

# Real overturned by Girona

Sergio Ramos sent off as Real Madrid's resurgence is ended by Girona

● **Marcelo and Ramos disaster rocks Real title hopes in the shock defeat**

● **A brilliant second-half performance from Girona saw them come from a goal down to win at the Bernabeu**

● **Real were left nine points adrift of league leaders Barcelona as their seven-game unbeaten run came to an end**

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid threw away their lead and perhaps their hopes of catching Barcelona as Girona came from behind to pull off a shock 2-1 victory at the Santiago Bernabeu yesterday.

Girona had not won in 13 matches and looked on course for a seventh straight defeat when Casemiro headed a dominant Madrid ahead in the first half.

But complacency set in, and Girona took full advantage as Cristhian Stuani scored a penalty and Portu nodded in at the back post, leaving the European champions scrapping even for a point before Sergio Ramos was sent off in the 90th minute.

They failed even to muster that, with defeat here a major act of self-harm for what was beginning to look like a serious resurgence in La Liga's title race.

Barcelona had beaten Real Valladolid by a single goal on Saturday but their stodgy display



Girona's Uruguayan forward Cristhian Stuani (2ndL) scores a penalty

continued a period of uncertainty for the Catalans, while Madrid arrived here on the back of seven wins and a draw at the Camp Nou.

Barca still have to go to the Bernabeu later this month but that Clasico will be a lot less nervy now. Their cushion has been extended to nine points over Real, with Atletico jumping back above them into second, seven points off the top.

"It's a shame," Real coach Santiago Solari said. "We drop points and our rivals won. It is a pity because we were on a great run." Is the league over? "Not at all," he said.

The frustration for Solari will be that his team had this game in the palm of their hands, in control against a Girona side that celebrated at the end as if they had secured survival.

Their first league victory since

November pushes them four points clear of the bottom three.

Solari will also take some of the blame after he fielded a rotated line-up following the Champions League win over Ajax in midweek.

**25<sup>th</sup>**  
red card was earned by Sergio Ramos as he received a second yellow card in stoppage time and was sent off

Gareth Bale and Vinicius Junior both started on the bench, while Luka Modric was suspended. Marcelo came in at left back and was again unconvincing for Girona's second.

Madrid barely broke sweat in the first half, in control but playing within themselves as long spells of possession were only occasionally turned into a clear-cut chance.

The best move was marked by two scoops, the first by Toni Kroos, who lifted the ball over Pere Pons and squared for Lucas Vazquez, who repeated the trick, dinking it between two defenders, only for his finish to be saved by Bono.

It was no surprise in the 25th minute when Casemiro nodded in Kroos' cross after Bono elected to punch rather than catch the initial ball in.

### Comfortable to complacent

Eusebio brought on both Aleix Garcia and Anthony Lozano at half-time, and the impact was almost instant, as Garcia blazed over a rebound after Lozano's

header.

Madrid slipped from comfortable to complacent and shortly after the hour they were punished. Stuani's header spilled out to Douglas Luiz, whose finish was blocked by the hand of Ramos.

Ramos' yellow card might have been red, the defender perhaps only spared by two white shirts behind him. Stuani made no mistake with the penalty.

Girona almost scored again, Portu's shot rattling the outside of the post, and then they did. Casemiro missed a tackle in midfield and Lozano's shot was parried to Portu. Marcelo dangled a leg but failed to stop the header

creeping inside the post.

Vinicius and Bale both came on but Vinicius three times missed the target from good positions, while Bale was whistled at one point after losing possession.

Casemiro wanted a penalty when he felt Pedro Alcala's hand on his shoulder and moments later Ramos was sent off, drawing a second yellow card catching Alcala in the face with an attempted volley.

Even Courtois was allowed up for a late corner and he got his head on it too but the ball flashed wide. The surprised applause quickly turned to groans at full-time.

### FA Cup

Bristol City	0	-	1	Wolverhampton Wanderers
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### English Championship

Blackburn Rovers	0	-	1	Middlesbrough
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### Italian Serie A

SPAL	1	-	4	Fiorentina
Empoli	3	-	0	Sassuolo
Genoa	2	-	1	Lazio
Udinese	1	-	0	Chievo

### German Bundesliga

Eintracht Frankfurt	1	-	1	Borussia Monchengladbach
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### Spanish La Liga

Real Madrid	1	-	2	Girona
Valencia CF	0	-	0	Espanyol

### French Ligue 1

Bordeaux	2	-	1	Toulouse
Caen	0	-	0	Strasbourg
Lille	0	-	0	Montpellier
Reims	1	-	0	Rennes

\*Scores as of closing

## VAR helps Fiorentina beat SPAL amid controversy



Mattia Valoti of SPAL scores his team's second goal which was disallowed by the referee

AFP | Milan

Fiorentina were saved by VAR yesterday amid chaotic scenes after the referee disallowed SPAL a goal and instead awarded a penalty which the Tuscans converted before winning 4-1.

Mattia Valoti's deflected strike after 75 minutes had been greeted with delight by the home crowd as it had given relegation-threatened SPAL a 2-1 advantage after 75 minutes in Ferrara.

But the referee immediately ordered a video review which confirmed Felipe had fouled Federico Chiesa in the build-up to the goal which he disallowed and instead awarded Fiorentina a penalty.

Jordan Veretout stepped up and converted from the spot with the decision proving to be a killer blow for SPAL who instead of being 2-1 up were 2-1 down.

The hosts scrambled to get back into the game but conceded a goal with Giovanni

Someone adding a third minutes later, and Brazilian Gerson a fourth two minutes from time.

SPAL had taken the lead through Andrea Petagna after 36 minutes before Edimilson Fernandes grabbed the equaliser just before the break.

Fiorentina move up to eighth -- seven points off the Champions League places -- after their eighth win this season.

SPAL sit three points above the relegation zone after their 12th defeat.

## Cavaleiro sees Wolves into FA Cup quarters

AFP | London

Ivan Cavaleiro's goal was enough to give Wolverhampton Wanderers a 1-0 win away to Bristol City yesterday that saw the Premier League club end their 16-year wait for an appearance in the quarter-finals of the FA Cup.

Second-tier Bristol City had their chances but midfielder Cavaleiro's 28th-minute finish at Ashton Gate ended their 15-match undefeated run and nine-match winning streak.

Victory kept alive Wolves' bid to win the FA Cup for the fifth time, with the Midlands club last having lifted the knockout trophy back in 1960.

Cavaleiro was one of three changes made by Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo to the side that drew 1-1 with Newcastle, along with goalkeeper John Ruddy and Romain Saiss.

Nuno's decision-making was rewarded at both ends of the pitch, with Cavaleiro scoring after he was played in by the influential Matt Doherty, who hit the post three minutes later.

Meanwhile 32-year-old keeper Ruddy tipped Bailey Wright's shot over the bar after 69 minutes and then denied Marlon Pack from the ensuing corner.

Ruddy made an even better save to repel a close-range flick from Matt Taylor and even had to save a shot from opposite



**Of course the goal was important and I'm very happy to score but the most important thing is the team move on to the next round**

IVAN CAVALEIRO

number Frank Fielding after the City goalkeeper came up for a corner in stoppage time.

Wolves now join top-flight rivals Manchester City, Brighton and Watford in the last eight, with Cup-holders Chelsea playing Manchester United shortly before Monday's draw in a repeat of last season's final.

"Of course the goal was important and I'm very happy to score but the most important thing is the team move on to the next round," Cavaleiro told BT Sport.

"It was a tough game, very hard game, they have great players, very good players and it was a great win for us."

Nuno added: "(I'm) very happy for the boys. It's a tough team. It's hard to defend when they put so many people in the box and you just hope for the best sometimes."



Matt Doherty of Wolverhampton Wanderers evades Jay Dasilva of Bristol City