

Arsenal's Arteta hits out at 'crazy minutes' players are clocking up



Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta gives instructions during a training session (file photo)

AFP | London

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta has bemoaned the fixture scheduling since the Premier League restart, saying yesterday his players have amassed "crazy minutes" on the pitch in recent weeks.

The Gunners host newly crowned Premier League champions Liverpool on Wednesday, three days after falling to defeat to Tottenham in the north London derby.

In the five games that followed their opening game of Project Restart -- a 3-0 defeat at Manchester City -- Arsenal's opponents had longer to prepare, with Arteta keen to stress that point.

"We have only had an advantage in one -- which was against Spurs," he told his pre-match press conference.

"But look at the boys, they keep going, they go full-gas, it doesn't matter and we will do it again."

An FA Cup semi-final against City is next up for Arsenal after the Liverpool clash, with Arteta keen to be able to field his strongest side in both games, despite the demands placed on his players.

"Obviously they've been hit



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and a lot of them have played some crazy minutes up until now and again we're going to have games every two-and-a-half days.

"We will try to put the strongest team out as possible here and as well on Saturday, and to do that we need to know how everyone recovers from the game."

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The Gunners are ninth in the table and need to make up a four-point gap on Sheffield United in seventh or win the FA Cup to qualify for the Europa League.

City deserve an apology, says defiant Guardiola

● Manchester City's two-season ban from European competitions was lifted on Monday but rival managers Jose Mourinho and Jurgen Klopp criticised the ruling

Reuters | London

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said his team deserved an apology, after their two-year UEFA ban from European football was overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) -- a verdict he called "a good day for football".

Guardiola said the club's reputation had been damaged by the furore around allegations that they broke Financial Fair Play (FFP) rules and fired back at comments from rival managers Jose Mourinho and Juergen Klopp.

Mourinho had described the CAS decision to fine City 10 million euros (9.09 million pounds) for non-cooperation with the investigation as "disgraceful".

"Maybe. The thing about the money, maybe. But Jose and all the managers should know that we were damaged. We should be apologised (to). Because, like I said many times, if we did something wrong, we will accept absolutely the decisions by UEFA and CAS because we did something wrong," Guardiola told a news conference yesterday.

"We have the right to defend ourselves when we believe what we have done is correct, is right. Three independent judges said this," the Spaniard added. Liverpool manager Klopp had



Pep Guardiola, Manager of Manchester City celebrates with the Premier League Trophy after winning the title in 2019

described the CAS verdict on Monday as "not a good day for football" but Guardiola disagreed.

"Yesterday was a good day for football because we play with the same rules of FFP as all the clubs in Europe. All of them. (If) we break this FFP, we will be banned," he said.

"We were damaged. The people say that we cheated and lying many, many times. The presumption of innocence was not there and after, when it happened and it was right, of course we are incredibly happy because we can defend what we have done on the pitch."

Guardiola also took aim at Spanish league president Javier Tebas, a long standing critic of City, who had questioned whether CAS was the right court for deciding such matters.

I am incredibly happy for the decision. It shows all the people said about the club wasn't true. People cannot understand how difficult it was for everyone as a club being under suspicion. Now we have proven it at the court, we go again on the pitch

PEP GUARDIOLA

"He is another one, this guy. Senior Tebas must be so jealous for the Premier League, the English football," he said.

"He is incredible legal expert from what I see, so next time

we will ask in which court, which judges we have to go. He has to be a little bit worried or concerned about La Liga, (he should) focus on there.

"We will be in the Champions League next season, Senor Tebas, because what we did it properly," he said.

Guardiola also took aim at a group of nine Premier League clubs who reportedly wrote a letter to CAS to argue against City receiving a stay on their ban.

"Guys accept it, we want to be here and we try. On the pitch we try as much as possible, sometimes win, sometimes lose. They have to understand it," he said.

"When you are not agreeing just knock on the door, for our chairman, our CEOs and talk, don't go from behind and whispering."

Sneijder latest top Dutch footballer considering return

Reuters | Amsterdam

Wesley Sneijder is considering following in the footsteps of his former Netherlands team mate Arjen Robben and returning to football next season.

The 36-year-old Sneijder will start training later this month at amateur team DOS Holland Stichtse Boys in Utrecht, which could be the prelude to joining home town club FC Utrecht.

Sneijder, who won a record 134 caps for his country and played at Ajax Amsterdam, Real Madrid and Inter Milan, is to make a bid to return to fitness after a year out of the game.

Robben, who is also 36, last month announced he was returning a year after retirement to play with boyhood club Groningen, where he has signed a one-season deal.

BRAVE CF partners with TV giants WIN Sports for Latin America expansion coverage

TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation, the fastest-growing MMA organization in the world, has struck a broadcasting deal with WIN Sports, one of the biggest sports networks in Colombia. The goal of the partnership is to expand the Bahraini fight league into Latin America, where BRAVE CF is already seen as one of the giants of the sport-world.

The organization, founded by His Highness Shaikh Khaled bin Hamad Al Khalifa, has constantly invested in Latin America, with four shows in Brazil and two in Colombia. After BRAVE CF 26 beat UFC Abu Dhabi with Khabib Nurmagomedov last year in the Colombian household's ratings, WIN Sports and BRAVE CF made a long-term deal official.

Per the deal, WIN Sports will broadcast BRAVE CF fights every Saturday in their best time,



proving that the Bahraini organization has truly become the only global MMA promotion.

Among the Colombian stars expected to feature are Eduardo Mora and Dumar Roa. The latter shocked the MMA world last November by knocking out former BRAVE CF Lightweight world champion Abdul-Kareem Al-Selwady at BRAVE CF 29, which took place in Bahrain.

"I can't wait for my people in Colombia to witness BRAVE

CF events. They will fall in love with the sport. I want to represent my country at the highest level and that's what BRAVE CF provided me: a chance to shine for the world", explained Roa. Roa's victory has been seen as the beginning of a revolution for MMA in Colombia, with BRAVE CF and its partner Latin Fighter Championship at the head of transforming the sporting scene in yet another region.

Darren Gough suggests England rotate Jofra Archer and Mark Wood

Reuters | London

England should not be overly reliant on express pace in the next two tests against West Indies and must consider alternating Jofra Archer and Mark Wood, former quick Darren Gough has said.

England opted for the express speed of Archer and Wood and the experience of James Anderson in Southampton but lost by four wickets in the series opener.

"I've said from the start -- rotate Archer and Wood," Gough, who played 58 tests between 1994-2003, told Sky Sport Cricket.

"We got a bit carried away, seeing Wood bowl really quickly in South Africa. We've seen Archer do it, but it's very hard to do it every single game."

Gough said England should also bring back Stuart Broad and Chris Woakes for the second test, which begins on Thursday at Manchester's Old



Mark Wood (r) and Jofra Archer look on during England nets (file photo)

Trafford.

"I would rest Wood and Anderson at Old Trafford and bring in Broad and Woakes," Gough said.

"That would be my plan then, with back-to-back test matches, you bring Anderson and Wood back (for the third test)."

Former captain Michael Vaughan said it would be unfair to criticise Archer, who claimed three second-innings wickets in Southampton, for not bowling consistently in excess of 90 miles per hour.