

City, Liverpool open with wins

AFP, London



Manchester City and Liverpool, last season's top two in the Premier League, were both made to sweat by determined opposition before opening their campaigns with hard-fought victories on Sunday.

David Silva and Sergio Aguero scored as champions City began their title defence with a 2-0 success at Newcastle United, after Daniel Sturridge had struck late in the game to earn Liverpool a 2-1 win at home to Southampton.

The two rivals joined five other teams, including Arsenal, on maximum points, ahead of their showdown at the Etihad Stadium a week on Monday in the first major head-to-head of the season.

"It was very important for us to start with a win," said City manager Manuel Pellegrini. "We talked to the squad about the 'two h's' -- we were hungry and humble."

"We need both if want to continue winning titles and improve on what we did last season. We didn't have any clean sheets in pre-season, but we were very solid in this game."

Pellegrini gave a debut to new Brazilian midfielder Fernando and saw his side take the lead in the 38th minute at St James' Park.

Yaya Toure found Edin Dzeko with a lofted pass over the top and as Newcastle's centre-backs rushed across, the Bosnian teed up Silva with a clever back-heel and the Spain midfielder coolly beat Tim Krul.

Newcastle, who handed debuts to Daryl Janmaat, Jack Colback, Remy Cabella and Emmanuel Riviere, improved after the interval, with Cabella and Paul Dummett spurning opportunities to hit the target.

Newcastle substitute Ayoze Perez then saw a curling effort deflected agonisingly wide by Fernando, before Aguero ran through and beat Krul at the second attempt in stoppage time to finally put the game to bed.

Earlier, Sturridge snuffed a 79th-minute winner as Liverpool edged Southampton at a sun-soaked Anfield.

Raheem Sterling put Liverpool ahead midway through the first half, but Nathaniel Clyne lashed home an equaliser shortly before the hour following a neat exchange with debutant Dusan Tadic.

Brendan Rodgers's Liverpool looked destined to drop points in their first competitive game since the sale of Luis Suarez to Barcelona, but with 11 minutes to play, Sterling teed up Sturridge to flick home the winning goal.

"We scored two very good goals and we're delighted about the win," Liverpool manager Rodgers told Sky Sports.

"In terms of the character and desire and the will to win, we were exceptional."



Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge pounces in the late winner against Southampton in their opening English Premier League match at Anfield yesterday.

PHOTO:
AFP

Brandao smacks Motta's nose

PSG owner wants life ban

AFP, Paris



Paris Saint-Germain were left fuming on Saturday after midfielder Thiago Motta was left with a fractured nose following a bust-up in the tunnel at the end of their Ligue 1 clash with SC Bastia.

Images from surveillance cameras in the tunnel at the Parc des Princes, obtained by several local media outlets, appeared to show Bastia's Brazilian forward Brandao waiting for Motta to approach him

before headbutting the Brazil-born Italy international.

A mass altercation then ensued, and PSG president Nasser Al-Khelaifi told beIN Sports that Motta's nose had been fractured in the incident.

Al-Khelaifi also called for serious action to be taken against Brandao, the 34-year-old former Marseille player.

"I hope that the Bastia player who did that is very severely punished. A heavy punishment is required," he said.

It is unclear why Brandao headbutted Motta, but, reports in

France have said that Bastia's players accused the 31-year-old of insulting them throughout the Ligue 1 clash in Paris.

Meanwhile, PSG's Brazilian captain Thiago Silva, who is currently sidelined with a hamstring injury, used his Instagram account to attack Brandao.

"I want to know how many matches this guy will be suspended for...a guy who is always disloyal!! Who always wants to talk instead of play," wrote Silva, who in May last year was suspended for shoving a

referee during a Ligue 1 match against Valenciennes.

"If I got three matches two years ago for touching the referee...Imagine an assault like that??"

The fourth official saw everything, I was by his side when this guy attacked our player."

PSG coach Laurent Blanc also

accused Brandao of being responsible for the injury that forced full-back Gregory Van der Wiel to come off at half-time of the game, which the reigning champions won 2-0.

Bolt wins at Copacabana

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Olympic champion and world record holder Usain Bolt won his first 100m of 2014 on Sunday in an exhibition race run on Rio's iconic Copacabana beach, two years out from the 2016 Olympics.

The Jamaican superstar won in a time of 10.6sec although Bolt had predicted a sub-10sec time when he faced the press on Friday.

Britain's Mark Lewis Francis (10.42sec) and Jefferson Liberato of Brazil (10.44sec) shared the podium with Bolt who, after an injury-hit season, was running his first 100m since Brussels in September last year when he won in 9.80sec.

"I had a poor start but I regained some of my poise later in the race," Bolt told TV Globo.

"I felt a bit heavy, and I need to compete in more races... I will be in better shape after that."

The 27-year-old Bolt will compete in his final Olympics in Rio in 2016 before calling time on his career in 2017 after the world championships.

Juve to offload Llorente for Falcao

INTERNET

Juventus and Liverpool reportedly asked AS Monaco for Radamel Falcao on loan, as Valencia want Fernando Llorente.

The Colombian international hitman only left Atletico Madrid for £50m last summer, but is widely believed to be unhappy at Monaco.

His first choice would be moving to Real Madrid, but they cannot make a bid this year due to Financial Fair Play rules, having already spent £90m for the likes of James Rodriguez, Toni Kroos and Keylor Navas.

NEWS IN brief

'Neymar no star'

GOAL.COM

Barcelona forward Neymar will not be a true star until he wins the World Cup, according to Brazil coach Dunga.

The 22-year-old was in inspired form during the tournament this summer until a back injury in the quarterfinals brought his campaign to a premature end.

"He's the best player in Brazil, but no star. To have star status, you have to have world champion credentials on your back," Dunga told *Epoca*. "But we are going to work to make sure that, when he's with the Selecao, Neymar performs above the level that defines a star."

Dunga also feels criticism of Luiz Felipe Scolari was unjust after Brazil's 7-1 thrashing at the hands of Germany in the semifinals.

"It is easy to say [critical things], to point out the faults in idols," he said. "[Scolari] is a winner, competent and principled. Brazil conceded the first goal and Germany didn't allow them to breathe."

Suarez may play in Tuesday's friendly

AFP, Barcelona

Controversial Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez will probably play his first game for Barcelona in a friendly on Monday, coach Luis Enrique said Sunday, despite the player's competitive ban for biting a World Cup opponent.

Suarez, who is banned from competitive matches until October 25 for biting Italy's Giorgio Chiellini, trained with Barcelona on Sunday ahead of Monday's Joan Gamper Trophy, the traditional curtain-raiser to Barca's season, against Mexican side Leon.

"I would like him to be able to play for a few minutes tomorrow," Enrique told a news conference after Sunday's training.

"Not many, because he has not played for some time, but he has worked very well when training on his own."

Barcelona bought Suarez for a reported 95 million euros (£75 million, \$127 million) from Liverpool last month.

On Thursday, the Court of Arbitration for Sport relaxed his ban, allowing him to train and play in unofficial matches, but upheld his four-month exclusion from competitive games and his nine-match international suspension.

India beat Pakistan

AFP, Bangalore

India defeated Pakistan 1-0 on Sunday in an emotionally charged opener to take the lead in a two-match football series, the first between the arch-rivals for nine years.

The hosts hung on to their slender lead after striker Robin Singh scored in the 44th minute in front of thousands of cheering home fans at the Bangalore Football Stadium.

Temps flared on a number of occasions and angry words were exchanged, reflecting the high tensions associated with sporting clashes between the two neighbours in a match where India were reduced to 10 men when Robin Singh received his second yellow card.

The football series is the first since India toured Pakistan in 2005 in a three-match contest. India suspended sporting ties with its neighbour in the aftermath of the deadly 2008 attacks on Mumbai.

Bayern cruise

GOAL.COM

Reigning champion Bayern Munich cruised into the second round of the DFB-Pokal with a 4-1 win at Preussen Munster.

Germany's World Cup hero Mario Gotze opened the scoring for the Bundesliga champions Bayern with a 19th minute header while Thomas Muller added the second 10 minutes later.

David Alaba got on the score sheet early in the second half with a well-struck effort from outside the area before Claudio Pizarro scored with a delightful chip.

Roger Krohne got a late consolation from the penalty spot for Preussen, who then had Marc Heitmeier sent off for bringing down Robert Lewandowski in the area — only for the Pole to spur the chance to score his first competitive goal for Bayern from 12 yards.

Easy win for Proteas

AFP, Bulawayo

South Africa beat Zimbabwe by 93 runs in the first one-day international at the Queen's Sports Club on Sunday.

The Proteas piled up 309-3 in their 50 overs with Hashim Amla top-scoring on 122 not out.

Zimbabwe were dismissed for 216 in the last over as South Africa took a 1-0 lead in the three-game series.

The second and third matches are at the same venue on Tuesday and Thursday.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: 309 for 3 in 50 overs (De Kock 63, Amla 122 not out, Du Plessis 59, De Villiers 21, Duminy 22 not out; Nyumbu 2-52)

ZIMBABWE: 216 all out in 49.5 overs (Masakadza 61, Williams 51, Chigumbura 36, Jongwe 19; Parnell 2-43, Phangiso 3-43, Tahir 3-44)

Result: South Africa won by 93 runs.

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