

Moyes unhappy with 'rubbish' VAR despite West Ham's win

West Ham surprise Leeds 2-1



LEEDS: West Ham United's French striker Sebastien Haller is unsuccessful with this overhead kick during the English Premier League football match between Leeds United and West Ham United on December 11, 2020. — AFP

LEEDS: West Ham boss David Moyes labeled the use of VAR as "rubbish" after his side had to come from behind to beat Leeds 2-1 and move up to fifth in the Premier League on Friday. The Hammers could not have had a worse start as Mateusz Klich opened the scoring at the second attempt from the penalty spot after Lukasz Fabianski was penalized for coming off his line in saving his Polish international teammate's first spot-kick. Moyes were left exasperated with the decision based on the smallest of margins, while the retake was allowed to stand despite encroaching by Leeds players. "Until we get the VAR sorted I don't think I'll be happy," said Moyes.

"It's a really good result but we had another setback after 30 seconds. There are some terrible decisions that are happening at the moment. "Whoever saw it must have had Fabianski's foot x-rayed. The decision was rubbish." However, West Ham exposed Leeds' struggles to defend set-pieces to move within a point of the top four. Tomas Soucek levelled by heading in Jarrod Bowen's corner, although Leeds goalkeeper Illan Meslier should have done better. The winner arrived in similar fashion as Angelo Ogbonna powered in Aaron Cresswell's free-kick 11 minutes from time.

West Ham were inches away from another set-piece goal when Fabian Balbuena hit the post, but the visitors comfortably held out to continue their impressive season so far. "It worries me because it is causing an unevenness and we are finding it hard to correct it," said Leeds boss Marcelo Bielsa on his side's struggles at set-pieces. "It was a fair defeat. We prepared ourselves to face a game of the characteristics it had today and they were superior." A fourth defeat in six games leaves Leeds in 14th on their first season back in the top flight for 16 years, but with an eight-point cushion above the relegation zone. — AFP



LEEDS: West Ham United's Polish goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski (2nd left) concedes a penalty as he fouls Leeds United's English striker Patrick Bamford (center) during the English Premier League football match between Leeds United and West Ham United on December 11, 2020. — AFP

'No time to mope:' Inter seek Serie A lift after Euro flop

MILAN: Inter Milan turn their focus back to Serie A after their Champions League flop with a trip to Cagliari awaiting today following their group stage exit mid-week. "There's no time to sit and mope," warned captain Samir Handanovic with his side out of Europe after finishing bottom of their Champions League group. Antonio Conte's side are second in Serie A, five points behind leaders AC Milan, with the two city rivals trying to deny Juventus a 10th consecutive league title.

"We have to focus on the league and the Coppa Italia," urged Handanovic. In his second campaign, Conte now has no choice but to deliver a 19th 'Scudetto' to Inter and first since 2010. The former Juventus and Chelsea manager took Inter to second in Serie A and the Europa League final in his first season. A third consecutive group stage exit was a shock for Conte's expensively-assembled side, who are the top scorers domestically with 26 goals in 10 games.

Inter have spent nearly 300 million euros (\$363 million) in the past two years on new signings and their exit from Europe will hit hard. "There's a lot of regret," said Conte. "We haven't had much luck in the Champions League given certain incidents and refereeing decisions." AC Milan are riding high as they also target a 19th Scudetto and first since 2011. Top scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic could return against Parma after a muscle

injury ruled him out of their last two league games. Juventus, Lazio and Atalanta return to league action having all secured their passes to the Champions League knockout rounds. Juventus, six points behind Milan in fourth, travel to lowly Genoa after their confidence-boosting 3-0 win at troubled Barcelona in which Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice. "Playing like this, we have nothing to fear until the end of the season," the triumphant Portugal captain said after the game. Seventh-placed Lazio host Hellas Verona, who are just one point behind the Roman club, with Atalanta, in ninth, hosting Fiorentina.

Tuscan side Fiorentina are hovering above the relegation zone and hoping for a first win since October 25 against Atalanta, who have taken just five points in their last six games. Third-placed Napoli, looking for a first win in their newly-named Stadio Diego Armando Maradona, host Sampdoria. Gennaro Gattuso's side are six points behind Milan, having scored eight goals in their last two games against Roma and Crotone. Sassuolo host Benevento on Friday looking to regain some of their early momentum, having dropped to fifth in the table as Roma head to Bologna just a point behind Roberto De Zerbi's flamboyant side.

One to watch: Josip Ilicic

Atalanta's Josip Ilicic chases his first league goal this season against former club Fiorentina. The 32-year-old was out for two months with personal problems after the coronavirus lockdown, but got his first goal in the Champions League win over Liverpool two weeks ago. Ilicic played 105 matches with Fiorentina in Serie A between 2013 and 2017, before joining Atalanta where he had his best season last campaign with 15 league goals. — AFP



JERUSALEM: A person throws money at Moshe Hogege, owner of Israeli Beitar Jerusalem football club, during the club's training session on Friday after a member of Abu Dhabi's royal family bought half of Beitar. — AFP

Israel soccer fans clash over UAE's investment

JERUSALEM: Rival supporters of top Israeli football team Beitar Jerusalem, notorious for its anti-Arab fan base, fought each other Friday over Emirati investment in the club. AFP journalists said. A member of Abu Dhabi's royal family, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan, signed a \$92 million "partnership agreement" on Monday with club owner Moshe Hogege.

On Friday, on the sidelines of training by the players, supporters who backed the investment were attacked by a dozen supporters of the far-right "La Familia" fan group, who oppose the deal. "Police arrested four people between the ages of 18 and 29 involved in public disturbances," police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said in a statement. Beitar Jerusalem's fans have historically been considered anti-Muslim and anti-Arab, with the "La Familia" group known for its chants against the

Prophet. The first division club is the only Israeli side never to have fielded an Arab player.

But it has been working to change its image in recent years, and in 2017 received an award for its fight against racism. The investment in the club comes after Israel established ties with the United Arab Emirates, signing an accord along with Bahrain in Washington in September. Since then, the UAE and Bahrain have signed a raft of deals with Israel, ranging from tourism to aviation and financial services. Sheikh Hamad bought about half of Beitar in return for investing 300 million shekels (\$92 million) in the club over the next decade, the club said in a statement on Monday.

"We are very excited about this decision and understand the tremendous opportunities Beitar Jerusalem can have with the money," said Maor Yifrah, a 26-year-old supporter, draped in a scarf from Dubai. "We can take a new path which will bring us championships and trophies," Yifrah told AFP, adding that "all of Europe will hear from us." However, "La Familia" supporters criticized the investment. Some wrote angry comments on social media, including calling for Beitar Jerusalem's name to be changed to Beitar "Mohammed". — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
Southampton v Sheffield United 15:00
beIN Sports HD 2

Crystal Palace v Tottenham Hotspur 17:15
beIN Sports HD 1

Fulham v Liverpool 19:30
beIN Sports HD 1

Arsenal v Burnley 22:15
beIN Sports HD 2

Leicester City v Brighton 22:15
beIN Sports HD 5

SPANISH LEAGUE
Real Sociedad v Eibar 16:00
beIN Sports HD 3

Real Betis v Villarreal 8:15
beIN Sports HD 3

Elche CF v Granada 20:30
beIN Sports HD 3

FC Barcelona v Levante 23:00
beIN Sports HD 1

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE
Cagliari Calcio v Inter Milan 14:30
beIN Sports HD 1

Atalanta v ACF Fiorentina 17:00
beIN Sports HD 7

Bologna v AS Roma 17:00
beIN Sports HD 5

Napoli v Sampdoria 17:00
beIN Sports HD 4

Genoa CFC v Juventus 20:00
beIN Sports HD 4

AC Milan v Parma Calcio 1913 22:45
beIN Sports HD 4

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA
Augsburg v Schalke 04 17:30
beIN Sports

Bayer 04 v TSG 1899 Hoffenheim 20:00
beIN Sports

FRENCH LEAGUE
Nice v Stade Rennais 15:00
beIN Sports HD 6

Stade brestois 29 v Stade Reims 17:00
beIN Sports HD 6

Lorient v Nimes Olympique 17:00
beIN Sports

Nantes v FCO Dijon 17:00
beIN Sports HD 9

RC Strasbourg v FC Metz 17:00
beIN Sports HD 8

LOSC Lille v Bordeaux 19:00
beIN Sports HD 6

Paris Saint-Germain v Lyon nais 23:00
beIN Sports HD 6

Kuwait Football League roundup

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Three matches were played on Friday during the 12th round of Kuwait Football League (ranking stage). Though Sahel Sports Club showcased an acceptable performance during their match on Friday, Kuwait grabbed a narrow win 2-1. Kuwait's Tunisian player Ahmad Al-Akaishi scored his team's winning goal in the 33rd minute following a fast counter attack by Jumaa, who was able to pass the ball to Akhaishi. Meanwhile Sahel seemed to pay more attention to defense with few meaningless attempts on the goal. Sahel's Jasim Ateeq saw red in the 80th minute and Kuwait players were not able to take advantage of that.



In another match, Arabi Club reclaimed their winning ways as they beat Kheitan 3-0. Arabi's Essa Yacoubou scored the first goal in the 56th minute - then Al-Sanousi Al-Hadi scored a second goal in the 79th, after which Ahmad Al-Saleh scored a third towards the end of the match from the penalty spot. Kheitan suffered a setback after the referee gave defender Faisal Al-Enezi a red card in the 50th minute leaving Kheitan with 10 players. It was not long after that, when Essa Yacoubou scored with the help of Mohammad Zunaifer in the 56th minute. Al-Sanousi Al-Hadi doubled Arabi's score in the 78th minute.

The referee awarded Arabi with a penalty kick three minutes into added time which Ahmad Al-Saleh succeeded in converting it into a goal. In the third match, Kazma blew away Jahra with four unanswered goals and gained three points - raising their total to 22. This placed Kazma in third place as Jahra remained in ninth with 11 points.

