

# Barca ride on Adriano

AFP, Madrid

Adriano scored the only goal as a Barcelona side without the injured Lionel Messi laboured to a 1-0 victory over Malaga.

The Brazilian struck the decisive blow a minute before half-time with a left-footed effort that Malaga goalkeeper Willy Caballero will have been disappointed to see slip through his grasp.

However, Malaga were left to rue two huge chances after the break as firstly Fabrice struck the post and then Sebastian Fernandez headed straight at Victor Valdes when completely unmarked inside the area in the closing stages.

Despite Messi's absence, Barca boss Gerardo Martino once again started with Neymar on the bench as Fabregas replaced the Argentine, whilst Alex Song and Adriano replaced Sergio Busquets and Dani Alves from the side that started Wednesday's 1-1 draw with Atletico Madrid in the first-leg of the Spanish Super Cup.

Without either of their South American attacking stars, Barca's build-up play was somewhat ponderous in the first period as they failed to break down a solid but limited Malaga side.

Andres Iniesta then fired an effort from the edge of the area straight down Caballero's throat, but the Argentine was forced into a stunning save nine minutes before the break as he blocked Alexis Sanchez's header from point-blank range.

However, Caballero was slightly at fault when Barca did eventually take the lead as Adriano cut inside onto his left foot and his curling effort flew over the Malaga keeper's outstretched arm

**RESULTS**

**Atletico Madrid 5** (Garcia 16, 90, Costa 20, Arda 34, Tiago 52) Rayo Vallecano 0

Levante 0 Sevilla 0

Malaga 0 **Barcelona 1** (Adriano 44)

Real Betis 1 (Ruben Castro 90) **Celta Vigo 2** (Charles 67, Nollito 74)

on its way into the far corner.

Gerard Pique nearly added a fortunate second after the break as Xavi's free-kick rebounded off the defender's back and looped off the crossbar before Martino finally introduced Neymar just after the hour mark.

Malaga then passed up a huge opportunity to level with their first clear opening of the match as Roque Santa Cruz rounded Valdes and from a

tight angle cut the ball back for Fabrice, but the young Cameroonian could only pull his effort off the base of the post.

Neymar nearly made it two goals in as many games with a well-struck free-kick that Caballero did well to parry to safety.

And Malaga passed up another great chance in the final minute as Jesus Gamez's cross found Fernandez completely unmarked, only for the Uruguayan to head straight at Valdes, while the Barca keeper comfortably held Fernando Tissone's follow-up.

Barca's win took them to the top the table by a single goal ahead of Atletico Madrid after Diego Simeone's men continued their 100 percent record in the league with a 5-0 mauling of Rayo Vallecano at the Vicente Calderon.

Raul Garcia, Diego Costa and Arda Turan had the hosts 3-0 up after just 34 minutes and further goals from Tiago and Garcia after the break rounded off a perfect afternoon for Atleti ahead of the second-leg of the Super Cup at the Camp Nou on Wednesday.

Elsewhere, Sevilla's faltering start to their league campaign continued as they could only manage a 0-0 draw away to Levante.

And it was an even worse night for the other half of Seville as Real Betis lost 2-1 at home to Celta Vigo.



Polish third seed Agnieszka Radwanska makes a backhand return against unseeded Spanish Silvia Soler-Espinoso during their US Open match at Flushing Meadows yesterday.

## Sylhet to host Kiwi match?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was hopeful of hosting some matches at the Sylhet Cricket Stadium during New Zealand's tour of Bangladesh in October.

"I think it's possible after the way the work has been progressing. There are some process and we immediately invite ICC inspection for approval so that we can arrange the matches," said BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, who visited the venue with the touring New Zealand delegation to inspect the venues and facilities ahead of their team's tour.

New Zealand is expected to arrive in Dhaka on October 2 to play two Tests, three ODIs and one T20I.

Recently the ICC inspection team visited the Sylhet stadium, which is one of the proposed venues for the ICC World Twenty20 next year.

## No progress in BCB's panel

SPORTS REPORTER

Former chief justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, who was named the chairman of the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) disciplinary panel, has said that there has been no progress in the formation of the disciplinary panel.

The members of the panel are supposed to form tribunals which will hear the trials of the nine individuals accused by the ICC of breaching the BCB anti-corruption code.

"I have not received any file. The process has not begun as yet. It remains in whatever position we were at the start," said Chowdhury.

Speaking to The Daily Star, BCB's CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury stated that it was the ICC's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) that made the charges and the issue too is being handled by them.

The individuals charged by the ICC were given two weeks' time to submit their replies and the deadline ends today. It was learnt that a number of those who have been charged, were ready with their replies and are due to submit them to the chairman of the panel today.

# Napoli thump Bologna

AFP, Milan

Napoli thrashed Bologna 3-0 on Sunday in Rafael Benitez's first league game in charge as the Partenopei went top of the early Serie A table.

Champions Juventus had kickstarted the new season with a 1-0 away win at Sampdoria on Saturday when AC Milan, who finished third last season, were stunned 2-1 by a Luca Toni brace away at promoted Verona.

However a first-half opener from Jose Callejon and a brace from Slovakian forward Marek Hamsik sealed the points for the hosts in Naples as they went top ahead of Inter Milan and Roma.

Napoli underwent major changes in the close season with the league's top scorer, Uruguayan Edinson Cavani, moving to Paris Saint-Germain and coach Walter Mazzarri moving to Inter.

Former Real Madrid forward Gonzalo Higuain, brought in by Benitez as a direct replacement, made his league debut at the San Paolo but failed to hit the net as Hamsik stole the show with a scintillating performance.

Earlier on Sunday, Inter, whose 2012-13 campaign ended in a catastrophic ninth-place finish, got off to a winning start with second half goals from Yuto Nagatomo and Rodrigo Palacio securing a deserved 2-0 win over Genoa to get Mazzarri's reign as coach off to a positive start.

Prior to this game Inter had won only once in their last eight games, and Mazzarri said: "The boys hadn't won at home for several months and suffered a lot of defeats, so this win has helped exorcise the demons."

Elsewhere Cup holders Lazio, thrashed 4-0 by Juventus in the Italian Super Cup last week, made amends

**RESULTS**

**Inter Milan 2** (Nagatomo 75, Palacio 90+3) Genoa 0

**Cagliari 2** (Nainggolan 28, Cabrera 63) Atalanta 1 (Standerdo 27)

**Lazio 2** (Hernanes 13, Candreva 16-pen) Udinese 1 (Muriel 60)

Livorno 0 **Roma 2** (De Rossi 65, Florenzi 67)

**Napoli 3** (Callejon 32, Hamsik 45+2, 63) Bologna 0

Parma 0 Chievo 0

**Torino 2** (Brighi 40, Cerci 63) Sassuolo 0

with a 2-1 home win over Udinese.

Hernanes opened the scoring for Vladimir Petkovic's side in the 13th minute, with Antonio Candreva adding Lazio's second from the penalty spot three minutes later.

Udinese reduced the arrears on the hour thanks to substitute Luis Muriel, and the northerners, who finished fifth last term to secure a Europa League spot, pushed their hosts all the way



Napoli forward Marek Hamsik is ecstatic after scoring during their Serie A match against Bologna at the San Paolo Stadium on Sunday.

# Radwanska, Li cruise

AFP, New York

Britain, buoyed by the Andy Murray feelgood factor, celebrated US Open first round wins for Laura Robson and qualifier Daniel Evans on Monday as Agnieszka Radwanska and Li Na cruised into the second round.

As the first day of the final Grand Slam of the season got underway at Flushing Meadows, Robson, the first British woman to be seeded at a major for 26 years, won nine games in succession to beat Spanish veteran Lourdes Dominguez Lino, 7-5, 6-0.

The 30th seed, who ended Kim Clijsters' career in New York 12 months ago on her way to the last 16, next faces either France's Caroline Garcia or Shelby Rogers of the United States.

But she was over-shadowed, however, when world 179 Evans, making his debut after coming through qualifying, swept past Japanese 11th seed Kei Nishikori, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

Nishikori, who made the third round, last year, committed 38 unforced errors.

The 23-year-old Evans had never won a main draw match at the Grand Slams until Monday and his reward is a second round clash against either Australia's Bernard Tomic or Albert Ramos of Spain.

Polish third seed Radwanska, who has never got beyond the last-16 in New York, eased past Silvia Soler-Espinoso 6-1, 6-2 and next faces another Spaniard, Maria Teresa Torro-Flor.

"I think two-sets match for the first match is always good," Radwanska said. "I prepared very good. I'm ready now to play here and hopefully I can play same good tennis."

Chinese fifth seed Li also reached the second round with a 6-2, 6-2 win over Olga Govortsova of Belarus.

Li, a quarterfinalist in 2009, next plays Sofia Arvidsson of Sweden.

Later Monday, second seed Rafael Nadal, the 2010 champion, and Roger Federer, the former five-time champion and seeded a lowly seventh this year, begin their campaigns.

Nadal, who is undefeated on hard courts in 2013 and arrives in New York with back-to-back Masters titles in Montreal and Cincinnati, faces American wildcard Ryan Williams.

Federer concludes the night session on the showpiece Arthur Ashe Stadium against Slovenia's Grega Zemlja.

Defending women's champion Serena Williams, a four-time winner, kicks off the evening action against Francesca Schiavone, the former French Open winner from Italy.

Venus Williams, the back-to-back champion in 2000 and 2001 and the second oldest woman in the draw at 33, starts her 60th Grand Slam event against Belgian 12th seed Kirsten Flipkens, a semi-finalist at Wimbledon last month.

As well as tennis A-listers, the tournament will also welcome rock royalty with Lenny Kravitz, the Grammy Award winner, one of the warm-up acts at the opening ceremony which also features Oscar-winning actors Kevin Spacey and Cuba Gooding.

Meanwhile, 12 months after 2003 champion Andy Roddick quit the sport, another US veteran, James Blake, announced his retirement on Monday.

The 33-year-old, who reached as high as four in the world back in 2006 but now stands at 100, won 10 tour titles and made the US Open quarterfinals the same year.

## BJMC win again

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) recorded their second victory in the Walton International Invitational Women's Kabaddi Tournament when they defeated Nepal Women's Kabaddi team 15-8 at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

Andhra Pradesh Women's Kabaddi team, who lost against BJMC on Sunday, handed a 25-17 defeat to Assam Women's Kabaddi team in the second match.

## NAT'L WOMEN CHESS 7 qualify for final phase

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamia Sharmin Shimmi became champion in the preliminary phase of the 34th National Women Chess Championship after she drew her board against WFM Nazrana Khan Eva in the seventh and final round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Eva finished second while Mahmuda Hoque Chowdhury Moly became third.

Along with the top three, Dilara Jahan Nupur, Jahanara Haque Runu, WFM Jakia Sultana and Hamida Rahman grabbed the subsequent places to qualify for the final round where five players -- WFM Sharmin Sultana Shirin, WIM Shamima Akter Liza, WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Shabana Parveen Nipa and WFM Tanima Parveen -- will play directly.

# 'Arsenal fans brainwashed'

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger believes Arsenal fans have been "brainwashed" by the constant negativity surrounding his team.

Wenger came under fire from large sections of the Emirates Stadium crowd following Arsenal's 3-1 defeat against Aston Villa on the opening day of the season.

That barrage of abuse followed several incidents of barracking from angry fans last season as Arsenal's trophy drought stretched to eight years.

But Gunners boss Wenger, whose side have calmed the critics with successive victories over Fenerbahce and Fulham since that Villa loss, is convinced the occasionally poisonous atmosphere in north London is due to fans letting their emotions get the better of them after reading so many negative stories about the club.

"It's always excessive reactions," Wenger said. "We lost one game since the beginning of March. That's why it (the Villa loss) was a shock."

"The defeat was a shock, because it's the first game of the season."

"We won in the Champions League away at Bayern (Munich, in March), we won 3-0 at Fenerbahce."

"It's just like that at the moment. You (the media) have brainwashed a little bit the Emirates."

"Maybe rightly so, because we haven't won trophies for years; everything is always negative."

"We have to live this out and just play football well."

The Frenchman has been in charge at Arsenal since October 1996 and is now the top flight's longest serving manager following Alex Ferguson's retirement from Manchester United last season.

But Wenger, who has turned down a host of offers to leave Arsenal during his reign, believes society in general, and football in particular, has become more reactionary and less likely to show loyalty during difficult times.

"On one side when people are not loyal, people criticise; when they are loyal, they say they are there for too long," he said.

"It's always an excessive reaction and that's why people in charge have to take a (step back), more than ever."

"Being responsible in life is to do things you think are right, it's not to react to what people say."