

# 3 & easy for Real

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid eased past La Liga newcomers Las Palmas 3-1 to move three points clear of Barcelona at the top of the table on Saturday.

The Canary Islanders were making their first visit to the Santiago Bernabeu in 13 years, but couldn't have gotten off to a worst start as Isco and Cristiano Ronaldo put Madrid 2-0 up inside 15 minutes.

Hernan's header briefly gave the visitors hope seven minutes before half-time, yet Madrid restored their two-goal advantage just five minutes later through Jese Rodriguez's fine finish.

Barcelona can move back level on points with Madrid by winning at Getafe later on Saturday.

Real were without Keylor Navas, Sergio Ramos, James Rodriguez, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema through injury as coach Rafael Benitez preferred not to risk any of his stars ahead of Paris Saint-Germain's visit in the Champions League on Tuesday.

However, the hosts were never put under any serious pressure as Las Palmas coughed up possession deep inside their own half after four minutes and Casemiro teed up

Isco to coolly slot home his first goal of the season.

Ronaldo then added his 13th goal in as many games this campaign with a diving header to meet Marcelo's perfect cross from the left 10 minutes later.

Goalkeeper Kiko Casilla was making his first appearance for the Real senior team after rejoining his boyhood club from Espanyol in July and he was forced into action for the first time by Jonathan Viera's low shot which he parried to safety.

There was little Casilla could do seven minutes before half-time, though, as Madrid conceded for the first time at home this season when Hernan was given acres of space to head home Nabil El Zhar's corner via the underside of the crossbar.

Yet, any hope of a close contest was wiped away moments later when Jese skipped past Aythami Artiles before firing into the bottom corner.

Las Palmas started the better in the second period as Willian Jose blasted over with a great chance on the counter-attack before Casilla produced a brilliant save to turn the Brazilian's free-kick behind for a corner.

Madrid produced precious little after the break as Benitez also took off Luka Modric and Toni Kroos to keep them fresh for midweek.



Liverpool striker Christian Benteke (C) scores the third goal against Chelsea during their Premier League encounter at Stamford Bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Police fine Benzema

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema was stopped by Spanish police on Thursday night for driving without a valid licence, according to a police source.

A police patrol had stopped him to issue a fine after the French international had committed an illegal turn, explained the source.

However, when Benzema was asked to provide his identification and licence, he handed over an interim document requesting a European driving licence that was deemed insufficient by the officers.

The 27-year-old was sanctioned for breaking the highway code and called to appear before a judge. The case will be dismissed if he can provide evidence of a valid licence within five days.

## Dortmund close gap

AFP, Berlin



Second-placed Borussia Dortmund closed the gap behind German league leaders Bayern Munich to five points on Saturday as Marco Reus netted twice in their 3-1 win at Werder Bremen.

Reus fired in the opening and third goals, but Borussia should have won by more as Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang squandered three clear chances.

Right winger Henrikh Mkhitaryan capped a superb display with Dortmund's second having provided the final pass for both of Reus' goals.

After Bayern were held to a goalless draw at Eintracht Frankfurt on Friday, Dortmund took the chance to trim the Bavarian giants' lead.

They have now scored 18 goals in their last four games and a staggering 64 in 20 games this season under new coach Thomas Tuchel.

Dortmund opened the scoring after nine minutes when Mkhitaryan fired in a cross, Aubameyang let the ball roll to Reus, who

fired home at the far post.

Bremen levelled when Nigeria striker Anthony Ujah tapped home on 32 minutes after Matthias Ginter cleared off the line.

A superb cross off the offside of the boot from Mats Hummels found Mkhitaryan at the far post just before the break to head home on 44 minutes.

Reus added a third after Mkhitaryan's final pass split the defence as the defeat left Bremen 14th in the table.

Borussia Moenchengladbach earned their sixth straight victory to go fourth with a 4-1 win at Hertha Berlin having been bottom in September with five defeats.

Gladbach blitzed Hertha with two goals in as many first-half minutes at Berlin's Olympic Stadium from left-back Oscar Wendt, plus a solo effort from Brazil striker Raffael.

Gladbach grabbed a third when Swiss midfielder Granit Khaka drilled home a penalty on 55 minutes after Ivory Coast winger Ibrahim Traore was fouled in the area.

Alexander Baumjohann converted a late penalty for Hertha after being fouled before Havard Nordtveit grabbed Gladbach's fourth in added time.

## Mourinho has nothing to say

AFP, London

Under-pressure Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho kept his thoughts to himself after his side's wretched season continued with a 3-1 home defeat by Liverpool on Saturday.

Philippe Coutinho scored twice and Christian Benteke was also on target at Stamford Bridge as Liverpool condemned the misfiring Premier League champions to their sixth defeat of the campaign.

Mourinho's position has come under intense scrutiny on account of his team's desperate form, with some reports suggesting he is close to being sacked.

But when asked about his future after the game during a curious televised interview with BT Sport, he responded to a succession of questions by saying: "I have nothing to say."

Pressed over his future, he said he was not worried, and added that Chelsea's fans, who chanted his name throughout the game, were "not stupid".

## 'Neymar only knows how to attack'

INTERNET

Pele does not consider compatriot Neymar to be a truly great player, suggesting one of his former Santos teammates was "10 times better".

The 75-year-old, who won the World Cup three times with Brazil, acknowledged the Barcelona forward is the best player in the current national team.

However, he believes Neymar's shortcomings are his heading ability and lack of defensive awareness, claiming former Santos man Vasconcelos was a superior talent.

"Neymar is a good player, but how many goals has he scored with his head in his life," Pele said in an interview with Placar.

"Is he an excellent player? He is, but Vasconcelos [Pele's Santos teammate between 1956 and 1958] was 10 times better than Neymar, without any doubt."

"Neymar is an attacker, he plays up front. That is it. He does not track back, does not organise and does not come out to play."

"It's difficult to compare him with so many players of the past when he has deficits although within the current Brazil team, he is the main figure, the only one."

# Pressure mounts on Jose, City atop

AFP, London



Jose Mourinho's future as Chelsea manager was plunged into further doubt as the troubled English champions crashed to a 3-1 defeat against Liverpool on

Saturday.

Mourinho's mounting problems took centre stage on a dramatic day in the Premier League which saw Manchester City stay top after escaping with a late 2-1 win against Norwich.

Arsenal are second, behind City on goal difference, after battering Swansea 3-0, while misfiring Manchester United failed to find the net once again in a 0-0 draw against Crystal Palace.

At Stamford Bridge, Mourinho's side took an early lead through Ramires but any hopes that would alleviate the crisis were destroyed by Philippe Coutinho.

The Liverpool forward hit a superb equaliser in first half stoppage-time and punished sloppy Chelsea defending to put Jurgen Klopp's team ahead in the 74th minute.

With Mourinho fuming that Liverpool midfielder Lucas avoided a red card for what looked like a possible second booking at 1-1, his misery was compounded when Christian Benteke scored Liverpool's third seven minutes from full-time.

The Blues have now lost six of their 11 league games and are languishing four points above the relegation zone, prompting more debate about how long Mourinho can survive the axe from owner Roman Abramovich.

Reports before the Liverpool game had suggested that he could be dismissed in the event of another defeat, but, asked if he was worried about his losing his job, Mourinho said simply: "no".

"The fans are not stupid. They know how much myself and the players are trying," added Mourinho, who has repeatedly

## RESULTS

Chelsea (Ramires 4)	1 - 3	Liverpool (Coutinho 45+3, 74, Benteke 83)
Crystal Palace	0 - 0	Man United
Man City (Otamendi 67, Toure 89-pen)	2 - 1	Norwich (Jerome 83)
Newcastle	0 - 0	Stoke
Swansea (Ighalo 39, 48)	0 - 3	Arsenal (Giroud 49, Koscielny 68, Campbell 73)
Watford	2 - 0	West Ham
West Brom (Rondon 30, Lambert 84-pen)	2 - 3	Leicester (Mahrez 57, 64, Vardy 77)

denied rumours of a dressing room mutiny. "The fight goes on, but sometimes there are fights very impossible to win."

"I have some players really sad in the dressing room and I am full of respect for them."

At Eastlands, City defender Nicolas Otamendi opened the scoring with a bullet header in the 67th minute to notch his first goal since signing from Valencia in August.

Norwich snatched an 83rd minute equaliser when City goalkeeper Joe Hart spilled a corner and Cameron Jerome punished the embarrassing blunder.

But City hit straight back to win it when Norwich defender Russell Martin was sent off for deliberate handball.

Yaya Toure stroked in the resulting 89th minute penalty and there was still time for City to miss a spot-kick in stoppage-time when Aleksandar Kolarov fired wide.

Arsenal remain hot on City's heels as they bounced back from their shock League Cup exit with a stroll at Swansea.

Beaten by second tier Sheffield Wednesday in midweek, the Gunners took the lead when Olivier Giroud headed home in the 49th minute for Arsenal's 2000th goal under Arsene Wenger.

# Happy camp moves to Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER



The hockey players of the senior national team and the under-21 team turned a happy unit as the combined camp moved to the

Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday after spending a fortnight at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan.

A total of 43 players trained under recently-appointed coach Mahbub Harun while three senior players - Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, Kamrazzaman Rana and Imran Hossain Pintu are expected to join within a couple of days. The camp has been arranged for two competitions - the Junior Asia Cup in Malaysia from November 14 to 22 where the under-21 team will be participating, and the South Asian

Games in February next year in India where the senior side will participate.

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation's new general secretary, Abdus Sadek, said that he hoped that the under-21 team would try their best against the seven other Asian sides in Malaysia despite having little time for preparation.

"I don't think we should be expecting too much from this tournament as the youth team didn't get enough time to practice and will probably not be able to play any practice matches against a competitive side ahead of the tournament," Sadek told reporters as he watched the training yesterday.

"However, I hope that they can at least put up a good fight," said the veteran organiser, adding that Bangladesh were looking forward to an invitation for a five-a-side hockey festival to be staged in the United Arab Emirates in December.

Mamunur Rahman Chayan, veteran defender of the national team, said they were happy that the federation has at last announced a schedule for the inter-club players' transfer as they can concentrate on the game and take part in events at their favourite turf.

"It is good to be together with so many of our teammates and train on the blue turf. It was good to see the general secretary come watch us train on the first day of training here, which shows the positive attitude. As long as hockey is on the turf and we get to play matches - domestic, club level and international - we are happy," Chayan told The Daily Star.

"We have more than three months before the SA Games. Hopefully we can get to full fitness by that time, and if the federation can arrange a few practice matches away from home, our hopes will further be risen," added Chayan.



Head coach Mahbub Harun (R) and his disciples were all smiles as the senior and under-21 teams' combined camp moved to the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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