

Sports

# Dortmund's new caretaker coach gets a winning start

## Gladbach snatch late draw as Stindl claims hat-trick

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund's new caretaker coach Edin Terzic made a winning start Tuesday after club captain Marco Reus netted a late winner to seal a 2-1 victory at Werder Bremen. The 38-year-old Terzic replaced Lucien Favre, who was sacked Sunday less than 24 hours after a 5-1 thrashing at home by Stuttgart. "It's always important to come back with a win after such a brutal defeat," match-winner Reus told Sky.

"After a change of coach, the team knows it has let itself down. "We were up against it and hopefully we have got ourselves on the right track." Terzic has a contract for the rest of the season and inspired Dortmund to their first win in four league games while Bremen now have four straight defeats. "It was important we showed a reaction," said Terzic, who was Slaven Bilic's assistant coach at West Ham from 2015-17. "We lost a few balls in areas where we can't afford to do that, so there are lots of things to work on."

Dortmund took the lead in Bremen as Raphael Guerreiro was fastest to stab home with 14 minutes gone after Jadon Sancho had a shot charged down. Bremen equalized on 28 minutes when Josh Sargent pounced on a mistake by Dortmund defender Manuel Akanji and the ball was worked to Kevin Moehwald who fired home. Akanji made amends when he won the penalty from which Reus scored at the second attempt 12 minutes from time after Jiri Pavlenka saved the initial spot-kick. The away win lifts Dortmund to fourth, three points behind league leaders Bayer Leverkusen, who were at Cologne yesterday.

### Stindl hat-trick

Union, who host Dortmund on Friday, were held to a 2-2 draw at VfB Stuttgart, whose two-metre tall striker Sasa Kalajdzic came off the bench to score two late goals. Union were 2-0 up with five minutes left thanks to goals by defender Marvin Friedrich and Liverpool loanee Taiwo Awoniyi. However Kalajdzic scored with a header, then chested down and fired home, his shot surviving scrutiny for a handball from the VAR, to claim a point.

Hertha Berlin remain in mid-table after their goalless draw at second-from-bottom Mainz. Earlier, Borussia Moenchengladbach captain Lars Stindl completed a hat-trick with an equaliser in the fifth minute of added time to snatch a point in their 3-3 draw at Eintracht Frankfurt. Stindl's late heroics saved a point at Frankfurt, but Gladbach, who have drawn Manchester City in the last 16 of the Champions League, are winless in their last five games in all competitions.

After Stindl opened the scoring by curling in a 14th minute free-kick, Frankfurt roared back with three unanswered goals including two by Portugal striker Andre Silva. Leading 3-1, Frankfurt played the last 10 minutes with 10 men after captain David Abraham was sent off for a second booking. With 90 minutes almost up, Gladbach won a penalty and Stindl stepped up to convert. Then he netted a last-gasp header to seal the draw. The point leaves Gladbach eighth, one place and four points ahead of Frankfurt. —AFP



**BREMEN:** Bremen's German midfielder Maximilian Eggstein (left) vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match Werder Bremen v Borussia Dortmund on December 15, 2020. —AFP

## Premier League strugglers West Brom sack Bilic

**LONDON:** Slaven Bilic became the first Premier League manager to lose his job this season when he was sacked by struggling West Bromwich Albion yesterday. The 52-year-old Croatian's sacking comes with the side 19th in the table but on the back of an encouraging 1-1 draw with Manchester City on Tuesday. Bilic had been at the club for only 18 months but had earned the admiration of the fans after leading West Brom to automatic promotion from the Championship last season. Although results had been generally poor this term Bilic had been given little funding to bring in players in the close season. His budget for transfers was limited at

£20 million (\$27 million).

West Brom have garnered seven points from their 13 matches so far and have the worst defensive record in the Premier League, having conceded 26 goals. Bilic's relations with the board appeared tense from the start of the campaign with no discussions talking place about extending or renewing his contract which was due to run out at the end of this season. "West Bromwich Albion have today parted company with Head Coach Slaven Bilic," read a club statement. "Albion would like to thank Slaven and his coaching staff for their efforts in achieving promotion last season and wishes them all well in the future.

"The club will make no further comment at this time." Former England manager Sam Allardyce is among the favorites to fill the vacancy. The 66-year-old's last managerial post was with Everton, who he left in 2018.



West Bromwich Albion's Croatian head coach Slaven Bilic

Media reports suggest Allardyce will be offered an 18-month contract. In a sign that his appointment may be imminent, he has cancelled scheduled work with a radio station. Bilic's sacking

makes him the latest first managerial departure in a Premier League season for six years, since it took 18 games for Cardiff City to dismiss Neil Warnock in the 2014-15 season. —AFP

## Lazio, Benevento share spoils in Inzaghi derby

**MILAN:** Lazio continued their patchy Serie A form with a 1-1 draw at Benevento on Tuesday as the Inzaghi brothers faced off on the sidelines. Simone Inzaghi's Lazio qualified for the knockout stages of the Champions League for the first time in over two decades midweek but have been wildly inconsistent domestically and sit eighth on 18 points after 12 matches.

Promoted Benevento, led by former AC Milan, Juventus and Italy striker Filippo Inzaghi, move up to 13th after the draw, six points above the relegation zone. Lazio's star striker Ciro Immobile gave the away side a deserved lead with a superb strike in the 25th minute, last season's European Golden Shoe winner hooking Sergej Milinkovic-Savic's cross past Lorenzo Montipò.

That goal came four minutes after Luis Alberto had struck the upright with a low shot as Simone Inzaghi looked set to come out on top in the pitch-side sibling rivalry. Benevento pulled level on the stroke of half-time when Pasquale Schiattarella volleyed home after Lazio failed to clear Gianluca Caprari's corner. The hosts were unlucky to not take all three points when in the final minutes Riccardo

Improta failed to keep his header down after Pepe Reina had pushed out Giuseppe Di Serio's shot. Reina had to be a his best again moments later to keeper out Improta's powerful shot.

Home hero Schiattarella then ruined his good work in stoppage time when a wild tackle on Joaquin Correa earned a straight red card. Crotona remain bottom of the league after a goalless draw at Udinese in Tuesday's early match. They are level on six points with Genoa and Torino, and three behind Fiorentina, who host Sassuolo on Wednesday having not won a league match since late October. Yesterday, leaders AC Milan traveled to Genoa, while champions Juventus hosted Atalanta and title chasers Inter Milan and Napoli faced off at the San Siro. —AFP

## MLS teams struggle in CONCACAF Champions League exits

**MIAMI:** Montreal Impact and New York City FC were dumped out of the CONCACAF Champions League quarter-finals on Tuesday in a blow to Major League Soccer's hopes of ending a 20-year wait for victory in the competition. New York's campaign was snuffed out in clinical fashion by Mexican side Tigres UANL, who are aiming to finally land the continental crown after three losing final appearances in 2016, 2017 and 2019. Tigres, runners-up to Monterrey last season, cruised to a 4-0 victory, 5-0 on aggregate, after goals from French striker Andre-Pierre Gignac, Leonardo Fernandez, Rafael Carioca and Javier Aquino.

Gignac fired Tigres into the lead with a superb header in the 30th minute before Uruguayan midfielder Fernandez added a second with a cheeky backheeled finish in the 49th minute. Brazilian veteran Carioca then headed home Luis Quinones cross on 64 minutes before Aquino netted five minutes from time to complete the scoring on a grim night for New

York, the MLS affiliate of Premier League giants Manchester City.

The rout marked a difficult few days for City, who had only arrived in Orlando earlier Tuesday after three players tested positive for COVID-19 in the past week. The premier continental competition for clubs in North America, Central America and the Caribbean, the CONCACAF Champions League's final stages are taking place at a neutral venue in Orlando, Florida, in order to mitigate risks of disruption from the coronavirus. Tigres will now face Olimpia of Honduras in Saturday's semi-finals. The Central American club were beaten 1-0 by Montreal in Tuesday's early game but advanced on the away goals rule.

Olimpia had beaten Impact 2-1 during the first leg in Montreal in March before the pandemic brought sport in North America to a standstill. Montreal, coached by former France, Barcelona and Arsenal star Thierry Henry, struggled to break down a resilient Olimpia side, who defended in depth for long periods. The



**ORLANDO:** Deybi Flores #20 of CD Olimpia tackles Orji Okwonkwo #18 of Montreal Impact during the CONCACAF Champions League quarterfinal game at Exploria Stadium on December 15, 2020. —AFP

Canadian side were given a lifeline on 57 minutes, when German midfielder Amar Sejdic punished a poor clearance by Olimpia defender Carlos Pineda to curl home a low finish from the edge of the area.

But Henry's side were unable to carve out clear chances after that as Olimpia held on to reach the last four. Tuesday's defeats for New York and Montreal lengthened the odds on an MLS team

finally lifting the Champions League. The last MLS team to win the continental title crown was Los Angeles Galaxy in 2000. With Atlanta United trailing 3-0 from the first leg heading into their second leg game against Mexico's America, MLS's last chance of ending the title drought is likely to rest with Los Angeles FC. Los Angeles faced Mexico's Cruz Azul in yesterday's other quarter-final game. —AFP

## Role of heading in football has to be reexamined

**LONDON:** The role of heading in football should be "seriously considered" amid concerns of a link to an increased risk of dementia, according to the outgoing Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Gordon Taylor. Taylor will step down from his role at the end of the season after 40 years in charge after criticism of his perceived failure to act to tackle the issue of dementia in the game.

Last week a group of former international rugby players announced they were taking legal action against the English and Welsh governing bodies over the brain injuries they have suffered. Former England striker Gary Lineker is among those who have called for a complete ban on heading in training at all levels of the game. "We've got areas of research. We are looking at the number of players who are getting dementia and trying to establish a causal link," Taylor told Sky Sports.

"That's why it's so important that we look at the treatment of concussion and the number of times in training players are heading the ball and to seriously consider the role of heading in the game. "I don't know any footballer who regrets his career, but we also have a duty of care and I think it is incumbent on the authorities that we don't put off any youngster coming into the game because of worries about the future." England World Cup winners Nobby Stiles and Jack Charlton have both died from dementia earlier this year, while Bobby Charlton has also been diagnosed with the disease.

The FIELD study published last year found footballers were three-and-a-half times more likely to die of neurodegenerative disease than age-matched members of the general population. In 2002, an inquest recorded a verdict of death by industrial disease in the case of former England striker Jeff Astle caused by repeated heading of the ball. Dr Willie Stewart, who led the FIELD study, carried out a new examination on Astle's brain in 2014 which concluded that the 59-year-old had died from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). —AFP



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Aston Villa v Burnley beIN Sports HD 1	21:00
Sheffield United v Man United beIN Sports HD 1	23:00
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
AS Roma v Torino beIN Sports HD 4	22:45