerle 45)

Barca race to best ever start

AFP, Madrid



RESULTS

Real Madrid 5 (Aurtenetxe 12-og, Ramos 30, Benzema 32, Ozil 56, Khedira 72) **Athletic Bilbao** 1 (Gomez 42) **Barcelona** 3 (Messi 16, 60, Song 28) Real Zaragoza 1 (Montanes 24) **Osasuna** 0 (Malaga 0) **Valencia** 2 (Viera 16, Soldado 90-pen)

the right track.

A deflected shot from Karim Benzema off Jon Aurtenetxe put them ahead after 12 minutes and then Sergio Ramos and Benzema again gave them a commanding lead. Ibai Gomez reduced the arrears before the break but Mesut Ozil and Sami Khedira made it a heavy defeat for sorry Athletic.

Barca had their preferred centre-half pairing of Gerard Pique and Carles Puyol available and Song was chosen ahead of Javier Mascherano to play the defensive midfield role.

Jordi Alba crossed for Messi in the first minute and though he shot just wide the Argentine did put Barca ahead after 15 minutes with Alba again the supplier.

Messi was given plenty of room in the heart of the defence to pick his spot and slotted past keeper Roberto Jimenez.

The home side failed to clear a corner with full-back Martin Montoya only finding the edge of the area where Montanes fired the ball back in and it found the back of the net after taking a slight deflection off Puyol.

With the ease that Barca were opening up Zaragoza there was little alarm among the Catalan faithful and five minutes later it was their idol Messi who set up the second goal. He pulled the ball back from the deadball line for Song to score a rare goal.

Milan show some mettle

AFP, Rome



Lazio put the brakes on Juventus's bid to extend their Serie A lead by holding the champions to a scoreless draw on Saturday as AC Milan fought back to grab a share of the points in a 2-2 draw at Napoli.

Vladimir Petkovic's side went in to their 13th game of the season knowing their past history against Juve in Turin was firmly against them.

But four days before Juve host Chelsea in the Champions League, the Biancocelesti escaped a torrid second half to grab a share of the points at Juventus Stadium.

"It's a good point for us as regards morale," said Petkovic, whose side had goalkeeper Federico Marchetti to thank for keeping them in the game.

"Thanks to Marchetti and the defence that we managed to grab a share of the points."

Juventus's second draw of the season leaves the Bianconeri top on 32 points, five ahead of Inter and Napoli ahead of the former's home match against Cagliari on Sunday.

A win for Napoli would have allowed Walter Mazzarri's side to leapfrog Inter into second, but a brace from Stephan El Shaarawy left the frustrated Partenopei with their third draw of the season.

Napoli's last Serie A defeat was a 2-0 reverse to Juventus a month ago and the hosts started positively, thanks in large part to Milan keeper Christian Abbiati.

RESULTS

Juventus 0 **Lazio** 0 **Napoli** 2 (Inler 4, Insigne 30) **AC Milan** 2 (El Shaarawy 44, 82)



AC Milan starlet Stephan El Shaarawy scores a stunning goal against Napoli during their Serie A clash at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on Saturday.



What to WATCH

STAR Cricket
India v England
First Test, Day 5
Live from 10:00am

TEN Cricket
Sri Lanka v New Zealand
First Test, Day 3
Live from 10:30am

ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

English Premiership
West Ham v Stoke City
Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Real Sociedad v Rayo Vallecano



National Cricket League
(Four-day match, Day-4)
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: Sylhet Divisional Stadium
Khulna v Dhaka Metro
Venue: Shaheed Stadium, Bogra
Sylhet v Barisal
Venue: Barisal Divisional Stadium
Dhaka v Rangpur