

# Sports

76ers snap losing streak

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Yuvraj, Ashwin destroy Australia

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## HAMBURG BRACED FOR HISTORIC DROP

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LONDON: Liverpool's Luis Suarez (right) and Daniel Agger (center) and Tottenham's Michael Dawson (center left) lunge for the ball as Jordan Henderson, out of frame, scores from a free kick during their English Premier League soccer match. — AP

# REDS BEAT SPURS TO FIRE TITLE DREAMS

Liverpool 4

Tottenham 0

**LIVERPOOL:** Liverpool returned to the top of the Premier League table for the first time since Christmas with an emphatic 4-0 win at home to Tottenham Hotspur yesterday.

With title rivals Chelsea, Manchester City and Arsenal all dropping points on Saturday, Liverpool took full advantage to enhance their prospects of a first championship win since 1990.

An own goal from Tottenham captain Younes Kaboul set Liverpool on their way inside the opening two minutes and Brendan Rodgers's side never looked back as they kept the destiny of the title in their own hands with City and Chelsea still to visit Anfield.

Top scorer Luis Suarez doubled the

lead with his 29th goal of the season after 25 minutes, before Philippe Coutinho added a third 10 minutes into the second half.

Jordan Henderson completed the rout 15 minutes from the end, sealing an eighth consecutive league victory. No team in the top flight has bettered Tottenham's nine away wins this season, but Tim Sherwood's side have now lost their last three away from White Hart Lane, as their season threatens to peter out.

But while Spurs are beginning to look a spent force, Liverpool are going from strength to strength as they close in on matching a run of nine successive wins from the 2005-06 campaign, when they finished third.

Liverpool manager Rodgers made one change to the side that had beaten Sunderland 2-1 in mid-week, with Raheem Sterling replacing Joe Allen. And Sterling immediately made his presence felt as Liverpool took barely 90 seconds to go in front.

The winger combined with England colleague Glen Johnson, whose overlap-

ping run took him into the box and enabled him to put a low cross into the goalmouth.

### DAWSON ERROR

Suarez and Daniel Sturridge were both lurking, but following a deflection off defender Jan Vertonghen, it was Kaboul who inadvertently got the final touch to nudge the ball over the line.

It was not totally one-sided as Tottenham looked to respond on the counter-attack, but with little more than a quarter of the game gone, the Londoners-still missing injured top scorer Emmanuel Adebayor-left themselves with a near impossible task.

Michael Dawson's replacement of the injured Vertonghen should not have caused a major problem, with the long-serving defender slotting back into Tottenham's defence alongside Kaboul.

But his rustiness following an injury lay-off was apparent as his misdirected pass allowed Suarez a run on goal that he exploited to the full. Getting away from Kaboul, the striker beat Hugo Lloris with a left-foot shot across the goalkeep-

er into the far corner to claim his sixth goal in four games.

Kaboul's afternoon then almost took a further turn for the worse four minutes before half-time as he almost gifted Liverpool a third goal.

Dallying in possession, the Spurs skipper was dispossessed by Sterling, whose cross was met by a powerful header from Suarez, which was superbly touched onto the post by Lloris.

Sterling was a source of constant worry for the Londoners and eight minutes into the second half he should have put the game beyond doubt, but rather than shooting he passed to Henderson, who shot over. The end was not long in coming, though, as just a couple of minutes later Jon Flanagan carried the ball out of defence and picked out Coutinho, whose low shot from 22 yards found the bottom-left corner. When Henderson then curled a free-kick through a crowd of bodies and directly past Lloris, a repeat of Liverpool's 5-0 win at Tottenham earlier in the season was on the cards. This time there was not a fifth goal, but Liverpool had already done enough. — AFP

### EPL results/standings

Fulham 1 (Dejagah 71) Everton 3 (Stockdale 50-og, Mirallas 79, Naismith 87); Liverpool 4 (Kaboul 2-og, Suarez 25, Coutinho 55, Henderson 75) Tottenham Hotspur 0.

Playing today	
Sunderland v West Ham United	
Liverpool	32 22 5 5 88 39 71
Chelsea	32 21 6 5 62 24 69
Man City	30 21 4 5 80 28 67
Arsenal	32 19 7 6 56 37 64
Everton	31 17 9 5 49 31 60
Tottenham	32 17 5 10 40 44 56
Man Utd	32 16 6 10 52 38 54
Southampton	32 13 9 10 49 40 48
Newcastle	32 14 4 14 38 47 46
Stoke	32 10 10 12 37 45 40
West Ham	31 9 7 15 34 41 34
Aston Villa	31 9 7 15 34 46 34
Swansea	32 8 9 15 45 48 33
Hull	32 9 6 17 33 40 33
Norwich	32 8 8 16 26 51 32
Crystal Palace	31 9 4 18 20 39 31
West Brom	31 5 14 12 36 48 29
Cardiff	32 6 8 18 29 61 26
Sunderland	29 6 7 16 27 46 25
Fulham	32 7 3 22 31 73 24

Notes: top four teams qualify for next season's UEFA Champions League; fifth-place team qualifies for UEFA Europa League; bottom three teams relegated to Championship.

## EVERTON INCH TOWARDS TOP FOUR

Fulham 1

Everton 3

**LONDON:** Steven Naismith came off the bench to inspire Everton to a 3-1 success at Fulham yesterday that further enhanced their chances of qualifying for next season's Champions League.

After weathering sustained first-half pressure, Everton took a 50th-minute lead at Craven Cottage when Naismith's deflected volley ricocheted off Fulham goalkeeper David Stockdale and into the net for an own goal. Fulham substitute Ashkan Dejagah equalised with a blistering strike 21 minutes later, only for another substitute, Kevin Mirallas, to restore Everton's lead with 11 minutes remaining.

Naismith applied the coup de grace in the 87th minute to complete a win that

took Roberto Martinez's side to within four points of fourth-place Arsenal, who visit Goodison Park next weekend.

Everton also have a game in hand, but while their fans begin to dream of Barcelona and Bayern Munich, it is Bournemouth and Blackpool who beckon for Fulham after a defeat that left them five points adrift of safety at the foot of the Premier League table.

Everton were unchanged from their mid-week 3-0 win at Newcastle United, while Fulham manager Felix Magath made three changes, surprisingly handing a first start to 17-year-old French striker Moussa Dembele.

Arsenal's 1-1 draw with Manchester City on Saturday had opened the door for Everton, but it was Fulham who took the initiative in the first half on a warm spring day in west London.

After Lewis Holtby had sliced an early warning shot off target, a right-wing corner was flicked on by Brede Hangeland to Pajtim Kasami, who could only head wide at the back post.

Everton goalkeeper Tim Howard was



LONDON: Fulham's French striker Moussa Dembele (left) vies with Everton's English defender John Stones (right) during the English Premier League football match. — AFP

then obliged to save with his feet from Kieran Richardson, who had been played in by Dembele, before Stockdale produced a similar save at the other end to thwart Gerard Deulofeu.

It was Fulham who were creating the better chances, though, and Howard was called upon to tip over a header from Holtby and gather a header from Dembele

before the interval.

Everton lost Ross Barkley to a calf injury at half-time, but Naismith's entrance in his place proved the catalyst for an immediate upturn in their fortunes.

The Scottish forward claimed the credit for Everton's opener, although the decisive touch came from the unfortunate Stockdale. — AFP

## MIAMI SWINGS TO THE HITS OF GOLDEN OLDIES

**MIAMI:** Miami is one of the favourite stops on the WTA Tour because of the city's hip, youthful vibe but the final of Sony Open on Saturday was more about the golden oldies as Serena Williams and Li Na took centre stage.

As the downtown core was rocking to a techno music festival, out on Key Biscayne at the Tennis Center they were savoring some old time hits as two 32-year-olds slugged it out for the Miami hardcourt title.

Williams musical tastes may run more toward Mariah Carey but her play on a sweltering south Florida afternoon was more heavy metal as the world number one pounded out a 7-5 6-1 win over Li to claim a record seventh title on the Miami hardcourts.

"I don't know," shrugged Williams, when asked to explain how two 32-year-olds have come to dominate the women's game.

"I just feel that both she (Li) and I, we just have this never give up fight and it just goes to show that you can still shine at any age."

Number one Williams and number two Li have both won two titles each this season and sit atop the world rankings as the circuit's young guns scramble behind them.

Li's two wins include an Australian Open title and she has reached the final in Miami and semi-final in Indian Wells. Her loss to Williams was just her third of the season.

With wins in Miami and Brisbane, Williams pushed her career total to 59 titles (50 more than Li) and looks poised for another season of domination with just two losses on her record.

"We're playing great tennis and we're both one and two and we're both the same age," said Williams. "For me, it was just an honor to be there with her. — Reuters