Vinicius Junior makes the difference as Real Madrid secure comeback victory against Espanyol

AFP – Real Madrid are continuing to keep in touch with Barcelona at the top of the La Liga standings. Despite a scare, Carlo Ancelotti's side have come through against Espanyol, winning 4-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu.

The hosts went absolutely dominant in the first half, but thanks to poor finishing from Kylian Mbappe, they were unable to find a breakthrough. That was significant, as Espanyol went into a shock lead on 54 minutes, as Thibaut Courtois diverted Jofre Carreras' cutback into his own net.

Fortunately for Real Madrid, they managed to find a quickfire response. Jude Bellingham's effort was not held by Espanyol goalkeeper Joan Garcia, and this gifted a goal to Dani Carvajal, as he could not miss from a yard out.

15 minutes later, the comeback was complete. Vinicius Junior came off the bench to be the difference maker for Real Madrid – first, he supplied an outrageous trivela pass to set up Rodrygo Goes to make it 2-1, before adding the third goal himself only a few minutes later.

In the dying stages, Mbappe did get his goal, which came from the penalty spot after Endrick Felipe was fouled. That capped off a fine late resurgence from Real Madrid, who close to within one point of Barcelona – they play on Sunday against Villarreal.

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