

# Salah keeps Liverpool perfect, Real down Atalanta in Champions League

AFP- Mohamed Salah helped maintain Liverpool's perfect record in the Champions League on Tuesday while holders Real Madrid bounced back from their defeat at Anfield to topple in-form Italians Atalanta.

Elsewhere, struggling Paris Saint-Germain gained a vital win at Salzburg, while Bayer Leverkusen edged Inter Milan to move second.

Aston Villa, in their first appearance in the continent's elite club competition for 41 years, maintained their bright progress beating Leipzig 3-2 to sit third.

The first eight teams qualify directly for the last 16 with those placed ninth to 24 entering a play-off round.

In Spain, Salah's 63rd-minute penalty proved decisive against dogged debutants Girona to extend the Premier League leaders' record to six from six in the revamped format of Europe's flagship club competition.

Under new coach Arne Slot Liverpool are virtually assured a place in the last 16.

"If you ask me about all six games, I'm really pleased with all the results... (but) I'm far from pleased about the performance tonight," Slot told reporters in Girona.

"(We had) hardly any control at all over the game, maybe the second half was a bit better but then I'm trying to be positive."

Salah sent Paulo Gazzaniga the wrong way to net his 50th

Champions League goal, pulling the Egyptian level with Filippo Inzaghi as the 10th highest goalscorer of all-time in the competition.

The winger is out of contract at the end of the season but his 16 goals across all competitions have been essential in Liverpool's superb first half of the season.

While Liverpool are sitting pretty with two league phase rounds to come early next year, kings of Europe Real Madrid, beaten 2-0 by Liverpool last time out, have work to do to ensure their progress into the knockout phase.

Kylian Mbappe gave Real a 10th minute lead before hobbling off injured in Atalanta, his strike was cancelled out by Charles de Ketelaere's penalty in first-half additional time.

– Settle nerves –

Real coach Carlo Ancelotti started Vinicius Junior for the first time since a hamstring problem last month. The Brazilian had Real back on top before the hour, with Jude Bellingham also on the scoresheet for a 3-2 win over the Serie a leaders.

The hard-fought victory moved Real up to 18th on nine points and will have helped to settle any nerves at the 15-time European champions ahead of games against Salzburg and Brest in January.

PSG put the wheels back on their stuttering campaign with a much needed 3-0 defeat on the road at Salzburg.

The French champions went into this encounter in 25th with just four points and three goals scored after five matches.

They approach their last two league outings in provisional 24th – the final berth for the play-offs ahead of Wednesday's games.

Bayern swept aside Ukraine side Shakhtar Donetsk in

Gelsenkirchen 5-1. Fellow Bundesliga giants Leverkusen became the first team to score against Inter in this year's competition in a 1-0 win that lifted them five points adrift of Liverpool at the top of the league.

Another noteworthy performance on matchday six came on the Brittany coast where modest French Ligue 1 outfit Brest dished out a 1-0 defeat to former European champions PSV Eindhoven.

It left the Atlantic port city club flying high in fifth in their first ever appearance at European football's high table.

In other games, Celtic and Dinamo Zagreb remained in contention for the knockout round after an uninspiring 0-0 draw and Club Brugge beat Sporting 2-1.

Headline matches on Wednesday include Manchester city at Juventus, and Barcelona at Borussia Dortmund.

AFP