

Arsenal overpower Tottenham 3-1

Jimenez strikes as Wolves sink Southampton



LONDON: Arsenal's Portuguese defender Nuno Tavares (right) crosses the ball during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur at the Emirates Stadium yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Arsenal struck three times inside 35 minutes to beat Tottenham 3-1 yesterday and move above their north London rivals in the Premier League table. Just three weeks ago Spurs sat top and Arsenal bottom after their worst start to a league season for 67 years. However, the Gunners have been rejuvenated by six summer signings and the return to fitness of a number of key players.

Emile Smith Rowe opened the floodgates by taking advantage of some awful Tottenham defending on 12 minutes. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang then rounded off a brilliant team move before Bukayo Saka rolled home the third 11 minutes before half-time. Son Heung-min pulled a goal back for the visitors 11 minutes from time, but it was too little, too late for Nuno Espirito Santo's men. Arsenal climb to 10th ahead of Spurs on goal difference with both sides on nine points from six games.

However, they are going in opposite directions with Tottenham losing their last three league games by a combined score of 9-1. The last time north London derby took place in front of a full crowd, Unai Emery and Mauricio Pochettino were still in charge of the sides. Both clubs have had little reason to celebrate in the two years since. But there are encouraging signs for Arsenal that the decision to invest heavily in youth during the transfer window is beginning to pay off.

The Gunners spent more than any other Premier League club over the summer, investing £150 million in players aged between 21 and 23, despite failing to qualify for European football for the first time in 25 years. Four of the new faces started with all 11 of the starting line-up either signed in the two years since Mikel Arteta was appointed or handed a contract extension in that time. Saka and Smith Rowe are two of those to have committed their long-term future to the club where they came through the ranks and were the stars of a first 45 minutes that sent the Emirates into raptures.

Smith Rowe was allowed a huge amount of space to amble into the box and slot home Saka's cross. The hosts rampaged through Spurs with ease for a brilliant second goal in a move reminiscent of Arsenal's glory days under Arsene Wenger. Tottenham claimed in vain for a foul on Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg as Granit Xhaka turned onto Aaron Ramsdale's pass out from the back. Aubameyang then flicked the ball through for Smith Rowe to charge in on the Spurs goal before having the presence to turn back and pick out his captain for a cool finish.

The Tottenham Hotspur stadium played host to Anthony Joshua losing his world heavyweight boxing titles to Oleksandr Usyk on Saturday. And Nuno's men were dealt a knockout blow before the

break. Harry Kane found himself back in his own box trying to make a tackle, but the ball broke kindly for Saka to sweep the ball past Lloris. Kane's frustrating day continued into the second-half as he prodded wide with just Ramsdale to beat before seeing strong appeals for a penalty waived away for a challenge by Ben White.

Wolves sink Southampton

In another development, Raul Jimenez scored an emotional first goal since his horrific head injury in November as Wolves earned a 1-0 win over Southampton yesterday. Jimenez feared he would never play again after suffering a fractured skull in a clash with David Luiz at Arsenal last year. The Mexico striker only returned to action at the start of this season and had gone without a goal in his first five games. Jimenez had shown signs of frustration with the supportive headband he now wears to protect himself, even angrily removing it after a missing a headed chance against Brentford last weekend.

But the 30-year-old enjoyed a cathartic moment as his superb second half strike fired Bruno Lage's men to their second Premier League win this season. Jimenez had never gone six Premier League games without a goal since he arrived at Molineux in 2018. In the 61st minute, he danced through the Southampton defense, twice eluding Jan Bednarek

and leaving Mohammed Salisu bewildered on the turf, before calmly slotting past Alex McCarthy. The end of Jimenez's 336-day wait to score sparked a joyous celebration with his team-mates.

He was also embraced by the club's travelling fans in one corner of St Mary's after the final whistle. "I was thinking 'when will the goal come?'. I was fighting for it, working for it and all the team deserve it," Jimenez said. "I knew it was coming eventually. It felt really good. Four of our five games have been incredible. We need to keep going like this." Dedicating the win to Jimenez, Lage said: "This three points and this goal go straight to Raul. It was a special goal for Raul. I saw since the first day that he was a guy with a big ambition and hungry to come back to play to score goals for us."

"Raul is a good example, you can be a top player and a top man. Every time he's there working to do everything, to understand our way, to press, to help our team." The uplifting scenes that greeted Jimenez's decisive contribution were a stark contrast to the mood among Southampton supporters. Ralph Hasenhuttl's side remain winless after six league matches and were booed off at full-time. The scoreline could have been even worse for listless Southampton if McCarthy had not denied Jimenez a second goal with a fine save in stoppage-time. — AFP

Fati returns in Messi shirt to lift Barcelona

MADRID: Barcelona's Ansu Fati made the perfect return after 10 months out through injury by scoring in a 3-0 victory over Levante yesterday, a result that eases the pressure on coach Ronald Koeman. Fati, wearing the number 10 shirt previously belonging to Lionel Messi, came on to a raucous reception at Camp Nou, 323 days after his last appearance in November last year.

And the 18-year-old came back in style, carrying the ball forward and lashing it into the net in injury time to complete a much-needed victory for Barca. Fati was hoisted into the air by his teammates and then he climbed into the crowd behind the substitutes bench, to embrace members of his family and the club's medical staff. "I want to say thank you to the doctors and everyone who has been with me through all this, and the fans who have been unbelievable," said Fati afterwards.

After needing three operations on a knee injury, many wondered if Fati would ever get back to the levels he showed so spectacularly when he first broke into the first team in 2019. There is still a long way to go for the teenager but his return, and a brilliant goal, raised the roof at Camp Nou and lifted spirits after a turbulent few weeks consumed by speculation about Koeman's future. "You saw the reaction in the stadium - we know he is a very good player," said Koeman's assistant Alfred Schreuder, who took on media duties with Koeman serving a touchline ban.

"The goal was not even a chance. He created it out of nothing. This is the individual quality he has and it's what we need." Koeman may not be saved by this result - the club could look to make a change during the upcoming international break - but there was at

least renewed positivity inside the stadium, even before Fati's dramatic intervention. Barcelona's first win in four games moves them up to fifth in La Liga, five points behind Real Madrid with a game in hand. They play Atletico Madrid at the Wanda Metropolitano next weekend.

New era?

Memphis Depay had given them an early lead with a penalty and Luuk de Jong made it two by scoring his first goal for the club since joining from Sevilla on the last day of the transfer window. But the real excitement centered around the 17-year-old Gavi and 19-year-old Nico Gonzalez, both academy graduates, who delivered displays to suggest Barca's youngsters could yet be the faces of the new era. Depay earned the penalty he scored in the fifth minute when he skipped past and then tripped over the dangling leg of Nemanja Radoja before converting to give Barca the perfect start.

De Jong's second was instigated by Depay as well as he released Sergino Dest down the left, who cut inside and curved a pass into the striker, who took the ball on and fired in. Barca should have extended their lead before half-time. Gerard Pique somehow poked wide from a yard out before Gavi's superb through ball sent Depay clear but he left himself too much to do from the angle. Gavi then tried and failed to lob Aitor Fernandez. Levante were generous opponents, allowing Barcelona space to dictate through midfield while never really threatening a comeback.

Nico lashed wide from the edge of the box and Depay was denied again from the angle before substitute Riqui Puig almost completed a weaving run but overran his final touch. Puig, a popular graduate of Barca's La Masia academy, had enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from the home fans but it was nothing compared to Fati's welcome, the teenager unable to hold back a grin as he heard the cheers. — AFP

Juve beat Sampdoria 3-2 as tearful Dybala limps off

TURIN: Juventus held off Sampdoria to win their second match of the Serie A season 3-2 yesterday but will have to face Chelsea without star forward Paulo Dybala after the Argentina forward limped off with a thigh injury. Dybala opened the scoring early at a wet Allianz Stadium, with Leonardo Bonucci and Manuel Locatelli netting the other goals to move Juve ninth on eight points, but soon afterwards the 27-year-old left the field in tears after the latest in a long line of injuries.

Massimiliano Allegri's side host holders Chelsea in their second Champions League group match on Wednesday and the coach said that both Dybala and centre-forward Alvaro Morata, who also exited with a thigh problem towards the end of the match, would be out of action until after the next international break which runs from after next weekend's matches to October 15.

"Dybala and Morata definitely won't be available for Chelsea and Torino (on Saturday)," Allegri told reporters after the match. Dybala got off to a great start by flashing home his third goal in all competitions this season with nine minutes on the clock, striking home a beautiful first-time finish after Locatelli's shot was blocked.

The hosts were affected by Dybala's emotional exit in the 22nd minute and performed worse without him on the field, but looked to have taken



TURIN: Juventus' Argentine forward Paulo Dybala falls after colliding with Sampdoria's Gambian defender Omar Colley during the Italian Serie A football match. — AFP

a big step towards victory when Bonucci slotted home his penalty in the 43rd minute. Samp responded immediately though and almost pulled one back through Fabio Quagliarella before Maya Yoshida nodded the away side back into the game from Antonio Candreva's whipped cross two minutes before half-time.

Juve had lost points from winning positions three times in their first five matches but Locatelli re-established the hosts' two-goal lead in the 57th minute with his first Juve goal, tapping home Dejan Kulusevski's pull back. Home supporters were again worrying about the result though with seven minutes remaining when Candreva met Adrien Silva's pass with a well taken first-time finish, but that turned out to be the match's last significant act. — AFP