



WEST BROMWICH: West Bromwich Albion's English-born Scottish midfielder James Morrison (right) tackles Manchester City's French midfielder Samir Nasri (left) during the English Premier League football match between West Bromwich Albion and Manchester City yesterday. —AFP

CITY BEAT WEST BROM



WEST BROMWICH: Yaya Toure scored twice as Manchester City found a cure to its problems away from home by beating West Bromwich Albion 3-2 in the Premier League yesterday. Sergio Aguero put third-place

City ahead in the ninth minute at The Hawthorns, setting Manuel Pellegrini's team on its way to only a second away win that keeps it six points behind leader Arsenal.

The only blot for City on a night that saw captain Vincent Kompany return from 10 games out through injury were the late goals they conceded, with goalkeeper Costel Pantilimon turning the ball into his own net in the 85th and Victor Anichebe scoring in injury time. Toure had earlier finished off a classy team move to make it 2-0 in the 24th before converting a 74th-minute penalty.—AP

SOUTHAMPTON SLUMP 3RD SUCCESSIVE DEFEAT



SOUTHAMPTON: Southampton slumped to their third successive defeat and first at home this season as they lost 3-2 to Aston Villa in an absorbing Premier League tussle yesterday. The hosts had twice fought back to level only for former Leeds United player Fabian Delph to score a cracking winner for Villa, who extended their unbeaten run in the Premier League to five matches. Southampton manager Mauricio Pochettino had to hand a rare start to third choice 'keeper 21-year-old Paulo Gazzaniga-injuries to Artur Boruc and Kelvin Davis ruling them out-and the Argentinean was picking the ball out of his net after a quarter of an hour.

It was rough justice on the hosts as they had barely allowed Villa a touch but had failed to turn their pressure into a goal and were hit by a counterattack and a fine goal by Gabriel Agbonlahor. Saints, though, were far from deflated by conceding that

goal and they might have equalized on the half-hour mark, Jay Rodriguez forcing a fine save out of Brad Guzan. Rodriguez, who won his first cap for England last month in the friendly against Chile, did get the ball in the net three minutes into the second half as his header from Nathaniel Clyne's cross powered past Guzan.

The hosts should have got a second shortly afterwards as Pablo Daniel Osvaldo's deft backheel looked to have beaten the impressive Guzan, but the American got down well to save. No sooner had that happened than Villa regained the lead as Libor Kozak headed in Karim El Ahmadi's superb cross-the scorer's reward was to be immediately replaced by Belgian striker Christian Benteke, who had been left on the bench after failing to score in the past seven games. The Saints, though, showing the huge character that has symbolized their impressive Premier League campaign thus far, leveled again as Osvaldo was on hand to head home after England striker Rickie Lambert had headed across goal to set the Italian up. However, the previously rock-solid Southampton defense who had only conceded 10 goals in the previous 13 Premier League games-allowed Delph the freedom to run at them and then unleash a superb shot from 25 yards to restore the visitors' lead for good.—AFP

PSG UNBEATEN RUN BROUGHT TO AN END

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain failed to equal the record for their longest unbeaten run in France's top flight as they suffered a shock 2-0 defeat away to Evian yesterday. Youngster Clark Nsikulu put Evian in front at the end of a counterattack with 15 minutes remaining in freezing Anancy, and on-loan Marseille winger Modou Sougou made sure of the win for the home side when he added another in the 87th minute.

That goal came just seconds after Javier Pastore had missed a glorious chance to bring the defending champions level, and the result ends PSG's unbeaten record under Laurent Blanc. Indeed, the capital club's sequence of Ligue 1 matches without defeat ends at 26, one short of the club record set in their title-winning 1993-94 campaign. And their overall run without losing in all competitions ends at 36 matches, also one short of the club record.

However, that sequence does not include a defeat to Evian on penalties in the quarter-finals of the French Cup last season, and now the club from the shadow of the Alps can claim to be PSG's bogey side. "This win is marvelous for all our fans, the whole region. I have to congratulate my players," said Evian coach Pascal Dupraz, who nevertheless admitted his frustration that his side were unable to produce such performances on a regular basis.

Blanc's side are now just a single point clear of Lille at the top of the table, with the northern side having beaten Marseille 1-0 on Tuesday, with Nolan Roux scoring a stoppage-time winner as Nigerian goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama kept his 11th consecutive clean sheet. Meanwhile, Monaco are just one point further behind in third after they won 3-0 away to Nice in a Cote d'Azur derby on Tuesday, achieved without Radamel Falcao, as the Colombian missed a second successive game due to injury.

James Rodriguez, Emmanuel Riviere and Lucas Ocampos got the goals for Claudio Ranieri's men, as Nice fell to a

sixth straight defeat. Elsewhere yesterday, veteran goalkeeper Mickael Landreau broke the record for the most appearances by any player in France's top flight as he started for Bastia in their Corsican derby draw with Ajaccio. French international Landreau played his 603rd Ligue 1 game, three days after equalling the previous record held by former Monaco 'keeper Jean-Luc Ettori, in a game played on neutral ground on the mainland at the Stade Parsemain, home of second-tier club Istres.

But Landreau, formerly of Nantes, PSG and Lille, was unable to help Bastia beat their island rivals as the game ended in a 1-1 draw, a late Eduardo strike for Ajaccio cancelling out Florian Raspentino's early opener. "It is fabulous to experience this and to be able to share it," said Landreau after the match. "The game was played behind closed doors, but I prepare for every match in the same manner."

"I can feel what this represents, and it is massive." Saint-Etienne missed the chance to reclaim fifth spot as they went down 3-1 away to Rennes in Brittany, with Argentine striker Silvio Romero scoring his first two goals in French football for the hosts. Bordeaux inflicted a first home defeat on Guingamp since the opening day of the season, winning 1-0 thanks to a solitary Julien Faubert strike, while Lorient increased the pressure on beleaguered Montpellier coach Jean Fernandez with a 2-0 victory at the Stade de la Mosson.

Maxime Barthelme put Lorient ahead before Cameroon international forward Vincent Aboubakar scored his ninth goal of the season from the penalty spot at the death after the home side had been reduced to nine men by the dismissals of Vitorino Hilton and Abdelhamid El-Kaoutari. However, Montpellier's plight is not as serious as that of Sochaux, who remain rooted to the bottom seven points from safety after losing 2-0 at home to Reims. The midweek round of games concludes today when mid-table duo Lyon and Toulouse meet at the Stade de Gerland.—AFP

EVERTON WORSEN UNITED'S MISERY



MANCHESTER: Bryan Oviedo scored the only goal as Everton recorded a shock 1-0 win over a Manchester United side managed by their former boss David Moyes that put a huge dent in the champions Premier League title defense. Yesterday's result left United 12 points adrift of leaders Arsenal and was the first time Everton, whom Moyes left at the end of last season to replace the retired Alex Ferguson, had won at Old Trafford since 1992. Moyes endured a miserable evening, which began with him being jeered by his former supporters.

United went close to taking the lead when Wayne Rooney's deflected shot came back off the post in the opening period before Danny Welbeck headed on to the bar from close range in the second half. But Costa Rican Oviedo, signed by Moyes in 2012, turned in from close range to secure Everton's win with five minutes left. Everton manager Roberto Martinez had promised that the Blues would show that they are shedding a supposed inferiority complex against the Premier League's top sides and from the start they were keen to prove his point.

Romelu Lukaku caused early panic in the United defense as the hosts scrambled to clear a cross from Kevin Mirallas under pressure from the striker. Lukaku thumped wide from just outside the area and then had an effort deflected wide off Nemanja Vidic after Ross Barkley stole the ball from Shinji Kagawa in midfield. United's defense, with Chris Smalling playing alongside Vidic at centre-back,



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Patrice Evra (bottom right) attempts to head past Everton's Steven Pienaar (centre) during their English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford Stadium yesterday. — AP

struggled to get the ball away from the Steven Pienaar corner that followed before David de Gea was forced to tip over a powerful Mirallas shot.

The home side finally played their way into the match and a spell of pressure resulted in the ball falling for former Everton forward Rooney, whose drive was turned away by Tim Howard. Former United goalkeeper Howard impressed again when he pushed away Kagawa's close-range effort. And United went even closer to a goal when Antonio Valencia found space down the right and clipped over a cross that was glanced just wide by Ryan Giggs, playing for the first time since turning 40 last week.

Howard was beaten when Giggs picked out Rooney and the England striker's shot deflected off

Sylvain Distin but the ball came back off the inside of the post. Evra was in determined mood and broke beyond Mirallas to see a firm shot pushed away by Howard shortly after the interval. A poor header from Marouane Fellaini against his old club gifted Everton possession in a dangerous area and United's Belgium midfielder was relieved to see Chris Smalling divert Barkley's shot wide of goal.

Moyes attempted to put some energy into his team when he threw on Nani and Adnan Januzaj for Kagawa and Rafael just before the bar. But when the ball fell for Nani on the edge of the area the Portuguese lifted his shot well over the bar. After being fortunate not to be sent off in the 2-2 draw at Cardiff last month, Rooney once again allowed his frustration to get the better of him, missing with an

attempt to kick Phil Jagielka and earning a yellow card. Everton substitute Gerard Deulofeu was played in by Lukaku but could only come up with a disappointing shot straight at de Gea.

And United broke down the other end of the field for Januzaj's long-range effort to be palmed over unconvincingly by Howard. The home side were denied by the woodwork once again when Howard was at full stretch to keep out Evra's header from Rooney's corner before Welbeck headed on to the bar from close range. Mirallas went close to putting Everton in front when his free-kick came back off the outside of the post. But shortly afterwards, Everton got their breakthrough when Lukaku scuffed a shot to the far post and Oviedo turned in from six yards.—AFP

TOTTENHAM EASE PRESSURE ON BOSS ANDRE VILLAS-BOAS



LONDON: Tottenham eased the pressure on boss Andre Villas-Boas as Lewis Holtby's strike capped a dramatic late fightback in yesterday's 2-1 win at Fulham. Villas-Boas' team were in danger of suffering another embarrassing setback when Ashkan Dejagah gave the struggling hosts a surprise lead early in the second half.

But Vlad Chiriches' first Tottenham goal and a cool finish from Holtby eight minutes from full-time spared Villas-Boas' blushes and gave the sixth placed north Londoners their first win in five Premier League matches. While Villas-Boas was able to celebrate a much-needed three points, it was a frustrating start for Fulham's new

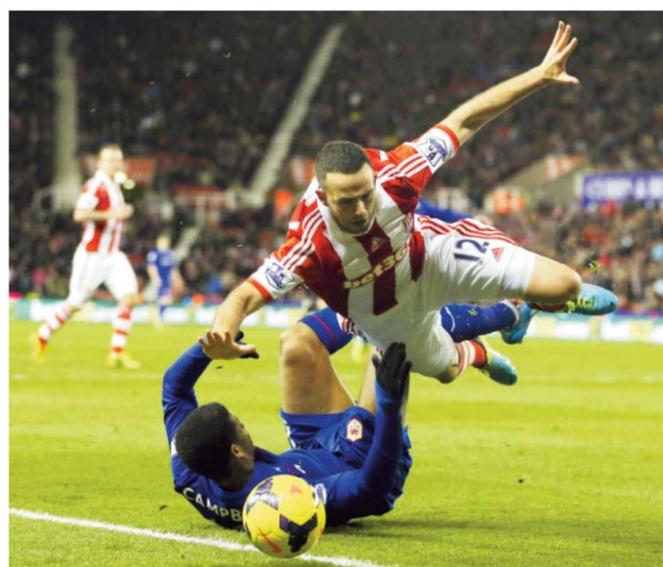
manager Rene Meulensteen following Martin Jol's sacking at the weekend.

Fulham have lost six consecutive league matches and former Manchester United coach Meulensteen faces a tough task to lift the third bottom Cottagers out of the relegation zone. Paulinho and Erik Lamela, two of Villas-Boas' under-performing big-money signings, wasted gilt-edged chances for Spurs in a first half that Fulham shaded through territory and possession. Brazilian midfielder Paulinho fired wide after Jermain Defoe had sent him clear on goal, spurning the first definitive opportunity of the match.

The closest the home side came to a real chance was from Pajtim Kasami's early through-ball to Dimitar Berbatov. The former Tottenham striker, reportedly keen to quit Craven Cottage in the January transfer window, looked well-placed to control and sneak through for a one-on-one with Spurs goalkeeper Hugo Lloris. But his first touch let him down at the crucial moment and the half-chance was gone. After that it was Spurs' chance to turn wasteful once again.

Defoe cut clear on the left after a deep clearance, held up play well, and waited for Lamela's well-timed delayed run into the box. The former West Ham striker's pass begged for a finish but instead Lamela side-footed wide. Lamela was once again in action with a rising drive from the edge of the area, but Fulham goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg was easily equal to the challenge. Fulham took a surprise lead in the 56th minute when Dejagah capitalised on fine work by Berbatov, cutting into the box after the Bulgarian's sharp pass to slide the ball past Lloris.

But Meulensteen's men were unable to hold out, with Romania defender Chiriches firing in with a first-time strike after a loose headed clearance from a Fulham corner in the 73rd minute. Just as Fulham looked to hit back, Spurs struck again to steal the points when German midfielder Holtby smashed home in the 82nd minute to claim his first Premier League goal since his move from Schalke in January. Fulham pressed for an equalizer, but Berbatov clipped wide before Kasami struck the outside of a post with the final chance.—AFP



STOKE: Stoke City's Marc Wilson (right) and Cardiff City's Fraizer Campbell compete for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match at the Britannia Stadium yesterday. — AP

STOKE AND CARDIFF STAY ABOVE RELEGATION ZONE



STOKE: Stoke and Cardiff stayed above the

relegation zone after playing out an uninspiring scoreless draw in the Premier League yesterday. Stoke had a goal disallowed at the end of the first half after Geoff Cameron was caught offside. Cardiff had a chance earlier but Asmir Begovic denied Jordan Mutch's effort with a good save. Cardiff almost scored in injury time as teenager Declan John saw his shot toward the bottom corner saved by Begovic. Stoke and Cardiff both have 14 points from 14 matches.—AP

SWANSEA THRASH NEWCASTLE 3-0

SWANSEA: Swansea City brought Newcastle United's four-game winning run in the Premier League to a juddering halt with a 3-0 victory at the Liberty Stadium yesterday. Substitute Nathan Dyer broke the deadlock with a volley

on the stroke of half-time, with an own goal from Newcastle right-back Mathieu Debuchy and a late Jonjo Shelvey strike completing victory.

It was only a second win in seven home games for Michael Laudrup's side, who climbed two places to 11th in the standings, while Newcastle slipped one place to seventh. Swansea recalled goalkeeper Michel Vorm after a knee injury, while Newcastle manager Alan Pardew kept faith with the team that had started in Saturday's 2-1 home win over West Bromwich Albion. Loic Remy has been instrumental in Newcastle's fine recent run, but the French striker was denied a ninth goal in 10 league games when Vorm produced a tremendous flying save to push away his early header.

With Michu and Wilfried Bony still sidelined by injury, Alvaro Vazquez led the line for the hosts and he threatened to break the deadlock with an angled drive that flew narrowly wide. It was to be the on-loan Getafe forward's last significant contribution, however, as he was forced to leave the fray shortly afterwards with an apparent groin injury. Luckily for Swansea, Dyer proved a more than adequate replacement, volleying in the opening goal in first-half stoppage time after Newcastle goalkeeper Tim Krul could only palm an Alejandro Pozuelo cross into the air.

Dyer and Shelvey both threatened early in the second half, with Vorm thwarting Shola Ameobi at the other end, before Swansea doubled their advantage in the 67th minute. Pozuelo dispatched a through ball for Shelvey to chase and although Krul blocked the former Liverpool midfielder's shot, the ball bounced off the unfortunate backtracking Debuchy and into the net. Shelvey would not be prevented from writing his name on the score-sheet, however, and he capped victory in the 81st minute with a fine shot from 25 yards.—AFP