

# Liverpool frustrated by Chelsea draw

AFP

Liverpool missed the chance to all but secure Champions League action next season after a 1-1 draw against Chelsea, while Manchester United were frustrated in a goalless stalemate at Sunderland on Saturday.

Ryan Gravenberch's sweet strike gave Liverpool the perfect start in the sixth minute at Anfield.

Chelsea hit back when Enzo Fernandez's 35th-minute free-kick evaded everyone to find the bottom corner.

Boos at full-time reflected the mood around Anfield after another lacklustre performance from the defending champions.

The result inched fourth-placed Liverpool closer to Champions League qualification, with a four-point lead over sixth-placed Bournemouth.

"I do," said Slot on whether he thinks he can regain the fans' backing.

"Not this season by the way. This season they will have their opinion and it will not change.

"If we can have the summer that we are planning to have, then I'm 100 percent convinced that we will be a different team next season than we are now."

Chelsea can no longer mathematically finish in the top five and remain in ninth.

The Blues had lost six consecutive Premier League games to fall out of contention for a top-five place prior to the trip to Merseyside.

But a more obdurate performance provided some encouragement for interim boss Calum McFarlane to take into next weekend's FA Cup final against Manchester City.

Manchester United are already assured of Champions League football following their win over Liverpool last weekend.

Michael Carrick's third-



placed side have little left to play for in and it showed in a dour affair at the Stadium of Light.

It was the first time United had failed to score in a league game since November.

## Red card drama

Bournemouth remain in contention for a stunning Champions League place after winning 1-0 at Fulham.

Bournemouth's Ryan Christie was sent off late in the first half after his booking for an ugly foul on Timothy Castagne was upgraded to a red card following a VAR check.

Fulham defender

Joachim Andersen was also dismissed before the interval after another VAR intervention turned referee Andy Madley's initial booking for a foul on Adrien Truffert into a red card.

Brazilian teenager Rayan won the game for Bournemouth in the 53rd minute with a fine finish from just outside the penalty area.

The Cherries, unbeaten in their last 16 league matches, are aiming to qualify for Europe for the first time their history.

Brighton bolstered

their bid to qualify for Europe with a 3-0 win against Wolves at the Amex Stadium.

Jack Hinshelwood nodded Brighton in front after 37 seconds and Lewis Dunk's header doubled their advantage in the fifth minute.

Yankuba Minteh's 86th-minute rocket completed the rout of already-relegated Wolves.

With two games to play, Fabian Hurler's side sit seventh, two points behind Bournemouth.

A sixth-place finish will bring either Champions League or Europa League qualification.

If Aston Villa finish fifth, their current position, and beat Freiburg in the Europa League final, then sixth place will secure a Champions League berth.

Manchester City host Brentford in Saturday's late game as they look to close the gap on leaders Arsenal.

Pep Guardiola's second-placed side are five points behind Arsenal, who travel to third-bottom West Ham on Sunday.

City have a game in hand on Arsenal but the destiny of the title is no longer in their hands after their damaging 3-3 draw at Everton on Monday.

Arsenal, who have also reached the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain, will seal their first English title for 22 years if they win their last three games.



Liverpool's Hungarian defender #06 Milos Kerkez (R) fouls Chelsea's English midfielder #10 Cole Palmer

# Barcelona eye title in Clasico

Madrid arrive in disarray, looking to spoil the Catalan party



Raphina celebrates for his goal in the reverse fixture

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Barcelona can clinch their 29th LaLiga title tonight when they face archrivals Real Madrid in a decisive El Clásico at Camp Nou, with kick-off scheduled for 10 PM Bahrain time.

Hansi Flick's side have been the standout team in Spain this season by most key metrics, with their dominance built largely on an exceptional home record. Barcelona have won every league match at Camp Nou this campaign and arrive on the back of a 10-game winning run in LaLiga.

If they avoid defeat in tonight's Clásico, the Blaugrana will secure the title. Should they win their remaining two home fixtures, they would become the first team since Real Madrid in 1985/86 to complete a perfect home league season, highlighting their consistency in front of their own supporters.

While Barcelona's preparations have been smooth, the same cannot be said for Real Madrid. Los Blancos have endured a turbulent season and are on course for back-to-back trophyless campaigns for the

first time in two decades, with inconsistency and internal issues derailing their year.

Managerial changes have failed to stabilise performances, while reports of dressing room tension have continued in recent weeks, leaving Madrid heading into the Clásico under significant pressure.

Their build-up has also been affected by injuries and uncertainty over several key players, further complicating an already difficult situation. Despite that, Madrid will be determined to delay Barcelona's title celebrations in one of football's fiercest rivalries.

Barcelona also have a couple of absentees, but their core squad remains intact as they prepare for a potential title-clinching night at home.

Key players such as Robert Lewandowski, Pedri, and Pau Cubarsí are expected to play central roles for the hosts, while Real Madrid will rely heavily on Vinicius Júnior and Jude Bellingham to produce decisive moments.

All signs point to a defining night in the LaLiga title race, with Barcelona within touching distance of the championship.

# Manchester City Cruise Past Brentford

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Manchester City strengthened their Premier League title push with a 3-0 win over Brentford at the Etihad Stadium yesterday, a result built on another standout performance from Jeremy Doku.

City came into the match under pressure after a chaotic 3-3 draw with Everton had allowed Arsenal to edge further ahead in the title race. That urgency showed early on, with Guardiola's side looking slightly rushed in possession and struggling to break through a compact Brentford block. The visitors were organised, disciplined, and in-

creasingly confident as they slowed the game and frustrated the home crowd.

The deadlock was finally broken just after the hour mark through Doku, who produced a moment of individual brilliance. Cutting in from the left, he curled a superb effort into the top-right corner, giving the goalkeeper no chance and lifting the atmosphere inside the stadium.

Brentford responded with a brief spell of pressure and felt they had a case for a penalty that was turned away, but City gradually took control. The pressure eventually told when Erling Haaland bundled home City's second goal in the 75th minute,



Jeremy Doku in possession against Brentford

effectively ending the contest.

From there, Brentford's resistance faded. Caoimhin Kelleher kept the score down with a sharp save to deny Phil Foden, but City continued to find openings. In stoppage time, substitute Omar Marmoush finished calmly to seal a comprehensive victory and add gloss to the scoreline.

The result keeps City firmly in the title race, but pressure remains as they continue to chase Arsenal, who are two points ahead. Guardiola will take encouragement from the performance, particularly Doku's influence, who was City's most dangerous outlet throughout.