

Salah takes Liverpool nine clear, Forest hit Brighton for seven

AFP – Mohamed Salah scored twice to take Liverpool nine points clear at the top of the Premier League by beating Bournemouth 2-0 on Saturday, while third-placed Nottingham Forest smashed Brighton 7-0.

Salah's double took him above Frank Lampard as the sixth highest goalscorer in Premier League history with 178 goals on another significant day in the Reds' charge towards a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title.

Bournemouth had not lost in 12 games in all competitions and beaten Arsenal and Manchester City at home earlier this season.

The Cherries can count themselves unfortunate not to have extended that run as they hit the woodwork either side of half-time through Antoine Semenyo and Marcus Tavernier.

Bournemouth were also furious over the awarding of a penalty that opened the scoring on the half hour mark as Cody Gakpo appeared to clip his own heels as he entered the box rather than being tripped by Lewis Cook.

VAR did not intervene to overturn referee Darren England's original decision to point to the spot and Salah ruthlessly rifled home the resulting spot-kick for his 20th Premier League goal of the season.

Bournemouth pressed in vain for an equaliser after the break as the in-form Justin Kluivert missed two big chances either side of Tavernier's strike off the post.

But one moment of magic from Salah sealed a massive three points in the title race when he cut inside onto his favoured

left foot and curled into the top corner.

“It feels good to be scoring goals, to be winning, but my main target this season is to win the Premier League with the team so we must keep going,” said Salah, whose future at Anfield beyond this season remains unclear.

Second-placed Arsenal have a mountain to climb if they are to rein in Arne Slot’s men and host defending champions Manchester City on Sunday.

– Forest land a punch –

Forest moved level on points with the Gunners thanks to a scintillating performance that blew Brighton away at the City Ground.

Nuno Espirito Santo’s men had been beaten 5-0 by Bournemouth last weekend but bounced back in style with Chris Wood netting a hat-trick.

Morgan Gibbs-White, Neco Williams and Jota Silva were also on target for Forest after Lewis Dunk’s own goal opened the floodgates.

“After what happened last week, the answer was good,” said Forest boss Nuno Espirito Santo. “You get punched, you get up – fantastic!”

The two-time European champions are on course for a return to the Champions League for the first time since 1980 as they opened up a six-point cushion on fifth-placed Newcastle, who blew the lead to lose 2-1 at home to Fulham.

Jacob Murphy put the Magpies in front at St. James’ Park, but Fulham hit back thanks to goals from Raul Jimenez and Rodrigo Muniz to climb up to ninth and within four points of the top six.

Everton’s relegation fears in their final season at Goodison

Park now appear over after thrashing Leicester 4-0.

Abdoulaye Doucoure opened the scoring after just 10 seconds as David Moyes enjoyed a third win in his first four games since returning as Everton boss.

Beto then took advantage of some woeful Leicester defending to score twice before half-time and Iliman Ndiaye rounded off a resounding win in stoppage time.

The Toffees are now 10 points clear of the bottom three.

By contrast, Ipswich look doomed after Southampton ended their wait for a league win since November with a 2-1 victory at Portman Road.

Paul Onuachu scored the winner three minutes from time for Saints, who are still eight points adrift of safety, but move to with seven of second-bottom Ipswich.

AFP