

City stun Napoli

Manchester

Early goals from Raheem Sterling and Gabriel Jesus saw Manchester City maintain their winning start in the Champions League with a 2-1 victory over Napoli.

City struck twice in the opening 13 minutes at the Etihad Stadium to set themselves up for a result that lifted them six points clear of the Serie A leaders, and

their supposed chief rivals, in Group F.

Napoli hit back strongly with Dries Mertens having a penalty saved before Amadou Diawara did score from the spot, but City survived a nervy finish.

Pep Guardiola's men arguably should have put the game beyond reach in the opening half-hour, as Kevin De Bruyne also hit the bar and Jesus was denied a second on the line.

Buoyed by their 7-2 thrashing of Stoke at the weekend, they were quickly into their stride.

Their first goal came after Leroy Sane opened up the Napoli defence and Sterling turned in a low shot after Kyle Walker's initial effort was blocked.

De Bruyne continued his rich vein of form by creating the second just moments later, seizing on a loose ball and delivering a now typically perfect pass into the path of Jesus. The Brazilian made no mistake from close range. De Bruyne might have added to the score when he curled a powerful left-footed shot against the bar and Jesus' effort was kept out by Kalidou Koulibaly.

Guardiola had described Napoli as one of the three best footballing sides in Europe but it was not until the latter stages

of the first half that they began to show why.

City had goalkeeper Ederson to thank for preserving their lead. The Brazilian first did well under pressure from Jose Calleron to claim a dipping cross from Lorenzo Insigne.

He then beat away Mertens' spot-kick after Walker was adjudged to have felled Raul Albiol, and also dealt with a long-range shot from the Belgian.

Mertens was frustrated again before the break as Nicolas Otamendi blocked another powerful effort.

Considering their exhilarating start, City had gone off the boil as the half-time whistle was blown.

De Bruyne tried to voice some grievance to the officials as he left the field and he reacted angrily as team-mates Fernandinho and David Silva pushed him away.

Napoli continued to make their presence felt after the break. Jesus broke clear only to be halted by a fine tackle from Albiol.

Marek Hamsik - one short of equalling Diego Maradona's Napoli goalscoring record - was denied by a brilliant sliding block from John Stones after Fernandinho had lost possession.

They were awarded a second penalty after 73 minutes when Fernandinho brought down Faouzi Ghoulam. Diawara grabbed the ball this time and placed a fine shot into the bottom corner.

City went close again as Napoli goalkeeper Jose Reina saved a De Bruyne free-kick and a Sane shot, but the hosts were relieved to hear the final whistle. (espn.in)

Raheem Sterling of Manchester City celebrates after scoring

Gabriel Jesus (top) of Manchester City is tackled during the UEFA Champions League Group F match

