

Barca topple Spurs on penalties after 2-2 draw

Shaqiri shines in debut as Liverpool rout Man U

CHICAGO, July 29, (AFP): Liverpool scored three second half goals as they wrapped up their pre-season tour of America on Saturday with a dominating 4-1 victory over Manchester United at Michigan Stadium.

Xherdan Shaqiri put a stamp on his Liverpool debut with a spectacular bicycle-kick goal to round out the scoring in the International Champions Cup match in front of a crowd of 101,000.

Shaqiri, of Switzerland, was one of five recent high profile signings which saw Liverpool shell out more than 200 million pounds (\$260 million US) in an attempt to close the gap on Premier League champions Manchester City.

It was a nice way for the Reds to finish up their US exhibition swing as they now travel back to Merseyside before continuing their preparations for the season with a training camp in France beginning next week.

Sadio Mane converted a penalty to open the scoring for Liverpool in the 28th minute.

Manchester United's 22-year-old midfielder Andreas Pereira tied the game 1-1 in the 31st minute off a free kick.

But Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool squad seized command in the second half, starting with Daniel Sturridge's 66th-minute strike.

Shaqiri, 26, did the heavy lifting on the play, outmuscling a United defender and then slipping a pass back to Sturridge who made it 2-1.

Sheyi Ojo then scored off a spot-kick in the 74th minute. That set the stage for Shaqiri to bring the packed stadium to its feet eight minutes later with his overhead kick from inside the box off a nice feed from Ben Woodburn.

Barcelona 2, Spurs 2

In Pasadena, Ernesto Valverde expects a bright future for summer signing Artur after the Brazilian midfielder netted a stunning goal on his Barcelona debut.

The La Liga champions have lost the services of experienced midfield duo Andres Iniesta and Paulinho since



Barcelona's Abel Ruiz (left), and Tottenham midfielder Cameron Carter-Vickers go after the ball during the second half of an International Champions Cup tournament soccer match on July 28 in Pasadena, Calif. Barcelona won on penalty kicks after the match was tied 2-2 in regulation. (AP)

the end of last season, but splashed out 40 million euros to bring in Artur from Brazilian outfit Gremio.

The 21-year-old made an instant impression in Barcelona's opening encounter in the International Champions Cup pre-season tournament on Saturday after firing home in a 2-2 draw against Tottenham Hotspur, before the Catalans triumphed 5-3 on penalties.

Barcelona boss Valverde has confirmed that he still wants to add to his options in the middle of the park, but was encouraged by the early signs from Artur during an impressive first half display in Pasadena, California.

But Barcelona's weakened team dominated the opening half and went ahead through a devastatingly simple

15th minute opener. Andre Gomes delivered an inswinging cross from the left, Rafinha escaped at the far post and headed the ball back into the six-yard box, where Munir cushioned it into the net from point-blank range.

A second arrived courtesy of Artur. Rafinha laid the ball back to the midfielder on the edge of the area and he effortlessly swept it into the far top corner beyond the helpless Gazzaniga.

Another new Brazilian signing, Malcolm, was introduced by Valverde at half-time and he came close to marking his Barcelona debut with a goal after taking on right-back Serge Aurier and firing a low shot towards the near post which was smartly diverted behind by goalkeeper Michel Vorm.

But after Valverde introduced a raft of teenagers into the fray, Spurs began to pull themselves back into the game and pulled level with two goals in as many minutes.

First, the Barcelona defence failed to deal with Ben Davies' left wing cross and after Christian Eriksen saw his shot blocked, Son Heung-min latched onto the rebound to divert a shot into the unguarded net.

Man City 3, Bayern 2

In Miami, Pepe Guardiola finished Manchester City's US tour with a deserved 3-2 victory over former club Bayern Munich, but his evening was soured with an injury to new signing Riyad Mahrez.

Two goals from substitute Bernardo Silva helped Manchester City come from 2-0 down to end a run of two defeats in this International Champions Cup campaign with youngster Lukas Nmecha scoring in between.

Mahrez, however, went down twice with what looked like an ankle problem. He was eventually forced off after just 27 minutes and looked in discomfort.

With the traditional English season opener — the Community Shield — taking place next Sunday at Wembley against Chelsea, coach Guardiola will assess the Algerian's fitness as the start of the Premier League campaign looms into view.

Meanwhile Guardiola's squad flew back to Manchester at the end of the Saturday match.

City's opening games against Borussia Dortmund and Liverpool had both ended in narrow defeats, but with Guardiola opting for familiarity — eight players in the starting lineup here had begun all three games of this US tour — it was another young side full of running.

Bayern's main men Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery looked dangerous on the ball, yet with Mahrez afforded plenty of space in midfield the English champions dominated the early stages and really should have opened the scoring.

Mahrez, who had already spent a few minutes getting treatment after being challenged, sent German-born City striker Nmecha through only for his shot to be saved by Sven Ulreich.

No-one could begrudge this young

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City side a share of the spoils, but the game was turned on its head with 20 minutes remaining.

A first City appearance for 17-year-old Spanish attacking midfielder Adrian Bernabe quickly resulted in a third goal for Guardiola's side. The former Barcelona youngster teed up Silva who wriggled clear in the area before drilling low past Ulreich for the winner.

Chelsea 1, Inter 1

In Nice, France, Chelsea beat Inter Milan 5-4 on penalties as goalkeeper Willy Caballero saved from Milan Skriniar in the shootout following a 1-1 draw in their opening game of the International Champions Cup.

Spain international Pedro struck after just eight minutes in Nice, slotting in a rebound after Inter keeper Samir Handanovic saved from a lively Alvaro Morata.

It was a second goal in as many games for Pedro, who celebrated his 31st birthday on Saturday, after he netted the winner in Monday's 1-0 victory over Perth Glory in Australia.

Inter levelled early in the second half through Roberto Gagliardini, whose drilled shot proved too much for Argentina's Caballero after fellow half-time substitute Tiemoue Bakayoko gave the ball away.

New Chelsea signing Jorginho nearly won it with a curling effort that forced Handanovic into a fine sprawling stop, while Tammy Abraham couldn't hit the target as he tried to steer home an Emerson cross.

'Qatar WC bid used black operations'

LONDON, July 29, (AFP): Qatar's successful, controversy-plagued bid to host the 2022 World Cup has been hit by further allegations that they used a secret "black operations" propaganda campaign to undermine rival bids in violation of FIFA rules, according to The Sunday Times.

The newspaper — which also made allegations in 2014 about Qatar buying the vote but of which they were subsequently cleared after a two-year long FIFA investigation led by American lawyer Michael Garcia — says emails leaked to them by a whistleblower from the bid team show they paid a US-based office of a public relations firm as well as former CIA agents to disseminate "fake propaganda" concerning main rivals Australia and the United States during their campaign to host the 2022 competition.

Qatar, to general surprise, beat the Australian and US bids as well as South Korea and Japan to the right to host the quadrennial football showpiece. Russia were awarded the 2018 edition at the same time, seeing off, amongst others, England.

The gas-rich Gulf state's strategy was to recruit influential individuals in order to

attack bids in their respective countries, creating the impression there was "zero support" to host the World Cup among the population, the paper said.

One of the core criteria considered by FIFA is said to be that the bids should have a strong backing from domestic populations. Bidders are also prohibited from making "any written or oral statement of any kind, whether adverse or otherwise, about the bids or candidatures of any other member association" under FIFA guidelines.

But one of the leaked emails the Times claims to have obtained was sent to Qatar's deputy bid leader Ali al-Thawadi, and allegedly shows the state was aware of plots to spread "poison" against other bidders in the running before Qatar won the right to host the World Cup in December 2010.

Such actions went as far as planning a resolution for US congress on the "harmful" effects of the American World Cup proposition during the week of the vote, as well as approaching and paying a US professor \$9,000 (7,723 euros, £6,865) to compose a report on the economic burden the competition would present.

Atlanta United edge Impact

Rooney scores, DC United win on late own goal

WASHINGTON, July 29, (AP): Wayne Rooney scored his first MLS goal to help DC United beat the Colorado Rapids 2-1 on Saturday night.

United (4-9-5), who won for just the second time since May 19, took a 2-1 lead on an own goal in the 90th minute when Ulises Segura's cross deflected off Colorado's Niki Jackson into the net.

Rooney, the 32-year-old English star who ranks second with 208 career Premier League goals, opened the scoring in the 33rd minute. Rooney ran onto a pass from Luciano Acosta and slipped it between the legs of Tim Howard into the net.

Colorado's Kellyn Acosta, who was acquired in trade with FC Dallas on Monday, chipped a first-time over goalkeeper David Ousted and inside the near post to make it 1-1 in the 82nd.

The Rapids (4-12-5) are winless in their last five games.

Atlanta United 2, Impact 1

In Montreal, Josef Martinez scored his 23rd and 24th goals in MLS-leading Atlanta's victory over Montreal in a rain-delayed game.

With 11 games left in the regular season, Martinez is only three short of the MLS season record of 27 goals

shared by three players. Atlanta (14-4-5) has a four-game unbeaten string.

Ignacio Piatti scored for Montreal (9-13-1). Goalkeeping coach Joel



New York Red Bulls defender Tim Parker (26) and Columbus Crews' Patrick Mullins (32) battle for the ball during the second half of an MLS soccer match on July 28 in Harrison, New Jersey. (AP)

Bats acted as Montreal coach as Remi Garde served a one-game suspension.

Atlanta opened the scoring in the 31st minute. Hector Villalba won a race for a ball down the right flank and crossed a ball in front that defender Rudy Camacho just missed before a leaping Martinez headed it under the crossbar.

Crew 3, Red Bulls 2

In Harrison, NJ, Patrick Mullins had a goal and an assist and Jonathan Mensah scored his first goal of the season to lead Columbus past New York.

Zack Steffen had four saves, including

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a diving stop on Aaron Long's header, for Columbus (10-7-6). The Crew have won back-to-back games for the first time since winning three in a row in May.

Mensah, a 28-year-old defender, opened the scoring in the seventh minute. New York's Michael Murillo picked up the ball when he mistakenly thought it was out of bounds, giving Columbus a free kick. Pedro Santos' entry was headed by Mullins to Mensah for the finish from near the spot.

Toronto FC 3, Fire 0

In Toronto, Jozy Altidore, Jonathan Osorio and Sebastian Giovinco scored in the second half in Toronto FC's victory over Chicago.

Defending champion Toronto (6-11-4) won for the first time at home since May 18. Chicago (6-12-5) has lost five straight and is 1-5-3 in its last nine.

Altidore opened the scoring in the 52nd minute off a rebound. The US star celebrated by taking off his orange boot and pretending to use it as a phone.

Whitecaps 4, Minnesota United 2

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Alphonso Davies showed why he landed a big transfer deal with German soccer giant Bayern Munich, dazzling the home crowd in the Vancouver Whitecaps' 4-2 victory over Minnesota United on Saturday night.

The 17-year-old Canadian midfielder had two goals and two assists in his homecoming. He missed Vancouver's three previous matches as negotiations took place over his \$22 million transfer.

FC Dallas 3, Sporting KC 2

In Kansas City, Kansas, Michael Barrios had his first MLS hat trick to help FC Dallas beat Sporting Kansas City.

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