



Arsenal forward Theo Walcott celebrates scoring the opening goal during their Premier League clash against Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium in London last night.

PHOTO: AFP

RVP stabs Gunners

RESULTS

Arsenal 1 (Walcott 2) Manchester Utd 1 (Van Persie 44-pen)
Chelsea 2 (Oscar 43, Lampard 45-pen) Swansea 0
Reading 0 QPR 0

AFP, London

Robin van Persie returned to frustrate Arsenal as the Manchester United striker rescued a 1-1 draw at the Emirates Stadium, while Reading and QPR were relegated from the Premier League on Sunday after playing out a 0-0 draw.

Van Persie was making his first appearance in north London since last year's £24 million transfer to United and he was given a hostile reception from Arsenal's supporters.

But, after Theo Walcott gave Arsenal a second minute lead, the Dutch forward silenced the boo-boys when he fired home from the penalty spot after being fouled by Bacary Sagna in the 44th minute.

With the title already wrapped up, champions United were happy to settle for a draw, but the result was a setback for Arsenal, who dropped down to fourth place following Chelsea's 2-0 win over Swansea.

A win for either Reading or QPR at the Madejski Stadium would have kept alive their slender chances of staying up at least until Aston Villa's clash with Sunderland on Monday.

But both looked wracked with nerves during a goalless stalemate which condemned Nigel Adkins' Reading and Harry



Redknapp's QPR to starting next season in the Championship.

Bottom club Reading and second bottom QPR are both nine points behind fourth bottom Aston Villa with three games remaining, but a complicated equation means there is no chance of either avoiding the drop.

If Wigan and Villa lose their next three games they will go into the final day on 3 and 34 points respectively, while back to back wins for QPR and Reading win would give them 31 points ahead of the last match.

However, with Wigan and Villa playing each other on the last weekend, only one of them could be overtaken by QPR and Reading, meaning QPR and Reading are guaranteed to be in the bottom three at the end of the season.

At Stamford Bridge, Chelsea cruised to a comfortable victory over Swansea which lifted them into third place and one point ahead of Arsenal.

Oscar gave Chelsea the lead with a fine finish from Frank Lampard's pass in the 43rd minute.

Lampard, who had come on as a substitute for the injured Ramires, netted the second goal in first half stoppage-time.

The England midfielder took his Chelsea career goal tally to 201 -- within one of Bobby Tambling's record -- when he drove home a penalty after Leon Britton had fouled Juan Mata.

That was enough to move Chelsea three points clear of fifth-placed Tottenham in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

Rats! Wish I hadn't

AFP, Paris

French football pundit Eric di Meco will be watching what he says in future after a throwaway comment had rather indigestible consequences.

Three years ago, when Spanish full back Cesar Azpilicueta joined di Meco's old club Marseille, the then president Jean-Claude Dessier described the player as "Spain's future right back".

But di Meco, a former defender himself, scoffed at the suggestion and told listeners to radio station RMC: "If that happens I'll eat a rat."

Fast forward to 2013 and Azpilicueta, now established as Chelsea's number one full back, recently made his debut for Spain.

And, to his credit, di Meco did not renege on his promise and duly devoured a coypu, a species of river rat, live on air....

Records keep tumbling

RESULTS

Bayern Munich 1 (Shaqiri 35) Freiburg 0
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Kiessling 35-pen) Werder Bremen 0
VfL Wolfsburg 3 (Arnold 34, Olic 61, Diego 75)
Borussia M'gladbach 1 (Mlapa 52)
Hoffenheim 2 (Weis 11, Salihovic 19) Nuremberg 1 (Simons 58-pen)
Augsburg 3 (Moelders 61, de Jong 83, Ji 86) VfB Stuttgart 0
Fortuna Duesseldorf 1 (Bodzek 88) **Borussia**

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich defender Daniel van Buyten has said the Bavarian giants head to Spain for Wednesday's Champions League semi-leg, return leg against Barcelona determined to finish the job after their stunning 4-0 first-leg victory.

The Belgian played in Saturday's 1-0 Bundesliga win over Freiburg as coach Jupp Heynckes made 10 changes from Tuesday's victory when Thomas Mueller netted twice as Barca suffered their heaviest European defeat since 1997.

Bayern are bidding to reach their third European final in four years at London's Wembley stadium on May 25 and picked up their 14th straight league win of the year so far.



"We all share one goal, we want to win trophies. We're marching onwards together. We have a strong bench and there's no resentment," said the 35-year-old, who is competing with Jerome Boateng for a starting place at Barcelona.

Swiss winger Xherdan Shaqiri hit the winner when he fired in a direct free-kick on 35 minutes to give Bayern, who were confirmed as champions three weeks ago, their 27th win from their 31 league games this season.

With 84 points this season, they passed Borussia Dortmund's previous record of 81, set in May 2012, for the most Bundesliga points collected in a season, but were made to work by a dogged Freiburg side.

It was also Heynckes's 50th Bundesliga victory since taking charge at Bayern in July 2011 with his team bidding to become the first German team to win the treble of European, league and cup titles.

"I issued a warning to my team before we played Freiburg," said Heynckes.

"What (coach Christian) Streich has achieved in Freiburg is sensational.

"It was hard work today but credit to the lads. We were very smart and very professional."

Maracana reopens

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Rio's fabled Maracana Stadium reopened on Saturday after a multimillion-dollar makeover that will make the legendary arena the showpiece venue of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics.

A limited crowd of approximately 25,000 spectators thronged the fabled venue, which hosted a world record audience of more than 200,000 for the 1950 World Cup but has now had its capacity reduced to a maximum of 82,238.

Spectators for the test event watched a friendly exhibition match between select teams led by Brazilian World Cup winners Bebeto and Ronaldo.

Along with VIPs including Brazil President Dilma Rousseff and her predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, many of the spectators were workers who have helped transform the ageing venue since 2007.

Real take heart from derby win

RESULTS

Levante 0 **Celta Vigo 1** (Fernández 20)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Susaeta 27, Herrera 90) Barcelona 2 (Messi 67, Sanchez 69)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Falcao 4) **Real Madrid 2** (Juanfran 13-og, Di Maria 63)
Real Zaragoza 3 (Montanes 28, Postiga 60, Rochina

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid assistant manager Aitor Karanka believes his side can take heart from their 2-1 win over Atletico Madrid on Saturday night as they try to overturn a 4-1 deficit from the first-leg of their Champions League semi-final against Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday.

Real made eight changes from the side that started in Germany for the derby clash at the Vicente Calderon, but still managed to emerge victorious thanks to Juanfran's own goal and a fine second-half strike from Angel Di Maria.

"It gives us extra motivation for the manner in which it was achieved," he told a press conference on Saturday.

"This team fought with humility and a lot of intensity.

"Looking forward to Tuesday it is very



good. As a team the work done was spectacular."

In a game low on quality throughout, Real managed to quell the hosts' service to Radamel Falcao after the Colombian had given Atletico a third minute lead and Karanka was delighted with how the squad responded after their thrashing in Dortmund on Wednesday.

"We knew it would be a game with a lot of tension. It was a derby and Atleti haven't won one for a long time so we let that be known to the players. Moreover, second place was in play. It wasn't easy.

"There weren't many chances. They concentrated on crossed balls which we knew would be their danger. What we are left with is that after the blow of the other day we have responded as a team and with people who are not used to playing."

However, Karanka denied that Madrid would have a huge psychological advantage when the two teams meet again for the Copa del Rey final on May 17, despite not having been defeated in a Madrid derby since 1999.

"A final is a different game. Two teams that play for everything in 90 minutes. It is not going to be easy, nor is there a physiological superiority."



Lewandowski keeping it real

INTERNET, Undated



Robert Lewandowski has revealed Real Madrid defender Pepe told him he had "scored enough" in Borussia Dortmund's 4-1 win in the first-leg of their Champions League semifinal last week.

The Poland striker produced an outstanding display as Dortmund ran out convincing winners in the first-leg of their Champions League semifinal, but Lewandowski has warned the tie is not over yet, as he bids to finish off Real Madrid on Tuesday.

"If we don't play as well as we did in the second half, it will be difficult," the 24-year-old told polishfootballonline.com.

"Real Madrid is a fantastic club and will definitely push us to play defensively. We have to look to score in Spain - that will make our job much easier.

"We have to play just as well in the return leg to show that this wasn't an accident.

Lewandowski then recalled a comment made by Pepe during the first leg and looked back on each of his four goals from the finest night of his career to date.

"During one of the last corner kicks, Pepe came up to me and said 'You've scored four goals already, don't you think that's enough?'" he recalled.

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Robert Lewandowski, Borussia Dortmund striker



Real Madrid winger Angel di Maria (L) is ecstatic after getting the winner in their La Liga derby against Atletico at the Vicente Calderon on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Maasranga TV & TEN Cricket
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe
Second Test, Day 5
Live from 2:00pm

SET Max
Indian Premier League
Rajasthan v Bangalore
Live from 4:30pm
Mumbai v Punjab
Live from 8:30pm

STAR SPORTS
English Premiership
Aston Villa v Sunderland
Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News

DAY'S EVENT

BD U-19s v SL U-19s
Fifth Youth ODI
Time: 9:30am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur

Bangladesh Premier League
Abahani v Team BJMC
Time: 5:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National