

## Sports

# Ronaldo double gives Real narrow win over Eibar

## Real move four points behind second-placed Atletico Madrid

**EIBAR:** Cristiano Ronaldo came to the rescue again as Real Madrid followed up their thumping win over Paris Saint-Germain with a narrow victory against Eibar. Ronaldo scored twice, his second six minutes from the end, as Real won 2-1 and avoided another slip-up in La Liga. Ivan Ramis had equalised for Eibar shortly after half-time.

His double means Ronaldo has now scored in seven consecutive games and has a remarkable 13 goals overall in that period. Real move four points behind second-placed Atletico Madrid, who will restore that gap to seven with a win over Celta Vigo today. Eibar stay eighth.

After securing a 5-2 aggregate victory over Paris Saint-Germain on Tuesday, Real swapped the Parc des Princes for the Ipurua Municipal Stadium, the smallest in La Liga with a capacity of just over 7,000.

They were below their best and rode their luck late on when Eibar should have converted a pair of excellent chances. But Ronaldo proved the difference again, the 33-year-old taking his tally for the season to 35 goals in 37 appearances.

Zinedine Zidane had insisted the success in Paris was now "forgotten" and his starting line-up suggested as much, with Karim Benzema the only key player rested.

Gareth Bale started up front alongside Ronaldo, while Luka Modric and Toni Kroos, fit enough only to come off the bench in midweek, returned. Isco and

Casemiro formed the top and tail of a midfield diamond.

Real were ragged early on as Takashi Inui, Kike Garcia and Joan Jordan all went close to giving Eibar the lead. Raphael Varane had to be replaced by Nacho after taking a bang to the head and, against the run of play, Real edged ahead in the 33rd minute.

A sloppy pass out from the back by Anaitz Arbilla conceded possession to Luka Modric who quickly picked out Ronaldo with a sublime bending pass. Ronaldo chested the ball down and slammed it in at the near post. In front, Real improved but five minutes into the second half and Eibar were level. Sergio Ramos lost his man at a corner and Ramis nodded in from six yards.

### Ronaldo has scored in 7 consecutive games

Ronaldo should have restored the advantage but failed to convert an excellent Bale cross and from the resulting corner, Bale flashed a glancing header just wide of the post.

Isco and Kroos made way for Benzema and Lucas Vazquez with 19 minutes left but Eibar had two golden chances to score a second.

First, the unmarked Inui headed over from seven yards out and then Kike hit the side-netting with only Keylor Navas to beat. They would soon prove costly misses. In the 84th minute, Pedro Leon gave away possession too easily, allowing Modric to feed Daniel Carvajal out wide. His whipped cross found the leaping Ronaldo and the Portuguese made no mistake. — AFP



**EIBAR:** Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (L) challenges Eibar's Argentinian midfielder Gonzalo Escalante during the Spanish league football match between Eibar and Real Madrid at the Ipurua stadium in Eibar yesterday. — AFP

## Everton cruise to victory, Newcastle win

**LONDON:** Wayne Rooney's penalty miss mattered little as Everton continued their fine home form as they earned a 2-0 victory over Brighton and Hove Albion in the Premier League yesterday. The hosts dominated in the first half but couldn't find a way past a Brighton side who travelled to Goodison Park on the back of three wins in their last four games in all competitions.

However, two goals in the second half saw the hosts home. Gaetan Bong put through his own net on the hour mark, before January signing Cenk Tosun smashed into the net in the 76th minute and Rooney could even afford to miss his penalty.

Brighton, who had Anthony Knockaert sent off for a dangerous tackle, dropped to 11th after a first defeat in eight in all competitions, now below Everton, whose ninth Premier League home win of the season lifted them to ninth. Earlier, Newcastle United moved clear of the Premier League's relegation zone after on-loan Brazilian winger Kenedy scored twice and Matt Ritchie added another in a 3-0 home win over struggling Southampton yesterday.

Kenedy, who was loaned to Newcastle by champions Chelsea in January, opened the scoring in the second minute and made it 2-0 in the 29th after a superb breakaway move involving Ayoze Perez and striker Dwight Gayle.

Ritchie scored the third shortly before the hour with



**LIVERPOOL:** Everton's English striker Wayne Rooney shoots from the penalty spot but fails to score during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Brighton and Hove Albion at Goodison Park in Liverpool, yesterday. — AFP

a crisp low show from 20 metres as Newcastle celebrated their first win in eight Premier League games against the Saints, who have won only one of their last 17 top-flight matches. Having scored his first goals for

the Magpies, Kenedy also became the first Newcastle player to bag a brace at St James' Park this season, with the home side missing several chances to win by an even bigger margin. — Reuters



**WEST BROMWICH:** Leicester City's Spanish midfielder Vicente Iborra heads the ball to score his team's fourth goal during the English Premier League football match between West Bromwich Albion and Leicester City at The Hawthorns stadium in West Bromwich. — AFP

## Mahrez majestic as Leicester come back to beat West Brom

**WEST BROMWICH ALBION:** Riyad Mahrez produced a majestic performance to create one goal and score another as Leicester City came back from a goal down to hammer bottom side West Bromwich Albion 4-1 in the Premier League yesterday.

The home side got off to a superb start when striker

Salomon Rondon stole the ball in front of his marker to stab home a deft volley in the eighth minute.

The advantage lasted just 13 minutes as Jamie Vardy put Leicester back on level terms with an even better volley, latching on to a superb long pass from Mahrez to fire home his 14th Premier League goal of the season. Mahrez then latched on to substitute Kelechi Iheanacho's pass to dink the ball home and give Leicester the lead just after the hour mark. Iheanacho's 76th-minute header made it 3-1, prompting many of the home fans to head towards the exits.

Vicente Iborra's stoppage-time header rounded off another dismal day for struggling West Brom. West Brom stayed rooted to the bottom, eight points from safety, while Leicester are eighth on 40 points.

## Huddersfield held by 10-man Swansea City

**HUDDERSFIELD TOWN:** Huddersfield Town failed to convert any of their 29 shots and were held to a goalless draw by 10-man Swansea City in yesterday's Premier League clash.

After an even start to the game, Swansea forward Jordan Ayew was shown a straight red card in the 11th minute for a bad challenge on Huddersfield midfielder Jonathan Hogg, leaving the visitors with a tough task on their hands.

Huddersfield's best chance of the half came in the 42nd minute when Steve Mounie's header looped just over the bar as Swansea held on to go into the break with the scores level.

The hosts piled on the pressure in the second half and saw a Tom Ince header strike the woodwork in the 91st minute with the resilient visitors securing a hard-fought draw.

West Ham United could face serious repercussions after several pitch invasions during the second half of a crushing 3-0 home Premier League defeat by Burnley.

West Ham, dangerously close to the relegation zone, dominated the first half but everything turned sour at the London Stadium after the break. Ashley Barnes fired Burnley ahead in the 66th minute, prompting furious home fans to run on to the pitch. If that was not bad enough Chris Wood doubled Burnley's lead minutes later and this time there were scuffles in the stands and one fan ran on and took the corner flag. Wood made it 3-0 as chaos broke out in the stadium, with West Ham's owners David Gold and David Sullivan being asked to leave the directors' box for their own safety. Defeat left West Ham in 16th place, three points above the relegation zone. — Reuters

## Papa Messi misses Barca match for birth of third son

**BARCELONA:** Lionel Messi announced that he and his wife Antonella Rocuzzo had become parents for a third time yesterday. "Welcome Ciro!! Thank God, everything went perfectly. He and his mummy are doing very well. We are super happy!!!" wrote Messi on his Instagram account, accompanying the post with a photo of the baby's hand. Ciro is a brother to five-year-old Thiago and Mateo, who is two. Messi had pulled out of Barcelona's squad for Saturday's La Liga match at Malaga to be present for the birth.

The club tweeted: "Change to the squad. Messi is out for personal reasons and Yerry Mina takes his place." The Argentinian couple, both 30, first met in their home town, Rosario, in 1996 and started going out a decade later. They were married last year in Rosario. Barcelona, who face Chelsea in the second leg of their last-16 Champions League tie at the Camp Nou on Wednesday, have an eight-point lead over Atletico Madrid at the top of La Liga. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)		
<b>ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE</b>		
Arsenal v Watford	beIN SPORTS HD 2	16:30
Bournemouth v Tottenham Hotspur	beIN SPORTS HD 2	19:00
<b>SPANISH LEAGUE</b>		
Espanyol v Real Sociedad	beIN SPORTS HD 3	14:00
Atletico de Madrid v Celta de Vigo	beIN SPORTS HD 3	18:15
Las Palmas v Villarreal	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:30
Athletic de Bilbao v Leganes	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:45
<b>ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE</b>		
Fiorentina v Benevento	beIN SPORTS HD 4	14:30
Bologna v Atalanta	beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN	17:00
Juventus v Udinese Calcio	beIN SPORTS HD 4	17:00
Cagliari Calcio v SS Lazio	beIN SPORTS HD 8	17:00
Sassuolo Calcio v spal	beIN SPORTS	17:00
Crotone v Sampdoria	beIN SPORTS HD 9	17:00
Genoa v Milan	beIN SPORTS HD 4	20:00
Internazionale Milano v Napoli	beIN SPORTS HD 4	22:45
<b>GERMAN BUNDESLIGA</b>		
Stuttgart v Leipzig	beIN SPORTS HD 5	17:30
Borussia Dortmund v Eintracht Frankfurt	beIN SPORTS HD 5	20:00
<b>FRENCH LEAGUE</b>		
Guingamp v OGC Nice	beIN SPORTS HD 6	17:00
Olympique Lyonnais v Caen	beIN SPORTS HD 6	19:00
Toulouse v Olympique Marseille	beIN SPORTS HD 6	23:00