

# History haunts Arsenal as Man City take control of title race

Arteta's side pay price for missed chances

● Title race momentum shifts to City

● Pressure mounts on Arteta

● Gunners' winless April run continues

AFP | London

The spectre of a charging Manchester City haunts Arsenal once more after a 2-1 defeat at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday put a huge dent in the Gunners' hopes of a first Premier League title in 22 years.

Mikel Arteta's men remain on top of the table for now but could be knocked off their perch for the first time in 2026 when City, with a game in hand, visit doomed Burnley on Wednesday.

Arsenal had lost just three times in 49 games this season before last month's League Cup defeat to City.

But they have won just one of their past six games, including four consecutive defeats in domestic competitions, as they contemplate another trophyless season.

It is a case of history repeating itself for long-suffering Arsenal fans, who have seen their side finish second in the Premier League for the past three seasons.

In both the 2022/23 and

2023/24 campaigns, Pep Guardiola's relentless team reeled in Arteta's side while last season the Gunners finished behind a resurgent Liverpool.

Once again City have hit their stride when it matters most, just as Arsenal have run out of steam.

Guardiola has now won 31 of his 39 Premier League games in April as he eyes a seventh title during his decade in Manchester.

By contrast, Arteta has overseen just 11 victories in 27 April league fixtures during his six-and-a-half years in charge.

Arteta was keen to stress that fortune had not favoured his side in a game of fine margins at the Etihad.

While Arsenal clearly showed signs of nerves in losing at home to Bournemouth last weekend, they took the game to City and were undeterred by Rayan Cherki's brilliant opener.

Kai Havertz charged down Gianluigi Donnarumma's attempted clearance to level almost immediately and Arsenal

## 22

years have passed since Arsenal last won the Premier League title, with the Gunners now facing another season of frustration



Players tussle after Manchester City's Norwegian striker #09 Erling Haaland and Arsenal's Brazilian defender #06 Gabriel Magalhaes went head to head

had plenty of other chances.

Eberechi Eze's shot somehow came off the post and along the line rather than into the net when the score was 1-1 and Gabriel Magalhaes's deflected header also came off the post in a frantic finale.

But Arsenal have only themselves to blame for repeated failings that have not been addressed.

Twice Havertz missed huge chances in the second half -- the German international failed to beat Donnarumma when one-

on-one before heading over when unmarked deep into stoppage time.

Arteta fell to his knees in the technical area in despair. After an injury-disrupted 18 months, Havertz was thrust into action for the full match as Arteta left Viktor Gyokeres on the bench until the final minutes.

The Swede was the man signed to solve Arsenal's need for a prolific number nine in last summer's transfer window.

Gyokeres is the club's top scorer with 18 goals in all competi-

tions, but he has rarely looked as if he is the answer against top-quality opposition.

### Ruthless City

Arteta admitted that City were sharper in attack.

"We proved that we are there, but the reality is that in the two boxes there was a difference," said Arteta. "That's what we think is the difference between the two sides, the finishing in the boxes."

"There is an element of luck, there is an element of timing,



of execution. There are a lot of things that have to be your way. "At the end, winning or not winning is going to come down to this moment. There are certain individual moments that you need in order to achieve what we want."

For Guardiola, Erling Haaland proved the value of a world-class striker.

The Norwegian had been well-marshalled in a bruising battle with Gabriel, but stole ahead of his marker to slot home the winning goal and his 47th for club and country this season.

"You can see the difference today on the field and those top players made a difference today," former Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira told Sky Sports.

"They will feel the pressure more now. I always question the mental strength of the team and I will question it more now regarding the result today."

## Arsenal still believe in title hopes despite City loss, says Odegaard

AFP | London

Martin Odegaard said he still believes Arsenal can win a first Premier League title since 2004 despite their devastating defeat.

Arsenal captain said the game against Manchester City was decided on small margins.

"We played a good game, I thought we pressed them really well, we had some really

good moments there on the high press," the midfielder told Sky Sports.

"And then, especially the second half, we looked a lot more dangerous, we had a few big, big moments there in front of goal.

"Small margins to decide a game like this, and we weren't sharp enough in front of the goals. That's why we go home with nothing, so I'm disappointed."

## Liverpool boost top-five bid, Spurs in peril

AFP | London

Liverpool are closing in on a top-five finish and a place in next season's Champions League after a disappointing title defence, while Tottenham's relegation fears continue to deepen as the season nears its conclusion.

Here are some key talking points from the Premier League weekend:

### Old guard ease Liverpool's pain

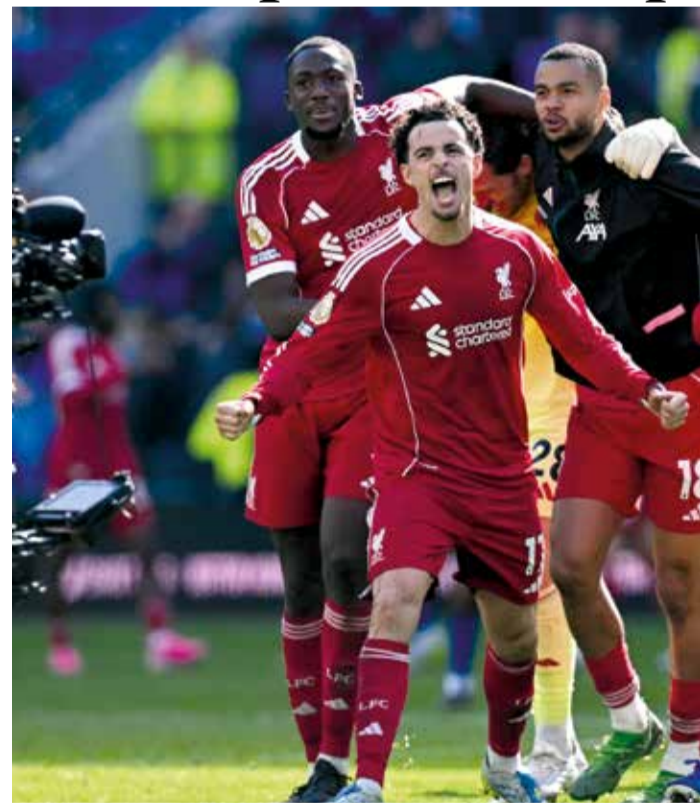
Everton started the Merseyside derby full of belief, but Virgil van Dijk's 100th-minute winner moved Liverpool a step closer to securing Champions League qualification.

Less than a year after winning the Premier League, Arne Slot is under pressure following a difficult second season at Anfield.

Heavy defeats in cup competitions have intensified scrutiny on the Dutchman.

However, Liverpool now look set to finish in the top five, sitting seven points clear of sixth-placed Chelsea with five matches remaining.

The inconsistent form of Mohamed Salah and Van Dijk has contributed to Liverpool's struggles this season, but both



Liverpool's English midfielder #17 Curtis Jones (C) and teammates celebrate on the pitch

delivered in the derby at Everton's new Hill Dickinson Stadium.

Salah opened the scoring before Van Dijk's late header effectively ended Everton's hopes of Champions League qualification.

### Tottenham's woes

Roberto De Zerbi has urged his struggling Tottenham side to keep believing as they battle to avoid relegation.

However, the club's position looks increasingly dire, with




wins proving elusive while their rivals continue to collect points.

Spurs conceded a stoppage-time equaliser in a 2-2 draw against Brighton, marking De Zerbi's first home game in charge.

If West Ham defeat Crystal Palace, Tottenham could find themselves four points adrift of safety with only five matches left.

Nottingham Forest's 4-1 win over Burnley lifted them five points clear of the drop zone, while Leeds have opened up an eight-point cushion.

Tottenham's upcoming clash against bottom club Wolves is now a must-win if they are to keep their survival hopes alive.



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