

SPORTS
sports

Messi brilliance leads Barcelona past Lyon

Lionel Messi proves too much for Lyon as Barcelona reach Champions League quarters

● Argentine forward scores twice as the Spanish champions beat their French opponents 5-1 at Camp Nou to progress to the last-eight

AFP | Barcelona

Lionel Messi came up just short of matching Cristiano Ronaldo's hat-trick a day earlier but still scored twice and set up two more as Barcelona beat Lyon 5-1 on Wednesday to reach the Champions League quarter-finals.

After Ronaldo's treble on Tuesday for Juventus sent Atletico Madrid packing in Turin, Messi delivered his own symphony at the Camp Nou, where Lyon were outplayed save for a very brief period in the second half when they threatened a comeback in this last-16 tie.

"Cristiano yesterday was impressive," Messi said afterwards. "It was a big surprise because I thought Atletico would be stronger but Cristiano had a magical night."

A 0-0 draw in France in the first leg last month meant Lyon always had a chance to make Barca nervous, but Messi's sumptuously chipped penalty and a simple finish from



Lionel Messi scores his second goal against Lyon

Philippe Coutinho looked to have finished them off before half-time.

Yet Lucas Tousart's volley left Lyon one goal away from putting Barcelona out, only for Messi to take charge again. He scored once more, before teeing up Gerard Pique and Ousmane Dembele to complete the victory.

Barcelona go into Friday's draw for the last eight as the sole Spanish representative,

along with Juventus, Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Tottenham Hotspur, Porto and Ajax.

The last time Spain only had one team left at this stage was 2010 and after defeats for Atletico and Real Madrid, it was up to Barca to avert a first Spanish blackout since 2005.

Coutinho had been whistled off by his own fans last week-

end but was picked to start, preferred to Dembele who had just recovered from a hamstring strain. The Brazilian was bright, enjoying one of his best performances in weeks.

"In the last few weeks, months even, I've not been playing well," Coutinho said. "You never know what the future holds but I am happy with my performance today."

"He has come in after not such a good run," said coach Ernesto Valverde. "It was an important match for him and he played very well."



Messi now has 108 goals in the Champions League, behind Ronaldo's imperious 124

Lyon could barely escape their own penalty area in early exchanges as Messi got to work. He fired one shot towards the top corner and then latched onto a Sergio Busquets pass but Anthony Lopes sprung out to intercept.

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Karters set for ultimate test in 24-hour endurance race at BIKC

TDT | Manama

The 2018/2019 edition of the Bahrain SWS Endurance Championship is set for a grand finale this weekend, with the much-anticipated 24-hour final round taking place at Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir.

The event is set to be the toughest tests of the endurance karting season, with multiple factors potentially influencing the race outcome including teamwork, stamina, elements, tough competition, and the like.

Mudabbar edge Brave Warrior

TDT | Manama

Mudabbar beat Brave Warrior by 157 runs in a CBA Division C 25 Overs League match.

Mudabbar won the toss and elected to bat first. Opener Waqas (80) scored a brilliant half century and was well supported by Ehtesham (44) who helped Mudabbar to score 208 runs at the end of 25 overs. Khalid and Ahmed took two wickets each for warriors.

In second innings, Anamul (five wickets) and Nadeem's (three wickets) magic spell helped Mudabbar to restrict the opponent for just 51 runs, and win the match by 157 runs.

Brief Score : Mudabbar 208/5 in 25 overs (Waqas 80, Ehtesham 44, Ahmed 2/37) beat Brave Warriors 51/10 (Khalid 17, Anamul 5/20, Nadeem 3/5) by 157 runs

Al Nusuf affirms progress plan

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) secretary general Mohammed Al Nusuf expressed pride for the Royal decree approved by HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, representative of His Majesty the King for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman, during his term as committee president, appointing him as new secretary general of the BOC.

In an official statement, Al Nusuf asserted his keenness to exert all possible effort and his vast experience in the development of sports in Bahrain, thus fulfilling the aspirations of the committee.

Al Nusuf added that the youth and sports sectors in the kingdom are on verge of a new stage based on professional work and changing sport into an industry of success.

Bahrain's own Hussain Ayyad in 'enemy territory' for Brave 22

TDT | Manama

One of Bahraini MMA's brightest prospects, Brave Flyweight Hussain Ayyad is used to fighting at home and is coming off a win in Manama, when he beat Mohammed Abo Ali at Brave 18. However, he will be in a different environment. This Friday night, "Iron" takes on Jason Vergara at Brave 22: Storm of Warriors, set for the Mall of Asia Arena, in Manila, Philippines.

Ayyad will be going straight into "opponent's territory" and will take on Vergara in his backyard. However, he doesn't seem fazed at the prospect of having to fight against the crowd's favourite fighter.

"Personally, the challenge of fighting an opponent in front of his own fans makes me give a stronger push to win. I shouldn't let the crowd affect me. I think it's the opposite. I think it affects him. When I catch him with something, I'm sure his fans will blame him, and not me", he recently said in an interview with Bah-



Hussain Ayyad during a weigh in

with Jason Vergara. However, I couldn't find enough videos on him, but from what I saw, I feel he trusts his striking game and uses a lot of his muay thai skills. So we developed a gameplan to deal with that, training to fix some of the mistakes in my previous fights. Hopefully, all the training will pay off and the fight will be easier because of the time I put in the preparation".

Klopp says Liverpool 'back at the top' after Bayern triumph

● Sadio Mane and Virgil van Dijk take Liverpool past Bayern Munich

AFP | Munich

Jurgen Klopp said his Liverpool side proved they are "back on the European stage" after an impressive 3-1 win at Bayern Munich on Wednesday put them into the Champions League quarter-finals.

Sadio Mane scored twice at the Allianz Arena to put last season's finalists Liverpool through with a 3-1 aggregate last-16 win.

"It's a big step to get this club back on the European stage and I am really happy," said Liverpool's German manager.

"If Barcelona, if Real Madrid come here, they know this is a hard place to win.

"It's a big step for us, let's see what we can do with it, but we



Liverpool's Sadio Mane scores their third goal

have a set a bar for this wonderful club that we really are back on the landscape of top international football.

"We think that is where this club should be, but let's carry on, we have a lot to learn, a lot to improve, but we're back."

Having missed the goalless first leg at Anfield three weeks ago through suspension, Virgil van Dijk's long pass led to Mane's excellent first-half goal.

"His first goal was ridiculous, the calmness with how he's finished it off," Liverpool midfielder James Milner said.

"He's on fire at the minute and let's hope it continues for the rest of the season."

Dutch centre-back Van Dijk then headed Liverpool into a 2-1 lead from a Milner corner on 69 minutes after Joel Matip's own goal had handed Bayern a first-half equaliser.