

Sports

Manchester United reach FA Cup quarter-finals, Burnley crash out

McTominay ensures Red Devils remain in hunt for first FA Cup title since 2016

LONDON: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer warned "wasteful" Manchester United to be "more clinical" after they edged into the FA Cup quarter-finals with a hard-fought 1-0 win against West Ham on Tuesday. Solskjaer's side were well below their best in a scrappy fifth round tie at freezing, snow-dusted Old Trafford.

But a fine finish from Scotland midfielder Scott McTominay ensured United advanced to the last eight for a seventh successive season. United last won the FA Cup in 2016 and McTominay's third goal in three games kept them in the hunt to lift the trophy for the 13th time.

After the frustration of the late Everton equalizer that dented their Premier League title challenge on Saturday, this was an essential result to lift the mood at United. It was hardly an eye-catching performance however, with United laboring against defensive West Ham until McTominay and Bruno Fernandes were introduced as second half substitutes.

"When it's only 1-0 and we are wasteful, anything can happen to us. We knew that from the last game," Solskjaer told BBC Sport. "I think we got about 15 to 17 shots in the end but we need to be more clinical. We should have finished the game off earlier. We needed to have a good result and a good feeling after today because we were low after Everton game. We are in the hat and that's what we wanted. We want to challenge and we want to go to the final. That's what we're here at Man United for."

Amad Diallo was named on the United bench for the first time since the 18-year-old's January move from Atalanta as Solskjaer made six changes.

Lukasz Fabianski prevented United from taking the lead in the 27th minute when he brilliantly pushed Victor Lindelof's header onto the post. There was a nasty clash of heads between West Ham's Issa Diop and United's Anthony Martial towards the end of the first half. Both continued after treatment but Diop did not return in the second half due to concussion.

"To clarify, Issa Diop was replaced as a concussion substitute, meaning we can now make a total of six changes, as can Manchester United, if we see fit," West Ham said in a statement. Fabianski saved well from Marcus Rashford before the game went into extra-time. McTominay finally made the breakthrough in the 97th minute. Martial's cross was only half-cleared and Rashford's deft touch teed up McTominay to steer a composed strike past Fabianski from just inside the area.

Cherries shock Burnley

In Tuesday's other fifth round tie, Burnley suffered a surprise exit as second tier Bournemouth won 2-0 at Turf Moor. Sean Dyche's side fell behind to Sam Surridge's first half goal and Junior Stanislas finished them off with a late penalty. While the loss was embarrassing, it will be forgotten if Dyche ensures Burnley retain their Premier League status. Burnley are currently 17th in the Premier League, sitting eight points clear of the relegation zone.

It could have been an even more chastening night for Burnley, who initially included the ineligible Erik Pieters in the team before being alerted to the issue by Bournemouth's media chief. Dutch



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Scottish midfielder Scott McTominay (right) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's first goal during the English FA Cup fifth round football match between Manchester United and West Ham United at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on Tuesday. — AFP

defender Pieters was banned after collecting bookings in the previous two rounds of the competition.

Pieters was replaced just before kick-off by Anthony Driscoll-Glennon, saving Burnley from a potential FA investigation. "The rules have changed this year with the booking situation and the number

of games in the FA Cup. It was just a clear oversight," Dyche said. "To be fair to Bournemouth, they flagged it and mentioned it, so credit to them for a bit of gentlemanly conduct. We jumped on it straight away and people at our club held their hands up in the right slots." — AFP

Juventus hold Inter to make Italian Cup final

TURIN: Juventus are in the final of the Italian Cup after a goalless draw with rivals Inter Milan on Tuesday put them through 2-1 on aggregate. Andrea Pirlo's side will face one of Napoli or Atalanta, who were locked at 0-0 ahead of last night's second leg in Bergamo, in May's final in Rome after comfortably holding Inter in a disciplined display at the Allianz Stadium.

Inter barely troubled veteran Juve goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon despite the return of Romelu Lukaku and Achraf Hakimi, while Cristiano Ronaldo was twice denied by fine Samir Handanovic saves at the other end.

Juve are unbeaten since losing 2-0 to Inter in Serie A last month as novice coach Pirlo drags his team into contention in league and cup after an uncertain start coaching the Italian champions. They have conceded just once since that defeat, in the first leg win at the San Siro last week, and look in ominous form as they return to the title chase at the weekend.

Juve sit seven points behind leaders AC Milan with a game in hand and a trip to troubled Napoli awaiting them on Saturday. "It's a completely different feeling as a coach, we're really happy but we haven't done anything yet," said Pirlo to state broadcaster Rai.

"We were really good today, they basically didn't have a shot on goal. Handanovic was the best player on the pitch," added the 41-year-old, who won four league titles as a Juve player. Antonio Conte, who led Pirlo to three of those Serie A crowns, will now have to concentrate entirely on overhauling Milan if he wants to win Inter their first trophy since 2011. Second-placed Inter are two points behind their city rivals ahead of their league clash with in-form



TURIN: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (left) shoots past Inter Milan's Slovak defender Milan Skriniar during the Italian Cup semifinal second leg football match between Juventus Turin and Inter Milan on Tuesday at the Juventus stadium in Turin. — AFP

Lazio on Sunday, while Milan travel to lowly Spezia.

Inter held at bay

Inter came into the match with a dismal recent record at Juventus, without a win since November 2012 when Conte was still managing the then-resurgent 'Old Lady' of Italian football. That win, 3-1 thanks to a brace from 2010 treble hero Diego Milito, ended a 49-match winning streak for Juve but no such heroics were on display on Tuesday night.

The return of Lukaku and Hakimi, who both missed the first leg through suspension, did nothing to improve Inter's fortunes in a blunt display from the away side, who had plenty of the ball but did very little with it. A first half of few chances featured a Juve team much-changed from the XI which beat Roma 2-0 at the weekend but equally comfortable

holding their opponents at bay.

Juve were content to sit on their first-leg lead, knowing that even a 1-0 defeat would have been enough for them to go through. Ronaldo came close to scoring first in the 64th minute when Weston McKennie pounced on sloppy play from Inter to put the Portugal captain through on goal. However Handanovic was quick off his line and pulled off a fine save to deny Ronaldo, who turned 36 last week.

Ronaldo was again denied by Handanovic five minutes later when he skipped past Milan Skriniar and Nicolo Barella and let rip with a powerful shot which the Slovene stopper did well to push away. Inter continued to push but the wall put up in front of Buffon held and Pirlo will have a chance to win his first trophy as a coach in debut season on the bench. — AFP

Real Madrid edge closer to Atletico after Getafe win

MADRID: A depleted Real Madrid moved to within five points of La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid on Tuesday by beating struggling Getafe 2-0. Madrid were without nine first team players, prompting Zinedine Zidane to adopt a 3-5-2 formation which he admitted they had not practiced, with Marcelo and the 20-year-old Marvin Park as wing-backs.

Karim Benzema and Forland Mendy scored the goals at Valdebebas, with Mendy's finish teed up by his fellow left-back Marcelo, who reveled in his new role. Madrid's victory puts them in sight of city rivals Atletico even if Diego Simeone's side have played two games fewer. "We have to believe in ourselves, we have to fight," said Zidane. "There is a lot of the league left, a lot in front of us."

Atletico had slipped up for the first time in nine league matches on Monday night, a late equalizer conceded in a 2-2 draw with Celta Vigo giving Madrid and Barcelona a ray of hope in the title race. And while the trophy remains very much in Atletico's hands, Madrid can only hope to increase the pressure by building some momentum themselves, especially with a Champions League tie against Atalanta around the corner.

Last week, an angry Zidane had castigated reporters for showing his team a lack of "respect" following a run of just two wins in seven matches, which included going out in both the Spanish Super Cup and Copa del Rey. His players have responded, backing up a gutsy win over Huesca on Saturday by seeing off a Getafe side that look a pale shadow of the team that has challenged for the top four in recent seasons. They drop to 13th, four points



MADRID: Real Madrid's French forward Karim Benzema (right) scores a goal during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Getafe CF at the Alfredo di Stefano stadium in Valdebebas, on the outskirts of Madrid on Tuesday. — AFP

above the bottom three.

Madrid deliver the goods

"We played with too much respect, too much fear," said Getafe coach Jose Bordalas. "We have to change and rediscover our identity." Zidane's long list of absentees includes Sergio Ramos, Eden Hazard, Eder Militao, Alvaro Odriozola, Lucas Vazquez, Fede Valverde, Dani Carvajal, Toni Kroos and Rodrygo.

To adapt, Zidane opted for a back three of Raphael Varane, Nacho and Mendy, with Marcelo at left wing-back and a surprise start for Park, who was born in Mallorca and coached at Tranmere

Rovers in England before joining Madrid's youth teams in 2016.

"In the end we weren't able to prepare it or train very much but we spent a bit of time talking about it," said Zidane. "The players have delivered very well what we discussed, which is good because it's not a system we are used to playing with."

Casemiro and Benzema both missed chances early on, the latter grazing the crossbar with a header, before Luka Modric drew a good save after the first of many marauding Marcelo runs. Getafe offered little, although Marc Cucurella had an opening in the box in the second half but took too long and the chance was lost. — AFP

News in brief

PSG lose Di Maria

PARIS: Argentinian forward Angel Di Maria will miss the first leg of Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League last 16 match at Barcelona, coach Mauricio Pochettino said on Tuesday. Di Maria suffered a thigh injury during the 2-0 Ligue 1 win against Marseille on Sunday and "he will not be at the Camp Nou" for the game on February 16, Pochettino said. Despite the bad news about Di Maria, last year's Champions League finalists hope to be able to select first-choice goalkeeper Keylor Navas, who is expected to return from a groin injury to resume training later this week. — AFP

Atletico v Chelsea moved

LONDON: Atletico Madrid's home match against Chelsea in the Champions League last-16 has been moved from Spain to Bucharest as a result of coronavirus restrictions, UEFA confirmed yesterday. Chelsea said in a statement on their website that the date of the match, February 23, and the kick-off time (20:00 GMT) would remain the same. The second leg is scheduled to take place at Stamford Bridge in London on March 17. The Spanish government on Tuesday extended a ban on flights from Britain, Brazil and South Africa from February 16 to March 2, in an attempt to stem the spread of new variants of COVID-19. — AFP

Man Utd, Arsenal play in Italy

PARIS: Manchester United and Arsenal's first leg matches in the last 32 of the Europa League have been moved to Italy, UEFA announced Tuesday, as coronavirus restrictions hit travel across Europe. United will face Spain's Real Sociedad in their away leg at Juventus' Allianz Stadium in Turin, while Arsenal will travel to the Stadio Olimpico in Rome to face Benfica. In a statement, UEFA said that both matches would take place as originally scheduled on February 18, with United kicking off at 17:55 GMT and Arsenal 20:00 GMT. Molde's home leg with Hoffenheim, also scheduled for 20:00 GMT on the same day, has been moved to Villarreal's Estadio de la Ceramica. — AFP

Racism action plan

LONDON: The Premier League on Tuesday launched a racism action plan to build on existing moves taken to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. The plan outlines a series of commitments aimed at creating greater access to opportunities and career progression for black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups in football, and actions to eradicate racial prejudice. Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said: "Football is a diverse sport, which brings together communities and cultures from all backgrounds. This diversity has made the game stronger on the pitch and it is vital we ensure this is reflected across all areas of the game." — AFP