

Ceballos ensures Real bounce back

Madrid

Dani Ceballos scored twice on his full debut as Real Madrid bounced back from a shock midweek defeat by Real Betis to close to within four points of La Liga leaders Barcelona with a 2-1 win at Alaves yesterday.

Earlier, Diego Costa was an interested spectator as Atletico Madrid leapfrogged Sevilla into second thanks to goals from Yannick Carrasco and Antoine Griezmann in a 2-0 win at the Wanda Metropolitano.

Barca can re-establish their four-point lead over Atletico with victory later at Girona.

"Today we needed the three points. We are not in brilliant form, but for sure we will play better on other days," said Real boss Zinedine Zidane.

Ceballos was one of three changes made to the side that lost to Betis by Zidane as Luka Modric and Gareth Bale were left on the bench ahead of Tuesday's Champions League trip to Borussia Dortmund.

And the Spanish under-21 international settled Madrid's nerves after just 10 minutes as he caught Fernando Pacheco flat-footed by pulling the ball inside the goalkeeper's near post from the edge of the area.

Alaves caretaker coach Javier Cabello had denied Enzo Zidane the chance to face his father Zinedine and former club as he was left out the Alaves squad.

However, Cabello did manage



Real Madrid's midfielder Daniel Ceballos (R) celebrates after scoring his team's first goal beside Real Madrid's defender from Spain Dani Carvajal

to inspire a more spirited display from the hosts, despite a sixth straight defeat, as they scored their first goal of the season five minutes before half-time.

Alaves captain Manu Garcia met Munir El Haddadi's cross flush to power a header into the top corner. Madrid retook the lead just three minutes later, though, as Ceballos pounced on a poor punch from Pacheco to fire into the bottom corner.

Real should have ensured a

far more comfortable afternoon after the break as Pacheco made a great save to deny Isco, Cristiano Ronaldo struck the woodwork twice and Sergio Ramos blazed over with the goal at his mercy.

Yet, Alaves could also have snatched a first point of the season as Alfonso Pedraza's deflected effort hit the bar before Pedraza struck the post when clean through on goal.

"When you go away having only scored two goals for the chances

we had it isn't a lot," added Zidane. "But the most important thing was to win the game."

Atletico maintained their impressive start to the season despite the difficulties of a ban on registering new players.

Costa won't be able to feature until January after completing his prolonged return to the club from Chelsea for a reported club record fee of 55 million euros (\$66 million), plus 10 million euros in add-ons. (AFP)

El Shaarawy brace as Roma down Udinese



AS Roma's Stephan el Shaarawy runs with the ball past Udinese's defender Giuseppe Pezzella (rear)

Milan

Stephan El Shaarawy bagged a first-half brace as AS Roma overwhelmed Udinese 3-1 to secure a third straight Serie A win yesterday.

Italian forward El Shaarawy scored twice after Edin Dzeko's 12th-minute opener, as Roma move up to fourth in Serie A with 12 points from five games, and with a game in hand just three points behind leaders Napoli and Juventus who play later.

Coach Eusebio Di Francesco said he was delighted that the pieces were beginning to fit into his jigsaw after early criticism of his tactics.

"I see the lads are ready to do what I ask," said Di Francesco. "El Shaarawy is an ideal forward for my system."

"I saw an excellent team movement. It's a pity we conceded that goal, and we could have scored a few more, but were not determined enough. I can't help but be satisfied with my team."

Luigi Delneri's visitors were struggling from the outset at the Stadio Olimpico with Dzeko on hand for the opener and his sixth goal of the season after Radja Nainggolan pushed his way through a porous Udinese defence.

Dzeko rolled in a cross for El Shaarawy's first after half an hour with a blunder by Udinese's Danish defender Jens Stryger Larsen giving the player nicknamed 'The Little Pharaoh' his second just before the break.

Diego Perotti had a chance to make it 4-0 late in the game but fired his spot-kick off target with Stryger Larsen getting one back after his earlier misfortune beating the offside trap to score a consolation goal in the final minutes. (AFP)

Football

Scores as of closing

English Championship:

Bolton	0	Brentford	3
Derby	1	Birmingham	1
Fulham	1	Middlesbrough	1
Leeds	3	Ipswich	2
Norwich	0	Bristol City	0
Preston	0	Millwall	0
QPR	0	Burton	0
Reading	1	Hull	1
Sunderland	1	Cardiff	2
Wolves	2	Barnsley	1

English Premier League:

Burnley	0	Huddersfield	0
Everton	2	Bournemouth	1
Southampton	0	Manchester United	1
Stoke	0	Chelsea	4
Swansea	1	Watford	2
West Ham	2	Tottenham	3
Leicester	2	Liverpool	3

German league:

RB Leipzig	2	Eintracht Frankfurt	1
Hoffenheim	2	Schalke 04	0
Werder Bremen	0	SC Freiburg	0
VfB Stuttgart	0	FC Augsburg	0
Mainz 05	1	Hertha Berlin	0
Borussia Dortmund	6	Moenchengladbach	1

Neymar-less PSG held by Montpellier

Paris

Paris Saint-Germain lost their perfect start to the Ligue 1 season as they struggled to a 0-0 draw at Montpellier yesterday without the injured Neymar.

With the world's most expensive player on the sidelines to ensure his fitness for Tuesday's Champions League clash against Bayern Munich, PSG were uninspiring in attack against a stubborn Montpellier side playing in a 5-4-1 formation.

Rising star Kylian Mbappe had the best of the visitors' chances, but the 18-year-old was profligate in front of goal as Unai Emery's men could only extend their lead at the top of the table over reigning champions Monaco to one point.

PSG started slowly as Montpellier comfortably kept



Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian defender Thiago Silva (L) outruns Montpellier's French forward Isaac Mbenza

them at arm's length.

The visitors unsurprisingly had most of the ball, but Montpellier looked a threat on the counter-attack with the pace of Claude Ninga up front.

Without Neymar pulling the strings, Paris were toothless for the first 45 minutes, with some

players perhaps keeping one eye on the Bayern game.

PSG did finally create a decent chance shortly after the restart, as Montpellier threw away possession on the edge of their own area and Mbappe curled a tame shot straight at home goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte.

The teenager, who will become the world's second-most expensive player behind Neymar when he completes his permanent transfer from Monaco next year, should have broken the deadlock, but headed wide when unmarked from only a few yards out.

Mbappe was starting to make an impact, as he raced through on goal only to scuff his shot and allow the home defence to clear.

PSG coach Emery belatedly made his first change in the 66th minute with Lucas Moura replacing the ineffective Julian Draxler. Striker Edinson Cavani, who missed a penalty last week after an argument with Neymar, had an appeal for a spot-kick waved away after going down in a heap under a potentially goal-saving tackle from defender Pedro Mendes. (AFP)