

LEICESTER HOPE TO CAPITALIZE ON EPL TITLE RIVALS' MISTAKES

WATFORD: Following a week of contrasting emotions, surprise leaders Leicester City head for Watford today back in the driving seat in an extraordinary Premier League title race. The disappointment of a 2-2 draw at home to West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday was followed by the welcome bonus of seeing title rivals Tottenham Hotspur, Arsenal and Manchester City all lose 24 hours later. The upshot was that the Foxes, despite failing to take a host of chances to beat West Brom, will travel to Vicarage Road with their lead at the top of the table extended to three points.

"That's football," said Leicester winger Marc Albrighton, whose side edged Norwich City 1-0 last weekend with a late winner. "I think in the last two games at home, we have had a massive amount of chances to win both games. "It was late on against Norwich to get the win but on Tuesday we kept pushing to the end and that was important. "We had chances with the last kick of the game but it just wasn't to be." Albrighton's team-mate Danny Drinkwater, who netted against Albion, added: "Tuesday was a point in the right direction. "We're slightly disappointed not to get the three points but I feel we have played well and we can take a lot of positives into today.

"We broke a resilient side down twice. They scored two goals as well but we can take positives. "There was a difference between that game and Norwich." With eight wins and just two defeats on the road, Leicester will take the best away record in the Premier League to Watford. The Hornets, meanwhile, have won five and lost five of their 14 home games so Leicester will feel confident of boosting their hopes of a fairytale title triumph. Leicester beat Watford 2-1 at the King Power Stadium in November but the most memorable meeting between the clubs in recent years came in May 2013, when Watford triumphed 3-2 over two legs in a Championship play-off semi-final.

Firepower

The Foxes recovered from that setback to win promotion to the Premier League a year later and now have their sights set on lifting the trophy in just their second season back in the top flight. "It is going to be a really tough place to go," Albrighton said. "Watford have showed what a good side they are this season. "They have got some great players, some firepower up top, but we will be confident as ever. "The season we have had is fantastic. We are

not going to let a point at home dampen any confidence in the camp."

However, Sebastian Proedl believes Watford are capable of beating the league leaders this weekend and influencing the title race. Quique Sanchez Flores' side were unfortunate to leave Old Trafford empty-handed this week after Juan Mata's late goal secured a narrow 1-0 victory for Manchester United.

And Watford defender Proedl said: "Every game at Vicarage Road so far this season has been tough for the opponent. So they should be warned. We want to get a result. "They are big contenders for the title and it is a good opportunity for us to show how we have improved this season. "Leicester could win the league. At the beginning everyone was surprised when they were top but no one is surprised any more." The manner of defeat to United may have been frustrating but Proedl is convinced his side's performance demonstrated how far they have come this season. "Maybe we can collect some points against Leicester that we missed against United," added the Austrian. "The best games are when you challenge the best. It is why we are here in the Premier League, to compete against the best."— AFP

UEFA SET TO INTRODUCE GOAL-LINE TECHNOLOGY

PARIS: UEFA will introduce goal-line technology to its competitions in time for this season's Champions League and Europa League finals, European football's governing body announced yesterday. A decision to bring in the technology (GLT) in time for Euro 2016 and for next season's Champions League had already been announced in January, but will now also be in place for the Champions League final in Milan on May 28 and the Europa League showpiece in Basel, Switzerland, on May 18.

The technology, which determines whether the ball has completely crossed the line, is already used in the English Premier League, Italy's Serie A, the German Bundesliga and Ligue 1 in France. World governing body FIFA also brought it in for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil after a series of successful trials. UEFA confirmed in January that GLT would be used in the European Championship in France in June and July and in the Champions League from next season, and added that it would likely ultimately be extended to all UEFA competitions.

However, former general secretary Gianni Infantino, now the FIFA president, has admitted that fitting all grounds with the necessary technology would be a logistical headache, particularly in a competition as extensive as the Europa League. Even in countries where the technology is already in place, a different system is used in France to that used in England, Germany and Italy. UEFA have said that, in conjunction with GLT, they will continue to use additional assistant referees to monitor activity in each penalty area.— AFP



FLORIDA: United States' Crystal Dunn (16) fights off the defense of England's Demi Stokes during the second half of a SheBelieves Cup women's soccer match on Thursday, March 3, 2016. — AP

DUNN POWERS USA

LOS ANGELES: Crystal Dunn and the reigning World Cup champion USA got off to a flying start with a win in their opening game of the inaugural SheBelieves Cup tournament on Thursday. Dunn's goal in the 72nd minute was all the US national women's team would need in a 1-0 victory over world number five England at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida.

Dunn took a short pass from teammate Meghan Klingenberg and spun away from a defender before hammering a right footed shot into the upper corner of the net. Her goal came less than 10 minutes after she entered the game as a substitute. The new women's international soccer event kicked off Thursday as four of the top five ranked teams in the world - USA, England, France and Germany - compete for the

tournament title on US soil.

The six-match competition features many of the world's top players and includes three teams that made the final four of last year's Women's World Cup. In the other game Thursday, Germany scored a late second half goal to defeat France 1-0. Right back Leonie Maier pounced on a loose ball and scored in the 83rd minute after France failed to clear a corner kick from the right side. It was the sixth goal of Maier's international career. Thursday's matches were the first of three doubleheaders. The Americans square off against France and Germany faces England in round two tomorrow. The tournament concludes Wednesday with the USA meeting Germany and England battling France.— AFP