

Liverpool back on top

Two deflected Xherdan Shaqiri strikes handed Liverpool victory over Manchester United

● **Eden Hazard ensures Chelsea stay in touch at top with win at Brighton**

● **Charlie Austin rises highest as Saints sink Arsenal in five-goal thriller**

AFP | London

Liverpool powered back to the top of the Premier League as Xherdan Shaqiri inspired a 3-1 win over bitter rivals Manchester United, while Arsenal's 22-match unbeaten run was shattered by a shock 3-2 defeat at Southampton yesterday.

Jürgen Klopp's side made it six successive league victories thanks to Shaqiri's late double after United's Jesse Lingard had cancelled out Sadio Mane's opener at Anfield.

Shaqiri's superb substitute cameo allowed Liverpool to reopen a one point lead over second placed Manchester City after the champions had knocked the Reds out of first place with their win against Everton on Saturday.

Liverpool's first win in their last six meetings with United ended a frustrating streak against the Old Trafford outfit that dated back to March 2016, while also extending their unbeaten start to the league season to 17 matches.

While that was cause for pre-Christmas revelry on the Kop, more significantly, Liverpool's refusal to be subdued by a United team set up by Jose Mourinho with five defenders was another statement of intent as they chase a first English



Liverpool's Swiss midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri (L) shoots to score their third goal

league title since 1990.

Senegal winger Mane put Liverpool ahead in the 24th minute when he broke away from Ashley Young to meet Fabinho's sublime pass with a nimble piece of chest control before shooting past David De Gea.

United equalised against the run of play in the 33rd minute as Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker made a hash of catching Romelu Lukaku's low cross

and Lingard finished off the rebound.

Alisson's error didn't prove costly as Switzerland midfielder Shaqiri struck within three minutes of coming off the bench, his shot flicking off the hapless Young into the roof of the net in the 73rd minute.

Shaqiri ensured Liverpool would return to the top in the 80th minute with a stinging strike that clipped the foot of United defender Eric Bailly on its way past De Gea.

United are now 19 points behind Liverpool in sixth place as the pressure mounts on Mourinho following another wretched display.

Meanwhile, Unai Emery admitted Arsenal need to fix their leaky defence after Southampton's Charlie Austin punished a howler from Bernd Leno to stun

the Gunners.

Austin settled a thrilling clash at St Mary's when he headed home with just five minutes left after Arsenal goalkeeper Leno misjudged Shane Long's cross.

Southampton had twice taken the lead through Danny Ings, only for Henrikh Mkhitaryan's brace to draw Arsenal level on each occasion. Leno's mistake handed Arsenal their first defeat in 15 league games and brought a stunning halt to their longest unbeaten run in all competitions since 2007.

Emery's fifth-placed team had not lost since a 3-2 defeat at Chelsea in August and the north Londoners' first setback since the close-season leaves them three points behind the fourth-placed Blues, who won 2-1 at Brighton yesterday.

Conceding Arsenal need to

English Premier League

Brighton	1	-	2	Chelsea
Southampton	3	-	2	Arsenal
Liverpool	3	-	1	Manchester United

Scottish Premier League

Hibernian	2	-	0	Celtic
Rangers	1	-	0	Hamilton
Academical				

Italian Serie A

SPAL	0	-	0	Chievo
Fiorentina	3	-	1	Empoli
Frosinone	0	-	2	Sassuolo
Sampdoria	2	-	0	Parma
Cagliari	0	-	0	Napoli

German Bundesliga

RB Leipzig	4	-	1	1. FSV Mainz 05
Eintracht Frankfurt	1	-	0	Bayer 04 Leverkusen

Spanish La Liga

Sevilla	2	-	0	Girona
Espanyol	1	-	3	Real Betis
Huesca	0	-	0	Villarreal

French Ligue 1

Nimes	2	-	3	Lille
Nice	1	-	1	St Etienne

*Scores as of closing

tighten up at the back, Emery said: "We haven't conceded a lot of chances but today they scored three goals. That is a lot so we need to improve with this."

"We need to do some analysis on how we can improve and do better."

Chelsea put a week of negative headlines for the behaviour of their fans behind them on the field thanks to an inspired Eden Hazard at Brighton.

The Belgian provided his

ninth assist of the season for Pedro to open the scoring and then chalked up his ninth goal of the campaign, but first in 13 games for club and country.

Solly March pulled one back with his first goal of the campaign, but Chelsea held on to restore some positivity after Blues fans were involved in alleged racist abuse of Manchester City's Raheem Sterling and anti-semitic chants during a mid-week Europa League tie.

Sevilla pile pressure on Barcelona at La Liga summit

AFP | Madrid

Sevilla reclaimed second place in La Liga yesterday as second-half strikes from Ever Banega and Pablo Sarabia sealed a 2-0 win over Girona which moved them level on points with leaders Barcelona.

Pablo Machin's side are unbeaten in seven league games since a 4-2 loss at Barca.

The hosts had to wait until the 55th minute to break the deadlock, when striker Andre Silva was tripped in the area by Girona defender Juanpe.

Argentinian Banega stepped up to send visiting goalkeeper Gorka Iraizoz the wrong way from the penalty spot.

The points were wrapped up only nine minutes later, as Wissam Ben Yedder cut the ball back for the onrushing Sarabia to slide home his 14th goal of the season in all competitions.

On Saturday, Atletico Madrid had also drawn level on points with Barcelona as An-



Sevilla's French forward Wissam Ben Yedder (R) challenges Girona's Brazilian midfielder Douglas Luiz

toine Griezmann's 80th-minute strike grabbed a 3-2 victory at Real Valladolid, while Real

Madrid sit just two points adrift after edging out Rayo Vallecano 1-0.

RB Leipzig thrash Mainz to strengthen grip on top-four spot

AFP | Berlin

Timo Werner and Yussuf Poulsen both scored twice as RB Leipzig brushed aside Mainz 4-1 yesterday to strengthen their hold on a top-four place in the Bundesliga.

Ralf Rangnick's men went into the game reeling after a surprise elimination from the Europa League group stage in midweek and last weekend's 3-0 loss to Freiburg.

But Leipzig produced a strong performance at the Red Bull Arena to close to two points behind second-placed Borussia Moenchengladbach and Bayern Munich in third, although unbeaten Borussia Dortmund remain nine points clear at the top of the table.

Any disappointment about recent results was quickly put to one side as Danish international Poulsen struck twice inside the opening 20 minutes.

The 24-year-old stretched out a leg to volley home Kevin Kampl's 14th-minute cross, be-



Leipzig's German forward Timo Werner (L) celebrates scoring the third goal with his teammate Leipzig's Danish forward Yussuf Poulsen

fore tapping in from close range after good work by Werner.

Karim Onisiwo's header before half-time gave Mainz hope,

but two fine individual strikes by Werner late on took him to

10 league goals this season and sealed the win in style.