

Liverpool suffer Salah blow in chase for Champions League

Slot confirms Salah unavailable for Saturday as Reds seek top-five finish in Premier League

● Mohamed Salah out with muscle injury

● Will miss Liverpool's trip to Brighton

● No timeframe given for recovery

AFP | London

Mohamed Salah will miss Liverpool's trip to Brighton on Saturday with a muscle injury -- a major blow for manager Arne Slot as he hunts a Champions League place next season.

The Egypt forward was forced off at Anfield on Wednesday after scoring in Liverpool's 4-0 victory against Galatasaray, which sealed their place in the quarter-finals of this year's Champions League.

In-form Salah, 33, has scored in three of his past four starts after an uncharacteristic lean spell.

"It's unusual," Slot said at his pre-match press conference yesterday. "As a result of that I think you can expect the outcome. So, (he's) not available for tomorrow."

Slot gave no timeframe for Sa-



Liverpool's Egyptian forward #11 Mohamed Salah (C) is greeted by Liverpool's coach Arne Slot (L) after being substituted

lah's recovery.

"The good thing for Liverpool and for us is that we go to an international break," he said. "The bad thing for Egypt is that he can't go there.

"We are hoping also with what Mo has shown in the past that he can recover faster than other players might in similar situations because he takes such good care of his body. History has shown that he can be earlier back than some others.

"But it's only two weeks until we go again so let's hope in that period of time he can be back."

Salah, who is rarely absent



Despite his reputation for durability, Salah's rare injury comes just as he rediscovered form, scoring in three of his last four matches after a mid-season slump

through injury, is firmly back in the fold at Anfield after a dramatic fallout with Slot earlier in the season, when he was dropped for several games.

Despite his recent good form, the Egypt forward has scored just five Premier League goals this season, compared with 29 in Liverpool's title-winning campaign in 2024/25.

Slot, whose team dropped valuable points in a 1-1 draw against Tottenham last week, admitted his side were not sharp enough in attack.

"We're struggling to score goals," said the Dutchman. "Not that we don't score them, but

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ARNE SLOT

with all the chances we create, it's unbelievable that we don't score, especially looking at the quality we have up front and throughout the whole team."

Liverpool are fifth in the Premier League, two points behind fourth-placed Aston Villa, with the top five teams almost certain to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Slot's men face Manchester City in the FA Cup quarter-finals on April 4 and will meet defending champions Paris Saint-Germain in the last eight of the Champions League.

Swiatek stunned at Miami Open by 50th-ranked Linette



Iga Swiatek of Poland returns a shot against Magda Linette of Poland

AFP | Miami

Iga Swiatek crashed out of the Miami Open second round Thursday as 50th-ranked fellow Pole Magda Linette fought back for a 1-6, 7-5, 6-3 victory over the six-time Grand Slam champion.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Swiatek, who won the Miami Open in 2022, suffered her first opening loss at a tournament since the 2021 WTA Finals.

It's just the latest disappointment for Swiatek, who was eliminated in the quarter-finals at the Australian Open and in the WTA 1000 events in Doha and Indian Wells.

Although she was seeded second in the elite combined ATP and WTA hardcourt tournament in Miami, Swiatek dropped this week to third in the world as Indian Wells finalist Elena Rybakina moved up behind top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka.

Swiatek's compatriot Linette had to dig deep after Swiatek -- who won their last encounter 6-1, 6-1 -- raced through the opening set in 33 minutes.

But she stuck to her guns and Swiatek double-faulted to give Linette two break points in the 12th game of the second set, Linette forcing a third set with a return winner.

Kane credits Kompany's Bayern 'evolution' as treble beckons

AFP | Munich

Harry Kane praised coach Vincent Kompany's role in Bayern Munich's evolution this campaign as a history-making season beckons for the German giants.

Nine points clear of Borussia Dortmund atop the table, defending champions Bayern host Union Berlin on Saturday heading towards another Bundesliga title.

With a German Cup semi-final against Leverkusen and Champions League quarter-finals versus Real Madrid in April, Bayern could win a third treble -- something no other European men's team has achieved.

Speaking after Bayern once thumped Atalanta for a second time on Wednesday, the England captain pointed out how early the former Manchester City captain is in his development, despite winning the Bundesliga title last season.

"In the way we play, we've learned and evolved over the last 12 months. I think a lot of people forgot it was Kompany's first year last year," Kane told reporters at the Allianz Arena



Bayern Munich's English forward #09 Harry Kane celebrates scoring (file photo)

late on Wednesday.

"We were still learning the way he wanted to play, we were still learning different ideas from him. I think we've really honed in on his ideas now, and for sure we're a better team this

year than we were last year."

Long derided for a lack of silverware, Kane said he was relishing the pressure and the spotlight big stage beckoned.

"Now it's about proving it on the big stage. We've had a fan-

tastic campaign in all competitions so far, but as we know and as we spoke about before, April and May is when it really counts.

"So we have to be at our highest level in those moments."

With 93 goals in 26 league games, Bayern are just eight short of the all-time single Bundesliga season record of 101, which they set in 1971-72.

Kane has 30 goals and is 12 short of breaking Robert Lewandowski's single-season record, set in 2020-21.

Michael Olise is also on track for a spot in the record books. The one-time Crystal Palace winger has 17 assists this campaign -- five short of beating Thomas Mueller's all-time record.

With just two losses in 41 games in all competitions this campaign, Bayern have been cruising but the Bavarian giants have not had it all their own way.

Against Union Berlin this Saturday, Bayern will be without the injured Musiala, Neuer and Davies along with Nicolas Jackson, Jonathan Tah and Luis Diaz, all of whom are suspended.