

Leverkusen held at Hamburg; Wolves win

Relentless Bayern make it record 9 in a row



Schalke's Franco di Santo (left), and Berlin's Sebastian Langkamp challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Schalke 04 and Hertha BSC Berlin in Gelsenkirchen, Germany on Oct. 17. (AP)

BERLIN, Oct. 17, (AFP): Bayern Munich became the first team to win their opening nine games of a Bundesliga season on Saturday as a first-half Thomas Mueller strike proved enough for Pep Guardiola's side to beat Werder Bremen 1-0.

Mueller stole in front of Alejandro Galvez to control a Thiago Alcantara cross at the near post and stab past Felix Wiedwald for the only goal of the game, his ninth of the season, at the Weserstadion as Bayern made more Bundesliga history.

That was despite in-form Robert Lewandowski, having netted 15 times in his previous six games for club and country, for once failing to score.

However, the Pole felt he should have had a penalty in the second half after being taken out by

Wiedwald when through on goal, and Mueller's solitary strike sufficed to condemn Bremen to a club record-equalling fifth consecutive

Table with 2 columns: Match (e.g., Cologne vs Hannover 96), Score (1-0), and Local time (16:30).

league defeat.

The win, their 999th in the Bundesliga, set Bayern up nicely for their trip to face Arsenal in the Champions League in midweek and saw them once again move seven points clear at the top of the table from nearest challengers Borussia Dortmund, who won 2-0 at Mainz on Friday.

Germany striker Max Kruse scored his first career hat-trick as Wolfsburg climbed up to fourth with a dramatic 4-2 win at home to Hoffenheim at the Volkswagen Arena.

Dieter Hecking was taking charge of a Bundesliga game for the 300th time and saw his side open the scoring with just 41 seconds played when Julian Draxler squared for Kruse to score his first goal since signing from Borussia Moenchengladbach in the summer.

Draxler then crossed for Bas Dost to head in the second goal inside seven minutes but Hoffenheim fought back, Jeremy Toljan reducing the deficit before Jonathan Schmid converted at the second attempt to level matters on 54 minutes.

But Kruse, who came off the bench to score the winner for Germany against Georgia in Euro

2016 qualifying last weekend, put the Wolves back in front from a Luiz Gustavo assist just after the hour mark and then completed his hat-trick late on.

Schalke 04 are third, just a point behind their Ruhr rivals Dortmund, after Max Meyer struck a stoppage-time winner to see off Hertha Berlin 2-1.

Benedikt Hoewedes had earlier headed the Royal Blues in front but Salomon Kalou's 73rd-minute header looked set to earn Hertha a share of the spoils.

Meanwhile, Bayer Leverkusen were held to a 0-0 draw at Hamburg and promoted Darmstadt's good start to life in the top half continued with a 2-0 victory at Augsburg.

Sandro Wagner and Peter Niemeyer both netted in the first half as Darmstadt climbed into the

top half of the table and left Augsburg, who are in this season's Europa League, third from bottom.

Eintracht Frankfurt host Gladbach in Saturday's late game before Cologne entertain Hanover 96 and Ingolstadt go to bottom club VfB Stuttgart on Sunday.

Standings table with columns: P, W, D, L, GF, GA, Pts. Lists various clubs like Bayern, Dortmund, Schalke, etc.

British Soccer Results/Standings

LONDON, Oct. 17, (AFP): Collated British Soccer results on Saturday:

Large table containing Premier League, Championship, League One, League Two, Scottish Soccer Results, and English Soccer Standings.

Arsenal down Watford 3-0 as Liverpool held by Spurs

Allardyce off to losing start: Vardy double stuns Saints

WATFORD, United Kingdom, Oct. 17, (AFP): Alexis Sanchez continued his remarkable scoring streak as Arsenal regained second place in the Premier League table with a 3-0 win at Watford on Saturday.

The Chile forward opened the scoring in the 62nd minute to record his seventh goal in his last four Arsenal outings.

The 26-year-old also scored once



Manchester United's Wayne Rooney (right), grabs a hold of Everton's John Stones during the English Premier League soccer match between Everton and Manchester United at Goodison Park Stadium, Liverpool, England on Oct. 17. (AP)

for his country against Brazil and twice against Peru in 2018 World Cup qualifying, bringing his total since Sept 26 to 10 goals in just six games.

Arsene Wenger's side have a home date with Bayern Munich in the Champions League on Tuesday and will go into that game having been tested in all areas of the pitch by Watford, who are finding goals hard to come by on their return to the Premier League.

Wins earlier in the day for Manchester City, Manchester United — who temporarily moved above Arsenal into second place — and West Ham United had put added pressure on the Gunners to perform at Vicarage Road.

Laurent Koscielny, back from a hamstring injury, ousted Gabriel in central defence in the only change to the side that had beaten United 3-0 directly before the international break.

That meant Theo Walcott continued up front, with Olivier Giroud forced to bid his time on the bench.

Arsenal applied early pressure and Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes made a smart stop low down after Walcott had met Aaron Ramsey's cross from the right with a cushioned header.

Sanchez, back from a profitable if lengthy trip to South America to represent Chile, was next to have a go, cutting in from the left and unleashing from outside the box, but again Gomes was able to save.

But he was also indebted to goalkeeper Simon Mignolet for producing three important saves, which meant that although Liverpool have now won only once inside 90 minutes in their last 10 games, their manager was spared defeat on his first outing.

Klopp will have drawn encouragement from his team's combativeness, particularly against a team who had crushed Manchester City 4-1 in their previous home game, and will now turn his thoughts to his first home game against Rubin Kazan in the Europa League on Thursday.

Mauricio Pochettino's Spurs, meanwhile, are now unbeaten in seven games — the longest run in the division — having ended a run of five straight league defeats against Liverpool.

Klopp made just two changes to the last team selected by his sacked predecessor Brendan Rodgers as Adam Lallana and Origi replaced knee ligation injury victim Danny Ings and Daniel Sturridge, who was absent with a knock.

Clad in a black tracksuit, Klopp was quickly out on the touchline to offer encouragement to his new charges, who lined up in a 4-3-2-1 formation with Lallana and Philippe Coutinho supporting lone striker Origi.

Aggressive pressing was the cornerstone of Klopp's approach at Borussia Dortmund and Liverpool made an energetic start that saw Origi head

against the crossbar from one of a succession of early corners.

Southampton 2, Leicester 2 Premier League top scorer Jamie Vardy hit two second half goals to help Leicester City steal a 2-2 draw with another dramatic fightback at Southampton on Saturday.

Defensive lynchpins Jose Fonte and Virgil van Dijk put Southampton ahead at half time. But they could not resist the brilliant Vardy-led fightback which kept Leicester in fifth place.

England international Vardy now leads the Premier League charts with nine goals — eight coming in the last six games.

He could easily have had a hat-trick against a Saints side looking for a third straight league win.

After the goals from Southampton skipper Fonte and £13 million (£17.5 million euro) signing Van Dijk, the home side seemed to be cruising.

Dutchman Van Dijk had another header cleared off the line by Danny Drinkwater.

But Leicester boss Claudio Ranieri, who revealed this week he had been approached by Southampton before they appointed Ronald Koeman last year, sent on Nathan Dyer and Riyad Mahrez for the second half and the Foxes were a different team.

In the 66th minute, Dyer crossed for Vardy, under little pressure, to head almost casually beyond slow-to-react goalkeeper Kelvin Davis.

Celtic return to top with Motherwell win

MOTHERWELL, United Kingdom, Oct. 17, (AFP): Celtic returned to the summit of the Scottish Premiership despite missing a host of chances in a 1-0 win over Motherwell at Fir Park on Saturday.

Aberdeen's 2-0 defeat away to Ross County on Friday — their third straight loss in the league — meant Celtic knew they could leapfrog the Dons at the top of the table if they could avoid defeat to Motherwell.

After some early pressure it was Nadir Ciftci, making his first start in the league for the Hoops since joining from Dundee United in the summer, who fired Celtic in front in the 15th minute after Kris Commons' initial effort had been saved.

The Glasgow giants then missed a number of opportunities to add to their advantage while they had two good claims for penalties turned down by referee Alan Muir as Mark McGhee's return as Motherwell manager got off to a losing start.

“For 70 minutes it was very satisfying but we should have scored more goals and we should have had at least one penalty, maybe two,” Celtic manager Ronny Deila said.

“In the last 20 minutes we should have been braver on the ball and kept it more so we didn't have to stress so much.”

Motherwell manager Mark McGhee thought the result was about right.

“The first half we felt like we were playing with a missing player but there was a 20 minute spell at the end when we did a lot bet-

ter,” McGhee, in his second spell in charge, said.

“We might have nicked something but I think them winning 1-0 was just about the balance of the game.”

Celtic made three changes for the match as Ciftci was handed a rare start up front in place of top scorer Leigh Griffiths, who could only find a place on the bench after recovering from an injury picked up on international duty.

“I think that was a good result for us. We were playing with a missing player but there was a 20 minute spell at the end when we did a lot bet-



Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (right), vies with Levante's Moroccan defender Zou during the Spanish League football match Real Madrid CF vs Levante UD at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in Madrid on Oct. 17. (AFP)

CR7 overtakes Raul Ronaldo sends Real top

MADRID, Oct. 17, (Agencies): Real Madrid opened a two-point lead over Villarreal at the top of La Liga when Cristiano Ronaldo set a club scoring record in a 3-0 stroll at home to Levante on Saturday.

Marcelo fired Real ahead in the 27th minute at the Bernabeu when he exchanged passes with Ronaldo and blasted the ball past Ruben in the Levante goal.

Ronaldo made it 2-0 three minutes later when he cracked a long-range effort into the corner, his 324th Real goal putting him one clear of former Spain striker Raul.

It ended a rare four-match goal drought in Spain's top flight for the Portugal captain, his joint-worst run since he joined Real in 2009.

Substitute Jese skipped past his marker and drove the ball high into the net to make it 3-0 eight minutes from time as Real secured a morale-boost-

ing win ahead of Wednesday's Champions League Group A match at Paris St Germain.

Levante squandered the few

chances they created, although forward Deyverson did force a good save from Real's former Levante goalkeeper Keylor Navas shortly before Ronaldo's goal.

Champions Barcelona can join Real, who were missing several key players including Karim Benzema and Luka Modric, through injury, on 18 points with a win at home to Rayo Vallecano later on Saturday.

Barca have lost their last two away matches, falling 4-1 at Celta Vigo and 2-1 at Sevilla, and are still without talisman Lionel Messi and captain Andres Iniesta, who are out injured.

Villarreal can reclaim top spot if they beat visiting Celta Vigo on Sunday, when fifth-placed Atletico Madrid play at Real Sociedad.