

14 A's clinch division after Astros' loss; Royals beat Cardinals 4-1



14 Jordan buys NASCAR team, Bubba Wallace to be driver



15 Lightning level Stanley Cup finals; Dallas Stars defeated



WOLVERHAMPTON: Wolverhampton Wanderers' Mexican striker Raul Jimenez (left) watches his header go past a diving Manchester City's Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson to score a goal during the English Premier League football match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Manchester City on September 21, 2020. Manchester City won the game 3-1. —AFP

Manchester City make winning start

Guardiola salutes 'incredible' Foden

WOLVERHAMPTON: Pep Guardiola labeled Phil Foden as "incredible" after Manchester City survived a scare to start their Premier League title challenge with a 3-1 win against Wolves on Monday. City's delayed start to the campaign - due to their involvement in last season's Champions League - had allowed Liverpool to build a six-point lead over them before they had even kicked a ball. Guardiola's side could not afford to slip up at Molineux if they wanted to keep pace with the champions and they raced into a two-goal lead before half-time thanks to Kevin De Bruyne's penalty and Foden's cool finish.

City's swaggering first half gave way to an anxious spell as Wolves dominated after the interval and they had to cling on after Raul Jimenez got one back before Gabriel Jesus sealed the points in stoppage time. Foden's goal was a welcome morale boost in his first match since the midfielder was sent home in disgrace, along with Manchester United's Mason Greenwood,

after the pair invited local women into the England team's hotel.

The breach of coronavirus protocols after England's Nations League match in Iceland was publicly condemned by City, but the 20-year-old retains Guardiola's trust. "For the goal and in the second half Foden played incredibly well, he helped us keep the ball," Guardiola said. While City equaled Aston Villa's record of winning 10 consecutive opening fixtures to a top-flight season, there is little doubt Liverpool remain the Premier League's preeminent force for now.

But Guardiola was delighted to open with a victory given the shorter than usual pre-season. "We could not run much because we are tired in our legs but in general we did a good game," he said. "The period that we are in, the situation that we had this last two weeks, I expected some moments where we suffer but in general we controlled it well. "It was a good performance. We know how difficult it is in this stadium. "Sometimes we

need more time to get to our best condition but it was a good start to come here and win."

It feels like a crucial season for City and Guardiola as they look to regain the title they won in 2018 and 2019. Guardiola says he needs to "deserve" an extension to his City contract rather than just be handed one as he enters the final year of his current deal. After finishing 18 points behind Liverpool and suffering a shock Champions League quarter-final defeat against Lyon, City need to push the champions harder this term and the early signs were encouraging.

Tense finale

It was De Bruyne, showing no signs of relaxing after being voted PFA Player of the Year last season, who took the responsibility of driving City forward and in the 20th minute he prised open the Wolves defense. The Belgium midfielder's burst into the Wolves area drew a rash lunge from Romain Saiss and referee Andre Mar-

riner awarded a penalty that De Bruyne converted with ease. City were beaten by Wolves twice last season, but this was Guardiola's team at their imperious best and they struck again with a slick move in the 32nd minute. Gabriel Jesus laid off to De Bruyne and his perfectly-weighted pass found Sterling, whose precise cutback teed up Foden to slot home from 12 yards.

De Bruyne had a chance to make it three from Jesus's pass, but for once he couldn't apply the finishing touch as Rui Patricio saved well. Totally out-classed in the first half, Wolves were much improved after the break and there were worrying signs for Guardiola as he surveyed his creaking defense. Daniel Podence turned to fire just wide and he threatened again with a chip over City keeper Ederson that just cleared the crossbar. Jimenez set up a tense finale when he met Podence's cross with a powerful header in the 78th minute, but Jesus netted deep into stoppage-time as his shot deflected in off Conor Coady. —AFP

Al-Arabi grab Amir Cup

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The football season came to an end with the final match of HH the Amir Cup, which was won by Al-Arabi Football Club after defeating Kuwait 2-1 in extra time on Monday evening. Kuwait took control of the match from the first whistle and Kuwait's Abdallah Al-Buraiki was able to score their first and only goal in the 26th minute.

Attacks and counter attacks continued in the second half until the 83rd-minute when Al-Arabi's Sidric Henry was able to score the equalizer - making it a 1-1 draw. The match went into extra time and there was no score until the very last minute when Al-Arabi's substitute Ali Khalaf scored the winning goal.

The road to the final match was not easy for both finalists. Kuwait's semi-final was not easy and had to be decided by penalty kicks. Al-Arabi meanwhile beat Tadhamon in the first round, then Burqan in round eight. They had a tough time in the semi-final when they met Yarmouk and ended in a goalless draw in both regulation and extra time. The match ended in a penalty shootout.

Al-Arabi now equal Al-Qadisiya in the number of HH the Amir cup wins (16 each). Meanwhile, Kuwait won it 14 times, Kazma 7, Salmiya and Yarmouk twice and Fahaaheel once. This marks the 58th Edition of HH the Amir cup which was launched in the 1961-1962 season. Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri represented HH the Deputy Amir, Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was in attendance during the match along with Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim and other dignitaries.



Djokovic wins fifth Rome title

ROME: Novak Djokovic claimed a record 36th Masters crown on Monday, beating Argentine Diego Schwartzman in the final of the Italian Open. The world number one came through 7-5, 6-3 in just under two hours to move ahead of Spanish rival Rafael Nadal (35) in the number of Masters titles. Serb Djokovic won a fifth Rome title, and first since 2015, in the warm-up clay-court tournament for next week's French Open. Nine-time Rome winner Nadal, the defending

champion, fell in the quarter-finals to eighth-seed Schwartzman.

Djokovic had been unbeaten this season before his US Open disqualification for hitting a line judge with a ball in frustration. The 33-year-old has won four trophies from five events in 2020 - the Australian Open, Dubai, Cincinnati, which was hosted in New York, and Rome. It was the 10th Rome final for Djokovic who has lost three times since his last victory, including last year to Nadal. Schwartzman, 15th in the world, took Djokovic's first two service games to led 3-0. But Djokovic rallied for his fifth win over the Argentinian, to extend his record to 31 wins out of his 32 matches this year. —AFP

AC Milan win league opener

MILAN: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored twice as AC Milan got their Serie A campaign up and running with a 2-0 win over Bologna on Monday. Ibrahimovic, who turns 39 next month, showed he has lost none of his goalscoring skills having also netted last week against Irish side Shamrock Rovers in the Europa League. "If I had been 20 years old I would have

scored two more goals," said the Swede of his display.

"I'm like Benjamin Button, born old, but I'll die young. Seriously, the team has worked well: you can see we're not at 100 percent yet, but it was important to start well." Ibrahimovic grabbed the opener in the 35th minute, rising higher than Danilo to get his head to a Theo Hernandez cross, and celebrated in front of the 1,000 spectators allowed into the San Siro for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic-mostly invited frontline health workers who had toiled during the worst of the crisis. — AFP