

Sports

Sane double secures Champions League top spot for Man City

'As newcomers to this competition, we have learnt a lot'

MANCHESTER: Manchester City survived a sloppy start to secure top spot in Champions League Group F by coming from behind to beat Hoffenheim 2-1 thanks to Leroy Sane's double on Wednesday.

Andrej Kramaric's penalty put the Germans deservedly in front on 16 minutes as another much-changed City side struggled to get up to speed. However, Pep Guardiola's men found their feet as the first half wore on and were level just before the break courtesy of a brilliant Sane free-kick. Guardiola was frustrated by his side's wastefulness in front of goal in the second period, but Sane did at least secure victory by converting Raheem Sterling's pass on the hour mark. "We started flat because this team is so demanding in terms of how they attack the space, their physicality, they are stronger than us," said Guardiola.

"After that we created an incredible amount of chances, but the result is good. "We are in the best 16, now we are going to see the draw and especially try to arrive in the right moment." City made life difficult for themselves in the group with a flat performance in losing at home to Lyon in their opening group game and were similarly caught cold having already secured their place in the last 16.

Kramaric had fired a warning shot inches over before Ederson produced an incredible finger-tip stop to turn another curling effort from the Croatian behind. However, Kramaric's luck

was in third time round from the penalty spot after Aymeric Laporte was punished for hauling down Benjamin Hubner.

All of City's best efforts before the break came from set-pieces as Gabriel Jesus and Nicolas Otamendi struck the woodwork.

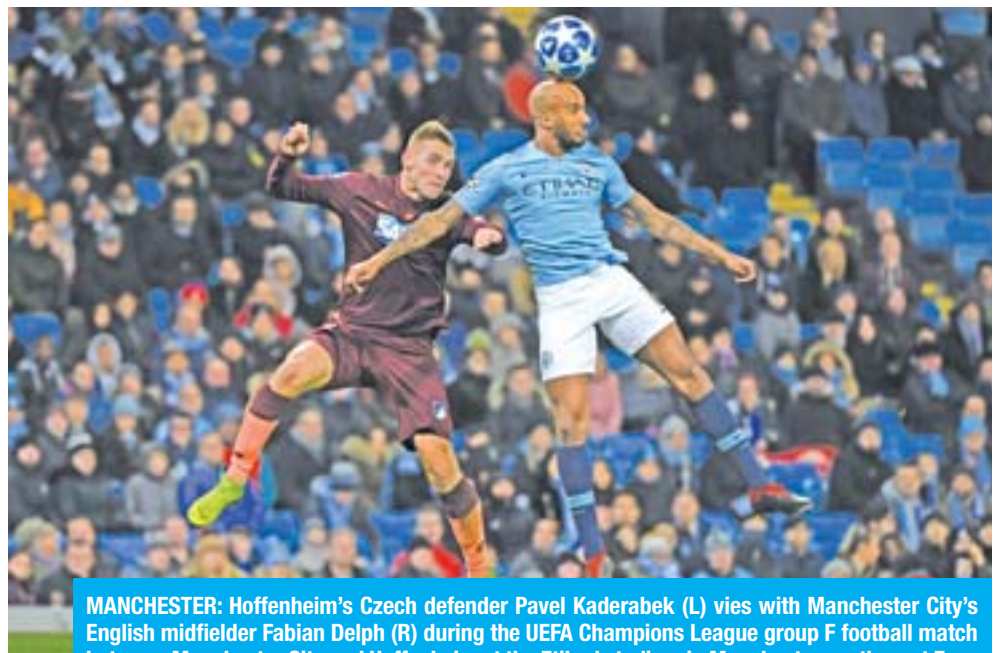
SANE SCREAMER

But the hosts were finally level in spectacular fashion when Sane curled a free-kick into the top corner from 30 yards out. Hoffenheim needed to win just to have a chance of qualifying for the Europa League knockout stage in third, but in their desperation to chase a winner left themselves hopelessly exposed to the pace of Sane and Sterling after the break.

"I don't think three points sums up our position completely. We would have gone further if we had got the points we should have done," said Hoffenheim boss Julian Nagelsmann, who will leave to join RB Leipzig next season.

"As newcomers to this competition, we have learnt a lot, we have played well in the tournament and come back several times in games. We have done a lot for this club and hope there will be more of this in the future."

Sane was guilty of overplaying as City incredibly spurned a three-against-one when Sterling fed the German, who tried to tee up the surprised Bernardo Silva rather than going for goal himself and Baumann saved the Portuguese's shot.



MANCHESTER: Hoffenheim's Czech defender Pavel Kaderabek (L) vies with Manchester City's English midfielder Fabian Delph (R) during the UEFA Champions League group F football match between Manchester City and Hoffenheim at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, north west England on Wednesday. — AFP

"We are young. I have that feeling. The people in front are 21, 22 years old we need to be more calm in these positions," added Guardiola. However, the City boss reserved

special praise for 18-year-old Phil Foden on his first Champions League start of the season just days after signing a new five-and-a-half-year contract. — AFP

FA chief Martin Glenn to step down

LONDON: Martin Glenn has resigned as chief executive of the Football Association and will leave his role at the end of the season, the governing body announced yesterday. The FA said Glenn, who was appointed in 2015, "had delivered much of what he came to do".

"When I accepted the role of CEO at The FA, I was tasked with improving the effectiveness of the organisation and making it financially secure," said Glenn. "I also joined with the strong belief that the England team's performance in tournaments could and should improve, and that the experience of the millions of people who play football could be a better one. "I will leave feeling proud of the success of the performance of all the England teams. I am confident that we have established in St. George's Park, a world-class centre which will ensure that the teams will continue to build on their current successes."

England, under Gareth Southgate, reached the semi-finals of the World Cup in Russia and recently qualified for next year's Nations League Finals. FA chairman Greg Clarke said Glenn's "integrity, commitment, energy and passion for football has underpinned the improvements on and off the pitch".

Glenn has presided over a series of challenging situations in his role, including the appointment and rapid departure of England boss Sam Allardyce. He was criticised for his role in the investigation into the conduct of England women's manager Mark Sampson, who was dismissed in September last year. — AFP

UEFA Champions League tables

PARIS: UEFA Champions League tables after the final round of group stage matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Group A				Group E											
Borussia Dortmund	6	4	1	1	10	2	13 - qualified	Bayern Munich	6	4	2	0	15	5	14 - qualified
Atletico Madrid	6	4	1	1	9	6	13 - qualified	Ajax	6	3	3	0	11	5	12 - qualified
Club Brugge	6	1	3	2	6	5	5	Benfica	6	2	1	3	6	11	7
Monaco	6	0	1	5	2	14	1	AEK Athens	6	0	0	6	2	13	0
Group B				Group F											
Barcelona	6	4	2	0	14	5	14 - qualified	Man City	6	4	1	1	16	6	13 — qualified
Tottenham	6	2	2	2	9	10	8 - qualified	Lyon	6	1	5	0	12	11	8 — qualified
Inter Milan	6	2	2	2	6	7	8	Shakhtar Donetsk	6	1	3	2	8	16	6
PSV Eindhoven	6	0	2	4	6	13	2	Hoffenheim	6	0	3	3	11	14	3
Group C				Group G											
Paris SG	6	3	2	1	17	9	11 - qualified	Real Madrid	6	4	0	2	12	5	12 — qualified
Liverpool	6	3	0	3	9	7	9 - qualified	Roma	6	3	0	3	11	8	9 — qualified
Napoli	6	2	3	1	7	5	9	Viktoria Plzen	6	2	1	3	7	16	7
Red Star Belgrade	6	1	1	4	5	17	4	CSKA Moscow	6	2	1	3	8	9	7
Group D				Group H											
Porto	6	5	1	0	15	6	16 - qualified	Juventus	6	4	0	2	9	4	12 — qualified
Schalke	6	3	2	1	6	4	11 - qualified	Man United	6	3	1	2	7	4	10 — qualified
Galatasaray	6	1	1	4	5	8	4	Valencia	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
Lokomotiv Moscow	6	1	0	5	4	12	3	Young Boys	6	1	1	4	4	12	4. — AFP