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# Man United held by Wolves

Paul Pogba missed a second-half penalty for United, who were denied victory by a spectacular equaliser from Ruben Neves

● **United miss the chance to go to the top of the Premier League table despite first-half brilliance**

AFP | Wolverhampton

Manchester United were forced to settle for a 1-1 draw against Wolves after Paul Pogba's penalty was saved by Rui Patricio at Molineux on Monday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side took the lead through Anthony Martial's second Premier League goal of the season in the first half.

Ruben Neves hit a brilliant equaliser for Wolves after the interval before France star Pogba was denied by Patricio.

It was a curious decision for Pogba to take the spot-kick as Marcus Rashford had scored a penalty in last weekend's 4-0 victory over Chelsea and also memorably netted the Champions League last-16 winner from the spot against Paris Saint Germain last term.

Pogba has now missed four Premier League penalties since the start of last season.

United would have gone top of the table with a win, but instead they were left to reflect on an



Wolves' Rui Patricio saves Paul Pogba's penalty

inconsistent performance that underlined why Solskjaer still has a lot of work to do to turn his team into title contenders.

While there were moments of promise in attack and defence, United didn't take their chances and crumbled too easily when they came under pressure in their second game of the season.

At an average of 24 years and 173 days, Solskjaer had picked United's youngest Premier League starting line-up since the final day of the 2016-17 campaign.

Daniel James made his maiden start for United after the close-season signing from Swansea scored his first goal as a substitute against Chelsea.

There was no place in the matchday squad for Chile forward Alexis Sanchez, who has been linked with Inter Milan.

Solskjaer has described James as United's 'x-factor', but the 21-year-old didn't win any friends when he was booked for diving in a failed attempt to win a free-kick from referee Jon Moss.

United threatened for the first time when another of their young guns Rashford spun past Ryan Bennett on the left side of the Wolves area and crossed towards Martial, who did not make enough contact as the ball flashed past him.

It was a warning Wolves failed to heed as United took the lead with an incisive raid in the 27th minute.

## Revitalised Wolves

Breaking inside from left, Luke Shaw found Jesse Lingard who



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moved the ball onto Rashford.

Rashford slipped a perfectly-weighted pass to Martial in the Wolves area and the French forward blasted a superb strike into the roof of the net without breaking stride.

Solskjaer had called for Martial to be more clinical and, his message received loud and clear, the Norwegian clapped approvingly on the touchline.

Martial's goal took him to 50 for United in all competitions since his move from Monaco in 2015.

Martial should have doubled United's lead on the stroke of half-time when he pounced on

Bennett's misplaced pass and eased past Willy Boly, only to tread on the ball when he seemed certain to score.

Well marshalled by Harry Maguire, United denied Wolves a single shot on target in the first half.

But Wolves were revitalised after the interval by the introduction of the speedy Adama Traore.

Suddenly, Maguire and company did not look so solid and Raul Jimenez glanced a free-kick against the far post with United keeper David De Gea rooted.

Wolves' pressure paid off in the 55th minute when a short corner was worked to Neves on the edge of the area and the Portugal midfielder curled a sublime strike into the top corner.

Neves's eye-catching effort survived a VAR review for offside in the build-up and he celebrated his 10th goal from outside the area since joining Wolves.

United had a golden chance to reclaim the lead when Martial found Pogba in the Wolves area and the France midfielder was clipped by Conor Coady.

Pogba and Rashford appeared to discuss who should take the spot-kick.

Whoever made the final call, it proved a bad move as Pogba's powerful drive was superbly pushed away by Patricio.

## Dembele adds to Barcelona's injury woes

AFP | Barcelona

Ousmane Dembele



Ousmane Dembele, Barcelona's French international striker, will miss five weeks after suffering a hamstring injury, the club said on Monday.

The club said in a statement that tests showed a "fibrillary lesion in the left thigh femoral biceps."

If Dembele is out for that long, he could miss five matches in La Liga as well as France's Euro 2020 qualifiers against Albania on September 7 and Andorra on September 20. He suffered a similar problem in May at the end of an injury-ravaged first season in Barcelona.

He is the latest casualty in a depleted Barcelona strike force. Lionel Messi missed the Liga opener in Bilbao on Friday, which Barcelona lost 1-0, with a calf problem.

Uruguayan star Luis Suarez limped off after 37 minutes in Bilbao, also with a calf problem, and is expected to be absent for a month.

Barcelona have loaned attacking midfielder Philippe Coutinho to Bayern Munich but are reportedly in negotiations to buy Neymar back from Paris Saint-Germain.

## Stephens splits with coach Groeneveld

Reuters | New York

American Sloane Stephens has parted ways with her coach Sven Groeneveld less than a week before the US Open gets underway, the former champion has said.

Stephens, who only teamed up with Dutchman Groeneveld in May, has not announced a replacement ahead of the year's final Grand Slam, which begins on Monday.

"After much thought, Sven Groeneveld and I have decided



Sloane Stephens serves against Yulia Putintseva during (file photo)

to go our separate ways," 2017 champion Stephens said in a tweet.

"Change is never easy, but I'm so appreciative of our time together. Onward!"

Groeneveld, who has previously coached former world number ones Ana Ivanovic and Maria Sharapova, thanked Stephens for their time together.

"I wish you a strong @usopen, you have all it takes, I believe in you!" he wrote on Twitter.

## Chelsea's Zouma recalls 'long journey' back to starting lineup

Reuters | London

Chelsea defender Kurt Zouma says his return to the club's starting lineup is the culmination of a three-year struggle when he was seriously injured and then sent out on loan to two Premier League clubs.

Zouma, who suffered a knee injury in 2016 that sidelined him for nine months, was loaned to Stoke City and Everton in the last two seasons before new Chelsea manager Frank Lampard made him a part of his first team plans.

"It has been a very, very long journey," Zouma told reporters. "I don't want to talk about that now, because that is the past

but I fought very hard.

"People don't know, people don't see but I was in the shadow, working hard to get back because I had a very bad injury. I was off for one year (away from the first team) but people forget that.

"But I always believed in myself. My family was always there behind me and now I'm back here. I'm very happy to play here, I just want to keep going."

Zouma has started the club's first three games of the season and although he was below-par in a 4-0 loss in the opener at Manchester United, Lampard has shown faith in the 24-year-old Frenchman as the London side looks for its first win.

"That's what I wanted," Zouma added.

"I'm in a big club and everyone wants to play. The competition is very hard and there are a lot of talented players, so when you train you have to do it right.

"There are players who came back, like me, and other players, the younger guys who came in. Now we are starting to understand each other. We just need to be more clinical and get the wins."



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KURT ZOUMA



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