



Juventus's French midfielder Paul Labile Pogba (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring the all-important goal against Torino at the Olimpico Stadium in Turin yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pogba seals it for Old Lady

AFP, Florence



A second-half header from French midfield sensation Paul Pogba secured a 1-0 derby win for Juventus away to Torino on Sunday to send the champions up to second place in Italy's Serie A.

Juventus's fifth win in six games leaves them level on 16 points with leaders Napoli but second due to inferior goals difference.

Inter, who sit third, can move up to first or second if they beat Cagliari in one of five scheduled afternoon matches.

Roma, however, began the weekend with a two-point cushion on their pursuers and will restore that lead with a win against Bologna at the Olympic Stadium in Sunday's late game.

Juventus had several chances to put the match beyond the reach of Torino, but had to rely on Pogba's header in the 54th minute.

The French midfielder, signed on a free transfer from Manchester United prior to last season, found himself in the right place at the right time when a corner came flying in from the right.

Carlos Tevez rose to meet the ball and after his glancing header came off fellow striker Sebastian Giovinco, Pogba was on hand to nod the ball into the net past goalkeeper Daniele Padelli.

Juventus, who face Galatasaray in the Champions League on Wednesday, should have scored more in a dominant second half when Tevez proved a constant threat.

The Argentinian striker hit a superb first-time strike which brought a great diving save

RESULTS

Torino 0 **Juventus 1** (Pogba 54)
Played Saturday
Genoa 0 **Napoli 2** (Pandev 14, 25)
Milan 1 (Birsa 46) Sampdoria 0

from Padelli.

Montenegrin striker Mirko Vucinic, who replaced Giovinco in the 74th minute, forced another diving save from the Torino 'keeper six minutes from time.

On Saturday Goran Pandev ended his recent goal drought with a first-half brace to secure a 2-0 away win at Genoa to put Napoli top.

Pandev had gone nine games without hitting the net since scoring against Pescara last April.

But with coach Rafael Benitez resting forwards Marek Hamsik and Gonzalo Higuain ahead of Tuesday's Champions League clash against Arsenal at the Emirates, Pandev made the most of a rare start with strikes in the 14th and 25th minutes.

Despite the prospect of Roma regaining their two-point advantage on Sunday, Benitez said: "I'm really happy because we got the win against a team that was determined and showed a lot of character and quality football.

"It's just a shame we didn't put the game beyond reach earlier with a third goal, we had the opportunities."

AC Milan claimed only their second win in six games when Valtter Birsa's 46th minute goal secured a 1-0 win at home to Sampdoria.

Suarez bites Sunderland

AFP, London

Luis Suarez crowned his Premier League return with a brace as Liverpool won 3-1 at bottom club Sunderland on Sunday to climb to second place in the table.

Having completed a 10-game ban for biting Chelsea's Branislav Ivanovic last season, Suarez scored in each half at the Stadium of Light as Liverpool ended a run of three games without victory.

Daniel Sturridge had given Liverpool the lead with his fifth goal of the season, with Emanuele Giaccherini replying for Sunderland early in the second half after Suarez had made it 2-0.

"He's getting the reward for his hard work over the period that he was off," said Liverpool manager Brendan Rodgers of Suarez, who made his comeback in the mid-week League Cup loss to Manchester United.

It was Sunderland's first league game since the dismissal of manager Paolo Di Canio, but although they are now four points from safety, interim coach Kevin Ball took heart from their second-half display.

Sturridge's teasing low cross from the right allowed Suarez to slide home his first goal since completing his suspension.

The Uruguayan celebrated by lifting his jersey to reveal a T-shirt bearing a picture of his family with his new-born son Benjamin, who was born on Thursday.

Pragmatic Moyes

AFP, London

Manchester United manager David Moyes says his team do not possess enough "world-class players" to mount a serious challenge for Champions League success this season.

United have lost three of their first six games in the Premier League since Moyes succeeded Alex Ferguson, with Saturday's 2-1 loss at home to West Bromwich Albion leaving them in 12th place in the table.

It represents the club's worst start to a league season since 1989.

"To win the Champions League, you need five or six world-class players," he told the Sunday editions of several British newspapers.

"Look at Bayern Munich; they have it. Look at Barcelona, who had it in the past and Real Madrid, who have maybe got it now.

"That's the level you have to be at to win it. We've not got that yet, but what we have got is experience."

United visit Ukrainian champions Shakhtar Donetsk for their second Group A fixture on Wednesday.

Derby defeat for Real

AFP, Madrid



Gareth Bale's long-awaited Real Madrid home debut ended in disappointment as Atletico Madrid beat Los Blancos 1-0 to register their first league victory over Real

for 14 years on Saturday.

Bale started on the bench and had to watch on as Koke played in Diego Costa to slot Atletico into an 11th minute lead.

The Welshman was then called upon by Carlo Ancelotti at half-time to turn things in Real's favour, but he wasn't able to impact the game greatly as Atletico maintained their 100 per cent start to the campaign.

They have 21 points from seven games and are second on goal difference behind Barcelona who also have seven wins from seven after clinching a 2-0 win at Almeria.

However, Koke insists Atletico are not yet thinking about the title.

"We are very happy with the result

today but also with the effort of the whole team," he said.

"We are having a great year and we need to continue like this. The manager gave us a few instructions and we managed to score first then hold out pretty well."

Madrid captain Sergio Ramos admitted his side need to reflect after a first defeat of the season, which leaves them five points off the leaders.

"When things don't go well, you need to reflect," he said.

"They have won the derby because we lacked the efficiency we have had in recent years. We lacked rhythm and movement between the lines."

After a cagey opening 10 minutes, the Madrid derby burst into life when Koke played Costa in behind the home defence and the Brazilian slotted home his eighth goal in seven league games.

Even the goal though couldn't shake Real out of their early malaise and it took until the 20th minute for Thibaut Courtois to be forced into a save as he palmed Karim Benzema's flicked header behind.

The French striker had a much clearer headed opportunity from another Angel di Maria pass six minutes later but this time failed to even find the target.

And it was Atletico who should have doubled their tally before half-time on more than one occasion.

Firstly, Tiago squandered a glorious chance as he headed over when completely unmarked from Koke's header before Diego Lopez made a fine save to deny Gabi and then Costa just couldn't bundle home the rebound as Real struggled to cope with another corner.

Ancelotti reacted to his side's flat first-half display at half-time as he introduced both Bale and Luka Modric with Asier Illarramendi and Di Maria making way.

However, Lopez again had to keep Real in the game with an excellent low block as Costa raced clear on goal 15 minutes into the second period.

Bale forced Courtois into his first stop after the break with a low drive which the Belgian handled confidently.



The battle was quite intense in the Madrid derby on Saturday. Here Real goalkeeper Diego Lopez (L) and Atletico striker Diego Costa bark at each other with the latter settling the issue scoring the winner past Lopez.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Royals in semis

SPORTS DESK

Rajasthan Royals moved into the semifinals of the Champions League Twenty20 with a massive nine-wicket win over Perth Scorchers at the Saiwaj Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur yesterday.

Set to score 121 for a win, the Royals sauntered to the target in 16.3 overs with Ajinkya Rahane (62) and Sanju Samson (50) hitting unbeaten half-centuries. The only casualty in their chase was their captain Rahul Dravid, who was out for a four-ball-duck.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PERTH SCORCHERS: 120 all out in 20 overs (Voges 27; Cooper 4-18, Tambe 2-17, Faulkner 2-16)

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 121 for 1 in 16.3 overs (Rahane 62 not out, Samson 50 not out) Result: Royals won by 9 wickets

Messi out for 3 weeks

AFP, Madrid



World Player of the Year Lionel Messi has been ruled out for up to three weeks by a thigh injury he suffered in Barcelona's 2-0 win over Almeria on Saturday.

The Argentine had put the

Catalans in front with a sublime left-footed strike from 20 yards, but had to be replaced soon after and will now definitely miss Barca's Champions League trip to Celtic in mid-week as well as Saturday's home game against Valladolid.

"The tests carried out this morning have confirmed a small muscle injury in his right thigh," said a statement on the club's website.

"The approximated time out is two to three weeks, and therefore he will miss the meetings this week against Celtic and Valladolid."

Luckily for the Spanish champions, following next weekend's match there is a two-week break from club duties due to interna-

tional commitments and Messi is expected to be fit for the trip to Osasuna on October 19.

Argentina manager Alejandro Sabella has called up his captain for his side's remaining World Cup qualifiers, however with La Albiceleste having already secured their place in next year's finals, it seems likely that Messi will miss the meetings with Uruguay and Peru.

Messi has been plagued by muscular problems since the end of last season.

The 26-year-old suffered a hamstring injury in Barca's Champions League quarter-final against Paris Saint-Germain in April and despite briefly returning to action, he never truly recovered from the problem as he sat out the last month of the campaign.

And he has also had a minor muscular injury in his left leg earlier this season that forced him off in the first-leg of the Spanish Super Cup and to miss the league trip to Malaga in August.

However, he has still scored 11 times in nine matches so far as Barcelona have made their best ever start to a Spanish league season.



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