

Bayern cruise past Chelsea into Champions League quarters

Messi unstoppable as Barca reach CL last 8

BARCELONA, Spain, Aug 9, (AP): Just when it looked like Lionel Messi had nowhere to go, the Argentine great bamboozled half of Napoli's team before scoring from an exquisite solo effort that helped Barcelona reach the Champions League quarter-finals in Portugal.

Messi netted Barcelona's second goal in the 3-1 victory that sent the Spanish side past Napoli on a 4-2 aggregate score.

Messi's goal in the 23rd minute was arguably the pick of the 31 he has scored this season in all competitions.

Napoli appeared to have him in check when Messi received the ball all alone outside the right corner of the area.

Barcelona's all-time record scorer, however, dipped his head and took on the well-placed defense. He kept control of the ball despite being knocked over while going past three Napoli players. Three more tried to intervene but Messi found the angle to fire while losing his balance to send the ball past the goalkeeper and inside the far post.

Clement Lenglet and Luis Suárez also scored for Barcelona which advanced five months after it drew 1-1 in Naples before the pandemic stopped European soccer.

Barcelona will meet Bayern Munich on Friday in the quarter-finals to be played in Lisbon in a "bubble" format of tight security to prevent a coronavirus outbreak from derailing the competition's finale.

Bayern sealed their spot after beating Chelsea 4-1 with two goals from Robert Lewandowski to complete a 7-1 rout over two legs.

"We are more than satisfied with our first half," Suárez said. "Bayern is a great rival and is one of the favorites, along with us, of the eight that will be in Portugal."

Messi's beautiful goal doubled Barcelona's lead after Lenglet headed in a corner in the 10th. The opener settled Barcelona down after Napoli's Dries Mertens had given the hosts a scare by hitting the post shortly after kickoff.

Video review had a busy night. It disallowed another Messi goal for a handball by the forward and then awarded Messi a penalty after he slipped in front of Kalidou Koulibaly and was kicked in the lower left leg by the defender.

Messi spent several minutes re-



Napoli's Arkadiusz Milik gets in a shot during the Champions League Round of 16, second leg soccer match between Barcelona and Napoli at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, Spain on Aug 8. (AP)

ceiving medical attention, and Suárez stepped up to convert the spot kick. Barcelona coach Quique Setién said that Messi, who played the whole game, had a hard knock but that "I don't think he will have a problem."

Lorenzo Insigne pulled one back

for the visitors in first-half injury time with a penalty awarded after Ivan Rakitic fouled Mertens.

Gennaro Gattuso's side came out from halftime on the attack, and in need of two goals to go through.

Barcelona's defense held up and,

once the Rakitic-led midfield got control of play, Setién had time to give a debut to youth player Ramón Rodríguez.

"We have a lot to regret, we disappeared for half an hour and conceded incredible goals," Gattuso said. "I am

disappointed, I believe we could have done better."

Barcelona are searching for their first European Cup since 2015 and only a Champions League trophy will prevent it from ending the season without a title for the first time since 2014.

They lost the Spanish league title to Real Madrid last month and failed to reach the Copa del Rey final.

The comfortable win comes with Setién under fire from fans after Barcelona's disappointing finish in the league, coming second to Madrid. There was speculation in Spanish media that his future hinged on beating Napoli.

After champions Liverpool, Madrid, and Juventus all exited in the Round of 16, Barcelona will believe they have an even better chance to win a sixth title.

"This was the first forward step we wanted and now I hope that we play the matches ahead with the same attitude which we demonstrated here," Setién said.

The match at Camp Nou was played without spectators. Barcelona and large areas of northeast Spain are seeing a recent spike in cases of COVID-19, but health officials assured

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UEFA the game was safe to play despite the concerns of Napoli.

A moment of silence was held for the victims of the pandemic before kickoff.

The coronavirus pandemic has changed almost everything about the Champions League. Empty stadiums, games in August and a tournament in Portugal.

But Bayern Munich keep winning, and Robert Lewandowski keeps scoring.

The Poland striker scored twice and set up two more goals as Bayern beat Chelsea 4-1 on Saturday for a 7-1 win on aggregate in Munich to book a ticket to Lisbon.

Bayern has won 18 straight competitive games going back to February and hasn't lost since December.

"We wanted to win the game and show we were picking up where we left off," Bayern coach Hansi Flick told Sky, adding of Barcelona: "As with any opponent, we have the requisite respect and we're going to prepare well."

Lewandowski has 13 goals in seven Champions League games this season - putting Cristiano Ronaldo's record of 17 within reach - and 53 in 44 across all competitions.

Flyers 'clinch' East top seed

Knights beat Avs 4-3

TORONTO, Aug 9, (AP): Rookie Nicolas Aube-Kubel scored twice, and the Philadelphia Flyers defeated the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-1 on Saturday night to clinch the Eastern Conference's top seed through the playoffs.

The Lightning not only dropped the game in completing preliminary round-robin play with a 2-1 record, Tampa Bay's star defenseman Victor Hedman did not return after appearing to twist his right ankle while going down untouched midway through the first period.

Coach Jon Cooper didn't have an update on Hedman's status or how much time he might miss, though acknowledged his potential loss would create a notable hole in the Lightning's lineup.

Stankos has been out since sustaining a lower body injury before the start of training camp last month. Cooper would only list Rutta as being unfit to play.

Joel Farabee had a goal and assist, Tyler Pitlick scored into an empty net



Colorado Avalanche's J.T. Compher (37) is checked by Vegas Golden Knights' Nick Holden (22) during the first period of an NHL Stanley Cup qualifying round game in Edmonton, Alberta on Aug 8. (AP)

seed.

Aube-Kubel, who has seven goals in 45 career NHL games, enjoyed his first career NHL two-goal outing by staking the Flyers to a 2-0 lead by scoring less than seven minutes apart in the first period.

A Lightning turnover in their own zone led to Aube-Kubel standing in front and deflecting in Shayne Gostisbehere's shot from inside the blue line 7:40 in.

His second goal came on a 2-on-1 break during which he converted Sean Couturier's pass from the right wing.

Gostisbehere had a two-point outing in making his playoff debut after sitting out the first two games.

Alex Tuch scored 4:44 into overtime, Jonathan Marchessault had two goals and the Vegas Golden Knights beat the Colorado Avalanche 4-3 on Saturday to earn the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference.

The Golden Knights will face Chicago in the first round of the playoffs. The second-seeded Avs take on Arizona.

Tuch scored the winner on a shot over the shoulder of Avalanche goaltender Philipp Grubauer. The Avalanche tied the game with 1:02 left in regulation when J.T. Compher poked in the puck.

Marchessault scored in the second period and again early in the third when he was pulled down by Avalanche defenseman Ryan Graves on a breakaway. Awarded a penalty shot, Marchessault beat Grubauer to the glove side.

Nicolas Roy also scored for the Golden Knights, who finished 3-0 in the playoff seeding round between the top four teams. Colorado wound up 2-0-1. It was Tuch's third goal in round-robin play.

Buttler, Woakes lead remarkable comeback

England down Pak by 3 wickets in 1st Test

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 9, (AP): Jos Buttler and Chris Woakes led England to a three-wicket victory over Pakistan in the first Test.

The pair went on the counter-attack at the fall of the fifth wicket in England's second innings and shared a sixth-wicket stand of 139 on day 4 at Old Trafford. No fans were present for the exciting finale due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions.

Buttler was out for 75 while Woakes hit the winning runs and was undefeated on 84 as England finished on 277-7 for their 10th highest successful Test run chase.

Leg-spinner Yasir Shah (4-99) had put Pakistan in pole position with two wickets as England, chasing a target of 277 for victory, slipped from 86-1 to 117-5 in their second innings.

Ollie Pope (7) was the fifth man out to a remarkable delivery from left-armer Shaheen Afridi which flew off the pitch. As Pope flinched in surprise, the ball clattered into his glove and lobbed high towards Shadab Khan coming in from gul-

ly.

That dismissal brought Buttler

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and Woakes together and the game increasingly swung in England's favor.

Wicketkeeper Buttler more than made up for his poor match performance behind the stumps.

"I'm quite proud, if I take those chances (with the gloves) we'd have won two hours ago," Buttler told Sky Sports. "I'm very aware I didn't keep well, I missed some chances and at this level you can't afford to do that, no matter how many runs you score."

"Thoughts go through your head that if I don't score any runs I've maybe played my last game. But you have to shut those out and go and play your game."

When Buttler was out leg before wicket to Yasir, England only needed 21 runs to win.

Woakes, selected as a seamer, had shown his batting skills with a superb cover drive to bring up his half-century on an unpredictable wicket. Dom Bess (0 not out) was with Woakes at the end.

Earlier, Pakistan resumed on 137-8 and added a quickfire 32 runs before being bowled out for 169.

Broad finished with figures of 3-37, taking his tally to six in the match, and there were also two wickets apiece for Woakes and Stokes, who both had figures of 2-11.

Pakistan scored 326 in their first innings before dismissing England for 219.

The second of three Tests starts Thursday at Southampton.

Woakes has been in great form with the ball all summer but his innings, which included 10 fours, saw him turn match-winner with his highest score in more than two years.

Buttler owed a debt to his team after three costly misses behind the stumps in the first innings and paid with a superb counter-attacking innings that made good on the selectors' ongoing faith.

Only once before has a higher fourth-innings score won a Test in Manchester, Michael Vaughan's England against New Zealand in 2008.

A lunch score of 55-1 represented solid progress, Rory Burns the man to go to a fractional lbw decision in Mohammad Abbas' favour, with Dom Sibley going about his business methodically and Joe Root carefully negotiating a much-anticipated first spell from Yasir.

The steady accumulation continued in the afternoon until Sibley broke ranks, swinging hard when Yasir tossed one up to the stumps and sending to slip. After 114 balls and 36 tough runs it was a soft end.

Having broken the 64-run stand, Pakistan went on the charge as England's middle-order crumbled in taxing conditions. Root gave it away on 42, shaping to steer Naseem Shah to his favorite outlet at third man but fending a rising delivery to Babar Azam.

Ben Stokes was beaten by lavish bounce from Yasir, with a light brush of the glove on the way through to Mohammad Rizwan.

After Pope's dismissal, with four wickets tumbling for 31 runs, the winning line now seemed distant and the pitch wholly unreliable.

But Buttler and Woakes put on exactly 50 in just 49 balls before tea. Both men reached half-centuries in the 63rd over, Buttler marginally quicker in 55 balls.

Pakistan slowed the rate by pushing out the field but the batsmen shifted accordingly, ticking off the century stand in little more than 20 overs then dragging the required runs under 50.

Pakistan burned their last two reviews in the space of eight balls before a slog-swept six from Buttler brought the winning line ever closer.

Yasir guaranteed England did not get there without a scare, winning another close call against Buttler and then seeing off Broad too, but Woakes remained.

MLS to resume regular season following Florida 'tournament'

WASHINGTON, Aug 9, (AP): Buoyed by the MLS is Back tournament and confident of its coronavirus protocols, Major League Soccer will resume its regular season with teams playing in their home cities.

The league's 26 teams will each play 18 games, with the first between FC Dallas and Nashville set for Wednesday. Dallas and Nashville will play three games against each other, having been forced to withdraw from the MLS is Back tournament because of COVID-19 cases.

A majority of games will be played without fans because of local regulations. Teams will be subject to a rigorous testing protocol and will use charter flights or buses.

"We believe we have a good plan, we believe our players and our staff are focused on adhering to our protocols, and if we're able to do that, we ought to be able to get our games in," MLS Commissioner Don Garber said Saturday during a conference call. "And if we can't do that in a way that's safe, and one that's ensuring the health of our players, we'll have to address it."

MLS continues to work with the Canadian teams because of travel restrictions. The Canadian teams - Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver - have not been included in the first phase of the schedule.

The plan comes as coronavirus cases and deaths mount across the country. Nearly 5 million people have contracted COVID-19 and 161,000 have died.

"We understand that getting back to play is going to have some challenges. We're aware of those challenges, we're prepared for it, we are understanding that it's not going to be easy," Garber said. "We know that we might have is-

suages that are going to disrupt us and might even force us to postpone games. We're aware of the need to be flexible, we're aware that we are entering a new normal for our industry."

The month-long MLS is Back tournament has been played without fans at ESPN's Wide World of Sports complex at Walt Disney World. The championship match is set for Tuesday between the Portland Timbers and Orlando City.

Players and team personnel have been sequestered in two Disney resorts for the duration of the tournament, which started July 8. The group stage matches counted toward the regular season.

MLS suspended the season March 12 because of the pandemic after teams had played two games each. Celebrating its 25th season, the league had added two expansion teams this year, Nashville and Inter Miami.

MLS is Back appeared that it might be derailed at the start when Dallas and Nashville had to drop out. But apart from those two teams there have been only two confirmed positive tests - one from Sporting Kansas City and one from Columbus.

After their game at Toyota Stadium on Wednesday, Dallas and Nashville will play again Aug 16. A third match between the two teams will be scheduled later.

"Having suffered the heartache of the Orlando Tournament, it's wonderful to be preparing for our first game in five months," Nashville coach Gary Smith said in a statement. "The players and staff are excited to be competing again and we would all like nothing more than to get into a rhythm of games to promote the team development we have all missed."



England's Chris Woakes bats during the fourth day of the first cricket Test match between England and Pakistan at Old Trafford in Manchester, England on Aug 8. (AP)