

Sports

Bayern Munich put 12 past minnows Bremer in German Cup

It was fun to score goals and get into a rhythm: Musiala

BERLIN: Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting scored four goals Wednesday as Bundesliga giants Bayern Munich thrashed fifth-tier minnows Bremer 12-0 in the first round of the German Cup. The original tie was postponed at the start of August after an outbreak of COVID-19 in the squad of Bremer, who play in Bremen's regional league.

Bayern showed their hosts little mercy. They were 8-0 up when Bremer were reduced to 10 men for the last 13 minutes after their defender Ugo Nobile hauled down Bayern replacement midfielder Michael Cuisance, who was through on goal.

Even with their star striker Robert Lewandowski and Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer both rested, Bayern strolled into this Sunday's draw for the second round. Choupo-Moting wrapped up his hat-trick within the opening 35 minutes and, having been handed the captain's armband for the second-half, grabbed his fourth and Bayern's 10th in the dying stages.

"We threw ourselves into it from the first to the last minute, that's why the game turned out like it did," he said. Germany winger Leroy Sane provided Choupo-Moting with simple tap-ins for his first two goals before the Cameroon star headed in his third goal after the host defence failed to clear the danger.

Former England youth star and now German

international midfielder Jamal Musiala, 18, was involved in two first-half goals, then netted again just after the break. He fired home from a tight angle, then flicking the ball past the Bremer goalkeeper, which was helped into the net by defender Jan-Luca Warm for an own goal.

"It was fun to score goals and get into a rhythm," said Musiala. It was 5-0 at half-time, but Bayern then added two goals in quick succession when 19-year-old replacement striker Malik Tillman took full advantage of a mistake in the defence before Musiala grabbed his second.

Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann experimented by giving left-back Omar Richards his debut since his free transfer from Reading this summer. American defender Chris Richards, 21, also made a rare appearance for the second half.

"It was clear that we had to - and would - win the game, but the way we did it was important," said Nagelsmann, who heaped praise on Choupo-Moting. Having earlier been booed by the Bremen crowd, Sane was given a round of applause when he slotted home the visitors' eighth goal with 25 minutes left.

Following Nobile's dismissal, French midfielder Michael Cuisance grabbed a goal of his own, then set up Choupo-Moting for his fourth. Frenchmen Bouna Sarr and Corentin Tolisso tapped in late goals. —AFP



BREMEN: Bayern Munich's German midfielder Jamal Musiala plays the ball during the German Cup (DFB Pokal) first round football match SV Bremen vs Bayern Munich, in Bremen, northern Germany. —AFP

League Cup holders City face Wycombe

LONDON: League Cup holders Manchester City were handed a home tie against Wycombe in Wednesday's third round draw. Pep Guardiola's side begin their bid to win the trophy for a fifth consecutive season against the League One side at the Etihad Stadium. If City win the League Cup this season, they will move past Liverpool onto a record nine triumphs in the competition. Tottenham, beaten by City in last season's final, face a trip to their manager Nuno Espirito Santo's former club Wolves.

Nuno's team won 1-0 at Wolves in the Premier League last weekend. Troubled Arsenal have a visit from AFC Wimbledon after the Gunners thrashed West Bromwich Albion 6-0 in the second round on Wednesday.

There are all Premier League ties between Manchester United and West Ham, Norwich and Liverpool and Chelsea and Aston Villa. Leicester face Millwall, Everton travel to QPR and Leeds visit Fulham. Watford entertain Stoke, Burnley host Rochdale and Brighton are at home to Swansea.

Brentford, semi-finalists last year, will welcome League Two's bottom side Oldham to the Community Stadium. The ties will be played over the week commencing September 20. —AFP

Djokovic chases calendar-year Grand Slam at US Open

NEW YORK: Top-ranked Novak Djokovic will try to complete the first calendar-year men's singles Grand Slam since 1969 and become the all-time men's leader in Slam titles by capturing the US Open. Five past champions won't be in the field when the showdown begins Monday on the New York hardcourts, with Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Stan Wawrinka, Juan Martin del Potro and 2020 winner Dominic Thiem absent due to injuries.

That leaves the main obstacles in Djokovic's path to a 21st career Slam crown as a set of rising 20-something talents trying to build their trophy hauls—Russia's second-ranked Daniil Medvedev, Greece's third-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas and fourth-ranked Olympic champion Alexander Zverev of Germany. The roots of Djokovic's amazing 2021 run were in last year's US Open, where he was defaulted out of the tournament in the fourth round against Carreno Busta when he struck a ball and it accidentally hit a line official in the throat. The 34-year-old Serbian star has not dropped a Grand Slam match this year, beating Medvedev in the Australian Open final, Tsitsipas in the French Open final and Italy's Matteo Berrettini in the Wimbledon final.

"It's really fortunate for me and incredible that it's all coming

together in the same year," Djokovic said. "That's something that I didn't expect but I always dream of achieving the biggest things in sport." He's trying for a calendar-year men's Slam feat managed only by Australian Rod Laver in 1962 and 1969 and American Don Budge in 1938.

"What he achieved this year is something amazing," Nadal said. "I definitely believe that he can do it, without a doubt." Djokovic briefly has held all four Slam titles at once, winning his fourth in a row at the 2016 French Open to complete a career Grand Slam.

In his career, Djokovic has won nine Australian Opens, six Wimbledon crowns, two French Opens and the 2011, 2015 and 2018 US Opens. He has spent a record span at world number one, more than 335 weeks, and comes into the US Open not having played since losing the Olympic bronze medal match to Spain's Pablo Carreño Busta.

Nadal, who along with Federer and Djokovic shares the men's record at 20 Slam titles, sees no reason why the Serbian star won't finish what he has started.

"Well, he already won three. So when you win three, you can win four, without a doubt, no? He did 75% of the way. He going to be playing on hard court, probably his best surface, so why not?" Nadal said. The "Big Three" of Federer, Nadal and Djokovic have won 60 of the past 72 majors since Federer took his first at Wimbledon in 2003, but six of the 12 won by others have come at the US Open.

US Open 2019 runner-up Medvedev, who won a tuneup title at Toronto, sees Djokovic as a clear favorite. "Definitely Novak is going to be the highest contender," Medvedev said. "He won already 20. He has experience. So he's the man under pressure, but I think he likes it.—AFP