

BRADLEY SECURES FIRST SWANSEA SUCCESS WITH 5-4 WIN OVER PALACE

 Swansea	5
 Crystal Palace	4

SWANSEA: Bob Bradley celebrated his first win as Swansea manager when Fernando Llorente's stoppage-time double clinched a wild 5-4 victory over Crystal Palace in the English Premier League yesterday.

Swansea led 3-1 with 15 minutes to go but faced a sixth successive winless game after going 4-3 behind by conceding three goals in nine minutes.

The comeback ended Bradley's wait for a Premier League win but Palace manager Alan Pardew was condemned to a sixth loss in a row. Swansea climbed off the bottom of the 20-team standings and Palace was two points ahead in 16th.

It started so well for Palace as Swansea's aerial struggles were exposed against the powerful Christian Benteke. He nodded the ball down into the path of Wilfried Zaha, who made the most of timid defending from Neil Taylor and Federico Fernandez to fire his fourth goal of the season past goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski.

But the mood changed inside Liberty Stadium when Jason Puncheon was adjudged to have fouled Jack Cork on the edge of the penalty area. Gylfi Sigurdsson struck a terrific free kick past Wayne Hennessey to equalize in the 36th.

It was a lifeline for Swansea as the host rarely threatened up until that point, but it almost threw it away two minutes later when Zaha headed Yohan Cabaye's cross against the crossbar before the ball was bundled to safety.

After the break, Palace forward Connor Wickham was taken off on a stretcher with what appeared to be a knee injury. The London club was being pushed back as Sigurdsson and Modou Barrow became increasingly influential and Swansea took the lead in the 66th.

Substitute Llorente's first touch proving crucial after heading toward the goal. Although Yohan Cabaye stopped the ball on the line with the possible use of an arm, Leroy Fer was primed to squeeze home the rebound. Two minutes later Palace struggled to cope with another set-piece and Fer finished again at the far post for his sixth goal of the season.

But Palace gave itself a lifeline when James Tomkins bundled home before Zaha's cross struck Cork and looped over Fabianski. Palace surged back in front when Benteke found the net off a post in a crowded goalmouth.

But Swansea was not finished yet and Llorente diverted home a shot from Sigurdsson before prodding in the winner.—AP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Watford v Stoke City	15:00
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Arsenal v Bournemouth	17:15
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Man' United v West Ham	19:30
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Southampton v Everton	19:30
beIN SPORTS 8 HD	

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA DIV

Villarreal v Deportivo	14:00
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Osasuna v Atletico	18:15
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Vigo v Balaidos	20:30
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Real Sociedad v Barcelona	22:45
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A

Palermo v Lazio	14:30
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Bologna v Atalanta	17:00
beIN SPORTS 7 HD	
Genoa v Juventus	17:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Cagliari v Udinese	17:00
beIN SPORTS 8 HD	
Crotone v Sampdoria	17:00
beIN SPORTS 12 HD EN	
Roma v Pescara	22:45
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA 1ST DIV

Schalke v Darmstadt	17:30
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	
Hertha Berlin v Mainz	19:30
beIN SPORTS	

FRENCH LEAGUE 1ST DIV

Angers v Saint Etienne	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nice v Bastia	19:00
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	
Lyonnais v Lyonnais	22:45
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	



MADRID: Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos, centre, attempts an over heard kick next to Sporting's Carlos Carmona, right, during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Sporting at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, yesterday. Real Madrid won 2-1.—AP

RONALDO DOUBLE EXTENDS REAL LEAD OVER BARCELONA

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo struck twice as Real Madrid were thankful to a late missed penalty from Duje Cop to open up a seven-point lead over Barcelona at the top of La Liga with a 2-1 win over Sporting Gijon yesterday.

Madrid looked set for an easy afternoon as Ronaldo opened the scoring from the penalty spot before he headed home a second inside 20 minutes. However, Carlos Carmona halved Sporting's deficit 10 minutes before half-time and the struggling visitors were handed a huge chance for an unexpected point 12 minutes from time when Nacho brought down Victor Rodriguez. Yet, Cop sent his penalty high and wide as Real held on amidst a torrential downpour to extend their unbeaten run to 31 games in all competitions. Barca can cut the gap back to four points when they travel to Real Sociedad today ahead of the first Clasico of the season between Spanish football's two giants at the Camp Nou next weekend.

"It is a game for us to forget because things didn't go as we would have liked," said Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane.

"We lacked a little bit of everything, but we are happy to get the three points which is the most important thing."

Fresh from netting a hat-trick against Atletico Madrid last weekend, Ronaldo continued his return to scoring form with a quickfire double to move ahead of Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez as La Liga's top scorer. Sporting had the first big chance to go in front when Carmona fired wide with just goalkeeper Keylor Navas to beat.

However, they were quickly behind when Lucas Vazquez was naively chopped down by Sergio Alvarez on five minutes and Ronaldo emphatically converted the resulting spot-kick. The Portuguese's second finish was even more impressive as he buried Nacho's cross from the left with a powerful header that left Diego Marino no chance in the Sporting goal.

In between times Ronaldo had also headed wastefully wide when unmarked from a corner, while Marino parried another fierce effort as the three-time World Player of the Year chased his 40th hat-trick for Madrid. Instead, it was Sporting who halved the arrears before half-

time when a rare misplaced pass from Luka Modric allowed Isma Lopez to cross from the left and Carmona's outstretched leg prodded the ball past Navas. In deteriorating conditions caused by the torrential rain, Madrid struggled to get going after the break.

Zidane withdrew captain Sergio Ramos with an eye on the Clasico against Barcelona next Saturday with the Spanish international a yellow card away from missing that game through suspension. However, that decision nearly backfired as Nacho moved into central defence and quickly brought down Sporting substitute Victor Rodriguez inside the area. Cop pardoned Nacho's mistake, though, as the Croatian lent back and sent the ball well wide of Navas's goal much to the relief of thousands inside the Bernabeu. Ronaldo should have completed his hat-trick late on as he broke clear on goal, but his low shot was too close to Marino as Real had to see out a nervy final few minutes to secure a sixth straight La Liga win.

A 10th straight game without a win leaves Sporting still rooted in the bottom three.—AFP

AGUERO DOUBLE EARNS MAN CITY 2-1 WIN AT BURNLEY

 Burnley	1
 Man City	2

BURNLEY: Manchester City overcame Burnley's spirited challenge as Sergio Aguero's double inspired their fightback for a 2-1 win at Turf Moor yesterday.

Aguero's decisive brace took his remarkable scoring run to 33 goals in 34 Premier League games after Dean Marney had given Burnley a surprise lead over the title contenders.

City's recovery secured their sixth win in seven away games and moved them to the top of the table, although they could surrender pole position to Liverpool or Chelsea later in the day.

It was the first time this season that Pep Guardiola's team had come from behind to win, and the first time since September they had won back-to-back league games, having triumphed at Crystal Palace last time out. Burnley sprung a surprise by including former England goalkeeper Paul Robinson, now 37, after Tom Heaton injured a calf during training to miss his first game since joining the club.

Robinson, signed on a free transfer from Blackburn, had not played in the Premier League since 2012 and had gone 802 days without a first-team game, but he showed he still has the ability that earned him 41 caps and a career that took in Tottenham and Leeds. Burnley were defending one of the best home records in the Premier League, having won four of their previous six games - a run bettered only by Chelsea, Liverpool and Tottenham - and they took the game to City.

The visitors were fortunate not to concede a penalty as early as the fifth minute, but the referee Andre Marriner waved away the protests when Jeff Hendrick went down after an elbow in the back from Nicolas Otamendi.

FLYING SAVE

Guardiola made five changes from the team that played in midweek in the Champions League, but they struggled to come to terms with Burnley's approach and energy. Robinson did have to tip an effort from Argentina forward Aguero round a post but then, on 13 minutes, the goalkeeper initiated the opening goal as Burnley took the lead.

Robinson launched a long free-kick into the City penalty area and Otamendi's

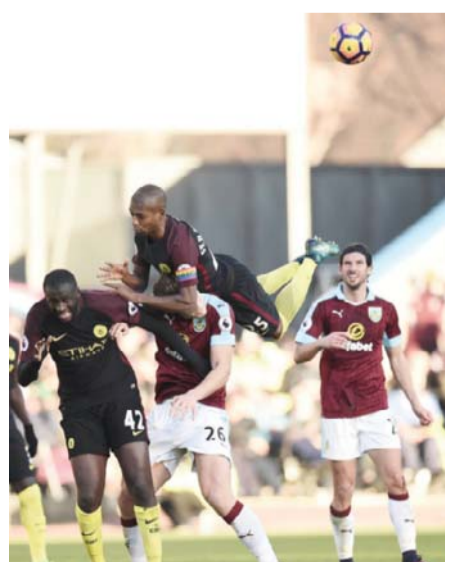
attempted clearing header fell invitingly for long-serving midfielder Marney, who rifled the ball past Claudio Bravo's dive for his first Premier League goal in seven years.

City responded but Robinson made a fine one-handed save to deny Nolito and Aguero lifted his own effort over the bar from Ferdinandinho's lay-off. Burnley eventually succumbed on 36 minutes and almost inevitably, it was Aguero who scored his ninth goal in 11 Premier League games and 15th in all competitions, pouncing at the far post after Nolito's initial shot from a corner had been blocked.

The scene appeared set for City to stride into the lead before half-time, but Robinson produced his best moment so far, a superb one-handed flying save to keep out Aguero's fierce shot on the turn.

Burnley, having lost the advantage, also lost scorer Marney to an injury and then Iceland midfielder Johann Gudmundsson limped off with a hamstring strain before half-time. City took the lead on the hour after Yaya Toure went down in the area and Burnley made a hash of clearing before Ferdinandinho was able to cut the ball back towards the near post where Aguero put the ball in with his knee.

Burnley refused to go down without a fight, but Michael Keane's well-directed header was cleared, George Boyd had a shot blocked, and substitute Ashley Barnes had an overhead kick well saved as City held out.—AFP



BURNLEY: Burnley's English defender James Tarkowski (2nd L) vies with Manchester City's Ivorian midfielder Yaya Toure and Manchester City's Brazilian midfielder Ferdinandinho (up) during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and Manchester City.—AFP



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's English midfielder James Milner scores their second goal from the penalty spot during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Sunderland at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday.—AFP

LIVERPOOL OVERCOMES COUTINHO INJURY, BEATS SUNDERLAND 2-0

 Liverpool	2
 Sunderland	0

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool overcame the loss of Philippe Coutinho to a serious-looking first-half injury to beat Sunderland 2-0 and keep up its title challenge in the English Premier League yesterday.

Coutinho was carried off on a stretcher in the 34th minute with his right leg in a brace after a challenge with Sunderland midfielder Didier Ndong. Divock Origi came on as Coutinho's replacement and put Liverpool ahead in the 75th minute with a curling shot into the far corner. James Milner converted a penalty in stoppage time to seal victory after Ndong tripped Sadio Mane.

Liverpool, which started the 13th round of games in second place, has lost only once this season. The exact nature of Coutinho's injury wasn't immediately clear. The loss put an end to Sunderland's mini-revival, after back-to-back wins lifted the team off the bottom of the standings. Sunderland manager David Moyes'

poor record at Anfield continued - including his spells at Everton and Manchester United, Moyes hasn't won in 14 games.

The visitors conceded 78 percent of possession but managed to limit Liverpool to a handful of half-chances in the first half.

Part of Sunderland's success in negating the threat of Liverpool, which scored 17 times in five previous home league matches, was Jason Denayer's man-marking job on Coutinho. The one occasion that the on-loan Manchester City defender lost his man resulted in Coutinho's injury, as Ndong's follow-through caught the right foot of the Brazilian, who was trying to jink past him.

Sunderland's one chance before the break fell to former Everton midfielder Steven Pienaar but goalkeeper Loris Karius just got out quick enough to block. Liverpool's frustration finally ended 15 minutes from time when Jordan Henderson picked out Origi on the left of the penalty area and the striker threaded a shot across a crowded box and inside the far post.

After Milner stepped up to score his fifth goal of the season, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp had the luxury of handing 17-year-old academy graduate Ben Woodburn a debut.—AP

 Leicester	2
 Middlesbrough	2

SLIMANI SPOT ON TO SAVE LEICESTER

LEICESTER: Leicester salvaged a dramatic 2-2 draw against Middlesbrough as Islam Slimani converted a penalty deep into stoppage-time at the King Power Stadium yesterday. Claudio Ranieri's side trailed twice to goals from Middlesbrough striker Alvaro Negredo, but Riyad Mahrez got Leicester's first equaliser with a penalty before his Algerian team-mate Slimani struck from the spot to earn a point with virtually the last kick of a thrilling encounter.

Although Leicester finished the happier thanks to their late escape, the Foxes remain too close to the relegation zone for comfort and their fairytale title seems a lifetime ago just seven months later. Middlesbrough went into the match as the Premier League's joint lowest scorers, but they threatened first as Adama Traore sped past Christian Fuchs and drove in a cross-shot that Ron-Robert Zieler parried to Marten de Roon, who swept his effort wide. Karanka's team had found their stride quickly and Negredo's 977-minute goal drought came to an end in the 13th minute.

Negredo, on loan from Valencia, had gone 11 games without a goal since scoring in the opening game of the season, but the Spanish striker was in unusually clinical mood as he exchanged passes with Gaston Ramirez and fired high into the net from inside the penalty area.

Leicester's 2-1 Champions League win over Brugge in midweek was the latest memorable moment in their maiden voyage in Europe's elite club competition. Ranieri's men have been far less inspired in their title defence, but they roused themselves after falling behind and Japan striker Shinji Okazaki hit the bar with a spectacular scissor kick from Mahrez's cross. The Foxes' pressure was rewarded with a 34th minute equaliser when Middlesbrough defender Calum Chambers was penalised for handball and Mahrez stroked home the spot-kick.

After scoring 13 times by this stage last season, Leicester striker Jamie Vardy has found himself stuck in a rut with 14 games without a goal since he netted his second of the campaign on September 10. Vardy could have broken his barren streak when Okazaki crossed towards him just before half time, but Ramirez cleared as the England international prepared to shoot.

It would prove another frustrating afternoon for Vardy, who was booked and never looked likely to get on the scoresheet before being substituted midway through the second half.

Vardy was replaced by Slimani and Mahrez also departed as Ranieri tried to pep up his attack, yet Middlesbrough regained the lead in the 71st minute. Adam Forshaw's high pass over the Leicester defence sent Negredo racing clear and he fired a low strike past Zieler.—AFP