

Italian Old Ladies have 16-point advantage

Juve win after two sent off, Napoli miss late penalty

NAPLES, Italy, March 4, (RTRS): Serie A leaders Juventus held on to win 2-1 at Napoli in a stormy top-of-the-table clash which saw both teams have a player sent off and Lorenzo Insigne miss a late penalty for the hosts.

The win, courtesy of goals from Miralem Pjanic and Emre Can, took Juve 16 points clear of Napoli and almost certainly wrapped up an eighth straight title for the unbeaten Turin giants who have 72 points out of a possible 78 with 12 games left.

Juventus raced into a 2-0 halftime lead after Napoli goalkeeper Alex Meret was sent off in the 25th minute. The visitors then had Pjanic dismissed and Napoli's Jose Callejon pulled one back before Insigne let the Turin side off the hook.

The game hinged on an incident in the 25th minute when Napoli full-back Kevin Malcuit's back pass was intercepted by Cristiano Ronaldo, forcing Meret to come out of his penalty area and lunge at the Portuguese forward who went to ground.

The referee awarded a straight red card without reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor. Replays, though, suggested that, although Ronaldo had to jump over Meret's outstretched leg, no contact was made.

"The rules, as I understand them, say



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Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo (center), struggles for the ball with Napoli's Kevin Malcuit (left), and Allan during the Serie A soccer match between Napoli and Juventus at the San Paolo stadium in Naples, Italy on March 3. (AP)

Balotelli's flying volley helps Marseille sink St Etienne

D.C. United beat defending champions Atlanta United

WASHINGTON, March 4, (Agencies): Luciano Acosta scored and assisted on Paul Arriola's goal to help D.C. United beat defending champions Atlanta United 2-0 on Sunday night in the MLS opener for both teams.

Bill Hamid had two saves for his fourth shutout in his last five regular-season starts.

D.C. United is unbeaten in its last 11 regular-season matches.

Los Angeles FC 2, Sporting Kansas City 1

Adama Diomande scored in the fourth minute of stoppage time to lift Los Angeles FC past Sporting Kansas City.

Diomande cut back to evade a defender at the top-left corner of the box and blasted a rising shot.

Krisztian Nemeth opened the scoring for Sporting KC in the 16th, and Diego Rossi tied it in the 47th.

Meanwhile, Mario Balotelli scored

a superbly acrobatic volley and Florian Thauvin added a penalty to give Olympique de Marseille a 2-0 win over a toothless St Etienne on Sunday

that lifted them above their visitors and into fourth place in Ligue 1.

Mercurial striker Balotelli held off Loic Perrin and twisted his body to

volley the ball home from a corner in the 12th minute, before celebrating by grabbing a cellphone from a photographer in the Stade Velodrome to record the moment.

Thauvin struck the second from the spot nine minutes later following a handball by Mathieu Debuchy, sealing a straightforward win that put Marseille fourth on 44 points, one ahead of St Etienne.

Earlier in the afternoon, Olympique Lyonnais forward Moussa Dembele struck two second-half goals to round off a thumping 5-1 win over visitors Toulouse in their clash at the Groupama Stadium.

Memphis Depay opened the scoring for the third-placed home side after 10 minutes but the lead was short-lived as Matthieu Dossevi put Toulouse back on level terms five minutes later.

Bertrand Traore put Lyon back in front with a bizarre goal on the half-

hour, whipping a left-foot effort into the danger area that goalkeeper Baptiste Reynet allowed to fly past him.

Lyon went 3-1 up five minutes later when Nabil Fekir won a penalty which he fired home himself and Dembele's double put the icing on the cake for the hosts.

Lyon are now five points behind second-placed Lille, who won 1-0

SOCCER

at home to Dijon, and 22 adrift of runaway leaders Paris Saint Germain, who have 71 points.

Elsewhere, bottom side Guingamp secured a point with a scoreless draw at home to Nantes while Nice beat Strasbourg 1-0 in a game that saw Nice's Danilo and Strasbourg's Samuel Gomis both sent off after an ugly 89th minute confrontation.



In this Feb 20, 2019 file photo, Atletico forward Alvaro Morata reacts after scoring his side's opening goal but the goal was disallowed after a review by VAR during the Champions League, round of 16, first leg soccer match between Atletico Madrid and Juventus at Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid. (AP)

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