

Sports

Milan slam brakes on Napoli title charge with four-goal thumping

AC Milan hammer runaway Serie A leaders 4-0

MILAN: AC Milan hammered runaway Serie A leaders Napoli 4-0 on Sunday in an incredible performance which slammed the brakes on their opponents' charge to a first league title in over three decades. Rafael Leao outshone Khvicha Kvaratskhelia in the battle of the wing wizards with a brilliant brace while Brahim Diaz and Alexis Saelemaekers netted the other goals for the rampant defending champions who move up to third.

The biggest win of the Serie A season for Stefano Pioli's side was also a third league defeat for Napoli, whose huge lead at the top of the table has been cut to 16 points after second-placed Lazio beat Monza 2-0 earlier on Sunday. A difficult 2023 has left Milan 20 points off the pace but they have struck first blood in a trio of matches against Napoli which will conclude this month with the Champions League quarter-final between the two Italian teams.

"It's an incredible feeling, but even if I hadn't scored today, we still played very well," said Leao after his first goals since mid-January. Napoli were without injured star striker Victor Osimhen but an otherwise first choice line-up was humbled by Milan who have boosted their chances of qualifying for next year's edition of Europe's top club competition.

Milan are however only a point above local rivals Inter Milan and Roma, who sit fifth on goal difference following their 3-0 win over Sampdoria. "It's only the first step... we have another 10 matches left in the league in which we need to have the same attitude," Pioli told DAZN. "We threw away chances in the past and that can't happen any more. I'm happy with the win but it's only one game."

"For this to be a good season we need to be playing in the Champions League next season," Diaz

was at the heart of Milan's fast start and it was his delightful pass which slipped through Leao and allowed the Portugal winger to dink the away side ahead in the 17th minute. And the home fans were stunned into near silence eight minutes later after more brilliant play from Diaz, who collected Ismael Bennacer's cross before cutting inside Mario Rui and then lashing in from close range.

Napoli struggled to get anything out of a well-drilled Milan and Leao struck again just before the hour mark, showing why he is so important to his team by bursting past Amir Rrahmani and smashing a powerful finish into the top corner. With Napoli reeling, Saelemaekers took advantage of more sloppy defending, dribbling through weak tackles and nutmegging goalkeeper Alex Meret to cap a perfect night for the seven-time European champions.

Lazio consolidate second

Pedro's low finish in the 13th minute and a sensational free-kick from Sergej Milinkovic-Savic 10 minutes after half-time gave Lazio their fifth win in six league matches at Monza. Milinkovic-Savic's goal was his first since scoring against Milan in January and his 65th for Lazio, making him the club's highest ever foreign goalscorer.

"It's been a few months that I've not played as well as I could have, it's been a hard period for me, but I give all I can to improve and today finally I scored a goal," Milinkovic-Savic said. Roma overcame 10-man Sampdoria in Rome thanks to Georginio Wijnaldum's header six minutes into the second half and two late goals from Paulo Dybala and Stephan El Shaarawy.

Netherlands midfielder Wijnaldum struck five minutes after Jeison Murillo was sent off for two



NAPLES: Napoli's Italian forward Matteo Politano (right) reacts after colliding with AC Milan's Portuguese forward Rafael Leao during the Italian Serie A football match between on April 2, 2023. — AFP

bookable offences and then won the penalty from which Dybala scored his 10th league goal of the season with a minute remaining. El Shaarawy swept home a fine stoppage-time finish to hand Samp their 19th defeat of the season and leave them 10

points behind Spezia, who sit just above the relegation zone and drew 1-1 with fellow strugglers Salernitana. Earlier, eighth-placed Bologna increased their hopes of European football next season with a 3-0 win over Udinese. — AFP

Potter pays the price as Chelsea remain ruthless

LONDON: Chelsea's new owners have been quick to try and put their stamp on the club, but the Blues hot seat remains one of the most precarious in football as Graham Potter was sacked as manager on Sunday. Potter lasted just seven months in the job as the Englishman paid the price for slipping to 11th in the Premier League table. That was not the return the club's American ownership group was expecting after investing over £500 million (\$616 million) in new players in their first season in charge, on top of the £2.5 billion they paid for the club.

The consortium headed by LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali of private equity firm Clearlake Capital have now dismissed two managers in their debut campaign. Thomas Tuchel was jettisoned in September despite his achievements on the field, in winning the Champions League in 2021, and off it as he deftly handled the difficulties of last season when sanctions were imposed on the club due to the ownership of Roman Abramovich.

A hire-and-fire culture at Stamford Bridge is

nothing new after Abramovich's 19-year reign between 2003 and 2022. The Russian showed no mercy to even illustrious managers such as Jose Mourinho, Carlo Ancelotti and Antonio Conte, who won Premier League titles during their time at Chelsea. Despite the disruption in the dugout, Chelsea fans were still spoiled by success during the Abramovich era with 19 major trophies. That has so far not been the case under the new regime.

Scattergun transfer strategy

Potter won just 12 of his 31 matches in charge as Chelsea crashed out of both the League and FA Cup in the early rounds to Manchester City and find themselves rooted in the bottom half of the Premier League. Only Champions League success can salvage the season, but they face a difficult route to the final.

The Blues take on holders Real Madrid in the quarter-finals later this month with the winners progressing to a last four clash against City or Bayern Munich. Potter had been sold the dream when he was plucked from Brighton with Chelsea paying over £20 million in compensation for his services. "There's a completely different ownership," he said earlier in the season when speculation first arose over his future. "This is hard for people to get their head around as Chelsea for 20 years has been one thing and now all of a sudden it's different."

That has proven not to be the case as Boehly and



LONDON: Chelsea's English head coach Graham Potter gestures during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Aston Villa at Stamford Bridge in London on April 1, 2023. — AFP

Eghbali's patience was exhausted by a 2-0 home defeat to Aston Villa on Saturday that was met by boos from the home support. Potter was ultimately the fall guy for a scattergun approach to the transfer market that exposed a lack of experience among the new owners. Boehly installed himself as the club's sporting director last summer and oversaw a £250 million outlay on Raheem Sterling, Kalidou Koulibaly, Wesley Fofana, Marc Cucurella and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, all of whom have struggled to make a meaningful impact. — AFP

Antetokounmpo lifts Bucks; Dallas on the brink

LOS ANGELES: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points as the Milwaukee Bucks returned to form with a statement 117-104 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday. Eastern Conference top seed favourites Milwaukee - routed 140-99 by Boston in their last outing on Thursday - bounced back in style to score an emphatic win over the third-placed Sixers. Antetokounmpo led a balanced Milwaukee offensive display that saw five players finish in double figures in a wire-to-wire victory at Fiserv Forum.

Antetokounmpo finished with 14 rebounds and six assists in addition to his 33-point haul, while Brook

Lopez (21 points), Khris Middleton (19) and Jrue Holiday (18) all contributed. Tyrese Maxey led the Sixers scoring with 29 points while Joel Embiid added 28. The win edged Milwaukee closer to sealing top spot in the Eastern Conference. With four games remaining in the regular season, the Bucks lead the East on 58-22, with Boston second on 54-24.

Philadelphia remain third on 51-27 following Sunday's loss. Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer meanwhile said Antetokounmpo's performance confirmed his belief that the Greek star should be the front-runner for the regular season MVP award. "We certainly feel like Giannis is the MVP," Budenholzer said. "What he does at both ends of the court - he does everything," Budenholzer said. "We feel like he's in the conversation and he should be the guy."

In other games on Sunday, Western Conference leaders Denver - still missing Nikola Jokic - held on for a tense 112-110 win over the Golden State Warriors. Michael Porter Jr and Jamal Murray combined

for 55 points as the Nuggets withstood a late Warriors rally to hold on. Warriors star Klay Thompson missed a last-gasp three-point attempt before a desperate block from Murray thwarted another effort as time ran out.

In Los Angeles, LeBron James bagged the 107th triple-double of his career as the Lakers continued their late season resurgence with a 134-109 romp over the Houston Rockets. James finished with 18 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds, while Anthony Davis led the Lakers scoring with 40 points. The Lakers third consecutive victory leaves them seventh in the Western Conference, just one spot outside the automatic postseason places. In Oklahoma City meanwhile, Kevin Durant scored 35 points against his old club as the Phoenix Suns romped to a 128-118 win over the Thunder. Shai Gilgeous Alexander scored a game-high 39 points for Oklahoma City, who are 10th in the Western Conference, just one win ahead of the Dallas Mavericks. —AFP

Humiliating exit for multi African title winners Mazembe

JOHANNESBURG: Multiple African trophy winners TP Mazembe from the Democratic Republic of Congo plumbed new depths on Sunday by losing 1-0 at home to Young Africans of Tanzania in the CAF Confederation Cup. It was the fifth straight Group D loss for a club that for decades were among the most feared in the continent. A second half goal from Farid Mussa condemned Mazembe to finishing last in the four-team mini-league with just three points from a win over Real Bamako of Mali in matchday one. They were beaten at home and away by Young Africans and US Monastir of Tunisia, the two qualifiers for the quarter-finals, and at Real Bamako.

Mazembe began the African season in the premier club competition, the CAF Champions League, but a shock elimination by Vipers of Uganda, demoted them to the second-tier Confederation Cup. Club officials reacted to the penalty shootout defeat against Vipers by sacking experienced French coach Franck Dumas and promoting his assistant, local Pamphile Mihayo. Given their African pedigree, Mazembe were among the four clubs seeded for a group stage involving 16 teams, but on the field they have been unable to match that billing.

Mazembe have won 11 CAF titles, an achievement matched by Zamalek, and bettered only by another Egyptian club, Al Ahly. The Congolese won the Champions League five times, the CAF Super Cup on three occasions, the Confederation Cup twice and the now defunct African Cup Winners Cup once. They were also the first African representatives to reach a Club World Cup final, losing 3-0 to Inter Milan in 2010 in Abu Dhabi. DR Congo had three clubs in the group stage and Daring Club Motema Pembe and Saint-Eloi Lupopo also failed to achieve top-two finishes, and were eliminated.

Elsewhere, ASEC Mimosas of the Ivory Coast won their fourth straight Group B match by defeating Nigerian visitors Rivers United 1-0 in Yamoussoukro. Mofosse Karidoula scored the lone goal after only two minutes and it ensured former African champions ASEC finished top of the table, three points ahead of fellow qualifiers Rivers. —AFP


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NOTICE
March 13, 2023

Mr. Jesley Xavier Miranda, son of Mr. Jesus Nazareno Miranda, resident of H No 184/1 Figueum Bhatt, Goa Velha, North Goa - 403108, Goa and Ms. Acacia Pinto, daughter of Mr. John Joe Pinto, resident of Khalil Village, Kirol Road, Vidyavihar, Mumbai 86, Maharashtra both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (cw2.kuwait@mea.gov.in) /letters/ telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

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I, **SALIM HASSAN ALI**, holder of Indian Passport No. L4907160 having permanent address at Maharashtra, India - 416510 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as under: **SALIM HASAN ALI SHAIKH**. (C 3194)

I, **ANTONIO OLIVEIRO**, holder of Passport No. P7116987 do hereby change my name to **ANTONIO** (as given name) **OLIVEIRA** (as surname) for all purposes. I will henceforth be known in the name **ANTONIO OLIVEIRA** and I also undertake to carry out this name change in all my documents. (C 3193) 03/04/2023