



Elated Bayern Munich players throw coach Jupp Heynckes into the air while celebrating their 23rd Bundesliga title in Frankfurt on Saturday. Bayern cantered home in record time, with six games to spare.

PHOTO: AFP

Brazil crush Bolivia

REUTERS, Santa Cruz

Neymar scored twice and Ronaldinho ran the midfield at will as an experimental Brazil side beat Bolivia 4-0 in a friendly on Saturday.

The match, which gave Luiz Felipe Scolari the first win of his second stint as Brazil coach, was held in aid of the family of a young fan killed by a flare last month.

Neymar scored in the 30th and 41st minutes after fellow striker Leandro Damiao had put Brazil ahead after three minutes.

Midfielder Leandro, who replaced Ronaldinho in the 77th minute, scored the fourth in a counter-attack one minute into added time.

Striker Alexandre Pato, who returned home this year to join Corinthians from AC Milan, came on in the second half replacing Leandro Damiao in his first appearance for the 2014 World Cup hosts since August.

More to come from Abidal

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona defender Eric Abidal has said that if all goes well with his health, he will continue to play for one or two more years.

The Frenchman returned to first-team action for the first time in 14 months in Barca's 5-0 win over Mallorca on Saturday after undergoing a liver transplant almost exactly a year ago.

"Football is my life and I didn't want to end my career without playing," he told Barca TV.

"I didn't want to go out like this and I have fought to return. The objective I had wanted was to end my career playing and if I feel fine and can continue for a year or two I will do."



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BAYERN champions

REUTERS, Berlin



Bayern Munich won their 23rd German league title in record time on Saturday by winning 1-0 at Eintracht

Frankfurt to open up an unsailable 20-point lead with six games remaining.

The Bavarians ended the two-year reign of Borussia Dortmund by clinching a 22nd Bundesliga title faster than any club in the league's 50-year history.

Bastian Schweinsteiger flicked the ball into the net with a neat backheel in the 52nd minute to lift Bayern to 75 points ahead of second-placed Dortmund, who beat Augsburg 4-2.

"It's a fantastic moment and I'm winning a league title after 23 years again," said coach Jupp Heynckes, who guided Bayern to the championship in 1989 and 1990 during his first stint as coach.

"I have won a few championships in my time as player and coach but never when it was still that cold," he said of the fastest title win in Bundesliga history.

"My players are now harvesting all the work they put in throughout the year. They put into action exactly what I told them."

Heynckes will make way for Spaniard Pep Guardiola at the end of the season by which time Bayern, who are chasing an unprecedented treble for a German club, might have added the Champions League and domestic Cup trophies.

Fresh from a 2-0 Champions League quarter-final, first leg victory at home to Juventus, Bayern should have taken the lead much earlier against Frankfurt, with Xherdan Shaqiri rattling the post with a low shot in the 10th minute.

David Alaba missed a penalty by firing against the same spot 15 minutes later as the visitors showed some nervousness.

But Germany international

Schweinsteiger made sure of their 11th straight league win this year with his seventh goal of the campaign, turning in a superb Philipp Lahm cross after the fullback's burst down the right wing.

Bayern keeper Manuel Neuer needed to come to the rescue late in the game as sixth-placed Frankfurt, battling for a Champions League spot, poured forward.

"You feel that this team wants more," said club boss Uli Hoeness. "Now we want to win the Champions League and the German Cup. There will be time to celebrate at some point."

There was some singing and dancing on the pitch in Frankfurt but no big title party in Munich, as Bayern are focusing on the second leg at Juventus next week.

"We really wanted to win this and get the title out of the way," said Bayern captain Lahm. "There will be one or two beers that will be opened on the way back tonight. But we now want to focus on Juventus. It (the season)

is not finished yet."

Bayern's 23rd league title covers their 22 Bundesliga crowns and a German national championship trophy in 1932.

Dortmund rested seven key players ahead of their own Champions League quarter-final, second leg at home to Malaga next week but had little trouble easing past Augsburg despite briefly trailing 2-1.

Bundesliga top scorer Robert Lewandowski sealed their victory with his 21st goal of the campaign in added time after a Julian Schieber double.

Fourth-placed Schalke 04 boosted their hopes of a Champions League place next season by beating Werder Bremen 2-0 away with goals from Julian Draxler and Ciprian Marica to reach 45 points, four behind Bayer Leverkusen who drew 1-1 at home to VfL Wolfsburg.

Hamburg failed to bounce back after last week's 9-2 demolition by Bayern, and slumped to a 1-0 home defeat.

RESULTS

Werder Bremen 0 Schalke 04 2 (Draxler 51, Marica 69)

Borussia Dortmund 4 (Schieber 22, 52, Subotic 64, Lewandowski 90+2) Augsburg 2 (Baier 43, Vogt 45)

Borussia M'gladbach 1 (de Jong 74) Greuther Fuerth 0 Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schuerrle 12) VfL Wolfsburg 1 (Kjaer 70) Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Bayern Munich 1 (Schweinsteiger 52) Hamburg 0 Freiburg 1

ROLL OF HONOR

2013 Bayern Munich

2012 Borussia Dortmund

2011 Borussia Dortmund

2010 Bayern Munich

Silva doubt for Barca tie

AFP, Rennes

Paris Saint-Germain face an anxious wait to see if defender Thiago Silva will be fit to play in the club's Champions League quarter-final second leg against Barcelona on Wednesday.

Silva missed Saturday's 2-0 victory at Rennes with a knee injury as Zoumana Camara deputised alongside Mamadou Sakho in the Brazilian's absence.

"He took a blow to the knee against Barcelona on Tuesday, that's why he wasn't here today (Saturday). Will he be ready Wednesday? I don't know, we'll see," said PSG manager Carlo Ancelotti following his side's win in Brittany.

Meanwhile, the Italian said that the club's other Brazilian central defender Alex would be ready for Wednesday's second leg after shaking off a thigh injury.

Vucinic fires Juventus riposte

REUTERS, Rome



Ten-man Fiorentina scored two late penalties in a 2-2 draw at home to Milan on Sunday to dent the Rossoneri's bid for a second place finish in Italy's Serie A.

Milan took a deserved lead in the 14th minute thanks to former Viola midfielder Riccardo Montolivo and were given a further boost when Nenad Tomovic saw red on 39 minutes for an apparent elbow to the face of Stephan El Shaarawy.

The visitors doubled their lead just after the hour thanks to Frenchman Mathieu Flamini, only for Adem Ljajic and David Pizarro to score one each from the spot in the closing stages to earn a share of the points.

Milan's seventh draw of the season leaves Massimiliano Allegri's side in third, 13 points behind leaders Juventus.

Earlier, striker Mirko Vucinic gave himself a timely confidence boost ahead of Juventus' Champions League clash with Bayern Munich by firing the Serie A leaders to a nervy 2-1 win over Pescara on Saturday.

The Montenegrin scored both goals, including a deft curler for his second, though they came towards the end of another inconsistent display in which he missed an open goal and decided to shoot from a tight angle when team-mate Emanuele Giaccherini was in a better position.

Vucinic, who now has nine league goals this season, at least managed to draw a smile from his manager, Antonio Conte.

Conte, usually taciturn, joked that Vucinic's performance was so baffling he might have to drop him for Wednesday's game, when Juventus hope to overturn a 2-0 deficit in their quarter-final, second leg at home to Bayern.

"I said to him afterwards that he had a strange match. He scored two goals - imagine what he could have done if he'd played well," Conte told reporters.

Smoker Balotelli to be fined

REUTERS, Milan

AC Milan's maverick forward Mario Balotelli was caught smoking in the toilet on the train during the team's journey to Florence and will be fined, chief executive Adriano Galliani said on Sunday.

Balotelli was ticked off by the train guard who told Galliani: "You need to pull his ears. He was smoking in the bathroom," Gazzetta dello Sport reported.

Smoking is banned on Italian trains. "I want to say that we're going to fine him," Galliani told the newspaper.

Balotelli has scored seven goals in eight appearances and has managed to stay out of trouble since joining the club in January from Manchester City.

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PHOTO: AFP

AC Milan forward Mario Balotelli is disappointed during their Serie A clash against Fiorentina at Florence on Sunday.

Barca more than Messi

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona took another step towards their fourth La Liga title in five years as a hat-trick from Cesc Fabregas guided them to a 5-0 win over Mallorca on Saturday.

Fabregas started up front in the absence of the injured Lionel Messi and made a welcome return to form as he also played a part in Barca's other two goals, scored by Alexis Sanchez, as the Catalans

restored their 13-point lead at the top of the table.

However, the biggest cheer of the night was reserved for Eric Abidal as he made his first appearance in 14 months after undergoing a liver transplant.

Any doubts over whether Barca would be able to cope without Messi against the league's bottom side were quickly dispelled by two goals in a two-minute spell midway through the first-half.

Earlier, Real Madrid had continued their own good run of late with a 5-1 demolition of Levante.

The visitors had taken a shock lead through Michel just after the half-hour mark, but their lead only lasted five minutes as Gonzalo Higuain scored a goal of the season contender with a wonderful volley from Xabi Alonso's cross.

Kaka then put the hosts ahead before the break from the penalty spot and Cristiano Ronaldo made the game safe with his 29th league goal of the season six minutes from time.

Substitute Mesut Ozil twice scored from close range in the dying moments as Los Blancos also warmed-up for their Champions League quarter-final second-leg away to Galatasaray in perfect fashion.

RESULTS

Real Sociedad 4 (Vela 21, Albert De la Bella 24, Griezmann 30, Martinez Berridi 51) Malaga 2 (Morales 43, Santa Cruz 70)

Real Madrid 5 (Higuain 36, Kaka 39-pen, Ronaldo 84, Ozil 87, 90+1) Levante 1 (Herrero 31)

Deportivo La Coruna 3 (Gama 11, Marchena 40, Minero 55-og) Real Zaragoza 2 (Postiga 16-pen, Montanes 35)

Barcelona 5 (Fabregas 20, 37, 46,