

Haaland leads Man City revival to beat Chelsea

AFP- Erling Haaland inspired a Manchester City fightback from 1-0 down to beat Chelsea 3-1 and move into the Premier League top four at the Blues' expense on Saturday.

City recovered from a nightmare start to Abdukodir Khusanov's debut as he gifted the visitors the opening goal, scored by Noni Madueke.

Josko Gvardiol levelled for Pep Guardiola's men before Haaland showed his blend of strength and skill to chip in 22 minutes from time.

The Norwegian then turned provider for the in-form Phil Foden to secure City's fourth win in five league games after just one in their previous nine.

Chelsea have won just once in their last seven Premier League games to fall to sixth and will once again reflect on the need to upgrade on goalkeeper Robert Sanchez after his positioning led to Haaland's crucial goal.

City's victory puts them back in pole position to qualify for next season's Champions League, just days before they try to save themselves in this season's competition.

The English champions must beat Club Brugge on Wednesday to reach the playoff round after collapsing from 2-0 up to lose 4-2 at Paris Saint-Germain in midweek.

"After (conceding the goal), emotionally, we came back," said Guardiola. "It's really, really important for our final Wednesday and for the next games."

Guardiola threw in new signings Khusanov and Omar Marmoush for their debuts.

But that decision backfired spectacularly in the case of Khusanov inside three minutes.

The first ever Uzbek to play in the Premier League did not properly connect with an attempted header back towards his own goal and Nicolas Jackson pounced to tee up Madueke for a tap in.

Moments later Khusanov was fortunate to get away with only a yellow card for chopping down Cole Palmer.

By contrast, Marmoush was showing why only Bayern Munich's Harry Kane had scored more Bundesliga goals than him this season prior to a £59 million (\$72.6 million) move from Eintracht Frankfurt.

The Egyptian thought he had equalised when he pounced to fire home the rebound after Sanchez parried Ilkay Gundogan's effort, but was flagged offside.

"I think in the first half you could see he has something special. That is obviously the reason Manchester City bought him," said Haaland of his new strike partner.

– City go direct –

Gvardiol's marauding runs from left-back were causing City's biggest threat.

Chelsea did not heed a warning as the Croatian prodded inches wide with his left foot after storming into the box.

Just before half-time, Gvardiol had a simple task for his fifth Premier League goal of the season.

Matheus Nunes this time made the break from full-back and after he was denied by Sanchez, the ball fell for Gvardiol to roll into an empty net.

Guardiola cut his losses with Khusanov at the start of the

second period. He was replaced by John Stones and City were rarely troubled thereafter at the back.

Marmoush was close to a perfect start to his City career when he blasted wide from Haaland's pass after the Norwegian was picked out by a long ball from Ederson.

But again Chelsea did not learn their lesson. Moments later from another Ederson clearance, Haaland outmuscled Trevoh Chalobah and then chipped Sanchez, who had charged out of his goal and ended up in no man's land.

"I think the second goal changed the mood," said Maresca. "We trust Robert for sure but in the same moment he is aware that he is making mistakes."

Despite City's struggles, Haaland has remained a reliable source of goals as he took his tally for the season to 24, six of which have come in the last six games.

And he created the third goal as his layoff sent Foden clear to slot home his sixth goal in his last four league games.

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