

Aubameyang double leads Arsenal to FA Cup triumph

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice to win his first trophy as Arsenal captain

● **Chelsea goalscorer Christian Pulisic was forced off just after half-time with a hamstring injury**

AFP | London

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang inspired Arsenal to a record 14th FA Cup win as the Gunners captain struck twice to beat Chelsea 2-1 in the final at an empty Wembley yesterday.

Christian Pulisic had given Chelsea the dream start, but the Blues unravelled after Aubameyang was brought down by Cesar Azpilicueta inside the area and converted the resulting penalty.

A brilliant finish from Aubameyang 23 minutes from time earned Mikel Arteta silverware in his first season as Arsenal boss before Chelsea were controversially reduced to 10 men when Mateo Kovacic was shown an extremely soft second yellow card.

Arteta said ahead of the final he hoped a taste of success would encourage Aubameyang, who only has a year left on his contract at the Emirates, to commit to a new long-term deal.

The Gabon international's



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang of Arsenal scores his sides second goal

double took his tally for the season to 29 and ensured the Gunners will not miss out on European football next season for the first time since 1995/96 as they qualify for the Europa League.

An FA Cup final unlike any other with nearly 90,000 empty seats saw the traditional singing of "Abide With Me" performed on the Wembley roof.

Chelsea had already achieved their primary goal from Frank Lampard's first season in charge by securing a place in next season's Champions League last weekend and early on they

“It was a difficult start. Sometimes you can go down. But if there's something I know about this group of players, it's that they weren't going to give up. They reacted straight away and played the best 30 minutes since I arrived

MIKEL ARTETA

seemed set to cap a top-four finish with Lampard's first trophy as a manager.

Emiliano Martinez flew to his left to turn Mason Mount's shot behind, but Arsenal did not heed that warning as Chelsea's front three combined perfectly for the opener on five minutes.

Mount's low cross was flicked on by former Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud and Pulisic continued his scoring streak since football's return in June by showing quick feet before prodding the ball home.

Arteta has gained plenty of plaudits for his tactical nous

during his first eight months in a managerial role and the Spaniard managed to reorganise the Gunners during the first-half drinks break to change the momentum of the game.

A minute after play resumed, Nicolas Pepe thought he had curled home a brilliant equaliser from the edge of the box, only to be denied by Ainsley Maitland-Niles being flagged for off-side in the build-up.

While Chelsea have already significantly strengthened their forward line for next season with the signings of Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech, Arsenal are hoping just to hold onto their key man in Aubameyang.

Just like in the semi-final win over Manchester City, he proved to be the match winner as he raced onto Kieran Tierney's hopeful ball over the top and outpaced Azpilicueta before being brought down by the Chelsea captain just inside the area.

Azpilicueta escaped the double punishment of a red card, but VAR confirmed the spot-kick and Aubameyang coolly slotted home.

Chelsea were further hit by two big injury blows either side of half-time as Azpilicueta and Pulisic pulled up with hamstring injuries that will almost certainly rule them out of the Champions League last 16, second leg against Bayern Munich next weekend

Rangers get off to winning start at Aberdeen



Ryan Kent shoots to score Reuters | London

Steven Gerrard was pleased with the resilience displayed by Rangers as they got their quest to deny Celtic a record-breaking 10th consecutive Scottish Premiership title off to a winning start with a 1-0 win at Aberdeen.

Ryan Kent scored the only goal of the first Scottish Premiership game for 147 days after the 2019/20 season was ended early due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Rangers lost a series of points from winning positions in the second half of last season to finish 13 points behind Celtic when the campaign was curtailed in March.

And Gerrard was pleased his side saw the game out comfortably despite failing to add to their lead.

"I'm pleased we showed signs today we are capable of staying in there and getting over the line," the former Liverpool captain told Sky Sports.

"In an ideal world we want it to look great in every game, but over the course of 38 games you've got to stay tough, stay together and put your body on the line. They pushed us all the way, but this is a big three points."

Hamilton takes pole for British GP in record time

● **Lewis Hamilton powered to a 91st career pole position at Silverstone**

AFP | Silverstone

Lewis Hamilton smashed the track record twice yesterday to grab a record seventh British Grand Prix pole position with a stunning performance in a tense qualifying session.

Hamilton, who on Sunday seeks a record-increasing seventh Silverstone victory, finished ahead of his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas by more than three-tenths of a second after the Finn had been fastest in final practice and then again in both Q2 and Q3 when he also set lap records.

The defending six-time champion and current series leader bounced back from a ragged performance, including a spin, in the first parts of qualifying to claim his 65th pole with Mercedes and the record-increasing 91st of his career.

It was also a record eighth successive Mercedes pole success in Britain on a day when



Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes GP celebrates in parc ferme

they were clear of their nearest rivals Red Bull by a full second, Max Verstappen taking third place on the grid ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Rising British star Lando Norris, 20, was fifth for McLaren ahead of Lance Stroll in Racing Point's 'pink Mercedes', Carlos Sainz in the second McLaren, Daniel Ricciardo and his Renault team-mate Esteban Ocon and Sebastian Vettel, who was 10th for Ferrari.

"This track is awesome! But it is tough out there - with the winds, it is like juggling balls on a moving plate," said a delighted Hamilton.

"I had a spin and as you know qualifying is all about confidence and I was struggling in the first sectors of every lap, but I took some deep breaths, composed myself and in Q3 I had a clear lap and the second one was even better!"

"It still isn't perfect, but it never gets old."

He added that it was strange to drive without any fans in the circuit. "Usually, it's all sirens, flags and smoke and the atmosphere is buzzing - you get out of the car and have a different energy so I miss them, but I hope everyone is safe and happy at home."

Mokaev dominates arch-rival McVeigh at BRAVE CF 37, wants spot in Poland card

TDT | Manama

The world of MMA stood still for 15 minutes as the biggest prospect in the sport took his first steps in the professional scene with a successful and dominant performance.

The pound-for-pound number one amateur fighter in the world Muhammad Mokaev did more of the same on his pro debut and dominated Glenn McVeigh en route to a unanimous decision victory at BRAVE CF 37, the first-ever show of the fastest-growing MMA organization in Sweden.

For his part, McVeigh hung tough and showed he belonged in the cage, having a good performance in the first round and impressing with his submission defense in the second and third rounds. However, the short-notice debutant had too much on his hands and wasn't able to stop Mokaev's takedowns and great striking offense.

Both men hyped up the fight in the last few days as McVeigh tagged BRAVE CF president almost imploring for the fight and saying he could "smash the bum Mokaev". The two-time amateur world champion didn't



Muhammad Mokaev and Glenn McVeigh in action during their bout

like the words and promised to make him pay.

They were close to starting fighting twice before actual fight night, in an impromptu meeting in the host hotel lobby, and then in the post-weigh-ins staredowns. Inside the BRAVE CF Arena, they kept the trash talk on high volume, and the lack of fans made for great viewing as fans at home were treated to their exchanges - with the referee having to ask both men

to "watch their words" at one point.

After the bout, Mokaev said their beef was squashed but admitted he still had a problem with McVeigh giving him a finger in a pre-fight post on social media. "The Punisher" also asked for a fight in Poland, where BRAVE CF makes its debut on September 5th. Now with a 1-0 pro record, the sky is the limit for Mokaev.