

SPORTS

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Ex-Spurs, United forward Dimitar Berbatov retires

AFP | Paris

Dimitar Berbatov, Bulgaria's joint all-time leading international scorer, said that he was retiring as a player after more than a year without a club.

"Although when I think about it, it's never The End, because I will stay in the game in one way or another, the time has come to say that after almost 20 years playing football I am stopping with my professional football career!" he wrote in a long Instagram post.

Berbatov, a languid but elegant, imaginative and effective striker, made his debut for CSKA Sofia, where his father Ivan also played.

He moved to Bayer Leverkusen before joining Tottenham who sold him to Manchester United for £30.7 million (38.1 million euros at the time) two seasons later.

He spent four seasons at Old Trafford, winning two Premier League titles and sharing the league's Golden Boot with Carlos Tevez in 2010-11. He spent two seasons each with Fulham and Monaco, before finishing with less successful stints at PAOK in Greece and the Kerala Blasters in India.

He played 77 times for Bulgaria, scoring 48 goals, which tied him for most with Hristo Bonev, who played 96 internationals between 1967 and 1979.

Greenwood saves United

Mason Greenwood's first Manchester United goal earns win over Astana



Manchester United's striker Mason Greenwood shoots to score

AFP | Manchester

Teenager Mason Greenwood rescued a much-changed Manchester United from an embarrassing start to their Europa League campaign with the only goal to beat Kazakh champions Astana 1-0 at Old Trafford on Thursday.

At just 17, Greenwood became the youngest goalscorer for United in European competition with a composed finish under Nenad Eric 17 minutes

from time.

"We always know that in and around the box he is one of the best finishers we have got," said United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer on Greenwood's composure.

Victory justified Solskjaer's decision to make nine changes from Saturday's Premier League win over Leicester with a host of youngsters given their chance to impress.

Greenwood was joined in the starting line-up by Angel

Gomes, Axel Tuanzebe and Tahith Chong.

"Today was a great opportunity for them," added Solskjaer.

"We made it hard for ourselves. Games like these, you want to make sure you win the game in the first 20 minutes and you can enjoy it.

"You could see some of our lads needed games but it's pleasing we got the three points."

The visitors had travelled nearly 6,000 kilometres to the Theatre of Dreams and could



At just 17, Greenwood became the youngest goalscorer for United in European competition

have held out for a famous point thanks to Eric's heroics in goal.

Brazilian midfielder Fred saw an early effort come back off the bar as United started strongly and Eric made two brilliant saves to deny Marcus Rashford.

Rashford made his name in similar circumstances during an injury crisis for Louis van Gaal in the Europa League in 2016 with a double against Danish club Midtjylland.

And Solskjaer is hoping United's failure to qualify for the Champions League can at least come to some good with the Norwegian keen to promote youngsters in Europe's second tier competition this season.

Solskjaer has been glowing in his praise of Greenwood's poise in front of goal and he repaid his manager's faith by twisting and turning inside the area before slotting in at the near post to end Astana's resistance.

Hudson-Odoi agrees new five-year deal at Chelsea

AFP | London

Chelsea winger Callum Hudson-Odoi quashed speculation over his future by signing a new five-year deal with the Premier League side on Thursday.

The 18-year-old was a target for Bayern Munich with his previous contract set to expire at the end of this season.

Hudson-Odoi had reportedly been reluctant to commit his future to Chelsea due to a lack of opportunities for young players over recent years.

However, all that has changed at the start of this season under Frank Lampard with Fikayo Tomori, Mason Mount and Tammy Abraham all regularly given their chance to shine.

"It's an amazing feeling," said Hudson-Odoi.

"It's been a long wait but it's done now and I'm really happy about that.

"I've been a Chelsea player since I was eight and this is the right club for me to be at. I want to lift as many trophies as possible, win as many

games as possible and contribute to as many goals as I can as well."



Callum Hudson-Odoi

Lennon energised by Celtic display in Europa League opener



Ryan Christie scores from the penalty spot to give Celtic a 1-1 draw at Rennes

AFP | Rennes, France

The Europa League group stage might be a turn-off for some, but for Celtic it is a valuable platform on which to measure themselves and Neil Lennon's side can take plenty of positives from a 1-1 draw away to French Cup winners Rennes on Thursday.

The Glasgow giants again missed out on a place in the Champions League group stage this season but their point in Brittany, secured thanks to a Ryan Christie second-half penalty, is an ideal start in Group E, which also features Lazio and CFR Cluj.

Celtic had to come from behind after conceding to M'Baye Niang's 38th-minute spot-kick for the home side, and they ended the game with 10 men as substitute Vakoun Issouf Bayo was sent off in injury time.

A draw at Roazhon Park is better than Paris Saint-Germain managed as they went down 2-1 here last month, while Arsenal were beaten on this ground last season.

It was a result to be proud of for Celtic's boisterous, sunburnt supporters who brought the city to a standstill on a mass march to the stadium earlier in the day.

Arsenal run riot at Frankfurt

Bukayo Saka inspires Arsenal to thrilling win at Eintracht Frankfurt

AFP | Frankfurt am Main

Arsenal youngsters Joe Willock and Bukayo Saka claimed goals as a rotated Gunners side romped to a 3-0 win at 10-man Eintracht Frankfurt on Thursday in the Europa League.

Willock, 20, one of seven changes by Arsenal manager Unai Emery to the team which started Sunday's 2-2 draw at Watford, gave the Gunners a first-half lead after a deflection off a Frankfurt player.

Eighteen-year-old Saka and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang grabbed late goals as Frankfurt were reduced to 10 men for the final 11 minutes when midfielder Dominik Kohr was shown a second yellow card for fouling Saka.

"Everybody can be happy and continuing in this competition is important, so it was good to get a good win, especially away from home," said Emery.

The Arsenal boss singled out Saka after the teenager showed confidence above his years by scoring and then setting up Aubameyang late on.

"We wanted to give the young players a chance and they showed the confidence to take their chances," said Emery.



Bukayo Saka curls home Arsenal's second goal

"He (Saka) showed his confidence with his finishing, he looked good and physically strong," added Emery, who praised his side's defending after shutting out Frankfurt despite facing 24 shots at goal.

Last season's Europa League finalists rebounded from throwing away a two-goal lead at Watford, with playmaker Mesut Ozil left out for the trip to Germany.

Club record signing Nicolas Pepe and midfielder Dani Ceballos made second-half appearances off the bench.

Aubameyang started up front flanked by teenager wingers Emile Smith Rowe, 19, and Saka. It took the Gunners time to

find their feet and the first 15 minutes were strewn with errors from both teams.

Frankfurt, beaten on penalties by eventual champions Chelsea in last season's semi-finals, fielded an entirely new forward line after selling strikers Luka Jovic to Real Madrid and Sebastian Haller to West Ham.

But the hosts had the best of the early chances, Jovic's replacement Filip Kostic twice going close with Dutch striker Bas Dost also firing over.

"We did well in the first half, we dominated, the only thing missing was a goal," said Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp. "We kept our heads up af-

"We wanted to give the young players a chance and they showed the confidence to take their chances. He (Saka) showed his confidence with his finishing, he looked good and physically strong"

UNAI EMERY

ter going down and the result doesn't reflect our performance."

Arsenal started finding holes to exploit as Willock and Smith Rowe had massive chances before the former finally got the breakthrough -- with a dose of luck.

Saka linked up on the counter with Willock, who cut inside to get his shot away, which deflected off Frankfurt captain David Abraham and bounced in off the underside of the bar.

The Gunners again rattled the woodwork just after the breakthrough a free-kick by captain Granit Xhaka.