



Everton's Michael Keane (L) vies with Hajduk Split's Franck Ohandza (R)

# Everton take charge in Europa League

**Paris**  
**E**verton took a 2-0 lead in a Europa League qualifying play-off first leg clash yesterday against Hajduk Split in Liverpool in a game stopped temporarily due to crowd trouble.

Hajduk fans surged towards the Goodison Park pitch and threw objects with play stopped shortly after Michael Keane's 30th-minute header had put the hosts in front.

After police brought the situation under control players returned to the pitch and Everton doubled their lead in the 45th

minute thanks to Idrissa Gueye's strike off a Wayne Rooney cross.

"I was really happy with the first half and unhappy about the second. We lost a big opportunity to score more goals," said Everton coach Ronald Koeman.

Keane said he was delighted to score his first goal for Everton since his move from Burnley in the summer.

"I'm delighted - first and foremost, to get a clean sheet," the England defender told *www.evertonfc.com*. "That's what we aim for, especially in European

games at home. It's massive and makes it a lot easier when they don't score.

"It was the same case as in the last tie, when we took a 1-0 win over there. We managed to go one better today. I thought we played well in the first half, we weren't really ourselves in the second half but at least we got the clean sheet."

In Milan, defender Leonardo Bonucci captained AC Milan to a 6-0 win on his competitive debut for the Italian side against modest Macedonians Shkendija two months after playing for Juventus

in the Champions League final.

The Chinese-owned club were too strong for the Macedonians with a double from new signing André Silva in the first half and Riccardo Montolivo after 25 and 85 minutes. Fabio Borini and Luca Antonelli added two more midway through the second half to set the Italians on the road to the group stages with the second leg away on August 24. Vincenzo Montella's side have never won the second-tier European competition which they last competed in the 2008-2009 season. (AFP)

## Stosur withdraws from US Open



Samantha Stosur (file pic)

**New York**

**A**ustralia's Samantha Stosur has withdrawn from the US Open, where she was champion in 2011, because of a nagging right hand injury, organizers of the Grand Slam tournament said yesterday.

The 33-year-old from Brisbane won her ninth career title in May on Strasbourg clay but she has not played since losing in the fourth round of the French Open to eventual winner Jelena Ostapenko.

Stosur, ranked 43rd in the world, will be replaced in the main draw by Germany's Annika Beck, 23, for the hardcourt showdown at Flushing Meadows that begins on August 28.

Beck, ranked 114th, has an 8-18 record this season with first-round exits at the year's other three Grand Slam events. Her best Grand Slam run was into last year's fourth round at the Australian Open. (AFP)

## Pliskova to face double duty in fight



Karolina Pliskova

**Cincinnati**

**C**zech defending champion Karolina Pliskova tightened her grip on the world number one ranking but was preparing for a second match Friday at the WTA and ATP Cincinnati Masters.

Pliskova ousted Italian qualifier Camila Giorgi 6-3, 4-6, 6-0 in one of five matches postponed from Thursday due to rain. She faced a short-rest quarter-final against fifth-ranked Dane Caroline Wozniacki at the last major tuneup for the US Open.

The winner will advance to a Saturday semi-final against Wimbledon

champion Garbine Muguruza, who ousted Russian eighth seed Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-2, 5-7, 7-5 in a matchup of two-time Grand Slam winners that lasted two hours, 45 minutes.

"It was one of the best matches of the year," Muguruza said. "It was a battle. I fought so hard. It was very tough. We both played very well."

Pliskova saved two break points and held in the final game of the first set but Giorgi hit a backhand winner on the only break point of the second set to force a third, which the Czech dominated to advance. (AFP)

## Mayweather unfazed by 'dirty' Conor

**Los Angeles**

**F**loyd Mayweather has accused Conor McGregor of "fighting dirty" in training but is confident of a clean battle when the two men meet in their August 26 superfight.

Mayweather told reporters on a conference call on Thursday he believed mixed martial arts star McGregor had used illegal tactics in sparring sessions.

The undefeated former welterweight king, who is coming out of retirement to fight McGregor in Las Vegas, said he had spotted rabbit punches in footage of McGregor's sparring session with Paulie Malignaggi.

McGregor, who has never fought in a professional boxing contest, appears to floor Malignaggi in the footage.

Mayweather, 40, was unimpressed.

"I had a chance to see it and my thought were, it was interesting," Mayweather said of McGregor's Malignaggi knockdown.

"A lot of rabbit punching, a lot of illegal shots, behind the head," he added.

McGregor has hired veteran referee Joe Cortez during his training camp to help advise on boxing rules and ensure he fights clean.

"He's had Joe Cortez in his training camp and I've still seen him being extremely dirty," Mayweather said.

Veteran referee Robert Byrd will be responsible for managing the fight and Mayweather is confident he will maintain control of the contest.

Byrd officiated in Mayweather's 2013 win over Robert Guerrero in Las Vegas.

"I truly believe the referee is going to do a great job," Mayweather said.

"The referee's job is to keep the fight clean. He don't have anything to worry about. I'm

looking forward to following the Queensberry rules of boxing," he added.

Mayweather retired from boxing in 2015 with a perfect 49-0 record to emulate former heavyweight legend Rocky Marciano. A win against McGregor would see the welterweight become the only man to ever hold a perfect 50-0 record.

Mayweather insisted however that moving clear

of Marciano's historic benchmark was not on his mind.

"Even though this is my 50th fight, this is not my focus," Mayweather said. "Rocky Marciano is a legend, he did it his way. I just like to do it the Mayweather way."

Win or lose, Mayweather is adamant that nothing will be able to tempt him back into the ring following his return against McGregor." (AFP)

### Boxing super fight

Welterweight superstar Floyd Mayweather and mixed martial arts icon Conor McGregor are set for a boxing showdown on August 26

**Floyd Mayweather**

United States  
 40 years old



**Boxing record:**  
 49 wins, undefeated  
 20 knockouts

**Titles held:**

- WBA Super World Super Welterweight
- WBA Super World Welterweight
- WBC World Super Welterweight
- WBC World Welterweight

**Conor McGregor**

Ireland  
 29 years old



**Mixed martial arts record:**  
 21 wins, 3 losses  
 18 knockouts

**Titles held:**

- UFC Lightweight Champion
- UFC Featherweight Champion

**August 26**  
 T-Mobile Arena, Las Vegas, USA

**Weight class:**  
 Super welterweight (70 kg)

**12 rounds**