

Barca storm to La Liga title

Lionel Messi scored a hat trick as Barcelona became La Liga champions for the seventh time in the past 10 years

A Coruña, Spain

Lionel Messi put the icing on the cake as Barcelona clinched the La Liga title with a 4-2 victory over Deportivo La Coruña, who were relegated.

Barca went into the match knowing a point would be enough to see them regain the trophy with four matches still to play.

They did not have things all their own way against a spirited Depor, who fought back to level through Lucas Perez and Emre Colak after Philippe Coutinho and Messi had put Barca 2-0 up.

Depor were forced to push forward knowing only victory would be enough to keep their survival hopes alive and they paid the price as Messi added two late goals to complete the 46th hat trick of his career.

The on-pitch celebrations were muted, perhaps out of respect for their dejected opponents, but Barca, who remain unbeaten in the league, cannot be denied a seventh title in 10 seasons.

The Depor players gave them a guard of honour as the teams took to the pitch, with Ernesto Valverde's men

having won the Copa del Rey last weekend before switching their focus to wrapping up the league.

It took only seven minutes for the visitors to take the lead as Ousmane Dembele set up Coutinho for a delightful clip into the top corner.

But if Barca thought this was going to be a procession, they were mistaken. Depor have shown improved form of late and they had the ball in the net in the 17th minute only for it to be ruled out.

Marc-Andre Ter Stegen pushed away Raul Alcantara's

header and Perez tapped in but, after a lengthy delay and with Depor celebrating, the officials decided Fabian Schar had interfered from an offside position by jumping in front of the keeper.

Former Barca keeper Ruben had to be at his best in the 30th minute to keep out a Messi free-kick after he had been fouled by Schar, who was a touch fortunate not to pick up a second yellow card.

Dembele and Coutinho then almost combined for a second, the Brazilian sending a shot just wide. (PA Sport)



Lionel Messi scores his second and Barcelona's third goal (Pic courtesy: theguardian)

Karolina Pliskova withdraws from Prague Open

London

Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova has withdrawn from this week's Prague Open and will be replaced by Aliaksandra Sasnovich in the main draw.

The world number six was the top seed in Prague and was scheduled to face twin sister Kristyna Pliskova in the first round of their home tournament on Tuesday.

"Karolina Pliskova has

withdrawn from Prague...

Aliaksandra Sasnovich moves into Pliskova's spot and will play Kristyna Pliskova," the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) said on Twitter yesterday.

Former world number one Pliskova beat American CoCo Vandeweghe to win her first title of the year at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix on Sunday. (Reuters)



Karolina Pliskova (file pic)



Zinedine Zidane

Real Madrid will attack Bayern Munich

Madrid

Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane has said his side will look to attack Bayern Munich quickly in Tuesday's Champions League semi-final second leg as they seek to remain on course for an unprecedented third consecutive European Cup.

Real hold a 2-1 lead after the first leg in Germany last week, however the Frenchman insists the job is nowhere near complete.

"The key for us is think about winning the game and go onto the pitch wanting to do that. We need to go out to score quickly and that's what we'll try to do," Zidane told a

news conference.

"It's a semi-final, we know how important it is and what we have to do. We don't have to change what we're doing.

"Our focus and determination will be there - we don't need to change much - what we did in the first leg was good, but we now need to show in the return that what we want is to go through."

With regular right back Dani Carvajal missing with a hamstring problem, Zidane faces a selection headache given replacement Nacho has sat out the past month with a thigh injury. (Reuters)

Emre Can set for Juve move



Emre Can (file pic)

London

Liverpool defensive midfielder Emre Can has agreed a five-year contract with Italian champions Juventus, according to reports in Italy yesterday.

The 24-year-old German international, who is sidelined with a back injury, will sign with the six-time Italian champions as early as this week, Gazzetta dello Sport reported.

The midfielder can leave Liverpool on a free transfer at the end of the season, and

Gazzetta reported that the German has already agreed a deal worth six million euros (\$7.5 million) per year.

French champions Paris Saint-Germain were also reported to be interested in signing Can who preferred a move to Italy with fellow Germans Sami Khedira and Benedikt Howedes already in Turin.

Can arrived in Liverpool in 2014 from Bayer Leverkusen, having previously won the Bundesliga title with Bayern Munich in 2013. (AFP)