

Atletico Madrid's Fernando Torres celebrates

# Torres lifts Atletico Madrid

**London**

**F**ernando Torres' first goal in La Liga this season gave Atletico Madrid a hard-fought 1-0 win over Alaves on Saturday and lifted the club into second place behind Barcelona.

Torres broke the deadlock five minutes after coming on in the 69th minute with Atletico's attack stifled by Alaves' well-positioned defence.

Torres made his run forward in sync with Sime Vrsaljko's cross from the right flank before sliding to redirect the ball home with his left foot.

At 33 years old, Torres has had to settle for a role as a reserve player behind regular starters Antoine Griezmann and Kevin Gameiro. His goal was his first in any competition this campaign other than the brace he scored against Elche in the Copa del Rey.

Torres' goal comes just before the arrival of even more competition in Atletico's attack. Diego Costa and Vitolo will join the club in January when their transfer ban expires.

Diego Simeone's team took advantage of Valencia's 2-1 loss at Eibar as Atletico moved two points ahead of their title rivals. Barcelona are three points ahead of Atletico before hosting Deportivo La Coruna on Sunday.

Despite their failure to reach the knockout rounds of the Champions League, Atletico are as sound as ever in the domestic competition, where they are unbeaten through 16 rounds and have won four in a row.

Atletico's unbeaten streak in La Liga stretches back 20 matches to last season since their loss at Villarreal on April 25. (AP)

Pulisic celebrates with teammates

## Pulisic's 89th-minute winner lifts Dortmund

**Dortmund**

**C**hristian Pulisic scored in the 89th minute to give Borussia Dortmund a 2-1 win over Hoffenheim on Saturday.

The young United States star ran onto a through ball from Shinji Kagawa, took a superb touch to flick it around goalkeeper Oliver Baumann and tapped it in as Dortmund prevailed in their second straight game under new coach Peter Stoger.

"Shinji played the ball through and I was slightly too close to the goalkeeper,

so I had to take a touch to carry it past him," Pulisic told Dortmund's website. "The rest was easy. It's a great feeling."

Pulisic's strike was the latest-ever goal by a U.S. international to provide a lead in the Bundesliga. The 19-year-old, who hadn't scored for Dortmund since Sept. 20, became the sixth American to reach eight career Bundesliga goals.

Mark Uth had put the visitors in front in the 21st minute, punishing Dortmund's lacklustre defending, but Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang equalised with a 63rd-minute penalty. (espn.in)

Mark Noble (file pic)

## Noble pleased at his 300th appearance

**London**

**W**est Ham United captain Mark Noble was proud to mark his 300th Premier League appearance with a goal in the London outfit's 3-0 win at Stoke City on Saturday.

After a win over champions Chelsea and a draw with Arsenal, West Ham continued their revival under manager David Moyes by beating Stoke City to record their third consecutive clean sheet and climb to 15th in the table.

Midfielder Noble, who progressed through West Ham's ranks and made his league debut in 2005, scored the first of the three goals against Stoke from the spot after Manuel Lanzini was fouled by Erik Pieters in the first half.

"It was a good performance, all in all, and we've kept three clean sheets in a week, which is some achievement, especially with the opposition we've played against," Noble told the club's website. (Reuters)

# Kvitova looking forward to a stronger 2018

**London**

**R**eturning to playing tennis again was all Petra Kvitova could have hoped for after being stabbed in the hand last December and the twice Wimbledon champion is glad that a tough and emotional year is coming to an end.

The Czech required four hours of surgery on her left hand last December after being attacked by a man wielding a knife who had gained access to her apartment by posing as a utility worker.

Kvitova returned to action, after months of rehabilitation, during the

French Open in May and went on to win the Aegon Classic in June.

She last played at the Tianjin Open in October and was preparing to open her 2018 season at the Brisbane International in January.

"This year has been a rollercoaster. The beginning wasn't very nice, so I'm really glad that it's over. Now I can look at everything positively again," Kvitova added.

"It was a pretty tough year and I had a lot of emotions during my comeback... I can see that I can play tennis - and I can play it well, and

for me this is the best outcome I could have hoped for.

"I have started to live with my new hand. I've started to try to like it, to love it and that's how I am going to take it. It's my hand and I am just happy that I have all of my fingers."

The former world number two had a successful run throughout the grasscourt season followed by progression to the quarter-finals of the U.S. Open and the semi-finals of the China Open.

But the 27-year-old was yet to regain full fitness. (Reuters)



Petra Kvitova (file pic)