

## Sports

# Sixth-tier minnows pay big penalty as PSG cruise in French Cup

## Superstars Neymar and Kylian Mbappe rested

**PARIS:** Paris Saint-Germain rested superstars Neymar and Kylian Mbappe before defeating sixth-tier Linas-Monthlery 6-0 in the French Cup on Sunday as the amateur side were left to rue a missed penalty when trailing just 1-0.

The part-timers, whose budget is 2,000-times smaller than the Qatari-backed Parisian giants, trailed to a goal on the half-hour by teenager Adil Aouchiche. However, they were then awarded a penalty after Colin Dagba brought down Issa Cisse.

Up stepped Idrissa Kanoute but his tame spot kick was well-saved by Sergio Rico in the PSG goal. Less than a minute later, Uruguayan star Edinson Cavani, named captain for the match, tucked away PSG's second and the game was up.

Cavani, starting a game for the first time in two months, added his second just on the hour mark before Pablo Sarabia (63rd and 70th minutes) and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting (87th) completed the rout.

"We played seriously and with humility," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "We deserved to win, it was a good match for the team and the club and a good start to 2020." Tuchel was also full of praise for Cavani who has been linked with a winter transfer window move to Atletico Madrid in Spain. "Edi' is there to score, that's what we ask him to do. This will give him confidence, that's the best thing."

Andre Villas-Boas' Marseille needed penalties to win away to fourth-tier Trellisac in their last 64 tie. Lassana Diakhaby and Ange Gnaleko missed the crucial spot kicks for the minnows as the 10-time former winners

avoided a second straight cup exit to a side from National 2.

Abdoulaye Diaby scored for the hosts after 20 seconds following a goalkeeping howler by Yann Pele and France midfielder Dimitri Payet equalised after 20 minutes for the visitors who had Japan right-back Hiroki Sakai sent off in the closing stages of normal time. "In your worst dreams you don't need to suffer in that way," Villas-Boas said. "If we had been knocked-out without Sakai and with a humiliation like that, it would have been tough to take," he added.

Pele made up for his early mistake by saving Diakhaby and Gnaleko's efforts before Lucas Perrin slotted the winning penalty. Marseille were knocked out of the competition by Andrezieux at the same stage last season.

JS Saint-Pierroise on Saturday became only the second overseas-based team to win a French Cup knockout tie and it was achieved playing more than 9,000km from home. The club, based on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, and which once boasted the talents of current Marseille star Payet, defeated second-division Niort 2-1. An overseas side has only once before achieved a similar feat when Geldar FC of French Guiana made the round of 16 in the 1988-1989 season. Saint-Pierroise's goals were scored by Gerard Hubert and Ryan Ponti, both in the second half.

The home team's reply also came courtesy of a visiting player when Gervais Randrianarisoa put through his own goal just after the hour mark in the game played at Niort, which sits to the north of Bordeaux. — AFP



**BONDOUFLE:** Linas-Monthlery's goalkeeper Sergio Rico Gonzalez (R) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani during the French Cup football match between Linas-Monthlery and Paris Saint-Germain at the Stade Bobin in Bondoufle, south of Paris. — AFP

## Lakers' 20 blocks subdue Pistons

**LOS ANGELES:** Anthony Davis recorded 24 points, 11 rebounds and a season-best eight blocked shots to help the Los Angeles Lakers register a 106-99 victory over the visiting Detroit Pistons on Sunday night. LeBron James added 21 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists for his ninth triple-double of the season as the Lakers won their fifth consecutive game. Los Angeles blocked 20 shots, one shy of the franchise mark set against the Denver Nuggets on April 9, 1982. Alex Caruso scored 13 points, Dwight Howard added 11 points, nine rebounds and five blocked shots and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 10 for the Lakers. JaVale McGee swatted away six shots for Los Angeles, which shot 45.7 percent from the field and was 6 of 20 from 3-point range. Derrick Rose scored 28 points and reserve Sviatoslav Mykhailiuk added 14 points for the Pistons, who lost for the ninth time in the past 11 games. Langston Galloway tallied 13 points, Andre Drummond had 12 points, 18 rebounds and four blocked shots, and Sekou Doumbouya and Christian Wood added 11 points apiece.

**MIAMI HEAT 122 - PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS 111**  
Reserve point guard Goran Dragic had his first dou-

ble-double of the season — 29 points and 13 assists — as Miami ran its home record to 17-1 at the expense of Portland. Blazers point guard Damian Lillard scored a game-high 34 points and added 12 assists. Portland center Hassan Whiteside, playing his first game in Miami since the Heat traded him to the Blazers in July, had 21 points, a game-high 18 rebounds and two blocks. Miami, which never trailed and improved to 10-0 following a loss, also got 20 points from Bam Adebayo, 19 from Derrick Jones and 14 from Kendrick Nunn.

**LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS 135 - NEW YORK KNICKS 132**  
Montrezl Harrell scored 34 points, and Paul George and Lou Williams had 32 apiece as host Los Angeles defeated New York while having three players score at least 30 points in a game for the first time in franchise history. Williams connected on 6 of 10 3-pointers and recorded nine assists for the Clippers. Marcus Morris Sr. led the Knicks with 38 points, hitting 6 of 7 3-pointers. RJ Barrett had 24 points, while Julius Randle added 16 points and eight rebounds. George, who returned after missing Saturday's defeat to the Memphis Grizzlies with a tight left hamstring, converted 5 of 6 3-pointers and 9 of 14 shots in 26 minutes. He fouled out with 7:06 remaining.

**MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES 121 - PHOENIX SUNS 114**  
Jonas Valanciunas had eight of his team-high 30

points in a third-quarter runaway as Memphis took a big lead and held off a frantic finish by Devin Booker for a victory over host Phoenix. Booker finished with 40 points, including 14 in the final 5:28, during which the Suns rallied from a 14-point deficit to get as close as 115-112 with still 52.6 seconds to play. Valanciunas' 30 points came on 12-for-16 shooting, as the Grizzlies shot 54.2 percent from the field. He also grabbed eight rebounds, tying Jaren Jackson Jr. for team-high honors.

**MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES 118 - CLEVELAND CAVALIERS 103**

Gorgui Dieng collected 22 points and 13 rebounds as visiting Minnesota overcame squandering a 25-point lead to defeat Cleveland. Shabazz Napier finished with 21 points, like Dieng hitting 8 of 10 shots from the floor. Andrew Wiggins returned from a four-game absence due to illness to match Robert Covington with 15 points for the Timberwolves, who have won four of six on the heels of an 11-game losing streak. Dante Exum scored 24 of his career-high 28 points in the second half for the Cavaliers, who dropped their fourth straight game. Cavaliers disgruntled forward Kevin Love was held out of Sunday's game against his former team for rest purposes, one day after his verbal altercation with general manager Koby Altman. — Reuters

## Spanish Super Cup jets off to Saudi

**JEDDAH:** Spanish football crosses new horizons when its re-booted Super Cup competition begins tomorrow in Saudi Arabia, a move that will significantly boost the national federation's coffers but has angered human rights groups and local supporters.

Real Madrid and Valencia meet in the first semi-final in Jeddah tomorrow before Barcelona take on Atletico Madrid 24 hours later for a place in Sunday's final.

The Super Cup was a two-legged tie between the league champions and Copa del Rey holders but federation chief Luis Rubiales oversaw a dramatic shake-up last November, striking a three-year deal to play the tournament in Saudi Arabia.

The federation has not confirmed financial details but Spanish media reports say the deal is worth around 40 million euros annually.

The Spanish Super Cup is the latest high-profile sporting event to be held in Saudi Arabia, which recently hosted the Anthony Joshua-Andy Ruiz Jr heavyweight boxing bout as well as the Italian Super Cup and a Brazil-Argentina friendly.

But the choice of the conservative Muslim kingdom — where women's rights and human rights remain an issue — was condemned by high profile figures in Spanish women's football and Amnesty International.

The event was also shunned by state network RTVE on human rights grounds and other prominent networks before Movistar bought the broadcasting rights.

A ban on women attending matches in Saudi Arabia was lifted in 2018 although some restrictions still apply, but Rubiales has said they will be able to attend the Super Cup freely.

Saudi sports minister Abdulaziz Bin Turki added: "My country is not like 10 years ago, we've changed many things. We have preserved our private culture but want to advance towards being a more modern country."

Transplanting the tournament to Saudi Arabia has also been met with a backlash from Spanish fans. "A festival of football where the four best teams compete should not exclude their supporters," said umbrella fan group Aficiones Unidas (Supporters United).

Newspaper El Mundo reported that 9% of 12,000 tickets available to Spanish fans have been distributed, with Valencia fans taking up only 26 tickets and Atletico picking up 50.

Organisers Sela Sports, however, say the majority of tickets have been snapped up by Saudi nationals and predict all three matches at the 62,000-capacity King Abdullah Sport City Stadium will be well attended. Valencia is the only team to criticise the changes, airing their disapproval at earning two million euros from the competition compared to the six million euros Barca and Real will receive and the three million euros Atletico will pocket. —Reuters

## Germany WCup 'ghost-goal' keeper Tilkowski dead

**BERLIN:** Former Germany goalkeeper Hans Tilkowski, who conceded a controversial Geoff Hurst 'ghost-goal' at the 1966 World Cup final, has died at the age of 84, his family told AFP subsidiary SID yesterday.

During the England v West Germany final at Wembley, Tilkowski, who made 39 international appearances, was beaten by Hurst's shot which hit the cross bar and was adjudged to have crossed the line during extra-time before England went on to lift the trophy 4-2.

The incident continues to leave a mark on German football where the term "Wembley-goal" is used to describe goal efforts which are difficult to validate. In English, "Russian linesman" is a term sometimes used to describe controversial refereeing decisions after Azeri Tofik Bahkramov gave the green light to goal.

"I will die with the certitude that the ball didn't cross the line," Tilkowski said of the incident. Hurst, who had been informed of Tilkowski's death by the family, paid tribute to the former keeper as a 'terrific player' and 'fine man.'

"Very sad to receive a call earlier to let me know that Germany's goalkeeper from 66 World Cup, Hans Tilkowski, has died," Hurst tweeted. "Terrific player for his club, Borussia Dortmund, and country and a very fine man, I very much enjoyed the time we spent together over the years."

Tilkowski won the German Cup with Borussia Dortmund in 1965 before clinching the European Cup Winners' Cup a year later. —AFP



**PERTH:** Rafael Nadal of Spain hits a return against Pablo Cuevas of Uruguay during their eighth session men's singles match on day four of the ATP Cup tennis tournament in Perth yesterday. — AFP

## Nadal flawless as Djokovic made to sweat

**SYDNEY:** An ominous Rafael Nadal was in cruise control for Spain at the ATP Cup yesterday but Serbia's Novak Djokovic was forced to sweat through brutal conditions for his second win in a row. The Spanish world number one swept past Uruguay's experienced Pablo Cuevas 6-2, 6-1 in just 73 minutes in Perth to ensure his country won their second consecutive tie at the inaugural 24-team event and moved closer to the quarter-finals.

He came on court after teammate and world number 10 Roberto Bautista Agut made short work of Franco Roncadelli 6-1, 6-2. "A great match. I played better than the other day. It was a very positive victory against an opponent for who I have a lot of respect," said 19-time Grand Slam winner Nadal. "I'm super happy."

Djokovic was given a testing workout in his opening clash in Brisbane on Saturday by big-serving South African Kevin Anderson, who took him to two tiebreakers. He was back to his dominant best against France's Gael Monfils, but the sapping heat and humidity made the 6-3, 6-2

win harder than the score suggested.

"It was definitely one of the most humid conditions that I have ever had in my career. Tonight was brutal," said the world number two, who extended his record over Monfils to 16-0, dating back 15 years.

"Obviously playing Gael, you know you are going to have a lot of exchanges, a lot of rallies. He is a great fighter and a great friend of mine. Tough luck today."

Eight of the 24 nations will make the quarter-finals in Sydney from the round robin — six group winners and two best runners up. Other winners yesterday included Japan, Croatia, South Africa and Austria. World number four Dominic Thiem bounced back from a shock loss in his opening match to beat tenacious Diego Schwartzman in two tough sets to steer Austria to victory over Argentina in Sydney.

Earlier, Dennis Novak showed battling qualities to upset world number 25 Guido Pella after losing the first set 6-0. It kept Austria alive in Group E after they lost their opening tie to Croatia.

The unbeaten Croats are sitting pretty, spearheaded by former US Open champion Marin Cilic who eased past Poland's Kacper Zuk in straight sets — his second victory in a row.

"I felt that the level was quite good. I was being aggressive," said Cilic, a losing Australian Open finalist in 2018. "I had to stay mentally in the match, really focused."

One of the biggest surprises has been Japan, which has won both its ties — against Uruguay and Georgia — despite being without injured stars Kei Nishikori and Yasutaka Uchiyama, their third best player.

Yoshihito Nishioka has stepped up, beating world number 26 Nikoloz Basilashvili in straight sets in Perth after thrashing world number 45 Pablo Cuevas on Saturday. "I think I played my best tennis and very happy about this," he said of his win against the Georgian where his pinpoint accuracy rattled Basilashvili. South Africa, spearheaded by Anderson, remain in contention after clean-sweeping Chile 3-0 in Brisbane. — AFP



**Matches on TV**  
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP	
Manchester United v Manchester City	23:00
beIN Sports HD 2	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Real Zaragoza v Sporting Gijon	23:00
beIN Sports	