

Sports

Man United held by Wolves after Pogba's penalty woe

Pogba has now missed four Premier League penalties since the start of last season

WOLVERHAMPTON: Manchester United were forced to settle for a 1-1 draw against Wolves after Paul Pogba's penalty was saved by Rui Patrício at Molineux on Monday. Ole Gunnar Solskjær's side took the lead through Anthony Martial's second Premier League goal of the season in the first half.

Ruben Neves hit a brilliant equaliser for Wolves after the interval before France star Pogba was denied by Patrício. It was a curious decision for Pogba to take the spot-kick as Marcus Rashford had scored a penalty in last weekend's 4-0 victory over Chelsea and also memorably netted the Champions League last-16 winner from the spot against Paris Saint Germain last term.

Pogba has now missed four Premier League penalties since the start of last season. United would have gone top of the table with a win, but instead they were left to reflect on an inconsistent performance that underlined why Solskjær still has a lot of work to do to turn his team into title contenders.

While there were moments of promise in attack and defence, United didn't take their chances and crumbled too easily when they came under pressure in their second game of the season. At an average of 24 years and 173 days, Solskjær had picked United's youngest Premier League starting line-up since the final day of the 2016-17 campaign.

Daniel James made his maiden start for United after the close-season signing from Swansea scored his first goal as a substitute against Chelsea. There was no place in the matchday squad for Chile forward Alexis Sanchez, who has been linked with Inter Milan.

Solskjær has described James as United's 'x-factor', but the 21-year-old didn't win any friends when he was booked for diving in a failed attempt to win a free-kick from referee Jon Moss.

United threatened for the first time when another of their young guns Rashford spun past Ryan Bennett on the left side of the Wolves area and crossed towards Martial, who did not make enough contact as the ball flashed past him. It was a warning Wolves failed to heed as United took the lead with an incisive raid in the 27th minute.

REVITALISED WOLVES

Breaking inside from left, Luke Shaw found Jesse Lingard who moved the ball onto Rashford. Rashford slipped a perfectly-weighted pass to Martial in the Wolves area and the French forward blasted a superb strike into the roof of the net without breaking stride.

Solskjær had called for Martial to be more clinical and, his message received loud and clear, the Norwegian clapped approvingly on the touchline. Martial's goal took him to 50 for United in all competitions since his move from Monaco in 2015.

Martial should have doubled United's lead on the stroke of half-time when he pounced on Bennett's misplaced pass and eased past Willy Boly, only to tread on the ball when he seemed certain to score.

Well marshalled by Harry Maguire, United denied Wolves a single shot on target in the first half. But Wolves were revitalised after the interval by the introduction of the speedy Adama Traore. Suddenly, Maguire and company did not look so solid and Raul Jimenez glanced a free-kick against the far post with United keeper David De Gea rooted.

Wolves' pressure paid off in the 55th minute when a short corner was worked to Neves on the edge of the area and the Portugal midfielder curled a sublime strike into the top corner. Neves's eye-catching effort survived a VAR review for offside in the build-up and he



WOLVERHAMPTON: Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba reacts as he is fouled by Wolverhampton Wanderers' English defender Conor Coady in the area and wins a penalty during the English Premier League football match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Manchester United at the Molineux stadium in Wolverhampton, central England. — AFP

celebrated his 10th goal from outside the area since joining Wolves. United had a golden chance to reclaim the lead when Martial found Pogba in the Wolves area

and the France midfielder was clipped by Conor Coady. Pogba and Rashford appeared to discuss who should take the spot-kick. —AFP

Juventus gamble on Sarri delivering another style of Serie A title

MILAN: Juventus begin their Serie A campaign this weekend under new coach Maurizio Sarri as the multiple Italian champions gamble on the veteran delivering another style of Serie A title.

The Turin giants start their quest for a ninth consecutive title in Parma on Saturday but could be without Sarri on the bench after the 60-year-old was diagnosed with pneumonia on Monday.

Sarri returns to Italy after one turbulent season in the Premier League with Chelsea, having previously coached his hometown team Napoli for three seasons.

Chain-smoking Sarri's appointment, in place of the clean cut Massimiliano Allegri who had delivered the last five of their Serie A titles, is a break in tradition for Juventus.

But after also ditching their iconic black and white striped jersey last season, the club are looking for a change in direction.

Despite their success Juventus have often been criticised for their boring defensive style of play.

Club bosses want a more attractive eye-catching style of football in an attempt to increase their fan base outside of Italy.

While Sarri's only major title was the Europa League last season with Chelsea, he promises to give serial Italian champions Juventus a more dynamic style of play.

Goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, returning to Turin after a season at Paris Saint-Germain, thinks the change of direction can pay off.

"Those who follow the same path will always achieve the same results, so Juve are seeking the Champions League and wanted to try breaking away towards pastures new," said the 41-year-old.

"Sarri is not a revolution, nor a gamble. He simply represents an untested path, a whole other story."

Among Juventus's rivals this season will be Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli and Inter Milan, now coached by former Juventus boss Antonio Conte.

But Juventus have spent big giving Sarri a stellar squad to target a 36th Scudetto and their first Champions League title since 1996.

Cristiano Ronaldo, a player who Sarri insists "will make the difference", will again be central to attack with newly-signed Dutch star Matthijs De Ligt the jewel in defense alongside veterans Giorgio Chiellini and Leonardo Bonucci.

De Ligt's Ajax sent Juventus crashing out of the Champions League last season.

The midfield has been strengthened with PSG's Adrien Rabiot and former Arsenal star Aaron Ramsey, both acquired on free transfers but on large salaries.

For Juventus sporting director Fabio Paratici all the pieces are in place for Sarri to deliver another style of football.

"We're very happy with what has been done. We bought de Ligt,



Italian coach Maurizio Sarri

who all the top teams wanted," said Paratici.

"We managed to buy him, along with two big players on free transfers: Rabiot and Ramsey, who were courted by many."

"Juve has very high-level players in all departments, a squad of absolute value." — AFP

Salah U-turn on teammate's harassment scandal divides Egyptians

CAIRO: Egypt and Liverpool star Mohamed Salah has reignited heated views about a sexual harassment scandal involving his national team-mate Amr Warda in a CNN interview which aired Monday.

After Salah sent controversial tweets that demanded the disgraced Warda be given a "second chance" during this year's Africa Cup of Nations held in Egypt, Salah directly addressed his revised stance.

"What I meant to say is that (sexual harassment) happened before and is happening now. He has to get treatment or rehabilitation just to make sure that it is not going to happen again," Salah told CNN.

Warda was kicked out of Egypt's squad over multiple claims of sexual misconduct that surfaced online in June but was reinstated at the request of his team-mates.

Salah denied having a role in Warda rejoining the team. His wide-ranging interview, which also took shots at Egypt's football federation, attracted both supportive and critical reactions.

One Egyptian tweeted "Salah is lying... he did have a direct role in bringing Warda back to the team. He

supported him with this tweets".

Another young woman enthusiastically posted "we love and support you Mo Salah!".

Former national goalkeeper Ahmed Shobair waded into the debate, noting that Salah's tweets were written in coordination with the federation's former chairman Hany Abou Rida.

The EFA board tendered its resignation after highly-fancied Egypt crashed out of the tournament at the last-16 stage following a 1-0 defeat to South Africa, a match in which Warda played.

Salah, who helped Premier League giants Liverpool win the Champions League in June, reiterated in the interview that "my position is still the same... the people misunderstand what I am saying".

The outcry on social media is still raging though.

One woman criticised how Salah had handled the scandal differently for Egyptian and international audiences.

"What a pathetic attempt to save your image in the West, sexual harasser supporter. You're not fooling anyone but your fans who were already looking the other way," she posted on Twitter. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP			
Cardiff City v Huddersfield Town	21:45		
beIN SPORTS			
Charlton Athletic FC v Nottingham Forest FC	21:45		
beIN SPORTS			
Fulham FC v Millwall FC	21:45		
beIN SPORTS			
Leeds United FC v Brentford	21:45		
beIN SPORTS			
Preston North End v Stoke City FC	21:45		
beIN SPORTS			
Queens Park Rangers v Swansea City	21:45		
beIN SPORTS			
West Bromwich Albion FC v Reading FC	22:00		
beIN SPORTS			

Suarez who? Carroll admits low football IQ

LONDON: Andy Carroll has admitted his football IQ was so low he had to use Google to find out who Luis Suarez was when he joined Liverpool in 2011. Carroll moved to Merseyside for a record fee for a British player of £35 million (\$42 million) and teamed up with the Uruguyan superstar in attack.

The 30-year-old former England international striker excused his ignorance by saying he meant no disrespect to Liverpool or Suarez.

He said he was just much more interested in going out with his friends than following football off the pitch when he was making his name at his first club Newcastle.

Carroll, who has returned to Newcastle on a one year deal after being released by West Ham over the summer, had to Google Suarez while he was flying by helicopter to Liverpool to complete the transfer on the final day of the January 2011 transfer window.

Suarez had signed just days before from Ajax for just over £22 million but Carroll told the Newcastle United team website he had no idea who his future team-mate was.

"When I was here (at Newcastle), I'd go home, mess about with my mates, play football, go out, whatever, but I'd never watch football. I never knew any players," said Carroll, who earned his record move to Liverpool after scoring 31 goals in 80 appearances for the Magpies.

"I'd come in on the Friday or wake up on the Saturday morning say-



Luis Suarez (top) and Andy Carroll

ing: 'Who are we playing?' "I was completely oblivious to all the football that was going on. "When I was in the helicopter to Liverpool, I was like, 'I know Stevie G (Gerrard), I know (Jamie) Carragher. Who else?'"

"My agent at the time had to tell me and I would get it on Google and find out the team. "It's bad because it's Liverpool players, but it's not disrespectful — I just literally didn't watch football."

Carroll whose career has been wrecked by injuries — even his Liverpool debut was delayed due to an injury he had suffered at Newcastle — also assured the Newcastle faithful that he is no longer the wild man he was in his first spell at the club. —AFP

Man United 'disgusted' by racist abuse of Pogba

LONDON: Manchester United said they "utterly condemn" the racist abuse their World Cup-winning midfielder Paul Pogba received after he missed a penalty in the 1-1 draw with Wolverhampton Wanderers on Monday.

The 26-year-old Frenchman has missed four penalties since the start of last season — the most by a Premier League player — while team-mate and fellow penalty-taker Marcus Rashford has converted all four of his attempts in that time.

Pogba was assailed on social media, becoming the third player in England to have received racist abuse in the past week due to missing a penalty. United said they were "disgusted" by the abuse and "utterly condemn" it.

"The individuals who expressed these views do not represent the values of our great club and it is encouraging to see the vast majority of our fans condemn this on social media also," the club said in a statement.

"Manchester United has zero tolerance of any form of racism or discrimination and a long-standing commitment to campaigning against it through our #AllRedAllEqual initiative. "We will

work to identify the few involved in these incidents and take the strongest course of action available to us. We also encourage social media companies to take action in these cases."

Rashford tweeted his support for Pogba. "Manchester United is a family. @paulpogba is a huge part of that family. You attack him you attack us all..." the England international said.

Chelsea's Tammy Abraham and Championship side Reading's Yakou Meite have suffered similar abuse in the past week. Abraham missed the crucial penalty in the shootout loss to Liverpool in the Super Cup last Wednesday. The posts aimed at him were described as "abhorrent" by Chelsea and manager Frank Lampard said he was "disgusted".

Lampard also called for social media sites to do more to prevent players being abused while Abraham has said he wants to "silence the haters" with his performances on the pitch. Chelsea banned a supporter for life in July for racially abusing Manchester City's Raheem Sterling.

Five others were excluded for periods of between one and two years for abusive language. Ivory Coast international Meite missed a penalty in time added on for Reading on Sunday against Cardiff but his side had the match already wrapped up at 3-0. Some of the tweets aimed at Pogba were later deleted while several accounts appeared to have been taken down. Twitter's terms and conditions say it "takes action against behaviour that targets individuals with hateful conduct". — AFP