

Sports

Bayern down Dortmund to go four points clear

Lewandowski nets double

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski scored twice as Bayern Munich opened up a four-point lead at the top of the Bundesliga with a 3-2 win at second-placed Borussia Dortmund on Saturday. Julian Brandt and Erling Haaland scored Dortmund's goals at Signal Iduna Park, but Lewandowski netted and converted the winning penalty, either side of a Kingsley Coman goal.

Dortmund coach Marco Rose was shown a red card for arguing with the referee after a Mats Hummels handball led to Lewandowski converting the key spot-kick 12 minutes from time. "In the first half, we should have led by more and in terms of how we played, I'm not sure we deserved to win," said Bayern forward Thomas Müller. "But in terms of fighting, we were there."

This was Bayern's seventh straight win over Dortmund, including five Bundesliga victories and two German Super Cup triumphs. Dortmund were unhappy to not be awarded a penalty after Marco Reus appeared to be fouled just before Lewandowski's crucial spot kick. "We always had the feeling that we could win. That's why it's doubly bitter that we lost like that," fumed Reus. Dortmund forged ahead in the fifth minute when Brandt, who was later stretchered off after a clash of heads, slammed in a superb shot.

A Hummels mistake led to Lewandowski equalizing four minutes later against his former club when the Poland striker motored onto a Thomas Müller pass and fired home. Bayern capitalized on another Dortmund error when Coman's excellent strike put the visitors in front before half-time. Just 120 seconds after the break, Dortmund

were level when Haaland shot past diving Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer after Dayot Upamecano cheaply gave away possession.

Dortmund were unlucky not to be awarded a penalty when their captain Marco Reus appeared to be fouled by Lucas Hernandez. At the other end, Hummels was again at fault when VAR confirmed his handball, to Rose's fury, and Lewandowski made no mistake. It was Lewandowski's 22nd goal in 15 Bundesliga games against Dortmund, who he left in 2014. Bayern midfielder Corentin Tolisso fired wide of an open Dortmund goal during 10 tense minutes of stoppage time.

Dortmund coach Marco shown a red card



Schick hits four
Earlier, Czech Republic striker Patrik Schick scored four second-half goals as third-placed Bayer Leverkusen romped to a 7-1 thrashing of bottom club Greuther Fuerth. Schick became the first Leverkusen player to score four goals in one half of a Bundesliga match. "In the first half I didn't have a single shot at goal. The second half was like opening a bottle of ketchup," Schick quipped.

Amine Adli and Edmond Tapsoba scored early goals for Leverkusen before Fuerth pulled a goal back from Jeremy Dudziak. Schick was then involved in the next five Leverkusen goals as the hosts ran riot. He set up Ecuador's Piero Hincapié just before the break, then fired in four goals in just 27 minutes—two with his left foot, one with his right and a header.

Schick has now scored 12 times in 11 league games this season and trails only Lewandowski,



MILAN: AC Milan's Spanish midfielder Brahim Diaz (left) challenges Salernitana's Slovenian goalkeeper Vid Belec during the Italian Serie A football match between AC Milan and Salernitana on December 4, 2021. —AFP

who has netted 16 goals, in the scoring charts. Wolfsburg crashed to a 3-0 defeat at Mainz ahead of Wednesday's all-or-nothing Champions League clash at home to Lille. Wolfsburg never recovered from conceding a goal by forward Jonathan Burkardt after just 68 seconds and were 2-0 down after only four minutes when Anton Stach scored from outside the box. To compound Wolfsburg's misery, their French defender Maxence Lacroix scored a late own goal.

Hoffenheim climbed into the top four with a 3-2 home win over Eintracht Frankfurt, whose three-match winning streak was ended. Colombia striker Rafael Borré gave Frankfurt an early lead, but goals by Dennis Geiger, Georginio Rutter and Diadie Samassekou put Hoffenheim in command. Substitute Goncalo Paciencia scored Frankfurt's second to set up a tense final 20 minutes, with empty stands in Sinsheim due to high numbers of Covid cases in the region. —AFP

Kuwait top league, thrash Qadisiya 3-0

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: Kuwait SC beat Qadisiya SC 3-0 in a marquee matchup that highlighted the third week competitions of Kuwait Premier League. The win gives Kuwait nine points from three matches as the club currently sit alone on top of the standings. Meanwhile, Qadisiya suffered their first defeat of the season and failed to carry momentum of their emphatic win against title holders Al-Arabi last week.

Ahmad Al-Zanki put the hosts ahead early with a goal in the eighth minute during the match held Saturday at Kuwait Sports Club Stadium in Kaifan, before scoring again 12 minutes later. Qadisiya gained some momentum after the break following a first half in which Kuwait controlled most of the pace, before Talal Al-Fadhel's goal in the 82nd minute sealed the deal for the hosts.

Kazma were held to a 1-1 draw against Al-Nasr earlier on Saturday, whereas Al-Arabi vs Salmiya



ended in a 2-2 draw in the week's other key matches. Kazma sits second in the standings with seven points, followed by Qadisiya with six. Al-Nasr with five and Al-Arabi and Salmiya respectively with four points each.

Kuwait look to maintain their lead when they vis-

it Salmiya on Friday, while Kazma have a chance to take over the lead temporarily when they host Al-Shabab. Qadisiya look to recover from their defeat when they host Al-Tadhamon, while Al-Nasr and Al-Arabi play against Al-Yarmouk and Al-Fahaheel respectively in other week 4 matches.

AC Milan go top of Serie A; Inter see off Roma

MILAN: A much-changed AC Milan saw off bottom side Salernitana 2-0 on Saturday to take top spot in Serie A ahead of previous leaders Napoli's match against Atalanta, while Inter Milan cruised to victory at Roma. Milan coach Stefano Pioli made six changes to his starting XI from the midweek victory at Genoa, with Tuesday's crucial Champions League match against Liverpool in mind.

But Franck Kessie and Alexis Saelemaekers both scored inside the first 20 minutes to ensure a straight-forward victory for the hosts at the San Siro. Milan have given their bid for a first league title since 2011 a boost this week after bouncing back from two straight defeats with successive victories. Pioli's men sit one point clear of reigning champions Inter, who beat Roma 3-0, and two ahead of Napoli, who host fourth-

placed Atalanta later on Saturday.

"I am satisfied with a good performance, a decent victory, because some assumed this could be taken for granted," Pioli told DAZN. "It would've been better if we had scored more goals, especially considering how many chances we created." The seven-time European champions have to beat already-qualified Liverpool in their final group game in Milan next week to have a chance of reaching the last 16.

"We wanted to be in this position and now we can only try to give our best," Pioli said of the Liverpool game. "We know Liverpool will inevitably cause us some issues, but the spaces can open up too, because they are certainly not unbeatable or impenetrable in defense." They made the perfect start against struggling Salernitana, as Kessie tapped in a fifth-minute opener. With Zlatan Ibrahimovic rested and Olivier Giroud part of a lengthy injury list, 20-year-old Pietro Pellegri was handed a full league debut for the club.

But the youngster, a close-season loan signing from Monaco, hobbled



MILAN: AC Milan's Spanish midfielder Brahim Diaz (left) challenges Salernitana's Slovenian goalkeeper Vid Belec during the Italian Serie A football match between AC Milan and Salernitana on December 4, 2021. —AFP

off after less than 15 minutes. Milan doubled their advantage in the 18th minute, though, as Brahim Diaz slipped in to Saelemaekers whose shot found the bottom corner. Rade Krunic, Diaz and Junior Messias were

among the players to miss chances for Milan, but Salernitana never threatened a comeback. Salernitana remain rooted to the foot of the table after taking just one point from their last six matches. —AFP

Nuggets rout Knicks as Spurs hold off Warriors

NEW YORK: Nikola Jokic scored 32 points and pulled down 11 rebounds as the Denver Nuggets schooled the New York Knicks in a 113-99 NBA victory on Saturday. The Nuggets won for just the third time in 10 games—and it wasn't even close. Second-year big man Zeke Nnaji contributed a career-high 21 points off the bench for a Denver team that never trailed.

It was a third straight defeat for the Knicks, who fell to 5-8 on their home floor at Madison Square Garden. "I like something here," reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Jokic said of the historic Manhattan arena—where he exchanged courtside

comments with famous Knicks fan Spike Lee. "I don't know what it is," Jokic connected on 14 of his 19 shots from the floor, including three of seven from three-point range. He handed out five assists in just under 27 minutes on court in his third game back since missing four games in late November with a wrist injury. The Nuggets capitalized on the defensive lapses of the Knicks, pushing their lead to as many as 30 points and connecting on 52 percent of their shots from the field. New York, trailing 60-49 at halftime, chipped away at Denver's lead early in the second half, trimming the deficit to six points. But Denver responded with a 23-3 scoring run and took a 21-point lead into the fourth quarter. The Knicks, limited to 40 percent shooting, remained in 11th place in the Eastern Conference, outside the playoff window. The Nuggets, at 11-11, are eighth in the West. In San Francisco, Derrick White scored 25 points while Dejounte Murray had 22 points and 12 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs closed the fourth quarter with an 8-1 run to beat the Golden State Warriors 112-107. —AFP



NEW YORK: Nerlens Noel #3 of the New York Knicks gets the steal from Davon Reed #9 of the Denver Nuggets at Madison Square Garden on December 04, 2021 in New York City. —AFP

News in brief

Rangers maintain record

GLASGOW: Giovanni van Bronckhorst enjoyed a comfortable home league debut as Rangers manager with a routine 3-0 win over Dundee on Saturday to open up a seven-point lead at the top of the Scottish Premiership. Joe Aribo's deflected strike opened the floodgates and only sterling work by Dens Park goalkeeper Adam Legzdins kept the Taysiders in the game. However, visiting defender Ryan Sweeney put a cross from Aribo into his own goal 10 minutes after the break before Alfredo Morelos added a third 20 minutes from time. Van Bronckhorst has now won all four games since replacing Steven Gerrard as Rangers boss. "We were very in control," said the former Dutch captain. "That's what you want when you play at home. We created a lot of chances and didn't give any away." —AFP

West Brom end winless run

LONDON: West Brom beat Coventry 2-1 on Saturday to end their winless run and climb to third in the Championship as Blackburn won again to consolidate their position in the play-off places. Kyle McFadzean's controversial own goal shortly before the interval proved decisive after Karlan Grant had put the Baggies ahead in the 20th minute. McFadzean turned into his own net following what appeared to be an obvious handball by Cedric Kipre but there is no VAR in the English second tier. Defender McFadzean then scored again at the right end, this time with a header from Todd Kane's corner, but it came too late to rescue Coventry. It was Valerien Ismael's side's first win in five league games stretching back to November 6. —AFP

Karim Benzema injured

MADRID: Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema was forced off with an injury in the first half of Saturday's La Liga match against Real Sociedad. Benzema went off with discomfort in his left leg, with the Frenchman appearing to point to the area around his knee and hamstring. Luka Jovic replaced him. The 33-year-old has scored 20 goals for Real Madrid this season and his absence would be a blow, especially ahead of Tuesday's Champions League game against Inter Milan. Both teams have already qualified for the last 16 but the winner of the match at the Santiago Bernabeu will go through as group winners. —AFP

MLS: COVID hits Union

NEW YORK: The Philadelphia Union will field a depleted lineup for this weekend's Major League Soccer semi-finals after 11 players were listed on Saturday as out due to COVID-19 protocols. Philadelphia will play host to New York City FC yesterday in the Eastern Conference final for a berth in next Saturday's MLS championship match against either the Portland Timbers or Real Salt Lake. Union midfielder and captain Alejandro Bedoya, goalkeeper Andre Blake and defenders Jack Elliott, Jakob Glesnes, Alvas Powell and Kai Wagner were last week's starters who were placed into MLS health and safety protocols. Also listed out in an injury report were reserve goalkeeper Joe Bendik, forwards Cory Burke and Sergio Santos and midfielders Ilesinho and Quinn Sullivan. —AFP