



Manchester City players' long wait to lift the Premier League title, which they had captured weeks ago, finally ended after a goalless draw against Huddersfield Town yesterday. (Inset) Manager Pep Guardiola, the architect of City's glorious season, is taken for a ride by his players.

PHOTOS: REUTERS

City finally lift trophy

AFP, Manchester



It took three weeks for Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany to finally get his hands on the Premier League trophy but, on a day of celebrations at the Etihad, a goalless draw may have left Huddersfield Town as the big winners.

A strong showing from the struggling visitors earned a valuable point which may be enough to keep them in the Premier League for a second season, an impressive achievement given their limited resources.

They also frustrated the bid by Pep Guardiola's runaway champions to set new Premier League records for the most goals, points and wins in a season -- all marks which could yet be claimed by City in the season's final week.

But, after a delay while uninvited supporters were removed from the field, Guardiola was finally able to see his team presented with the trophy which marks the third major country in which he has managed a team to a title following successes in Spain and Germany with Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

"England is a special place and is so tough," Guardiola told Sky Sports. "Today we saw it. You never know if you are going to win, but I had no doubt what I had to do."

"You win or lose, you have to try and do what you believe. Today was proof we can do better. We lost a bit of focus, but that is normal. To make back-to-back titles in this league will be tough, but we accept the challenge."

The celebrations for City's third title in seven seasons began well before kick-off, both inside and outside their Etihad home ground. Supporters were issued with blue and white flags to greet the champions as they were given yet another guard of honour on their way onto the field before kick-off.

They were also met by the survivors of City's famous 1968 title-winning side, who were on hand to receive an emotional welcome from fans who remember their feats half a century on.

Wenger gets 5-star Emirates farewell

AFP, London



"I will miss you," Arsene Wenger told the Arsenal

fans after being given a fitting farewell in his final home game in charge after 22 years with a 5-0 thrashing of Burnley on Sunday.

On a day dominated by tributes to the Frenchman, both teams formed a guard of honour for Wenger, 68, before kick-off to a chorus of "there's only one Arsene Wenger".

All around a full house of 60,000 at the Emirates -- in stark contrast to recent league games when fans have stayed away in protest at a poor season -- fans sported red t-shirts emblazoned with "Merci Arsene".

"Thank you for having me for such a long time. I know that's not easy but, above all, I am like you, I am an Arsenal fan," Wenger said a post-match presentation on the Emirates turf. "I would like to finish by one simple word: I will miss you. Thank you all for being such an important part of my life."

Before the game in his final programme notes, Wenger said he expected to be saddened by the occasion.

"I expect today will be dominated by sadness," he wrote. "It's the end of a long story for me at Arsenal. But I will also feel grateful for having led this club - that I cherish so much - for such a long time."

Wenger won three Premier Leagues and a record seven FA Cups. His crowning glory coming in the 2003/04 season when Arsenal won the league without losing a single game.

He was presented with the special gold trophy given to the club for that achievement after the match by two Arsenal legends Bob Wilson and Pat Rice, who worked on Wenger's coaching staff for many years.

That "Invincibles" season was his last as a Premier League winner, though, and fans became tired of Arsenal's inability to compete for league and Champions League titles.

However, there was plenty for the supporters to shout about in a fitting finale for Wenger as Arsenal displayed the attractive brand of attacking football that characterised his most successful sides over the past two decades.

Defeat to Atletico Madrid in the Europa League semifinals on Thursday means Arsenal missed out on Champions League qualification for the second consecutive season. But they bounced back in style to secure the small consolation of ensuring they will finish sixth in the Premier League ahead of Burnley.



Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger waves goodbye to the Emirates crowd one last time. The Frenchman is due to retire after two away games, ending a 22-year stay at the London club.

PHOTO: REUTERS

GIROUD SINKS LIVERPOOL

Olivier Giroud boosted Chelsea's bid to snatch a place in the Premier League's top four as the France striker sealed a 1-0 win over Liverpool that brought the Champions League finalists back down to earth on Sunday.

Giroud's first-half header at Stamford Bridge lifted fifth-placed Chelsea to within two points of fourth-placed Tottenham in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League.

A fourth successive victory equalled Chelsea's longest league winning streak this season, keeping them in the hunt for a top four finish while denting third-placed Liverpool's challenge for the same target.

It was a frustrating return to domestic action for Liverpool after their Champions League semi-final success against Roma in midweek.

In a dramatic conclusion to the top four battle, Chelsea, who are three points behind Liverpool, host struggling Huddersfield on Wednesday and Tottenham face Newcastle the same evening.

On the final day of the season next Sunday, Chelsea head to Newcastle and Tottenham entertain Leicester.

With only one win in their last five league games, Liverpool have made their top four status an unnecessarily tense affair. Jurgen Klopp's team should still be able to guarantee a Champions League berth if they beat Brighton at Anfield on Sunday.

BOA gives Baki, Shakil Tk 5 lakh



Abdullah Hel Baki (L) and Shakil Ahmed, the silver medalists from the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in Australia, stand with garlands at the BOA yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) handed over cash rewards worth Tk 5 lakh each to Gold Coast Commonwealth Games silver medalists Abdullah Hel Baki and Shakil Ahmed yesterday.

Baki won back-to-back silver medals in the 10m Air rifle event while Shakil bagged a silver medal in the 50m Air Pistol event.

"This type of reward will inspire us to do better in the future," said Baki after receiving a cheque from BOA president and Army Chief General Abu Belal Muhammad Shafiul Huq.

Earlier, the BOA declared Tk 10 lakh awards for the gold medal winners, Tk 5 lakh for the silver medal winners and Tk 3 lakh for the bronze medal winners of the Commonwealth Games.

Kurigram clinch kabaddi title

SPORTS REPORTER

Kurigram clinched the Bashundhara Group Independence Cup Kabaddi tournament title by handing a massive 58-36 defeat to Madaripur in the final at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Kurigram dominated the first half with a 19-5 lead before taking things up a notch in the second half to end on high and receive Tk 1 lakh as prize money. Madaripur got Tk 50,000 as the runners-up prize.

Wari demolish Bangladesh SC

SPORTS REPORTER

Wari Club recorded their second victory in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League, handing an easy 5-1 defeat to Bangladesh SC at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Ashik Mahmud slotted home a hattrick after opening the scoring in the 13th minute while Shamir Roy and Mukitul Islam also netted a goal apiece. Bangladesh SC pulled one back in the 32nd minute through Iqbal Nadir Prince.

Football unites to support Ferguson

Legendary manager suffers brain haemorrhage

AFP, Manchester

David Beckham and Cristiano Ronaldo were among those to offer messages of support to British football's most successful manager Alex Ferguson, after the former Manchester United boss underwent emergency surgery for a brain haemorrhage.

United said in a statement on Saturday that Ferguson's surgery had gone "extremely well", but the 76-year-old would need a period of intensive care to aid his recovery.

Ferguson won a total of 49 trophies during his illustrious managerial career, which also included spells at St Mirren and Aberdeen. The Scotsman led United to an impressive 38 trophies during his nearly 27-year reign at the club.

Real Madrid forward and five-times Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo kickstarted his career at United under Ferguson from 2003 to 2009.

"My thoughts and prayers are with you, my dear friend. Be strong, Boss!" the



Portugal captain said on social media as he shared a picture of him and Ferguson during their time together at Old Trafford.

Beckham was part of the famous "Fergie's Fledglings" group, along with Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and brothers Gary and Phil Neville, that led United to numerous trophies from the mid-1990s, including the historic 1999 treble.

"Keep fighting Boss. Sending prayers and love to [Ferguson's wife] Cathy and the whole family," Beckham said on Instagram with a picture of him signing his United youth contract as Ferguson stood by his side.

Many current and former United players, including Michael Carrick, Rio Ferdinand, Diego Forlan and David de Gea also offered messages of support as did United's Premier League rivals Manchester City, Arsenal, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool.

Ferguson and his family also received well wishes from clubs all around the world.

Sarri's future in doubt

Napoli draw sees Juve go six clear at the top

AFP, Milan

Maurizio Sarri's future as Napoli coach was thrown into doubt after Sunday's dramatic 2-2 draw against Torino shattered their bid for a first Serie A title since the days of Diego Maradona.

Juventus opened up a six-point lead on the southerners with two games left to play and are all but assured of a seventh-straight Scudetto.

"I did everything I could to get as many points as possible in the competition that the Neapolitan people cared more about," said Sarri.

Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis has blamed Sarri. "I'm sorry if he's not happy. My conscience is clear," said Sarri, who has been touted as a successor to Antonio Conte as Chelsea manager and also been linked with a move to replace Arsene Wenger at Arsenal. "I know that if I stay here, the president will continue to make these statements."

WALTON U-18 FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Farashganj blank Team BJMC

SPORTS REPORTER



Farashganj Sporting Club advanced to the semifinals of the Walton U-18 Club Cup Football Tournament with a single-goal win

over Team BJMC in the second quarterfinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

A 29-minute strike from Shamim Babu was good enough to see off Team BJMC, who put up good shows in the group-stage matches but could

not do well against the Old Dhaka outfit, who have already been demoted from the Bangladesh Premier League.

Farashganj will play against Brothers Union in the the semifinal on May 10.



Farashganj players celebrate after sealing a 1-0 victory over Team BJMC in the second quarterfinal of the U-18 Football Tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR