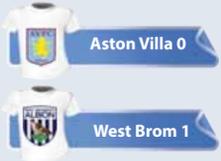


## BERAHINO LIFTS WEST BROM



**BIRMINGHAM:** Saido Berahino got his first start for West Bromwich Albion since his transfer request was rejected last month and lifted his side to a 1-0 win at Aston Villa yesterday. Berahino had vowed never to play for the club again after a move to English rivals Tottenham Hotspur was blocked. But the England Under-21 striker marked his return in style, poking in James Morrison's shot in the 39th minute to condemn Villa to their fourth defeat of the season. Manager Tony Pulis revealed that the 22-year-old had cleared the air with his teammates and was back to his old form. "He is very young and very impressionable and I'm sure if he could have done it again he would have done it differently," said Pulis. "The important thing is to get the kid back to what he was before the window opened." The Baggies came out firing with Villa

goalie Brad Guzan producing a fine stop to keep out striker Salomon Rondon's flicked header. Albion's record Venezuelan signing impressed all afternoon despite failing to find the net as the Baggies' defence kept a fourth straight clean sheet. Gabriel Agbonlahor set up a chance for the hosts after 26 minutes when he crossed for the onrushing Carles Gil, but the effort was blocked by Claudio Yacob. But Berahino nailed the opener six minutes before the break with Guzan keeping out another Rondon drive on the hour before Villa were denied a penalty after 65 minutes. Berahino looked to be inside the area when he blocked Alan Hutton's cross, with the referee giving a free-kick for handball just outside the box. There was some debate over whether the ball hit Berahino's arm, but the hosts nevertheless wasted the free-kick. Villa were again denied 20 minutes from time when Michal Richards headed past Boaz Myhill but the hosts had already been awarded a free-kick following a foul on Jack Grealish. Substitute Rudy Gesteira headed over the hosts' final chance in injury time with the win putting West Brom into the top half of the table with Villa one place off the bottom three. —AFP

## LEICESTER RESCUE UNBEATEN RECORD



**STOKE-ON-TRENT:** Leicester extended their unbeaten Premier League start to six matches as another thrilling fightback rescued a 2-2 draw against Stoke yesterday. Claudio Ranieri's side are sitting pretty in second place after a surprisingly strong opening to the campaign continued at the Britannia Stadium. The hosts had been firmly in control, taking the lead in the 13th minute when the fit-again Bojan Krkic-making his first league start in eight months slotted home, before Jonathan Walters pounced on a Wes Morgan error to make it 2-0 seven minutes later. But Leicester, who came back from two goals down to beat Aston Villa last week, reduced the deficit in the 51st minute through Riyad Mahrez's penalty and Jamie Vardy then notched the equaliser in the 69th minute. The Foxes went into this game with Ranieri having promised to buy them pizza if they kept the first clean sheet of their impressive campaign. They showed little appetite for that in a poor first-half per-

formance before once again producing a comeback to salvage something from the game—just as they have done in their last three league fixtures. Stoke, meanwhile, must reflect on a missed opportunity as they remain winless and in the relegation zone. They had settled into the game quickly and went 1-0 up when Marko Arnautovic deftly turned away from Ritchie De Laet on the left flank, cut inside and delivered a wonderful through ball for Bojan. The Spaniard stroked home his first goal of the season gleefully, his celebration showing his relief at being back on the scoresheet after the nightmare he has endured since sustaining a serious knee injury in January. Soon after, Stoke had another goal. Ex-Potters man Robert Huth allowed Jack Butland's long kick upfield to bounce past him and Morgan then made a complete hash of an attempt to play the ball back to his goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel. Walters, who had dashed past Huth, seized on the loose ball and side-footed in. Things became less comfortable for Stoke shortly after the restart as Arnautovic bundled over Danny Drinkwater and Mahrez fired in the resulting penalty, his fifth goal of the season. Vardy then drew things level with his fourth goal of the season, holding off Erik Pieters and scuffing a shot beyond Butland. —AFP



**STOKE:** Stoke City's Bojan Krkic scores from the penalty spot against Leicester City during the English Premier League match at the Britannia Stadium. — AP

## VAN GAAL DEFENDS SPLUTTERING ROONEY

**SOUTHAMPTON:** Louis van Gaal refuses to accept that Wayne Rooney is in a scoring slump despite the Manchester United captain going into Sunday's visit to Southampton without a Premier League goal in over five months. Rooney, who recently became England's leading all-time international goalscorer, has not hit the net in a Premier League game for United since the first weekend in April, although his club manager prefers to focus on the hat-trick the striker scored in the Champions League at Brugues last month rather than his 10-game domestic barren spell. "He scored against Bruges. He scored," said van Gaal. "It doesn't matter if it's the Premier League or the Champions League. I was very happy when we scored more goals. "It does not matter to me who is scoring. But we have to score more. When you are so dominant as we are, in all the matches, we have to win these games. "He has a range of scoring goals. You can count all the goals he's made. In my memory, Rooney has scored a lot. "He's nearly the record holder in the Premier League so I hope he will beat that record but I have to wait and see, like you do." Such a quest is still some distance off, Rooney's 185 career Premier League goals placing him two behind second placed Andy Cole and way behind all-time leading scorer Alan Shearer and his 260.

Rooney, 29, needs to score 76 times to overtake Shearer and, bearing in mind that the past five seasons in total have seen the United man score "only" 79 goals, van Gaal may be disappointed in his wish. Rooney missed United's victory over Liverpool last weekend with a hamstring injury, but looks certain to return against a Southampton side who van Gaal expects, like defending champions Chelsea, to improve drastically as the season progresses. "Wayne is back, it was a minor injury and we didn't want to take risks," said van Gaal. "But he has had training and treatment and I think he can start. "Southampton have a very good team, not worse than last year, but they started very badly. It's the same with Chelsea, but they shall come back, as we did last year. I don't think is a normal position for them." Meanwhile, broken leg victim Luke Shaw is due to fly back to Manchester this weekend where he will undergo a minor surgical procedure before being allowed home. Van Gaal has noted the effect that the horrendous injury had on Shaw's team mates in the United dressing room and hopes it may have a galvanising effect on them. "There was a question about the mental effect of such an injury and I said I cannot prove that, I cannot see in the heads of the players," he said. —AFP



**LONDON:** Bournemouth's Callum Wilson (left) and Sunderland's Younes Kaboul battle for the ball during their English Premier League soccer match at the Vitality Stadium. —AP

## BOURNEMOUTH BAG FIRST HOME VICTORY



**BOURNEMOUTH:** Bournemouth secured their first-ever home win in the English Premier League with a 2-0 victory over 10-man visitors Sunderland yesterday. Bournemouth, last season's second-tier Championship winners, needed less than 10 minutes to do the damage against the rock-bottom Black Cats. Striker Callum Wilson rocketed in a shot in the fourth minute, before Scotland right-winger Matt Ritchie volleyed in a stunning strike from the edge of the penalty box in the ninth.

Sunderland finished the match with 10 men after former France centre-back Younes Kaboul was dismissed for a second bookable offence. Bournemouth's win leaves them 11th in the table after six matches, while Sunderland are 20th, with just two points from their opening six games. In front of 11,271 fans packed into the tiny Dean Court stadium on the south coast, Sunderland never recovered from their early shock. Sunderland boss Dick Advocaat made one change from the side that lost 1-0 at home to Tottenham on September 13, bringing in Sebastian Coates for the ill John O'Shea. Bournemouth were looking to bounce back from their 3-1 defeat at Norwich on September 12. Cherries manager Eddie Howe made five changes, and the uncharacteristic move swiftly paid dividends. For the opener, Wilson caught out Kaboul, turning away from the defender and blasting his shot past Sunderland goalkeeper Costel Pantilimon. And five minutes later, the Cherries doubled their advantage. Sunderland failed to clear a corner kick

properly and Ritchie, on the edge of the penalty box, took the ball on his chest and volleyed a dazzling shot into the top left corner of the goal. Advocaat threw on Jack Rodwell at the interval and the midfielder did revitalise the Black Cats, seeing an effort deflected behind for a corner. Jeremain Lens thought he had pulled one back for Bournemouth from the resulting set-piece but his headed effort was wrongly ruled out for offside. Kaboul was booked shortly before half-time for bringing down Wilson near the edge of the penalty box and was spoken to by referee. But he did not heed the warning and after hauling down Wilson once again in the 74th minute, he was sent off for a second yellow card. Marc Pugh then nearly added a third goal for the hosts but his shot into the grass bounced on to Pantilimon's crossbar and was cleared away. However, by that stage, Bournemouth had already comfortably secured their second win of the season in their bid to stay in the top flight. —AFP

## EVERTON HOLD SWANSEA



**SWANSEA:** Everton suffered an afternoon of frustration as they missed a host of chances and saw substitute Kevin Mirallas sent off after less than two minutes on the field in a 0-0 draw at Swansea yesterday. The Toffees had the better of the game as their boss Roberto Martinez returned to his former club. But they missed a host of chances to win an entertaining contest and then saw Mirallas dismissed in stoppage-time for a high tackle on Modou Barrow. The game was halted early on following a nasty clash of heads in the Everton goalmouth between Toffees defender Phil Jagielka and Swansea forward Andre Ayew. Jagielka was back on his feet quickly but Ayew needed lengthy treatment both on the field and on the touchline before returning to the action.

Swansea captain Ashley Williams had to recover his own error when he dived in rashly to bring down Stephen Naismith on the edge of the home penalty area. Romelu Lukaku blasted the resulting free-kick towards goal but Williams used his head bravely to divert it behind for a corner. Jagielka was fully recovered and almost opened the scoring when he arrived to meet a corner by Ross Barkley but headed over the crossbar. In an entertaining opening to the game there were chances for both sides and Bafetimbi Gomis twice had the chance to break the deadlock for Swansea. First he saw an acrobatic effort from a Kyle Naughton cross saved comfortably by Tim Howard in the Everton goal. Then he raced to intercept a poor pass by Gareth Barry and advanced towards goal but sent an effort wastefully wide. Everton responded again through Stephen Naismith, who burst beyond the Swansea defence following a neat Everton move but was halted by Federico Fernandez's super, saving tackle. Naismith tried his luck again when a corner was cleared to him 20 yards from goal. His

effort flew through a crowd of players an Everton striker Romelu Lukaku tried to deflect it past Lukasz Fabianski in the Swansea goal but the keeper saved comfortably. Everton left-back Brendan Galloway created a good chance to open the scoring early in the second half with a clever drag-back in Swansea's penalty area, but he sent a firm shot wide of the far post. Lukaku then had an even better chance when he raced onto a fine pass by Barry and found himself in the clear, but the Belgian fired over the crossbar with only Fabianski to beat. Then, after Barry was booked for a foul on Naughton, Gylfi Sigurdsson sent a powerful free-kick into the side netting with several thousand Swansea fans mistakenly celebrating a goal. Williams then cleared off the line to deny Lukaku after his shot had beaten Fabianski and the big striker was denied again by a fabulous block by Neil Taylor on the edge of the area. In between those efforts Lukaku saw a teasing cross by Toffees substitute Gerard Deulofeu just elude the sliding Naismith. And Mirallas was dismissed in stoppage-time for a high challenge on fellow substitute Modou Barrow just moments after replacing Barkley. —AFP



**LONDON:** Swansea City's Bafetimbi Gomis (right) goes for a header during the English Premier League soccer match against Everton. —AP

### EPL results/standings

Aston Villa 0 West Bromwich 1 (Berahino 39); Bournemouth 2 (Wilson 4, Ritchie 9) Sunderland 0; Chelsea 2 (Zouma 53, Hazard 90) Arsenal 0; Manchester City 1 (De Bruyne 45) West Ham 2 (Moses 6, Sakho 31); Newcastle 1 (Janmaat 62) Watford 2 (Ighalo 10, 28); Stoke 2 (Bojan 13, Walters 20) Leicester 2 (Mahrez 51-pen, Vardy 69); Swansea 0 Everton 0.

**Playing today:** Liverpool v Norwich, Southampton v Manchester United, Tottenham v Crystal Palace.

English Premier League table after yesterday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Manchester City	6	5	0	1	12	2	15
West Ham	6	4	0	2	13	7	12
Leicester	6	3	3	0	13	9	12
Manchester Utd	5	3	1	1	6	3	10
Arsenal	6	3	1	2	5	5	10
Everton	6	2	3	1	8	5	9
Crystal Palace	5	3	0	2	8	6	9
Swansea	6	2	3	1	7	5	9
Watford	6	2	3	1	5	5	9
West Bromwich	6	2	2	2	4	6	8
Bournemouth	6	2	1	3	8	9	7
Norwich	5	2	1	2	8	9	7
Chelsea	6	2	1	3	9	12	7
Liverpool	5	2	1	2	3	6	7
Southampton	5	1	3	1	5	5	6
Tottenham	5	1	3	1	4	4	6
Aston Villa	6	1	1	4	6	9	4
Stoke	6	0	3	3	5	9	3
Newcastle	6	0	2	4	3	9	2
Sunderland	6	0	2	4	6	13	2