

FA wants video technology

REUTERS, London

Football Association (FA) chairman Greg Dyke said he would be keen to pilot the use of video technology in British football to aid referee's decision making.

Dyke's proposal would mirror the Dutch Football Association's (KNVB) policy of utilising replays to aid referee's decision making via a headset.

"I would very much like to do a pilot in the UK," Dyke told the BBC. "FIFA can stop us doing a pilot in the UK."

Dyke added: "I can understand that everybody thinks we should not rush into change and that we should do it slowly, which I think does make sense, but you have got to do pilots to see what does work and what doesn't."

"If you could help that referee with video technology, then you should."

"We see these figures and they tend to suggest referees are not having a bad season but obviously there are still mistakes inevitably and they get highlighted. That's life."

Keith Hackett, the former referees chief, said IFAB were wrong to delay the use of video technology and should take leadership to resolve the issue.

Lille stun Lyon

AFP, Paris

Ligue 1 leaders Lyon suffered their first defeat in 12 matches on Saturday, going down 2-1 at Lille to leave second-placed Paris Saint-Germain trailing by just two points with a game in hand.

Hubert Fournier's side broke the deadlock after just three minutes when Corentin Tolisso converted a Nabil Fekir corner.

However, Idrissa Gueye clawed back an equaliser in the second half after a clever one-two with Rony Lopes. And four minutes later, right on the hour mark, Manchester City loanee Lopes completed the turnaround with a nice strike from outside the box.



Sheikh Jamal midfielder Jamal Bhuiyan (R) gets into a scuffle with Sheikh Russel defender Bojan Petric during their ill-tempered semifinal clash of the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Sk Jamal win a feisty battle

Beat Sk Russel to book fifth consecutive Fed Cup final berth

SPORTS REPORTER



The first big clash of the season produced an ill-tempered affair at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday as Sheikh Jamal edged bitter rivals Sheikh Russel 2-1 to book their fifth consecutive Federation Cup final.

The defending champions came from behind and needed an 89th minute winner to overcome the spirited Sheikh Russel during a match, which was marked by debatable decisions, on-field scuffles and verbal taunts between the tacticians.

The tension began even before the two sides had taken the field as the players of Sheikh Russel occupied the dressing room designated for their opponents and stuck to their decision, forcing the start of the match delayed by 30 minutes.

Once the game started, it was the defending champions who dominated the pace of the game. But their two strikers -- Wedson Anselme and Emeka Darlington -- squandered a couple of early chances, heading wide of the target. And they had to pay for those wasted opportunities as Sheikh Russel, playing in counter-attacking approach, took the lead in against the run of play in the 40th minute.

Nigerian striker Kingsley Chigozie was brought down by Sheikh Jamal defender Yeamin Munna inside the danger zone and the referee pointed to the spot. The expert penalty kick taker Zahid Hasan Emily made no mistake as he dispatched the ball to left side of goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel.

The former champions could have taken a strangle hold of the game at the

SHEIKH JAMAL 2 - 1 SHEIKH RUSSEL
(NASIR 62, EMEKA 89) (EMILY 40)

stroke of half time had Chigozie's effort was not denied by the woodwork.

Sheikh Jamal pressed on for the equaliser after the restart but it was Sheikh Russel who came close to doubling the lead from a counter attack. However, Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Sohel came out off the box and handled the goal-bound chip from Chigozie to block the attempt. Referee Tayeb Hasan only served a yellow card to the national team's goalkeeper and allowed a free-kick to Sheikh Russel. The decision was met with anger by the Sheikh Russel players and the match was halted for five minutes.

Surviving the scare, Sheikh Jamal stepped up the pressure and levelled the scores in the 64th minute when skipper Nasirudding Chowdhury, receiving a chip from Wedson on the edge of the box, drove

a low shot past Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Rasel Mahmud Liton. Then as the match seemingly headed for extra time, Emeka dealt a fatal blow on Sheikh Russel's hopes by heading in a cross from Weson just one minute from the end of regulation time.

Sheikh Russel coach Dragan Djukanovic, who was involved in verbal spat with his counterpart during the game, blamed the referee for the defeat. "The referee changed the course of the game. He ignored two sending-offs and killed the game," alleged Djukanovic.

Sheikh Jamal coach Maruful Hauque claimed his side were also denied valid appeals for penalty.

"It (decision of the referee) is part of the game. The referee also ignored one of our penalty appeal and overlooked a handball incident of Sheikh Russel defender Bojan Petric inside the danger zone," said Maruful.

LvG admits Di Maria 'struggling'

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal confessed that Angel di Maria is struggling to adjust to English football after substituting him at half-time of United's 2-0 win over Sunderland.

After a promising start to his United career the form of the Argentine international has dipped. Di Maria has scored just once for United since the start of October and, after an ineffective first half against Sunderland at Old Trafford on Saturday, he was taken off at the interval by Van Gaal.

"When a player is not in a match, I have to do that," said Van Gaal of the substitution. "I'm the manager and I cannot deny what I see."

"We have to give Angel a little bit more time to adapt to the Premier League, the high English rhythm. It is not so easy."

Di Maria's adaptation to life in England has not been aided by a recent attempted burglary at his home, which occurred while he, his wife and young child were on the premises.

United have provided the family with security and moved them into a hotel, but Van Gaal conceded that the incident had not helped his star signing settle in Manchester.

"Of course," said the Dutchman. "I have already talked about the 'total human being principle', so his environment also has an influence on him, on every human being."

"Me, as a manager, also I have to manage that environment. That takes more time for him? OK, give him that time. The difficulty, not only with Angel, but all players, is they have to adapt to the Premier League. He has to adapt to the culture also."

Milan draw with Chievo

AFP, Milan

AC Milan could only labour a goalless draw with Chievo in Serie A action on Saturday, leaving them ninth in the table, three off a potential European qualifying spot.

In a tight match, Keisuke Honda had a chance for Milan in the 48th minute, while there was almost an own goal after Chievo's Alex saw a shot deflected off a defender past Milan goalkeeper Diego Lopez.

Roma will host Juventus today.

Valencia trump Sociedad

AFP, Madrid

Valencia moved level with La Liga champions Atletico Madrid in third with a comfortable 2-0 win over David Moyes's Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Argentine winger Pablo Piatti bagged both goals in a three minute spell early in the second-half as he slotted home low crosses from Dani Parejo and Sofiane Feghouli.

Atletico can move three points clear of Los Che once more before the two sides meet at the Vicente Calderon next weekend when they travel to Sevilla later on Sunday.

L'pool give City the Blues

AFP, Liverpool



Philippe Coutinho scored a sensational winning goal as Liverpool beat Manchester City 2-1 on Sunday to close on the Premier League top four and dent their opponents' title defence while Arsenal won 2-0 against top four contenders Everton. A 31st minute strike by Oliver Giroud opened the scoring, before Tomas Rosicky wrapped the game up in the 88th minute.

Coutinho produced a tremendous finish from 25 yards at Anfield to settle a game of immense quality after City striker Edin Dzeko had cancelled out an equally spectacular opener from Jordan Henderson.

It was a victory that moved Liverpool up to fifth place in the table and cast serious doubt over whether reigning champions City can now offer Chelsea a realistic challenge for top spot.

Manuel Pellegrini's side are now five points behind the leaders having played a game more than the Londoners, who did not feature in league action this weekend due to their League Cup final with Tottenham Hotspur.

This was an entertaining contest from the first whistle, with the hosts going close when Adam Lallana ran onto Coutinho's through-ball but could only shoot straight at Joe Hart.

Liverpool took the lead with their next attack in the 11th minute as Henderson received Raheem Sterling's pass before curling a fine shot from outside the box into the top-right corner.

City looked to respond immediately, with David Silva's pass splitting the home defence and Sergio Aguero's shot coming back off the post.

It was an open contest and Liverpool responded to City's chance through Coutinho, who fired over on the break, while Alberto Moreno's energetic run resulted in a wayward shot. City drew level on 26 minutes with a goal

that owed a lot to Aguero's trickery on the edge of the area as he found the unmarked Dzeko, who produced a composed finish beyond Simon Mignolet from 10 yards out.

Dzeko could have had a second soon afterwards, but his drive from the edge of the area went just over, while at the other end Lallana fired narrowly wide after a chipped pass from Lazar Markovic.

Coutinho worked Hart again from 20 yards and was then involved in a well-worked move, finding Lallana, who back-heeled to Sterling, only for the England forward to lose his footing at the crucial moment.

The break-neck pace continued in the second half, with Aguero heading agonisingly just over for the visitors from Pablo Zabaleta's cross.

Then Sterling's scrambled shot flew fractionally wide after Lallana appeared to have laid a goal on a plate for him.

The game finally settled down midway through the second half and it appeared both sides were finally showing the effects of their mid-week European defeats -- City against Barcelona, Liverpool at Besiktas.

Lallana was unable to hit the target with an acrobatic shot from a Markovic cross, but the hosts started to look the most likely to get the third goal of the game.

And it was Coutinho who provided the decisive moment, cutting infield from the left and arcing a glorious shot over Hart to claim his fifth goal of the campaign.

Both sides brought on attacking players -- Daniel Sturridge for the hosts and Wilfried Bony for City -- and it was the visitors who nearly levelled when a delightful piece of skill from Aguero resulted in him shooting just wide.

City's attacking allowed Liverpool to play on the counter-attack and Coutinho saw a deflected effort go just over from Sterling's pass. But the missed chance did not matter as Liverpool held on without too many alarms to continue their good form.

China to reform football

AFP, Beijing

China has taken steps to improve its football performance, state media reported Sunday, after a key group with presidential backing agreed a plan to raise the level of the game.

The country's central reform leading group, chaired by President Xi Jinping, approved the plan on Friday, the official Xinhua news agency said.

"We must develop and revitalise soccer to ensure we are a strong nation of sports," Xinhua cited a statement issued after a meeting of the group as saying.

"It is the desperate desire of the people as well."

The world's most populous country has long been a powerhouse in sports such as gymnastics, diving, table tennis and badminton.

But despite a domestic football league that offers foreign managers and players lucrative contracts, the national side remains a lowly 82nd place, tied with Guatemala, in FIFA's latest global rankings.

"More efforts should be made at the grassroots level to nurture young talents and ensure integration of clubs," it said.

'We can beat Juventus'

AFP, Rome

Roma coach Rudi Garcia has played down his side's title hopes but insists the Giallorossi can hand Juventus only their second defeat of the season on Monday to reinforce their grip on second place.

Roma started the season hoping to be challenging for a first scudetto since 2001 but a run of six draws in seven league games has seen Garcia's men slip steadily out of the title race.

Juve travel to the capital on Monday with a nine-point lead.

With Napoli only three points further adrift in third, Garcia admits fighting to hold on to second spot is now Roma's priority.

The first step, he said, is handing Juventus only their second league reverse of the campaign.

"For us the only things that counts now is this game, we want to win it. We have to do everything we can to maintain second spot and from there we can take aim at first place," said Garcia.

"But even if we win, the league title is not in our hands."

A recipe for

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Realistically speaking, Bangladesh's best chance at progressing would be a win against the English, who could be vulnerable against spin and have lacked the bite in bowling. So the ideal scenario for the Tigers would be to pack the side with spinners -- the wicket at Adelaide Oval will offer some assistance to the spinners -- and take the pace of the ball. If they win the toss, there should not be any qualms about batting first. What they would need to do will be to sort out their batting order first and put the opposition under the cosh right from the word go. Mushfiqur and Shakib will need to bat up the order to maximise the runs. However, if they get to field first, they would need to keep the same discipline they showed in the first two matches, and hope that the fielders don't let the bowlers down once again.

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