

SPORTS

Messi and Suarez shine as Barca humiliate Huesca

Hertha leave Schalke winless

BARCELONA, Sept 2, (Agencies): Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez scored twice each as La Liga champions Barcelona turned on the style to hammer Huesca 8-2 on Sunday and join Real Madrid as the only teams in the league to win their opening three games.

Top-flight debutants Huesca took a shock early lead in their first league visit to the Nou Camp when Colombian forward Cucho Hernandez deflected the ball in from point-blank range but Messi leveled in the 16th, cannoning a shot in off the post.

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An own goal from Jorge Pulido gave Barca the lead and Suarez scored for the first time in five games in all competitions to extend their advantage, although Huesca's Alex Gallar pulled one back before halftime to make it 3-2.

Any hope of a revival from the visitors was soon killed off by three Barca goals in 11 minutes from Ousmane Dembele, Ivan Rakitic and Messi while Jordi Alba capped a brilliant performance to score and Suarez added goal number eight from the penalty spot in stoppage time.

Karim Benzema scored twice and Gareth Bale notched another for Real Madrid in a 4-1 thrashing of Leganes Atletico Madrid crashed to defeat in La Liga.

Benzema grabbed a second-half double and might have got his hat-trick had Sergio Ramos passed on the penalty he scored after a foul on Marco Asensio.

Atletico lost more ground on their city neighbours as they sank to a 2-0 defeat at Celta Vigo which coach Diego Simeone described as "a major wake-up call".

At the Santiago Bernabeu, Bale broke the deadlock with a smart half-volley, which was briefly cancelled out by Leganes' Guido Carrillo, who converted his own spot-kick to ensure Thibaut Courtois' first Madrid contribution was to pick the ball out of his own net.

Rejuvenated under new coach Julen Lopetegui and, perhaps, lib-

erated by Ronaldo's absence, Bale and Benzema impressed again. Bale has now scored three times and Benzema four from the first three La Liga games of the season.

Real have also taken maximum points from their opening three fixtures in contrast to the same point last season when they were already five behind Barcelona.

Leganes' underwhelming start under new boss Mauricio Pellegrino continues. They are yet to post a victory.

Keylor Navas was named last season's best goalkeeper by UEFA on Thursday but was only deemed second choice here by Lopetegui, who handed Courtois his debut after joining from Chelsea earlier this month.

Luka Modric took the place of Isco, in a midfield three with Casemiro and Toni Kroos. Bale and Asensio supported Benzema up front.

Real's confident start saw Asensio skip in behind but his lifted finish floated just over, before Bale's cross was too quick for the straining head of Benzema at the back post.

The first goal came after Ramos' pass found Dani Carvajal as the furthest man forward and the full-back's clever header back towards the penalty spot wrong-footed everyone except Bale. The Welshman arched his right leg over the bouncing ball, his finish just enough to beat Ivan Cuellar.

Real looked in control but, against the run of play, Leganes earned a lifeline when Casemiro tripped Javier Eraso in the box. Carrillo sidefooted left as Courtois dived right.

Benzema was unlucky to restore the lead when his fired shot was denied only by the foot of Cuellar but the striker did not have to wait long. Three minutes into the second half he headed in Asensio's cross from the left after winning a tussle with Leganes' Jonathan Silva.

Referee Jaime Latre initially blew for a foul but, after consulting VAR, the replay showed Silva had been the aggressor and the goal stood.

There was no doubt about Benzema's second. He exchanged a one-two with Modric on the edge of the area and, drifting right, dragged his shot left, back across goal and into the bottom corner.



Real Madrid's Belgian goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois warms up before the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid CF and Club Deportivo Leganes SAD at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on Sept 1. (AFP)

He might have had his hat-trick had Ramos opted to delegate penalty duties after Asensio fell over a thoughtless challenge from Leganes captain Unai Bustinza. But Ramos took the spot-kick and made no mistake.

Atletico coach Simeone said he "assumed responsibility" as his side went down to goals from Celta's Maximilian Gomez and Spain forward Iago Aspas.

Atletico drew their opener against Valencia before making amends with a 1-0 home win over Rayo Vallecano but they have now dropped points for the second time this season.



Ondrej Duda scored a goal in each half to inspire Hertha Berlin to a 2-0 victory in Gelsenkirchen on Sunday, leaving opponents Schalke with no points from their opening two Bundesliga games.

Having finished second to Bayern Munich last season, Schalke have made the worst possible start to the current campaign. Their hopes of bouncing back from an opening day defeat to Wolfsburg were dashed by a well-organized Hertha side on Sunday.

Domenico Tedesco's men should have gone ahead on 13 minutes when Hertha's Marko Grujic conceded a penalty with a clear handball, but Daniel Caligiuri dragged his spot-kick wide of the post.

Within minutes, Schalke had paid dearly for their missed opportunity, as Hertha surged forward with a long ball, and Duda's deflected shot put the Berliners in front.

Schalke's miserable evening was crowned seconds from time, when Yevhen Konoplyanka was sent off for bringing down Dennis Jastrzembski in front of goal, and

Duda converted the resulting free-kick to give Hertha their first away win over Schalke in 14 years.

RB Leipzig are also still searching for a first league win of the season, after they were held to a 1-1 draw by promoted side Fortuna Duesseldorf earlier in the day.

After a heavy defeat in Dortmund last week, Leipzig were facing a nightmare start to the season when Matthias Zimmermann fired Duesseldorf in front, before Jean-Kevin Augustin spared his side's blushes with a 68th-minute equalizer.

"I think they underestimated us today," Zimmermann told Sky. "We played brilliantly going forward, and created a lot of chances. Sadly, we lost two points in the end." Leipzig made a nervy start to the game, and Marvin Ducksch squandered a gilt-edged opportunity to put Duesseldorf ahead after just six minutes.

Augustin found the net for Leipzig just before half-time, bundling in the rebound after Emil Forsberg had stung the palms of Fortuna keeper Michael Rensing. The Frenchman, though, was ruled off-side.

Duesseldorf wasted no time after the break and took a deserved lead on 47 minutes, Zimmermann linking up with Niko Giesselmann to sweep the ball into the bottom corner.

The home side responded with tenacity and were rewarded when Augustin picked up a loose ball in the box and prodded it past Rensing.

Matheus Cunha came within inches of scoring a brilliant winner for Leipzig ten minutes from time, but his overhead kick bounced just the wrong side of the post, before Ducksch forced a flying save from Peter Gulacsi at the other end.

Impact rout NYCFC

Resilient Seattle win 8th straight

SEATTLE, Sept 2, (AP): Raul Ruidiaz scored from the run of play, Nico Lodeiro converted a penalty kick and the Seattle Sounders took advantage of an own goal to beat Sporting Kansas City 3-1 on Saturday in a game between two of the hottest teams in MLS.

The Sounders (12-9-5) extended their club-record winning streak to eight games and set a league mark for consecutive wins in the non-shootout era (2000-present). The old mark of seven straight was set by Kansas City in 2012 and matched by Seattle with last Sunday's 1-0 victory at Portland.

Sporting (13-7-6) saw its four-game winning streak halted.

Unbeaten in their last 11 (9-0-2), the Sounders had to come from behind in

this one after Diego Rubio put Kansas City on the board just 96 seconds into the game.

Ruidiaz tied it in the 12th minute with a 5-yard shot straight in front of a wide-open net as goalkeeper Tim

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Meila had come off his line to play a crossing pass.

Seattle went up 2-1 in the 52nd minute. Harry Shipp had the ball on the left side of Meila's 6-yard box. His cross deflected off the right calf of Graham Zusi and into the far side of the net.

Just four minutes later, Shipp sent

another cross in from the left side. KC's Ike Opara went up for it, but the ball glanced off his right arm. A penalty kick was called, and Nicolas Lodeiro drilled it into the back left corner.

Impact 3, Red Bulls 0
French defenders Rod Fanni and Bacary Sagna each scored on headers, Ignacio Piatti added a third and Montreal beat MLS-leading New York.

Both Frenchmen scored their first goals for the Impact (11-14-3). Fanni scored first off a corner in the 30th minute. Sagna followed eight minutes later off a free kick, directing the ball past goalkeeper Luis Robles. Piatti added his 13th in stoppage time.

The Red Bulls (17-7-4) had a four-game road unbeaten streak snapped.

Ipswich's win drought goes on

LONDON, Sept 2, (AFP): Ipswich were denied their first win of the Championship season as arch rivals Norwich rescued a 1-1 draw in the East Anglian derby on Sunday.

Paul Hurst's strugglers took the lead in the 57th minute through Gwion Edwards.

But Moritz Leitner equalized for Norwich 14 minutes later in a fiercely-contested clash at Portman Road.

The result means Ipswich remain in the relegation zone, one place above bottom club Reading, with Norwich climbing to 17th.

Ipswich were dominating the play and they deservedly took the lead in the when Edwards' shot was deflected in after on-loan Burnley forward Jon Walters won a header in the penalty area.

But Norwich drew level when a

shot from Leitner from just outside the penalty went through a crowd of players and into the Ipswich net.

In the day's other second tier action, Bristol City moved into the play-off places after coming from behind to beat Blackburn 4-1 at Ashton Gate.

Blackburn took a 13th-minute lead in bizarre circumstances as City allowed a low inswinging corner from the right by Charlie Mulgrew to enter their net unaided, with goalkeeper Niki Maenpaa flat-footed and no one defending the near post.

However, Lee Johnson's side were level at half-time thanks to Josh Brownhill's effort.

City completed their revival in the second half with further goals from Marley Watkins, Famara Diedhiou and Marlon Pack.



Vancouver Whitecaps' Kei Kamara (23) gets his head on the ball after taking a pass in front of San Jose Earthquakes goalkeeper Andrew Tarbell, but misses the net during the second half of an MLS soccer game in Vancouver, British Columbia on Sept 1. (AP)

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