

JUVENTUS LOSE THEIR STRIPES

Serie A champions Juventus on Sunday unveiled their new home kit for the 2019-20 season, which for the first time in over a century removes the iconic black-and-white stripes traditionally worn by players. The club was founded in 1897, but players have worn black and white stripes of various types since 1903. Next season Cristiano Ronaldo and his teammates will wear a half-and-half jersey with white on the right and black on the left. The team will debut the new jersey against Roma in Serie A on Sunday in the Stadio Olimpico.

— AFP



Man City retain title in style

AFP, London

Manchester City retained the Premier League title in style on Sunday, holding their nerve to come from behind against Brighton and see off a charging Liverpool after a thrilling campaign.

Pep Guardiola's team thumped Brighton 4-1 away to finish on 98 points -- the second-highest total in Premier League history -- as Liverpool beat Wolves 2-0 at Anfield to finish a single, agonising, point adrift.

City, who strung together 14 league wins at the end of the season, are the first side to retain the title since their bitter rivals Manchester United managed the feat in 2009, and remain on course for the first domestic treble in English football history.

But Guardiola's team of aristocrats did not have it all their own way on a day of drama on England's south coast in keeping with an astonishing season in which the lead switched hands time after time.

Liverpool drew first blood on Sunday, with Sadio Mane striking in the 17th minute to put them mathematically top of the table and on course for their first English top-flight title since 1990, before the Premier League era even started.

City fans' nerves were shredded even further when Glenn Murray put Brighton in front from a corner in the 27th minute, resulting in a huge roar at Anfield.

But those cheers were quickly muted, with Guardiola's side level just 83 seconds later, Aguero staying onside and keeping

his cool to finish after a brilliant ball from David Silva.

Ten minutes later, the unmarked Aymeric Laporte rose to head in Riyad Mahrez's corner to complete the turnaround for City.

Guardiola's side continued to dominate at the start of the second half and were rewarded when Mahrez smashed in a third goal with 27 minutes to go.

Ilkay Gundogan then blasted home a free-kick to put the result beyond doubt.

City broke a host of Premier League records in romping to the title last season, becoming the first team in English top-flight history to reach 100 points and finishing a record 19 points clear of closest rivals Manchester United.

The outcome was cruel on Liverpool, who are second behind only United in the all-time list of English champions with 18 titles, although the last came in 1990.

The Merseysiders' points tally is the third-highest in Premier League history.

Jürgen Klopp's side travelled to face City at the Etihad in January with the chance to open up a 10-point lead but the defending champions won 2-1 in what turned out to be the pivotal match of the campaign.

Liverpool suffered a blip in late January and February, held to a series of draws, but they found their form again and relentlessly harried City, finishing with nine straight league wins.

Klopp's team will have to put the disappointment behind them as they prepare to face Premier League rivals Spurs in the Champions League final in Madrid on June 1.



Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany, flanked by his jubilant teammates, hold aloft the English Premier League trophy after their 4-1 win against Brighton and Hove Albion at the American Express Community Stadium Sunday. Pep Guardiola's men fought back from a goal down to defend their league title while Liverpool had to finish a point behind despite a 2-0 win at home against Wolverhampton Wanderers.

PHOTO: AFP



Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas wildly celebrated his victory over Spain's Rafael Nadal in the Madrid Open semifinal at the Caja Magica in Madrid on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Tsitsipas stuns Nadal

AFP, Madrid

Novak Djokovic will play Stefanos Tsitsipas for the Madrid Open title after the 20-year-old Greek stunned Rafael Nadal on Saturday to win a thrilling semi-final 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 on his fourth match point.

Nadal had been a clear favourite to face Djokovic in Sunday's showpiece at Caja Magica but the 17-time Grand Slam champion extended his stuttering build-up to the French Open with another surprise defeat.

Tsitsipas' stunning victory means he reaches his fourth ATP final of the season while fully vindicating those that have him circled as a future star of the men's game.

It might be too early to expect the world number nine to challenge at Roland

Garros later this month but, with a fearless style and formidable forehand, Tsitsipas is developing a habit for delivering on the big stage.

In terms of career wins, this perhaps trails only his ousting of Roger Federer from the Australian Open in January, when he went on to reach the semi-finals for his best run yet at a Grand Slam.

But, as well as Federer and Nadal, Tsitsipas has now beaten Alexander Zverev and Dominic Thiem, both twice, and Djokovic, whom he played on hard in Canada last year and prevailed in three sets.

He will draw confidence from that result ahead of Sunday's final but arguably even more so from overcoming Nadal, on clay, which Djokovic had earlier described as the "ultimate challenge" following his own 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/4) victory over Dominic Thiem.

Bale's Madrid exit nears

AFP, Madrid

Gareth Bale will be excluded from Real Madrid's squad on Sunday for the second match running as Zinedine Zidane continues to suggest the Welshman is not part of his plans for next season. Bale will not even be on the bench for Madrid's penultimate La Liga game away at Real Sociedad, just as he was not picked for the 3-2 win over Villarreal at the Santiago Bernabeu last weekend.

Since Zidane was reappointed, Bale has only played 90 minutes in three of his nine games in charge. He has been substituted three times and now left out completely three times too.

Asked whether he had spoken to Bale about his future, Zidane said on Saturday: "I'm not going to say anything about this, private conversations are private, they stay in the dressing room."

"It's what I have to do with the players, all the players, those who stay and those who have to go. But it stays inside the dressing room."

Bale and Zidane fell out last season before the Frenchman resigned after Real Madrid won the Champions League, offering Bale a fresh start under new coach Julen Lopetegui. But after Lopetegui and then Santiago Solari were sacked, Zidane's return has put Bale's future at the club in serious doubt.

Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett told Sky Sports News in England on Wednesday that the 29-year-old wants to stay.

"I am not sure that Mr Zidane wants him to stay but at the moment Gareth wants to stay," Barnett said. "He has got a contract, he will quite happily see it out until 2022."

Asked about Barnett's comments, Zidane said: "Nothing, I do not want to answer. I'm the Real Madrid coach and he does his job, that's it."

Zidane has been quizzed about various players leaving Madrid this summer after a miserable season that has left them 15 points behind Barcelona in the league, after also crashing out of the Champions League to Ajax in the last 16.

While Zidane has offered support to the likes of Karim Benzema, Marcelo and Raphael Varane, he has refused to offer assurances over Bale.

'Bayern have it all to lose'

AFP, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke has said that the pressure is now on league leaders Bayern Munich after his side bounced back in the Bundesliga title race on Saturday.

Bayern missed the chance to wrap up a seventh successive title when they were held to a 0-0 draw at RB Leipzig, while Dortmund beat Fortuna Duesseeldorf 3-2 to keep themselves in the running until the final round of games next weekend.

"We have given the Bundesliga a final on the last day," said Watzke. "That is good for the league and we are proud of that."

"We have been under brutal pressure, but now the pressure is heading south."

"Bayern have it all to lose, we can only win."

Having held a nine-point lead at the top of the table in December, Dortmund looked down and out after they slipped four points behind Bayern last weekend.

Yet they battled their way through a nervous game against Duesseeldorf to haul themselves back into the race.

"We need to control the game better towards the end and stay calmer," coach Lucien Favre told Sky, after his team survived a frantic last few minutes.

Dortmund must now beat Favre's former club Borussia Moenchengladbach next Saturday, and hope that Bayern slip up at

home to Eintracht Frankfurt.

"We have to give everything to win in Gladbach," said Favre.

Bayern, meanwhile, were left to rue a missed opportunity after they were held in Leipzig. They came within inches of securing the title on Saturday. Leon Goretzka's second-half goal was ruled out after VAR ruled that Robert Lewandowski's foot was in an offside position.

Bayern president Uli Hoeness called the offside decision "a joke", but CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said that Bayern were happy with a point.

"We would rather have won the title today, but the result does not put us in a worse position," he told Sky.

"In Frankfurt, we face a team who have had a very good season, but we have a good chance to win the championship."

Bayern have home advantage against Frankfurt next Saturday, and the chance to be crowned champions in

the Allianz Arena for the first time ever.

The Munich giants have not secured the title on home turf since 2000, despite having won 12 Bundesliga crowns since then. Bayern coach Niko Kovac also faces his former club next Saturday, and told Sky that he still talks to his former Frankfurt colleagues.

"I still have contact to one or two players and a lot of contact to the officials there," said Kovac.

"We will need passion and the will to win next week."

We have been under brutal pressure, but now the pressure is heading south. Bayern have it all to lose, we can only win.

HANS-JOACHIM WATZKE
BORUSSIA DORTMUND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Neymar scores on final PSG game before ban

AFP, Paris

Neymar responded to being handed a three-match ban by scoring as champions Paris Saint-Germain ended their three-game losing streak away from home with a 2-1 Ligue 1 victory at Angers on Saturday.

Thomas Tuchel's PSG have seen their season fizzle out since a shock Champions League exit at the hands of Manchester United in March, losing the French Cup final and embarking on a run of just one win in seven matches.

The return of Neymar from a foot problem has been a plus, with the world's most expensive player finding form ahead of his Copa America campaign with Brazil, which starts next month.

The 27-year-old's suspension for lashing out at a fan following PSG's penalty-shootout loss to Rennes in the French Cup final comes into effect on Monday, while he will also miss three Champions League games at the start of next season for

criticising the referee after the Man United defeat.

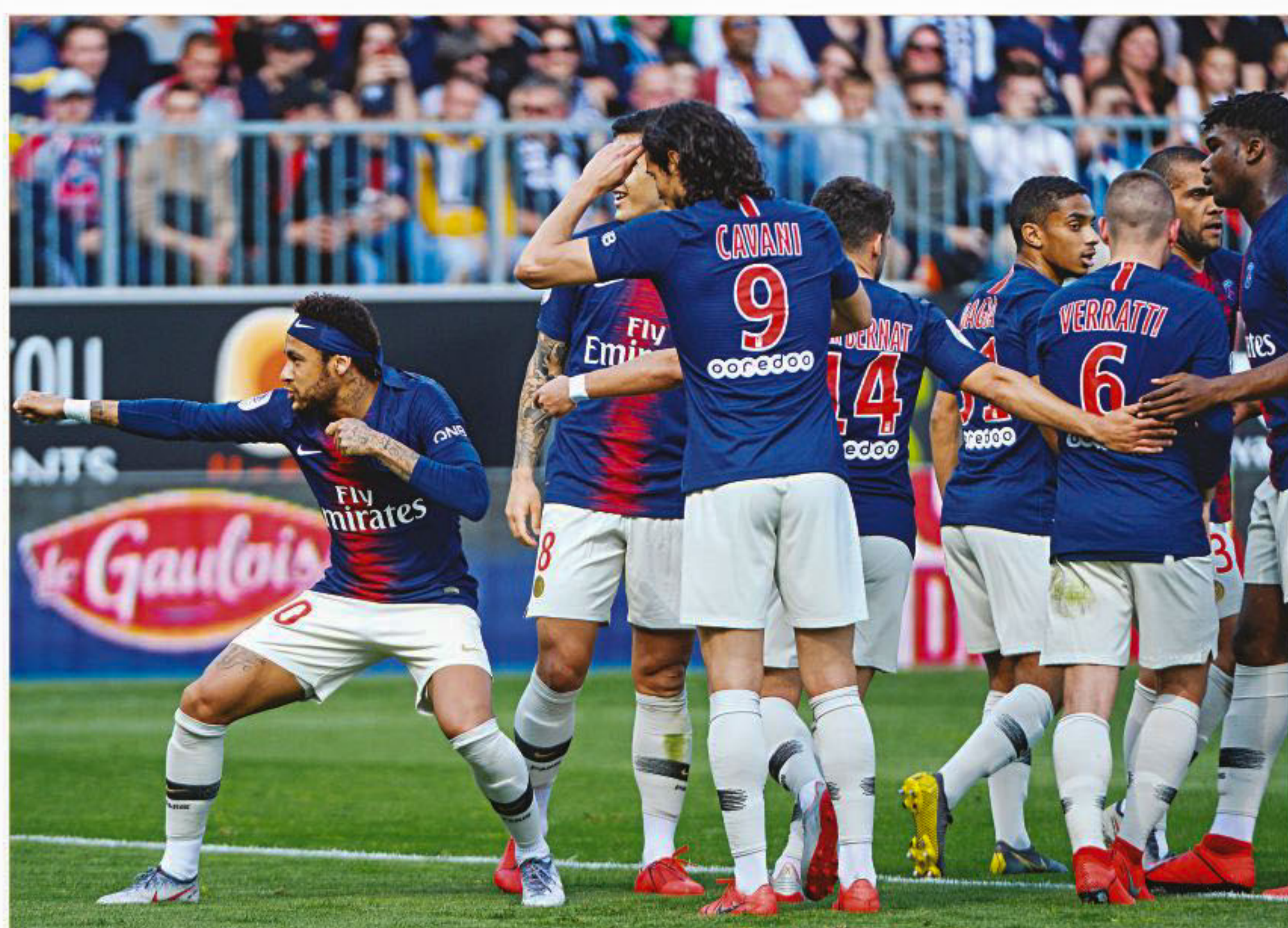
But he scored his third goal in four games on his final appearance of the season to give PSG a 20th-minute lead at the Stade Raymond-Kopa, diving to head home Dani Alves' scooped pass.

And Neymar turned provider as Angel Di Maria nodded in at the back post just before the hour mark to double the visitors' advantage.

But PSG have conceded 18 goals in eight games, failing to keep a clean sheet, after Flavius Tait grabbed a late consolation for midtable Angers, tapping in the rebound after Gianluigi Buffon had saved his penalty.

The French giants will now hope to ensure that the underwhelming win does not prove to be Neymar's final match for the club, ahead of the start of the transfer window next month.

"Neymar played well, but these are the things that we expect from him -- that he is decisive for us, scores goals and makes assists," said Tuchel. "It's his job, because it's his talent."



Before going on a three-match ban, Paris Saint-Germain forward Neymar showed off his kung-fu skills following a goal against Angers in their 2-1 Ligue 1 victory on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

Razib pips Zia to the title

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Enamul Hossain Razib became the unbeaten champion in the category A of the Late Dr. Abul Kashem Chowdhury International Rating Chess Tournament with a draw against IM Minhaz Uddin Ahmed Sagar in the final round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation conference room yesterday.

Razib and GM Ziaur Rahman earned an equal seven points from nine matches with Razib clinching the title through the tiebreaking system while Zia became runners-up.

Sagar, FM Khandokar Aminul Islam and Fahad Rahman secured 6.5 points each and their standings were also determined through the tiebreaking system with Sagar, Aminul and Fahad finishing third, fourth and fifth respectively.

In category B, Zia's son, Tahsin Tajwar Zia, became the unbeaten champion with 8.5 points from nine matches while Feroz Ahmed became runners-up with 8 points, informed a press release yesterday.