

Liverpool snatch derby win

Last-gasp goal secures crucial victory as top-five race intensifies

● Van Dijk scores late winner

● Liverpool beat Everton 2-1

● Salah equals derby goal record

● Villa win dramatic 4-3 clash

● Forest boost survival hopes

AFP | London

Virgil van Dijk scored a last-gasp winner against Everton yesterday as Liverpool strengthened their push for a Champions League spot next season before the Premier League summit meeting between Manchester City and Arsenal.

On a pivotal day in the English top division, fourth-placed Aston Villa squandered a two-goal lead against Sunderland but scored in stoppage time to win 4-3.

At the other end of the table, Morgan Gibbs-White netted a hat-trick as struggling Nottingham Forest came from behind against Burnley to win 4-1 and heap the pressure on troubled Tottenham.

Just a few weeks ago the battle for the top five, which guarantees entry into the Champions



6 points now separate Liverpool from sixth-placed Chelsea after the victory

League, looked as though it might be tight.

But fifth-placed Liverpool's 2-1 victory in their first match at Everton's new Hill Dickinson Stadium takes them seven points clear of stumbling Chelsea, in sixth spot.

Captain Van Dijk was the hero for Arne Slot's Liverpool, heading Dominik Szoboszlai's corner past a helpless Jordan Pickford in the 100th minute.

"Today was massive in the situation that we are, in hunt for the Champions League spots," Van Dijk told Sky Sports.

"That is definitely not Liverpool-worthy, in my opinion, but it is the reality and it was important we got the win. I'm glad we did.

"We've got five more games left (some) against teams that are also fighting for the Champions League spots. Every game is a big one."

Mohamed Salah had opened the scoring for last season's champions, slotting home in the first half following a superbly weighted pass from Cody Gakpo.



Liverpool's Dutch defender #04 Virgil van Dijk (3R) scores their late second goal

The goal came just two minutes after Iliman Ndiaye's effort at the other end was cancelled by VAR, with Jake O'Brien ruled offside.

Salah, departing at the end of the season, has equalled Steven Gerrard's nine goals to become the joint top-scoring player in the Premier League fixture between the two Merseyside teams.

The goal took the wind out of the sails of David Moyes' team but they were level through Beto within 10 minutes of the restart.

Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall, on the left of Everton's attack, fired across goal for Beto to attack and he poked home ahead of an on-rushing Giorgi Mamardashvili, who was immediately stretched off, replaced by Freddie Woodman.

The game looked destined to end as a draw but the officials signalled 11 added minutes but Van Dijk had the last laugh.

Villa thriller

Ollie Watkins scored twice for Villa, who moved level on 58

points with third-placed Manchester United, three clear of Liverpool.

England forward Watkins' early opener was cancelled out by Sunderland's Chris Rigg but Watkins restored Villa's lead in the 36th minute with his second headed goal of the game.

Morgan Rogers gave Villa breathing space with a third shortly after the restart but Unai Emery's team nearly threw it away as first Trai Hume and then Wilson Isidor scored within a minute for Sunderland.



Salah equalled Steven Gerrard's record of nine Merseyside derby goals in the Premier League

But there was still time for Tammy Abraham to grab a dramatic late winner.

"What a position we are in, semi-final of European competition (Europa League) and pole position to qualify for top five," said captain John McGinn.

"We can go and achieve what not many Aston Villa players have done for a long time. We're keen to do that and we're driven, five big games left to try and get ourselves over the line."

Nottingham Forest, involved in a relegation scrap with West Ham and Tottenham, fell behind against Burnley but Gibbs-White put on a second-half masterclass to seal an ultimately comfortable win.

Forest are five points clear of 18th-placed Spurs, with Wolves and Burnley almost certainly doomed.

Tottenham could only manage a 2-2 draw at home to Brighton on Saturday to move a point behind West Ham, who travel to face Crystal Palace on Monday.

Evenepoel outsprints Skjelmose to win Amstel Gold Race

AFP | Valkenburg

Remco Evenepoel made up for his disappointment a year ago by outsprinting reigning champion Mattias Skjelmose to win the Amstel Gold one-day classic yesterday.

A year after Skjelmose had outwitted Olympic champion Evenepoel and world champion Tadej Pogacar to win a three-man sprint, the Belgian gained his revenge for his first major one-day victory in almost two years.

Evenepoel had not tasted victory in a major one-day race since claiming the Olympic crown in Paris in August 2024, finishing second to Pogacar at the world championships, European championships, and Tour of Lombardy last year, while he finished third at Amstel.

He was part of a small group



Remco Evenepoel (R), Romain Gregoire (C) and Mattias Skjelmose (L) in action

that went clear of the peloton when Frenchman Romain Gregoire launched an attack with around 40km left.

American Matteo Jorgenson and Frenchman Kevin Vauquelin crashed, leaving Evenepoel, Skjelmose and Gregoire out

front on their own.

They caught and passed the last remnant of the day's breakaway, Italian Marco Frigo, before an attack by Evenepoel dropped Gregoire.

The Olympic champion and Skjelmose then collaborated

to the finish, with Evenepoel launching his dash for the line first and easily holding off the Dane for his 74th professional victory.

It was a timely return to winning ways with tougher tests ahead, including next weekend when Pogacar and teenage French sensation Paul Seixas will be on the start-line for the year's fourth Monument race, Liege-Bastogne-Liege.

After beginning the season in fine form with six victories, Evenepoel had struggled in two stage races, finishing 10th at the UAE Tour and then fifth at the Tour of Catalonia.

However, he had taken an impressive third place behind Pogacar and Mathieu van der Poel on his debut at the Tour of Flanders two weeks ago.

Frenchman Benoit Cosnefroy pipped compatriot Gregoire in the sprint for third place.

Driver killed in seven-car accident during Verstappen race at Nuerburgring

AFP | Nuremberg

Veteran endurance driver Juha Miettinen was killed in a seven-car pile-up during a race at Germany's Nuerburgring on Saturday.

The race, which also featured

four-time Formula One world champion Max Verstappen, was halted after the accident with organisers suspending the event.

It was part of the Nuerburgring Langstrecken Series (NLS) qualifiers for a 24-hour race to

be held in May, in which Verstappen is set to take part.

AFP subsidiary SID reported that the Dutchman was not on the course at the time of the accident but is due to drive on yesterday.

The accident took place just

25 minutes into the four-hour event before an incline at the Klostertal stage of the track.

Miettinen, 66, died in the course medical centre, while six other drivers were hospitalised with non-life-threatening injuries.

Rinku blitz leads Kolkata to first win of IPL season



Rinku Singh plays a shot

AFP | Kolkata

Rinku Singh hit an unbeaten 53 to lead Kolkata Knight Riders to their first win of the IPL season as they beat Rajasthan Royals by four wickets in a low-scoring contest yesterday.

Rajasthan posted 155-9 as their batting faltered after 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi top-scored with 46 at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

Kolkata, who had five defeats and one point from a rained-off game coming into the match, slipped to 5-2 and 85-6 before the left-handed Rinku steered the team home with two balls to spare.

Rinku smacked five fours and two sixes in his 34-ball knock and put on an unbeaten 76-run stand with number eight Anukul Roy, who made

29, to steer the team home.

The left-handed Roy kept calm with his senior partner as he hit a six off Jofra Archer in the 19th over and Kolkata needed nine from the final six balls.

Rinku, who was dropped on eight by Nandre Burger, hit two fours and a winning six as he raised his fifty to bring cheer to the dugout and home crowd. England pace bowler Archer had Tim Seifert bowled for a duck on the first ball of the chase and South Africa's Burger dismissed skipper Ajinkya Rahane for nought to make it two down.

Kolkata's big-buy Cameron Green looked fluent in his 27 off 13 balls but fell stumped off Ravi Bishnoi with wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel making a wide collection and a back flip onto the stumps.