

# Sports

Vettel holds off late Hamilton charge to win Bahrain GP

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Golden Barker hails embattled British team

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MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2017

SEVILLA STUMBLES AGAIN WITH 0-0 DRAW AT VALENCIA

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MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Argentinian defender Marcos Rojo (L) vies with Chelsea's Brazilian-born Spanish striker Diego Costa during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Chelsea at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday.—AFP

## MAN UNITED BEAT CHELSEA TO OPEN UP EPL TITLE RACE

	Man Utd	2
	Chelsea	0

MANCHESTER: Ander Herrera scored one goal, set up another and executed the perfect marking job on Eden Hazard to set up Manchester United's 2-0 win over Chelsea that opened up the Premier League title race yesterday. United didn't even need rested top scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic to consign the leaders to their fifth league loss of the season, which left

them only four points ahead of Tottenham with six games left. Marcus Rashford - Ibrahimovic's replacement up front - ran onto Herrera's through-ball to give United a seventh-minute lead. A constant menace for Chelsea's defense all game, Rashford ensured Ibrahimovic wasn't missed at Old Trafford. Herrera shadowed Hazard in a tactical plan by United manager Jose Mourinho that limited the effectiveness of Chelsea's main attacking threat. On a rare occasion he left Hazard's side, Herrera popped up in Chelsea's area in the 49th minute to smash a deflected shot high into the net from 18 meters. The result didn't just blow open the title race, it also left the battle for Champions League qual-

ification intriguingly poised. United moved up to fifth place, four points behind fourth-placed Manchester City with a game in hand, and is six points behind third-placed Liverpool having played two fewer games. United had conceded five goals and failed to score in its two losses to Chelsea this season - one in the league and one in the FA Cup - but Mourinho got his tactics spot on against his former team this time. Rashford excelled, stretching Chelsea's center backs with the kind of movement and pace that Ibrahimovic would not be able to offer. Winger Jesse Lingard was played out of position in attack and added more mobility alongside Rashford. Herrera and Matteo Darmian did brilliant stifling jobs in man-marking Eden Hazard

and Pedro, respectively. And United center backs Marcos Rojo and Eric Bailly succeeded in riling the combustible Diego Costa, who was booked in the first half and played on the edge throughout. As good a tactical masterclass as it was from Mourinho, there was a touch of fortune about both goals. In the build-up to Rashford's goal, Herrera blocked with his hand a pass from Nemanja Matic but the infringement wasn't picked up. The United midfield anchorman ran forward and split the defense with his through-ball to Rashford, who got in behind David Luiz and bobbed a finish past Asmir Begovic - starting in place of the injured Thibaut Courtois. Fans in the Stretford End chanted Herrera's name as he frustrated Hazard time and again in

the first half, and they did so again after he made it 2-0 with a shot that clipped off the heel of Kurt Zouma and span beyond an unsuspected Begovic. Chelsea produced possibly its sloppiest display of the past seven months, with the leaders not helped by left wing-back Marcos Alonso pulling out of the match during the warm-up to be replaced by a center back in Zouma. That succeeded in unbalancing the team. Chelsea is still the favorite for the title, with the only obvious stumbling block in its run-in being a trip to Everton on April 30. Its last four games are against Middlesbrough, West Bromwich Albion, Watford and Sunderland. Tottenham doesn't look like letting up, though, after winning its last seven games and scoring 22 goals in the process.—AP

## FIRMINO LIFTS LIVERPOOL BACK TO THIRD PLACE

	West Brom	0
	Liverpool	1

WEST BROMWICH: Roberto Firmino fired Liverpool to a 1-0 victory at West Bromwich Albion yesterday that moved Jurgen Klopp's men back into third place in the Premier League. Firmino settled a scrappy game with a close-range header in first half stoppage-time to condemn Albion boss Tony Pulis to his first ever home league defeat against the Reds. The Brazilian converted a flick-on from Lucas Leiva to seal a fifth win in their last seven games for Liverpool. They are unbeaten since losing at Leicester in late February and now lead fourth-placed Manchester City by two points, although Pep Guardiola's team have a game in hand in the race for an automatic spot in the Champions League group stage. West Brom had the first opening when Liverpool failed to clear their lines and Matt Phillips picked up possession on the edge of the area. He struck a shot that deflected to Hal Robson-Kanu

but the Wales forward could not react quickly enough to turn it home. Liverpool began to dominate possession but Phillips tried his luck again with an ambitious effort from distance that went high and wide. However, Liverpool should have led on 15 minutes when they pounced on a hesitation from Claudio Yacob in the West Brom midfield, stole possession and broke with pace. Lucas fed Philippe Coutinho, who burst into the area and hit a cross-shot that flew narrowly wide of Ben Foster's goal. West Brom then missed a glorious chance from a well-worked free-kick that saw Phillips volley a cross towards Nacer Chadli at the far post. The Belgian was distracted by the slightest of touches by Emre Can, but Chadli should still have gobbled up the chance. Instead he missed his kick and Liverpool almost broke away and scored. Firmino crossed for Coutinho, who sent a difficult shot wide at the far-post. Coutinho then tried another long-range shot but it never troubled Foster. And Liverpool's defensive vulnerability was exposed again when Robson-Kanu raced onto a simple ball over the top but he snatched at his shot and Simon Mignolet made a comfortable save. After struggling to break down West Brom's resistance, Liverpool went ahead through a set-piece on the stroke of half-time.

**STUBBORN** Chris Brunt was penalised for a foul on Divock Origi, and from James Milner's free-kick the visitors took the lead. It was flicked on by Lucas to Firmino, who nodded home after reacting quicker than Craig Dawson. Origi could have doubled the visitors' lead early in the second half when he cut in from the left and curled a right-footed shot just beyond the far post. Milner should have scored moments later when he arrived late to meet a cross by Firmino, only to side-foot a volley over the crossbar. West Brom introduced three substitutes in an effort to change the pattern of the game but they were met with stubborn resistance from the visitors. In fact they almost fell further behind when a Coutinho free-kick took a double deflection on its way for a Liverpool corner. A rare chance for Pulis's side came with 12 minutes remaining as Jake Livermore dragged a shot well wide of Mignolet's goal. But two minutes later they should have been level after Liverpool gifted possession to Salomon Rondon, who moved towards goal before feeding Phillips. The winger connected well with his shot but it was smothered low down by Mignolet. Liverpool substitute Alberto Moreno angered Klopp in stoppage-time when, with Foster forward for a corner, he led a Liverpool counter-attack but opted to shoot from distance at an open goal and missed, with team-mates screaming for a pass.—AFP



WEST BROMWICH: West Bromwich Albion's English goalkeeper Jack Rose (L) chases back to tackle Liverpool's Dutch midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum (R) after going up to attack a corner kick in the dying minutes of the English Premier League football match between West Bromwich Albion and Liverpool at The Hawthorns stadium in West Bromwich, central England, yesterday.—AFP