

Milik saves angry Napoli blushes

Milan
Arkadiusz Milik came off the bench to save Napoli's blushes with a late leveller in a 2-2 draw at Sassuolo yesterday. Maurizio Sarri's men travelled to Reggio Emilia trailing second-placed Roma by two points in the battle for automatic entry to next season's Champions League. But having failed to find the net in a messy first half, Napoli hit the woodwork twice on their way to an eighth draw of the campaign that leaves them third, nine points behind leaders Juventus and one off Roma. Juventus, bidding for a record sixth consecutive scudetto, host Genoa later on Sunday

while Roma are at Pescara on Monday. Belgium midfielder Dries Mertens, who has played as a striker during Milik's injury absence, broke the deadlock seven minutes after the restart with a rare header that gave him his 22nd league goal of the season. Sassuolo pulled level seven minutes later largely thanks to Napoli captain Marek Hamsik. His mistimed header back to goalkeeper Pepe Reina was intercepted by Domenico Berardi, who scored in the 59th minute. Napoli should have pulled in front again on 65 minutes but a Mertens free kick rattled off Andrea Consigli's crossbar.

Minutes later, Consigli was quick to collect the ball after Lorenzo Insigne's curler bounced off the inside of the far post. After those reprieves, Sassuolo poured forward sensing an upset and were almost rewarded 10 minutes from the end when Reina could only parry Paolo Cannavaro's flick-on from a free-kick on the right. But moments later, second-half substitute Luca Mazzitelli pounced on Berardi's overhead kick to beat the Spanish keeper down low with his maiden Serie A goal. It prompted Sarri to replace Brazilian midfielder Jorginho with Milik, who with practically

his first touch of the ball had Napoli back on level terms when he controlled Kalidou Koulibaly's nod-down at a corner to sweep past Consigli. It was the Pole's fifth league goal of the campaign and first since September having been sidelined for the best part of six months after rupturing his anterior cruciate knee ligament in October. Napoli regained the momentum but Mertens's drive curled over and Pol Lirola blocked a late Insigne effort. Napoli left the Mapei Stadium amid angry protests after their last-gasp penalty claims were waved away despite a Mertens flick appearing to come off Cannavaro's arm.

Celtic into Scottish Cup final

Glasgow
A second-half penalty by Scott Sinclair sealed a 2-0 win for champions Celtic over bitter rivals Rangers and a place in the Scottish Cup final yesterday. Sinclair's penalty and a first-half effort by Callum McGregor set them up with a May 27 date with Aberdeen -- who beat holders Hibs 3-2 on Saturday -- and a potential domestic treble for the first time in 16 years. McGregor and Sinclair's goals avenged defeat at the hands of Rangers at the same stage last year and extended their unbeaten run to 41 domestic matches this season. It brings to an end a 92-year Hampden Park hoodoo for Celtic, who failed to beat Rangers in the last four of the competition on their previous five attempts since their last victory at this stage in 1925. Celtic manager Brendan

Rodgers said his side were a joy to watch. "Everything you would want from your team to play in terms of composure, temperament and technical quality," purred Rodgers. "We restricted Rangers to very few opportunities and the only disappointment was we didn't score more." His Rangers counterpart Pedro Caixinha felt his side showed Celtic too much respect in the first half. "At half-time we tried to change some things but I think we needed to be more aggressive in defending," he said. "I think they deserved to win but we could have done, and should have done, much better." Rangers kicked off at Hampden but it was to be the closest they were to the ball for the majority of the half. Rangers had conceded just

once in their previous five games, but with Celtic enjoying the lion's share of possession a goal seemed inevitable and it duly came through McGregor. Moussa Dembele brought down Mikel Lustig's long ball over the top of the Rangers defence and laid it back into the path of the Scottish midfielder, whose first-time strike with his left-foot rolled into the bottom corner. Rangers were then relieved to see Dembele, scorer of five goals in five Old Firm appearances, limp out of the game on the half hour with a pulled hamstring to be replaced by Leigh Griffiths. Rangers made two changes at the break with Joe Garner and Andy Halliday making way for Joe Dodoo and Barrie McKay. But just as they started to threaten they conceded a penalty from a quick Celtic breakaway. Goalkeeper Wes Foderingham

hesitated in coming to collect Kieran Tierney's through ball allowing Griffiths to run in on goal and the striker was brought down by a horribly mistimed sliding challenge from James Tavernier. Foderingham nearly made amends as he palmed Sinclair's spot-kick on to the inside of the post but the ball bounced over the line to double Celtic's advantage. Celtic then had two chances in quick succession with Foderingham tipping over a fierce strike from Griffiths before Dedryck Boyata headed over from close range. Despite Celtic's dominance Rangers captain Kenny Miller was presented with a golden chance to pull one back when he got on the end of Tavernier's cross, but sent his weak header straight at Craig Gordon. (AFP)

Football

FA Cup semi-final, Wembley:



Arsenal 2 Man City 1

English Premier League:

Burnley 0 Man Utd 2
Liverpool 1 Crystal Palace 2

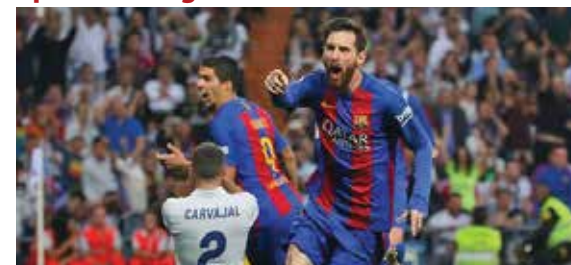
English Championship:

Aston Villa 1 Birmingham 0

Scottish Cup semi-final, Hampden:

Celtic 2 Rangers 0

Spanish La Liga:



Real Sociedad 1 Deportivo la Coruna 0
Celta Vigo 0 Real Betis 1
Las Palmas 1 Alaves 1
Real Madrid 2 Barcelona 3

German Bundesliga:

Freiburg v Bayer Leverkusen (1330),
Schalke v RB Leipzig (1530).

Italian Serie A:



Sassuolo 2 Napoli 2
Chievo 1 Torino 3
Lazio 2 Palermo 2
AC Milan 1 Empoli 2
Sampdoria 1 Crotona 2
Udinese 2 Cagliari 1
Juventus 4 Genoa 0

French Ligue 1:



Toulouse 1 Nice 1
Saint Etienne 1 Rennes 1
Lyon 1 Monaco 2

Russian Premier League:

Tomsk 1 Orenburg 2
Samara 0 Rubin Kazan 0
Krasnodar 2 Arsenal Tula 0