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REUTERS, Madrid

Barca march on



Barcelona extended their winning start to their title defence to six games when Neymar scored his debut La Liga goal and Lionel Messi netted his seventh of the season in an entertaining 4-1 victory at home to Real Sociedad on Tuesday.

While Barca fans were treated to some breathtaking skill at the Nou Camp on the 56th anniversary of the inauguration of Europe's biggest stadium, Atletico Madrid gave another indication they may be challenging for the title come the end of the campaign with their sixth win in six matches.

Diego Costa struck twice in a 2-1 win at home to Osasuna to match Messi on seven for the season as Atletico joined Barca on a maximum 18 points, five ahead of Real Madrid, who play at promoted Elche on Wednesday.

Sociedad, who like Barca, Real and Atletico are competing in this term's Champions League, made the livelier start as they set about chasing their first league win at the Nou Camp in more than 20 years.

Haris Seferovic cracked a shot against the crossbar in the second minute of Tuesday's game but the home side were ahead three minutes later when Neymar, recruited from Santos in the close season, bundled over the line after some indecision in the Sociedad defence.

World Player of the Year Messi made it 2-0 with a diving header from the Brazilian's cross three minutes later and Sergio Busquets scored a rare goal to make it 3-0 in the 23rd minute.

Messi, who squandered several chances, set up substitute Marc Bartra to score from close range 13 minutes from time.

RESULTS

Barcelona 4 (Neymar 5, Messi 8, Busquets 23, Bartra 76) Real Sociedad 1 (De la Bella 64)

Levante 1 (Diawara 36) Valladolid 1 (Javi Guerra 42)

Malaga 2 (Tissone 69, Portillo 90) Almeria 0

Barcelon forward Neymar (2nd from R) celebrates his opening goal with teammates during their Primera Liga clash against Real Sociedad at Nou Camp on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Dortmund's late show

REUTERS, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund needed extra-time to edge past second-tier 1860 Munich 2-0 and book their spot in the last 16 of the German Cup after dominating Tuesday's tie and hitting the woodwork four times.

Substitute Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang converted a penalty after 1860's Dominik Stahl was sent off for a foul on Marco Reus in the 105th minute and Henrikh Mkhitaryan added another after a textbook break two minutes later.

Galatasaray fire Terim

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish giants Galatasaray on Tuesday fired coach Fatih Terim after a disappointing start to the season.

The news comes only a month after the most successful coach in Turkish history agreed to take over the national team on a one-year deal, while continuing his club commitments.

But following a mediocre start to the season that saw them win one, and draw three of their opening four league matches, leaving them currently ninth, Terim has been shown the door.

Following a board meeting the club published a statement on their website saying they had decided to "end Fatih Terim's contract", explaining that it was to "protect the club's interests".

Apart from the champions' poor league start, last week they were humiliated 6-1 at home to Real Madrid in the Champions League.

Known as the Emperor in his homeland, Terim was in his third stint at the Galatasaray helm having previously won six Turkish league titles and led them to the UEFA Cup crown in 2000, beating Arsenal on penalties in the final.

Moyes eyes top talent

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United manager David Moyes has said he's still short of players ready to go straight into the English champions' first-team and warned fans to prepare for more days like last weekend's derby defeat.

United were thrashed 4-1 by Manchester City, a result immediately billed as a "demolition derby", on Sunday.

Moyes, speaking ahead of Wednesday's League Cup tie against arch-rivals Liverpool, said he was under no illusions about the scale of the task confronting him in succeeding retired United manager Alex Ferguson, who bowed out with the team winning the Premier League by 11 points last season.

"It was always going to be tough following such a great manager with a great team and I think people with real football knowledge will know there are probably some changes to be made," Moyes said in comments reported by Britain's national press on Wednesday.

"It is not going to be made in one fell swoop. It is going to be done in time.

"That is why the Manchester United board realised the job that needed to be done was a long-term one.

"There was always going to be days like this and there might well be more days like this," the Scot added.

Moyes's delayed arrival from Everton meant the only major signing United made during the last transfer window was Belgium midfielder Marouane Fellaini from his old club.

United failed in their attempts to bring Spain Under-21 captain Thiago Alcantara and midfielders Cesc Fabregas, Ander Herrera and Daniele de Rossi to Old Trafford.

Meanwhile Everton's Leighton Baines remained at Goodison Park while fellow left-back Fabio Coentrao could not be enticed away from Real Madrid.

"I don't think it's actually the squad, I think we've got numbers," said Moyes as he prepared to face a Liverpool side set to be buoyed by the return from suspension of striker Luis Suarez.

"Maybe we've got work to do to bring in players not for the squad but to go right into the team.

"That will happen. But going back to that transfer window, we always said it was going to be a tough one and it was going to take a little bit more time."

Lewandowski plans Bayern transfer

REUTERS, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund striker Robert Lewandowski hopes to join Bayern Munich in January when he will be eligible to sign a new deal.

"We still have to wait a bit but I say I think in January I can go," the 25-year-old told reporters after Tuesday's 2-0 German Cup second-round win against 1860 Munich.

Asked whether that would mean a move to Bayern in January, Lewandowski, with a Dortmund official standing nearby, said: "Yes, because it is then that I can officially sign a new contract."

The Poland international fell out with Dortmund bosses over his failed attempt to join the treble winners in the close season.

Messi never wants to be substituted

INTERNET

Gerardo Martino has defended substituting star player Lionel Messi during Barcelona's 4-1 triumph over Real Sociedad on Tuesday.

The Argentine star displayed discontent after being replaced in the second half of the Liga win, but the head coach insists that his decision was made in the best interest of the player and the club in the long term, while praising the team's overall performance.

"Messi never wants to be subbed off, but it's my task to take care of him," Martino told reporters after the match.

"We need him at end of season as well as now. My way of thinking won't change. I repeated the whole time how I want to play, maybe this game helps some to see things clearer.

"We've played a very good game. The way we played in the first half was wonderful - it was a pity we couldn't score more."

Martino went on to laud summer signing Neymar following his debut Liga goal, while insisting that Alexis Sanchez also played well despite not scoring.

"Neymar is an exceptional player," Martino said. "It has surprised us how hard he wants to work for the team.

"Alexis didn't score, but he worked very hard today, both in defense and attack. He does things that few forwards do."

Masche out for 2 weeks

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona defender Javier Mascherano will miss his side's Champions League trip to Celtic next week due to a hamstring injury.

The Argentine international limped off after just 35 minutes of Barca's 4-1 win over Real Sociedad on Tuesday night and tests carried out on Wednesday confirmed that he will be out for up to two weeks.


"Tests realised this morning have confirmed that the hamstring strain will force him out for 10 to 15 days," said a statement on Barca's website.

His absence leaves Barca boss Gerardo Martino extremely short of cover in central defence with Gerard Pique the only established fully-fit centre back available.

Twenty-two-year-old Marc Bartra replaced Mascherano on Tuesday.

Big three breeze thru'

AFP, London



Chelsea, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur breezed into the League Cup fourth round on Tuesday, while Sunderland began life without Paolo Di Canio by beating Peterborough United.

Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho handed Juan Mata a rare start at third-tier Swindon Town and he created the opening goal in the 29th minute with a shot that was parried by Wes Foderingham for Fernando Torres to tap home.

Ramires doubled the visitors' lead six minutes later, poking the ball over the advancing Foderingham from Torres's astute pass to complete the scoring in a 2-0 victory.

Ramires had only come on as a substitute for the injured Marco van Ginkel in the 10th minute but he had to cede his place at half-time, with John Terry coming on.

Fresh from their 4-1 drubbing of derby rivals Manchester United on Sunday, City enjoyed a similarly straightforward evening with a 5-0 win at home to Wigan Athletic, the side who beat them in last season's FA Cup final.

With Micah Richards back in the team after injury, City took a 33rd-minute lead when Edin Dzeko finished from Fernandinho's through ball.

RESULTS

Aston Villa 0 Tottenham Hotspur 4 (Defoe 45+1, 90+2, Paulinho 49, Chadli 86)

Burnley 2 (Ings 45, 68) Nottingham Forest 1 (Derbyshire 24)

Fulham 2 (Bent 54, Berbatov 68) Everton 1 (Naismith 12)

Hull City 1 (Proschwitz 59) Huddersfield Town 0

Leicester City 2 (Knockaert 78, Drinkwater 81) Derby County 1 (Martin 42)

Manchester City 5 (Dzeko 33, Jovetic 60, 83, Toure 76, Navas 86) Wigan Athletic 0

Southampton 2 (Ramirez 15, Hooiveld 83) Bristol City 0

Sunderland 2 (Giaccherini 32, Roberge 74) Peterborough United 0

Swindon Town 0 Chelsea 2 (Torres 29, Ramires 35)

Watford 2 (Acuna 23, Faraoni 55) Norwich City 3 (Murphy 77, Hooper 90+5, 115) - aet

West Ham United 3 (Morrison 1, Jarvis 8, Vaz

Tottenham Hotspur striker Jermain Defoe celebrates one of his two goals against Aston Villa during their League Cup match in Birmingham on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP