

Chelsea top Premier League



LONDON: Southampton's English defender Kyle Walker-Peters (left) vies with Chelsea's Spanish defender Cesar Azpilicueta during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Southampton at Stamford Bridge yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Manchester United were held at home by Everton yesterday after Cristiano Ronaldo was dropped to the subs bench as Chelsea scored two late goals against Southampton to top the Premier League table. Elsewhere, Leeds beat Watford for their first league win of the season while Norwich avoided defeat for the first time during the campaign. United's 1-1 draw at Old Trafford continues an unimpressive run of home results including a League Cup defeat by West Ham and last week's shock Premier League loss at the hands of Aston Villa.

Ronaldo has scored five times in six games in all competitions since rejoining the club in late August but Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said he did not regret resting the 36-year-old - who scored a dramatic stoppage-time winner against Villarreal in midweek. "You make decisions throughout the season, you've got to manage the players' workload," said the Norwegian manager. "The decision was, for me, the correct one today." "We have started better than last season, but it is still not what we wanted."

Everton created plenty of chances in the opening period but fell behind shortly before half-time when

surprise pick Anthony Martial curled home his first Premier League goal since February from a Bruno Fernandes pass. Solskjaer called on Ronaldo and Jadon Sancho 12 minutes after half-time as he looked to put the game beyond Rafael Benitez's men but Everton ruthlessly exposed United's frailty on the counter-attack.

Demarai Gray won the ball back on the left and freed Abdoulaye Doucoure into acres of space in midfield. Doucoure played in Andros Townsend to fire home his fifth goal in nine appearances. Townsend then performed a Ronaldo-style "Siuuu" goal celebration and said it was done in tribute to the Portuguese superstar, whom he said was his "idol". Everton thought they had won it late on but Yerry Mina's close-range finish from a Tom Davies pass was ruled out for offside following a VAR review.



Manchester United stumble again

Chelsea ended a miserable week on a high, with Timo Werner and Ben Chilwell striking late in a 3-1 win against Southampton, who are still without a league victory this season. The three points lifted the Stamford Bridge club to the top of the Premier League on 16 points, two clear of Liverpool, Manchester United and Everton.

Thomas Tuchel's side, tipped by many to win the Premier League in the early weeks of the season, were well beaten by Manchester City last week and lost to Juventus in the Champions League in midweek. But they returned to winning ways in London yesterday, helped by a second-half red card for Southampton midfielder James Ward-Prowse. Trevoh Chalobah nodded Chelsea into an early lead but Ward-Prowse leveled from the penal-

ty spot just after the hour mark before he was sent off in the 77th minute for a dangerous tackle on Jorginho after a VAR check.

Werner provided the decisive moment, sliding in from Cesar Azpilicueta's cross before Chilwell volleyed in from close range on 89 minutes to secure the victory. "After two defeats we had to be careful that we didn't start being too sad or too worried because there was a chance to be on 16 points," Tuchel told the BBC. "It was important to have a better performance than the last two games, that we sharpened our mindset so that we are not afraid to lose. It was nice to play the way we did and get a deserved win."

Leeds beat Watford 1-0 thanks to a first-half strike by Diego Lorente while Hwang Hee-chan struck twice as Wolves beat struggling Newcastle 2-1. Norwich stopped the rot against Burnley after six straight league defeats but they remain rock-bottom of the Premier League table with just a single point after seven games. Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, who have won three consecutive league games, travel to Brighton for the evening kick-off. — AFP

Springboks stun All Blacks in classic as Wallabies shine

GOLD COAST: A gutsy South Africa upset old rivals New Zealand yesterday to bounce back from "a tough few weeks" in the Rugby Championship while Australia burnished their credentials with a fourth consecutive win. The world champions headed into the sixth and final round of the southern hemisphere tournament on the back of three defeats and had to dig deep to snap the streak-and end New Zealand's 10-match win run.

In a nail-biter on Australia's Gold Coast, the match went to the wire with Elton Jantjies slotting a penalty after the final hooter to earn a tense 31-29 win. In the early game at Cbus Super Stadium, the Wallabies ground down a ragged Argentina 32-17 with Andrew Kellaway bagging a hat-trick, building on beating Los Pumas last week which followed two wins against South Africa. It ensured Dave Rennie's men finished the Rugby Championship in second place on 18 points, seven behind the All Blacks and three clear of the Springboks.

Argentina, who played yesterday without the experienced Pablo Matera and Santiago Medrano after they were banned for breaching COVID rules, lost all six matches to prop up the table. South Africa coach Jacques Nienaber said: "It's been a tough few weeks for us, we lost momentum in not securing victory in the last three games. "But in fairness, that's the margins when the one, two, three in the world play against each other. "This weekend we got the opportunity at the end of the game to win it, last week New Zealand had that opportunity. "That's why it's good for us to play these



GOLD COAST: New Zealand's captain Ardie Savea (center) and teammates celebrate with the Rugby Championship trophy after their match against South Africa at Cbus Super Stadium in Gold Coast yesterday. — AFP

games, for our guys it's good exposure," he added. The All Blacks went to the break with a 20-14 lead after tries from Sevu Reece, Ardie Savea and Brad Weber. But Nienaber's pep-talk at half-time fired up his team. Makazole Mapimpi barged over for a try soon after the restart to add to Damian de Allende's first-half effort before a thrilling final five minutes that saw the lead change four times.

The All Blacks had already sealed the Rugby Championship with their 19-17 victory over South Africa last week, but coach Ian Foster was nevertheless "bitterly disappointed". "Losing a game at the end when you've got control of it was frustrating, but it was a massive arm-wrestle," he said. "I thought South Africa played superb, they came with a lot of attitude, they moved us

around and really challenged us."

A resurgent Australia came into their clash against Argentina bubbling with confidence and dictated a game in which Kellaway crossed three times and 38-year-old prop Greg Holmes became the oldest Wallaby since World War II. It was the first time they have won four in a row since 2017 and the first time ever at the Rugby Championship, boding well for their upcoming European tour.

"I'm really stoked," said skipper Michael Hooper, whose team head to Japan to play the Cherry Blossoms on October 23 en route to face England, Scotland and Wales. "We had a tough three games on the trot against the Kiwis (All Blacks) so to turn things around, be able to play in our backyard here and get four wins, it's showing some really nice stuff for us." — AFP

Brandt lifts Dortmund as Freiburg beat Hertha

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund proved yesterday they can win in the Bundesliga without injured star striker Erling Braut Haaland by grabbing a 2-1 victory at home to Augsburg. With Haaland again in the stands at Signal Iduna Park having also missed Tuesday's Champions League win over Sporting Lisbon with a persistent leg injury, Dortmund bounced back from last week's shock league defeat at Moenchengladbach. Raphael Guerreiro converted a penalty after ten minutes only for Augsburg to draw level through Swiss striker Andi Zeqiri just before the break.

Germany winger Julian Brandt hit Dortmund's winner when he smashed Marco Reus' clever pass into the net six minutes into the second half. The victory lifts Dortmund to second in Germany's top flight, a point behind leaders Bayern Munich who host Eintracht Frankfurt today. Bayer Leverkusen can leapfrog Dortmund into second place today night if they win at Bielefeld. Freiburg, the only Bundesliga club along with Bayern who remain unbeaten, are third and level on points with Dortmund after their 2-1 win at Hertha Berlin.

Veteran striker Nils Petersen, 32, who specializes in goals off the bench, grabbed the second-half winner just two minutes after coming on at Berlin's Olympic Stadium. Petersen's perfectly-timed bicycle kick means he has now scored 30 Bundesliga goals as a substi-

tute during his career. Wolfsburg, league leaders up until a fortnight ago, suffered a second consecutive league defeat to drop to fifth after losing 3-1 at home to resurgent Moenchengladbach, whose American teenager Joe Scally scored his first Bundesliga goal when the 18-year-old fired in the visitors' third goal deep in added time. Gladbach built on last weekend's shock home win over Dortmund by going 2-0 up after just seven minutes in Wolfsburg. Swiss striker Breel Embolo proved his fitness after a leg injury with a spectacular goal, then set up the second less than two minutes later. After his deft pass, Jonas Hofmann knocked the ball around advancing Wolfsburg goalkeeper Koen Casteels and tapped into the empty net.

Wolfsburg pulled a goal back when Ridle Baku, left out of the Germany World Cup qualifiers squad announced Friday, whipped in a cross which ricocheted off three players before Luca Waldschmidt fired home to make it 2-1 at the break. Wolfsburg had defender Maxence Lacroix sent off for a second yellow card after bringing Embolo down with 14 minutes left, then Gladbach captain Lars Stindl had a weak penalty attempt saved. Wolfsburg defender Jerome Roussillon was also shown a red card, but the referee reversed the decision following a VAR intervention after replays showed he made contact with the ball before bringing Hofmann down. — AFP