

# Three talking points from the Premier League weekend

AFP – Manchester City needed a 98th-minute equaliser from John Stones to stay on top of the Premier League, denying Arsenal a rare victory at the Etihad.

The 2-2 draw means just two points separate the top four after victories for Liverpool and Aston Villa.

Chelsea climbed up to fifth with a dominant 3-0 win at West Ham, but there was more frustration for toothless Manchester United.

AFP Sport looks at three talking points from the Premier League weekend.

## Respectful rivalry turns spiteful

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta was once City manager Pep Guardiola's assistant and the respect between the two men has previously softened the battle for supremacy between the two sides.

But after finishing second to City in each of the past two seasons, the Gunners were keen to make their mark on the champions.

Kai Havertz barrelled into Rodri within seconds at the Etihad to set the tone for a bad-tempered tussle between the title favourites.

Arsenal felt harshly treated when Leandro Trossard was sent off at the end of the first half for kicking the ball away, receiving a second yellow card.

But as the visitors dug deep, tensions flared between the benches.

Arsenal's attempts to waste time drew the ire of City players, coaches and fans.

Erling Haaland responded by throwing the ball at Arsenal defender Gabriel Magalhaes's head in celebration of City's late equaliser – meaning they have still not been beaten at home since 2022.

United lack cutting edge

United were a different team from the side humbled 4-0 on their last visit to Selhurst Park in May but failed to make the most of a dominant first half to leave south London frustrated.

Alejandro Garnacho and Bruno Fernandes hit the crossbar but the Red Devils were made to pay for a familiar lack of firepower, dropping two more points.

United have scored just five goals in their opening five Premier League games, three of which came against winless Southampton.

"We played very good (in the first half), total control of the game, the only thing was in the box and in the box is where the game is decided. We should be more clinical there," said United boss Erik ten Hag.

However, the problem is not a new one for Ten Hag's men.

United scored the joint-fewest goals of any side who finished in the top half of the Premier League last season.

Joshua Zirkzee has arrived as an extra option up front, but the Dutch forward often prefers to link the play than prowl for chances in the box.

Danish striker Rasmus Hojlund also made his first appearance of the season off the bench after a hamstring injury.

Zirkzee and Hojlund may come good in the long run but United's lack of a striker who can guarantee 20 goals a season could cost them in their quest to get back into the top four.

Chelsea making progress

Chelsea, by contrast, have a striker in red-hot form, with Nicolas Jackson striking twice in a routine 3-0 win at West Ham for Enzo Maresca's men.

Jackson was heavily criticised during his first season at Stamford Bridge for wasting too many glaring chances.

But the Senegal international did net 17 times and has four already in five Premier League appearances this campaign.

The 23-year-old has been rewarded with an extension of his contract until 2033.

Jackson's improvement symbolises a general upturn in the mood at Chelsea.

The decision-making at the top of the club was questioned after Mauricio Pochettino departed as manager before another chaotic transfer window.

However, Maresca has made an assured start, with 10 points from four games since an opening weekend defeat by City.

AFP