Barca thrash Bayern in Champions League, Liverpool stay perfect

AFP – A Raphinha hat-trick handed Barcelona a 4-1 win against Bayern Munich in the Champions League on Wednesday, while Liverpool stayed perfect with a 1-0 win at RB Leipzig and Erling Haaland produced another moment of magic for Manchester City.

In a clash that pitted five-time winners Barca against six-time champions Bayern, it was the home side that stole the show thanks to a triple from Brazilian attacker Raphinha and a goal from in-form veteran Robert Lewandowski.

Harry Kane levelled after Barca's first-minute opener for his fifth goal of the campaign but was helpless as his team collapsed to their second defeat in three Champions League outings.

"In my opinion this game could have been a (Champions League) final, to be able to win it in this way, so well, in front of our fans, is quite special and I leave here happy," Raphinha told Movistar.

The result leaves Bayern in the bottom half of the table, while Barcelona have two wins and are 10th.

Raphinha sent the hosts on their way at the Olympic Stadium inside 60 seconds, tucking home after rounding goalkeeper Manuel Neuer.

Kane levelled in the 18th minute with an acrobatic volley from a Serge Gnabry cross.

Ex-Bayern player Lewandowski then restored Barca's lead in the 36th minute by pouncing on a loose ball after Fermin Lopez had

snuck behind the visiting defence.

Raphinha got his second on the stroke of half-time with a curling effort off his right side.

The Brazil international's third on 56 minutes showcased Barca's danger on the counter as he galloped onto a swept pass from Lamine Yamal before arrowing home a left-footed finish with both centre-halves trailing in his wake.

Haaland scored a brace as Manchester City thrashed Sparta Prague 5-0 at home, including a spectacular backheel at shoulder height.

"I saw it when the ball came in. It's unbelievable. He's a statue. So tall and so flexible," said City boss Pep Guardiola in admiration of the Norwegian's goal.

It was an effort reminiscent of his strike against old club Borussia Dortmund two years ago that won Champions League goal of the season.

The Czechs had contained the hosts to a one-goal lead at half-time after Phil Foden's early strike.

But the floodgates opened in the second period with Haaland, John Stones and Matheus Nunes netting.

– 'Controlled the game' –

Leipzig's Lois Openda was twice denied by the assistant's flag as Liverpool fought to a narrow win in Germany.

Darwin Nunez's 27th-minute tap-in from Mohamed Salah's cushioned knockdown was enough to give Liverpool their third win in three matches as they moved to second in the standings.

They and table-toppers Aston Villa are the only teams with a 100 percent record in the new 36-team format.

"We controlled the game in large parts apart from the last few

minutes," Liverpool manager Arne Slot told TNT Sports.

"We needed Virgil (van Dijk) and Ibou (Konate) and our goalkeeper. If we left this place with a draw then I would've felt we lost something."

Irish goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher ably deputised for the injured Alisson Becker and produced several fine saves in the second half to protect Liverpool's lead.

Lille continued to enjoy life against teams from the Spanish capital, following up their surprise win at home to Real Madrid last time out by beating Atletico Madrid 3-1.

The home side took an early lead through Julian Alvarez, before Edon Zhegrova and a Jonathan David brace turned the game on its head in the final 30 minutes.

Bayer Leverkusen were held to an entertaining 1-1 draw at Brest, as the French club maintained their unbeaten start to life in Europe's top club competition.

Florian Wirtz broke the deadlock for Bayer in the 24th minute, before Pierre Lees-Melou thumped home a volleyed equaliser shortly before the break.

Young Boys looked to have kept Inter Milan at bay in Bern, with Marko Arnautovic failing to convert a second-half penalty.

But Marcus Thuram struck three minutes into stoppage time to hand the Italian champions a 1-0 win.

Feyenoord beat Benfica 3-1 away thanks to Ayase Ueda and an Antoni Milambo double.

Atalanta were held to a frustrating goalless stalemate at home to Celtic, while Dinamo Zagreb beat 10-man RB Salzburg 2-0.

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