



Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc celebrates after the qualifying session

## Ferrari's Charles Leclerc on pole for Singapore GP

AFP | Singapore

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc secured pole position for the Singapore Grand Prix yesterday as he looks to claim a stunning hat-trick of wins after triumphs in Belgium and Italy.

The 21-year-old will be joined on the front row by championship leader Lewis Hamilton in a Mercedes, with Leclerc's teammate Sebastian Vettel rounding out the top three, ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Valtteri Bottas. Despite winning the last two races on power-friendly tracks, Ferrari had been given little chance of competing under the floodlights at the demanding 23-turn layout in Singapore.

But Leclerc and Vettel tore up the script to gatecrash what was expected to be a Mercedes and Red Bull party.

"I'm extremely happy about today. It was a good lap but I lost it a few times," Leclerc said after completing a 1:36.217 second final lap.

"I have to thank the team. We brought some new bits that worked properly. I worked hard after a bad Friday and today it paid off," added Leclerc, who recorded his fifth pole position of the season.

Hamilton holds a 63-point lead over Bottas of Mercedes in the title race with seven rounds remaining.

The Briton said he would adopt an aggressive approach to Sunday's race in search of a ninth victory of the season, as he seeks a sixth world cham-



5 pole positions have been earned by Charles Leclerc this season

pionship.

"I don't know where Ferrari picked up their pace but they did a great job," said Hamilton, who lapped in 1:36.408.

"I'm really happy to be on the front row with them. Tomorrow we can be aggressive."

Vettel has suffered an erratic season while his rookie teammate has shone for the Italian team. The German was quickest in the first half of the final part of qualifying until Leclerc and Hamilton edged past him.

"The final attempt should have been better but I was able to improve run by run. Maybe I peaked too early," Vettel said.

Red Bull's Alex Albon will start sixth on the grid, ahead of Carlos Sainz, Daniel Ricciardo, Nico Hulkenberg and Lando Norris.

Dense smog from forest fires in neighbouring Indonesia had floated over Singapore in the past week, sparking concerns the F1 could be affected.

Air quality hovered around "unhealthy" levels in parts of the city yesterday evening but only a light haze was visible and did not affect the race.

# Man City demolish Watford

Manchester City hit eight past Watford as Bernardo Silva scores treble

● Leicester's fast start continues as James Maddison sinks Spurs with late stunner

AFP | Manchester

Manchester City powered to their record Premier League win as the champions scored five times in the first half of an incredible 8-0 thrashing of Watford, while Leicester enjoyed a VAR-assisted 2-1 victory over Tottenham yesterday.

Inspired by Bernardo Silva's hat-trick, Pep Guardiola's side ripped woeful Watford to pieces at the Etihad Stadium, eclipsing a 7-0 success against Norwich in 2013 which stood as their previous biggest top-flight win.

Although City fell one goal short of equalling the biggest Premier League margin of victory -- Manchester United's 9-0 demolition of Ipswich in 1995 -- their swaggering display was the perfect way to erase the bitter taste from last weekend's shock defeat at Norwich.

Second-placed City move to within two points of leaders Liverpool, who face Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

City had crushed Watford 6-0 in last season's FA Cup final and, with injury-plagued left-back Benjamin Mendy making his first start since April, they picked up where they left off at Wembley with a goal inside the first minute at the Etihad Stadium.

Kevin De Bruyne played a superb ball from the right, leaving David Silva with the simple task of poking home from close range for his first goal of the season.

The champions doubled their lead in the seventh minute after Watford keeper Ben Foster conceded a penalty with a foul on Riyad Mahrez.

Sergio Aguero coolly slotted in the spot-kick for his eighth goal in six games this term, tak-



Bernardo Silva of Manchester City scores his team's fourth goal

"We're six games in, we are not getting carried away. We had a tough start but I'm so pleased with the players' focus

BRENDAN RODGERS

ing the Argentina striker to 100 home Premier League goals for City.

Guardiola had rested Raheem Sterling, but even without their star winger City were rampant and they made it three in the 12th minute when Mahrez's free-kick hit Watford's Tom Cleverley in the head and deflected past Foster.

Astonishingly, City scored again in the 15th minute, De Bruyne's corner nodded on by Nicolas Otamendi for Bernardo to head home.

By the time Otamendi finished off Aguero's cross in the 18th minute, City had established the fastest 5-0 lead in the Premier League era.

The joint biggest half-time lead in Premier League history

wasn't enough for City and Bernardo struck again with a close-range finish after another flowing move in the 48th minute.

Bernardo completed his first Premier League treble on the hour with a tap-in from De Bruyne's cross.

De Bruyne set City's new record mark in the Premier League when the Belgium midfielder scored the eighth in the 85th minute.

**Leicester on the rise**

At the King Power Stadium, Leicester proved their credentials to gatecrash the top four as they came from behind to beat Tottenham.

Harry's Kane's improvised 29th-minute opener as he stumbled before flicking home put Tottenham ahead.

However, the game swung Leicester's way after Tottenham defender Serge Aurier's goal midway through the second half was ruled out by the finest of margins for offside by VAR.

The hosts built on that lift immediately as Ricardo Pereira equalised before James Maddison struck the winner from long range five minutes from time.

"We're six games in, we are not getting carried away," said Leicester boss Brendan Rodg-

ers. "We had a tough start but I'm so pleased with the players' focus."

By contrast, Tottenham have now won just two of their first seven games of the season in all competitions and Mauricio Pochettino admitted the VAR controversy had played a role in their latest flop.

Pochettino bemoaned the momentum swing given to Leicester by the long stoppage in play prior to Aurier's strike being ruled out for an extremely marginal offside against Son Heung-min.

"The emotion of the game changed. The belief it gave to Leicester made things happen differently in the last 10 minutes," Pochettino said.

"I'm only going to say that we all accept that system in the game and now I am not going to complain."

Burnley beat Norwich 2-0 at Turf Moor, with New Zealand striker Chris Wood scoring in the 10th and 14th minutes.

Sheffield United piled pressure on Everton manager Marco Silva, whose side were booed off after a 2-0 defeat at Goodison Park, the damage done by Yerry Mina's 40th-minute own goal and Lys Mousset's 79th-minute strike.

## Coutinho and Lewandowski fire Bayern top with Cologne rout

AFP | Munich

Philippe Coutinho's first Bayern Munich goal and a brace from Robert Lewandowski helped the German champions go top of the Bundesliga with a 4-0 thrashing of 10-man Cologne yesterday.

Poland star striker Lewandowski put Bayern ahead with just 150 seconds gone at the Allianz Arena after Joshua Kimmich split the Cologne defence before then doubling the hosts' lead with a header from a corner at the start of the season half to take his league tally to nine in five games.

Coutinho, on loan from Barcelona, claimed his first Bundesliga goal on the hour by converting a penalty at the second attempt, after Lewandowski gave the Brazilian the chance despite being on a hat-trick.

"It was a spontaneous de-



Robert Lewandowski and Philippe Coutinho celebrate during the match

cision, we didn't talk about it before the game," Lewandowski said of giving Coutinho the spot-kick.

"It was important for him here at the Allianz Arena, for the future and his confidence. He is a great player and we must all help him."

Kingsley Ehizibue had been

shown a straight red card just before the penalty for bringing down Coutinho in the area when he was one-on-one with Cologne stopper Timo Horn.

Coutinho capped a superb display by setting up Ivan Perisic to compound Cologne's misery by slotting Bayern's fourth on 73 minutes.

## Zidane would quit Real Madrid without backing

AFP | Madrid

Zinedine Zidane believes he has the backing of Real Madrid but admits he would leave if he ever felt he had lost the club's support.

Zidane has come under scrutiny after enduring his worst ever defeat as Madrid coach on Wednesday, a 3-0 loss to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

The result also followed an underwhelming start in La Liga, which has seen Madrid claim two wins and two draws from games against Celta Vigo, Real Valladolid, Villarreal and Levante.

After returning from Paris, Zidane gave his players the day off on Thursday, which surprised

those high up at the club, according to reports in the Spanish press.

Asked if he felt like his methods were being questioned, Zidane said in a press conference on Friday: "No, not at all, the opposite. I think the club helps us all to be strong and supports all the people that work here."

"If it's ever not like that it would probably be best to leave."

On his decision to give the players a day off, Zidane added: "It's not a question of whether they deserve it or not. We have to give them time off."

"They need time with their families, they have to be able to rest. We have seven games in 21 days. They need time away and I understand that."

Zinedine Zidane

## England all-rounder Moeen takes break from tests

AFP | London

England all-rounder Moeen Ali has taken a break from test cricket after losing out on a central contract for the longest format for the 2019-20 season following a dismal summer.

The 32-year-old off-spinner and left-handed batsman lost his place in England's World Cup winning team before being dropped from the test side after the defeat in first Ashes test.

"It's just to get away from it a little bit. I feel like I want to enjoy my batting and this will give me a bit of a break," Moeen told ESPNcricinfo. "I want to spend some time with the family."

Ali has played 60 tests, 101 one-dayers and 25 Twenty20 internationals - scoring eight hundreds while taking 280 wickets across formats.