

Sports

Aubameyang treble lifts Arsenal gloom in League Cup

‘The attitude the team had from the beginning was good’

LONDON: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang hit a hat-trick to lift the gloom around troubled Arsenal in a 6-0 rout of West Bromwich Albion in the League Cup second round on Wednesday. Beaten by Brentford and Chelsea in their first two Premier League games, Arsenal arrived at the Hawthorns in turmoil after their worst ever start to a season.

Mikel Arteta's side were booed off following Sunday's 2-0 home defeat against Chelsea, with a group of supporters surrounding the Arsenal manager's car and chanting for him to quit as he drove away from the stadium.

Against that miserable backdrop, Arteta could not afford a defeat against Championship promotion chasers West Brom, who rested their entire first team and fielded a side with seven debutants. Fortunately for Arteta, Aubameyang was able to make his first start this season after recovering from the coronavirus.

Aubameyang scored Arsenal's first two goals of the campaign before Nicolas Pepe and Bukayo Saka netted. The Gabon forward completed his treble just after the hour and Alexandre Lacazette added the sixth. "It was really good. To score six away from goal and keep a clean-sheet, I'm very happy," said Arteta, whose side will host AFC Wimbledon in the third round.

"The attitude the team had from the beginning was good. We were disappointed not to win the two games in the league. "When you lose the most important thing is to win the next match to get some confidence."

It won't buy Arteta much breathing space however as this weekend they face a daunting trip to Premier League champions Manchester City, where Arteta worked as Pep Guardiola's assistant before joining Arsenal. Losing to City would pile more pressure on Arteta, who has

pleaded with Arsenal's fans to back the team during a difficult period he describes as "unprecedented" in the club's history.

"We know what we will face on the weekend will be different game," Arteta said. "I don't know what will happen in the transfer window. A few days to go. Some exits are planned." Amid reports former Inter Milan boss Antonio Conte is being lined up to replace Arteta if results don't improve in the next five games, he desperately needed a morale-boosting victory against Albion.

There was no lack of support for Arteta from Arsenal's sizeable support in the midlands and, for once, his players delivered as well.

Dynamic Aubameyang

Having failed to qualify for Europe, Arsenal were forced to enter the League Cup in the second round for the first time since 1995. The north Londoners hadn't suffered a second round defeat in the competition since 1978 and they kept that run intact.

Arsenal were gifted the lead in the 17th minute. Woeful Albion defending on the edge of their own area presented the ball to Saka and when his stinging effort was pushed out by Alex Palmer, Aubameyang was on hand to tap into the empty net.

Arsenal had too much experience for Albion's callow youngsters and their captain struck again in the 45th minute. Pepe beat the offside trap and when his shot hit the post, Aubameyang was waiting to slot home from close-range.

Pepe bagged Arsenal's third seconds before the interval, the Ivory Coast winger stretching to score from four yards after Aubameyang's shot was saved. Saka made it four in the 50th minute with a sweeping finish from Martin



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

Odegaard's backheeled pass.

Aubameyang sealed his third Arsenal hat-trick in the 62nd minute when he curled into the far corner from the edge of the area. Lacazette came on for his first appearance this season and rifled home from Pepe's 69th

minute cross. Southampton crushed fourth tier Newport 8-0, with Mohamed Elyounoussi scoring a hat-trick in the biggest away win in the club's 136-year history. Burnley beat Newcastle 4-3 on penalties after a 0-0 draw at St James' Park. —AFP

Inter sign Argentina forward Correa

MILAN: Argentina's Joaquin Correa yesterday signed for Inter Milan from Lazio as the Italian champions continue to rebuild after losing two of their biggest stars this summer.

In a statement sent to the Italian stock exchange, Lazio said forward Correa has rejoined his former coach Simone Inzaghi on a season-long loan worth five million euros (\$5.9 million) plus one million in performance-related add-ons which will then automatically turn into a permanent sale for another 25 million euros.

The 27-year-old, who featured as a substitute three times in Argentina's Copa

America triumph this summer, has reportedly signed a five-year contract with Inter, who are yet to announce the deal. He played for three seasons under Inzaghi at Lazio, scoring 30 times in all competitions. He won the Italian Cup and Italian Super Cup in 2019.

Inter have been trying to strengthen their squad since selling Belgium forward Romelu Lukaku to Chelsea and marauding full-back Achraf Hakimi to Paris Saint-Germain.

The departure of two key figures in Inter's first Serie A title win since 2010 caused protests from supporters as the club tries to tighten its belt in the face of financial problems for Chinese owners Suning.

However new arrivals Edin Dzeko and Hakan Calhanoglu shone in Inter's 4-0 thumping of Genoa as Inzaghi — who replaced title-winning coach Antonio Conte earlier this summer — got off to a perfect start to the new season at the San Siro on Saturday. Inter travel to Verona today for their second match of the campaign. —AFP

Shakhtar into Champions League group stage

PARIS: Ukraine's Shakhtar Donetsk dumped Monaco out of the Champions League qualifying round with a 3-2 aggregate win sealed with an extra-time own-goal on Wednesday. Unheralded Sheriff Tiraspol of Moldova also made Thursday's group stage draw as did RB Salzburg of Austria as the play-offs wrapped up.

Monaco were left to regret what might have been after two predatory strikes from Wissam Ben Yedder in the first half fired them ahead 2-1 on aggregate. However, a 74th-minute goal from Marlos levelled the game and sent it into extra-time.

Then, with just six minutes left on the clock, Monaco defender Rubin Aguilar hung his head in despair after nodding the ball into his own net.

Sheriff Tiraspol became the Moldova's first representative in the group phase with a 0-0 draw in Zagreb after thumping Dinamo 3-0 in the first-leg.

No other team from the eastern European state of just 2.6 million people has previously made it into the final 32-team knock-out phase. Austrians RB Salzburg scored two goals in the first ten minutes of their game at Brondby winning 2-1 on the night and 4-2 on aggregate.

On Tuesday, two-time winners Benfica, Swedish side Malmo and Swiss champions Young Boys also qualified for the group stage. Benfica went into the pot after starting with a 2-1 first leg advantage over PSV Eindhoven and holding on for a goalless draw despite playing the final hour with 10 men.

Swiss champions Young Boys beat Hungarian title holders Ferencvaros 3-2 for a 6-4 victory and Swedish side Malmo reached the group stages with a 3-2 aggregate win over Ludogorets of Bulgaria. The draw for the Champions League group stage takes place in Istanbul with six match days from September to December. —AFP