

Salah helps Liverpool qualify

Mohamed Salah's winner took Liverpool into the Champions League last 16 with a 1-0 victory over Napoli

AFP | Liverpool

Goalkeeper Alisson Becker was labelled a "life saver" by Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp for a last-gasp save that secured a 1-0 win over Napoli at Anfield and progress to the last 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday.

Mohamed Salah's stunning solo effort put the hosts in front 11 minutes before half-time, but Liverpool were nearly made to pay for their profligacy in missing a series of second-half chances.

Alisson had barely been tested until the Brazilian number one spread himself brilliantly to deny Arkadiusz Milik a dramatic stoppage-time equaliser and go a long way to justifying the then-world record £67-million (\$85 million) fee for a goalkeeper Liverpool paid Roma in July.

"If I knew Alisson was this good -- I would have paid double," joked Klopp.

"The goal Mo scored, what a goal! And the save Ali made (was) unbelievable. It was of course a life saver tonight."

Despite losing all three of their away games in Group C, three home wins at fortress Anfield were enough to see Liverpool through to the knockout stage on goals scored over the Italians in second place behind Paris Saint-Germain, who won 4-1 away to Red Star Belgrade to secure top spot.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores their first goal against Napoli

"I'm still full of adrenaline, I could feel it in bubbles," added Klopp.

"This game was just amazing. The boys played with their whole heart on the pitch."

Liverpool's charge to the Champions League final last season was spearheaded by Salah's 44-goal season.

And after signalling his return to top form by scoring a hat-trick in a 4-0 win at Bournemouth on Saturday that sent Liverpool to

the top of the Premier League, Salah's 13th goal of the campaign relegated Napoli to the Europa League in the new year despite losing for the first time in Europe this season.

"It's a real shame our efforts haven't been rewarded," said Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti.

"We have no regrets. Overall the group of players have done extremely well, we took it down to the wire.

"You can't expect to come to

Liverpool and create 10 really good chances, we had one or two and didn't have the luck to take one of them."

Van Dijk's lunge

The outcome could have been very different if Virgil van Dijk had been sent off rather than just shown a yellow card that will keep him out of the first leg of Liverpool's last-16 tie for a dangerous lunge on Dries Mertens after just 15 minutes.



Liverpool's charge to the Champions League final last season was spearheaded by Salah's 44-goal season

UEFA will introduce the video assistant referee (VAR) system for the last 16, but Ancelotti bemoaned the delay in using the technology during the group stage.

"Seeing on the video, I knew it was a red card," added Ancelotti. "When VAR comes in (to) the Champions League, it is too late."

Liverpool took control as the first half wore on and broke the deadlock when Salah outmuscled Mario Rui and skipped past Kalidou Koulibaly before squeezing the ball underneath Ospina from a narrow angle.

Had Liverpool conceded they would have had to win by two goals due to their 1-0 defeat in Naples, and the hosts failed to cash in on their dominance of the early stages of the second half and avoid a nervy ending.

Brave CF strengthens Indian business relations

TDT | Manama

Brave Combat Federation will host the second event in India on 22nd December at the Gachibowli Arena in Hyderabad. The event marks the biggest Mixed Martial Arts event hosted till date in India.

The Bahraini Mixed Martial Arts organization will strengthen the growing sector of sports and media between the two nations by hosting the event. Brave 20 will give the opportunity for seven Indian athletes to compete for the first time in the International stage.

The operations in India will strengthen the growing popularity of the sport as well as create new avenues for the Bahraini based global Mixed Martial Arts organization which is also the fastest growing Mixed Martial Arts organization in the world.

India was among the first nations that hosted an event by Brave Combat Federation after Bahrain, Brazil, and the United Arab Emirates.

"India is a nation that has a rich history when it comes to martial arts. The growing digital media penetration in the second most populous nation in the world will help to spread the sport of mixed martial arts and to nurture upcoming talents in the region", said Mohammed Shahid, President of Brave CF.

Al Daaja closing on Loman for bantamweight title

TDT | Manama

Jalal Al Daaja will return to Brave Combat Federation after a long break to compete in the twentieth edition of Brave Combat Federation, taking place in Hyderabad, India.

Al Daaja will face an uphill battle as he clashes with the local hero and undefeated bantamweight sensation, Kantaraj Agasa. Agasa is undefeated in his previous 10 bouts and holds a perfect record of 10-0-0.

The bout marks one of the biggest challenges for the Jordanian bantamweight who had won his previous two appearances with Brave Combat Federation.

Al Daaja faced Jeremy Pa-



Jalal Al Daaja

catiwi in Brave 9 and Crisanto Pitpitunge in Brave 10, he came out with first-round finishes against the two fighters from Team Lakay. Al Daaja won by TKO against Pacatiw while he submitted Pitpitunge.

After the wins, he called out Loman. However, the world champions went ahead to face the bantamweight world championship contender, Frans Mlambo and subsequently Felipe Efrain.

With Loman coming up with dominating wins over Mlambo and Efrain, a win is crucial for the Jordanian to get a step closer to his dream to fight for the world championship.

Currently, Jalal Al Daaja is training in the camp that features the reigning welterweight world champion of Brave Combat Federation, Jarrah Al Selawe and the Middleweight powerhouse who will soon debut at Brave 21 in Saudi Arabia, Hashem Arkagha.

Female athletes to compete in Brave 20

TDT | Manama

Brave Combat Federation has announced to bring forward female athletes to compete for the first time in the edition of the event hosted in India.

Brave 20 taking place on 22nd December at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad will feature Micol Di Segni from Italy facing Maria Ribeiro from Brazil in a Women's Strawweight bout.

Micol Di Segni is the first female athlete from Europe to have signed with Brave Combat Federation. The strawweight fighter is also a prospect who evolved out of the IMMAF system for amateur fighters.

Di Segni secured the gold medal at the 2015 IMMAF World Championships final ahead of her professional debut and has a professional record of 6-1-0, with a five-fight win streak. At



Micol DiSegni (right) secures the Flyweight gold medal winner over Sweden's Anja Saxmark in the 2015 IMMAF World Championships final

the same time, Maria Ribeiro has a professional record of 4-1-0. Ribeiro will be coming after her first professional loss in her career.

"India has some of the best female combat sports talents in the world, the recent milestone achievement by Mary Kom is a testimony. By including the bout is critical not only to pro-

mote the growth of the female division in the promotion but also to encourage the athletes who are looking forward to competing professionally. The bout will provide exposure as well as showcase the level of competition that takes place at a global level.", said Mohammed Shahid, President of Brave Combat Federation.

New Zealand vs Morocco to headline co-main event in India

TDT | Manama

Brave Combat Federation will showcase a major matchup between New Zealand and Morocco on 22nd December at Gachibowli Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad, India.

The bout marks for the first time athletes from New Zealand and Morocco are competing in an MMA event taking place in India. John Brewin from New Zealand made an impact with two iconic wins at Brave Combat Federation fortifying his undefeated pro-

fessional record consisting of four major wins.

Brewin made his promotional debut at Brave Combat Federation after decimating the 2016 IMMAF Medalist, Hardeep Rai. The bout in India marks the third for Brewin in the organization.

Anas Siraj Mounir from Morocco will compete for the first time in the promotion at Brave 20. Anas Siraj Mounir is the second fighter to be signed from Morocco and the only fighter from Morocco in the promotion.

Hamza Kooheji confident to create history in Saudi

TDT | Manama

Hamza Kooheji will become the first Bahraini Mixed Martial Artist to compete in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia when the Kingdom hosts the first International Mixed Martial Arts event on 28th December at the King Abdullah Sports City Indoor Sports Hall in Jeddah.

Kooheji has initiated his training at the KHK MMA Bahrain under the Head Coach Eldar Eldarov and Veteran Martial Artist, Yousif Al Kooheji. The Bahraini youth icon is confident



Hamza Kooheji (right) victorious against Crisanto Pitpitunge (left) at Brave 16 in UAE

that he will be able to raise the bars higher when it comes to facing his opponent in Saudi Arabia.

He will face Yayong "The Wolverine" Wang (7-6-0) fighting out of Shanghai, China. This marks the first time a Bahraini professional fighter is challenged by a Chinese athlete. Kooheji reflected regarding the training and the support he is receiving leading to the fight.

The bantamweight fighter from the Kingdom of Bahrain has seven wins in his professional career and have inspired

Bahraini youth to follow the sport of Mixed Martial Arts under the initiative of His Highness Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

"Brave 21 will be an iconic event for the world of Mixed Martial Arts as this marks the first event taking place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. At this time, when the Kingdom of Bahrain is preparing for the national day, it gives me immense pleasure to train harder representing the Kingdom in a historic event", said Hamza Kooheji.