

SPORTS
sports

Arsenal, Chelsea cruise into last 16

● Callum Hudson-Odoi seals comfortable win for Chelsea over Malmo in Europa League

● Shkodran Mustafi header helps Arsenal to progress at expense of BATE Borisov

AFP | Paris

Arsenal and Chelsea reached the last 16 of the Europa League on Thursday after the Gunners comfortably saw off BATE Borisov 3-0 and Maurizio Sarri's troubled side relieved some of the pressure on him with the same scoreline against mediocre Malmo.

After falling 1-0 in Belarus, Arsenal were level on aggregate after just three minutes when Zakhar Volkov sliced Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's low cross past Denis Scherbitski in his own goal.

Unai Emery's side deservedly went through thanks to two thumping headers from Shkodran Mustafi and Sokratis either side of the break which put them into yesterday's draw. "We wanted this result but also we wanted to play for our supporters here. We did our best to come back (in the tie) and the team worked very well," Emery told BT Sport.

Ahead 2-1 from the first leg in Sweden, Chelsea had to wait until 10 minutes after the break for the first sign of excitement,



Chelsea's Callum Hudson-Odoi fires in their third goal

Olivier Giroud tapping in the decisive goal of a humdrum encounter at Stamford Bridge.

Ross Barkley made sure of the win with a super free-kick in the 74th minute, just after Malmo's Rasmus Bengtsson was sent off for his second bookable offence, before 18-year-old Callum Hudson-Odoi made the most of a rare start by crashing home the third.

"The boys really played well today. We worked hard throughout the game," said highly-rated Hudson Odoi, a Bayern Munich target in January.

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli breezed to a 2-0 win over FC Zurich that saw them win 5-1 on aggregate, while Inter Milan went through 5-0 after sweeping four goals past Rapid Vienna without reply at the San Siro.

Rennes make history

French side Rennes are into

the last 16 of a major European tournament for the first time after winning possibly the most entertaining tie of the round 6-4 on aggregate following a barnstorming 3-1 win at Real Betis.

Goals from Ramy Bensebaini and Adrien Hunou fired Rennes into a two-goal lead within the opening half-hour but the tie was put back in the balance when Giovanni Lo Celso pulled one back four minutes before half-time.

With Betis pushing to equal-



The goal that came at the end was definitely a bonus for the way that we played

CALLUM HUDSON-ODOI

ise and go through on away goals, M'Baye Niang finished off an injury time break to see the mid-table Ligue 1 side through.

RB Salzburg, Dinamo Zagreb and Zenit Saint Petersburg all overturned first-leg deficits, with Austrians Salzburg hammering Club Brugge 4-0 to go through 5-2 and Croatian champions Dinamo 4-2 winners on aggregate after a storming 3-0 victory over Viktoria Plzen.

Zenit overcame Fenerbahce 3-1 in Russia, Magomed Ozdov and Sardar Azmoun giving hosts an aggregate lead before Mehmet Topal put the Turks ahead on away goals just before break.

Pablo Fornals snuck Villarreal past Sporting Lisbon with a fine curling strike that gave the La Liga side a 1-1 draw on the night and a 2-1 win overall, while Benfica eased past Galatasaray 2-1 after a goalless draw in Portugal.

Arsenal face Rennes as Chelsea draw Dynamo Kiev



Arsenal's German defender Shkodran Mustafi (L) heads home their second goal during the UEFA Europa League round of 32

AFP | Paris

Arsenal will face French side Rennes in the last 16 of the Europa League, while Chelsea were paired with Dynamo Kiev in yesterday's draw.

Both Premier League clubs will be at home in the first leg on Thursday, March 7, with the return matches scheduled for March 14.

Arsenal's draw means that their veteran goalkeeper Petr Cech will return to face the club he represented for two seasons before joining Chelsea in 2004.

Rennes finished fifth in Ligue 1 last season and are currently in mid-table, but have impressed since the 38-year-old Julien Stephan was ap-



The final of this season's Europa League will be played in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on May 29

pointed as coach in December.

Arsenal manager Unai Emery -- who won the Europa League three years running as coach of Sevilla -- is familiar with Rennes from his two seasons in charge of Paris Saint-Germain.

London rivals Chelsea, the other Premier League club still in the competition, might also view winning the Europa League as their most likely route into next season's Champions League.

After beating Swedish side Malmo 5-1 on aggregate, they might find the going tougher against Ukrainian giants Dynamo. The clubs met in the group stage of the Champions League in 2015-16, drawing 0-0 in Kiev before Chelsea won 2-1 at Stamford Bridge.

Elsewhere, Sevilla, who have won the trophy five times including twice in its former guise as the UEFA Cup, will face Slavia Prague.

Widely-fancied Napoli will take on the Austrian champions Salzburg, who reached the semi-finals last season.

Former European Cup finalists and UEFA Cup winners Eintracht Frankfurt were drawn against Inter Milan, who won the UEFA Cup three times in the 1990s.

Chelsea banned from signing new players

AFP | London

Premier League club Chelsea have been banned from signing new players in the next two transfer windows as punishment for breaking rules on registering under-age players, FIFA said.

Ahmed Al Shaikh, President of the club -- who immediately said they would appeal the decision -- will be unable to make signings until the end of January next year.

"The disciplinary committee sanctioned Chelsea with a ban on registering new players at both national and international level for the next two complete and consecutive registration periods," FIFA said in a statement.

In addition, Chelsea were fined 600,000 Swiss francs (\$600,000, 530,000 euros) and given a period of 90 days to regularise the situation of the minor players concerned.

The ban does not prevent players being released by the club and it does not apply to



Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri reacts during a match

Chelsea's women's and futsal teams.

Chelsea have been given three days to appeal against FIFA's decision, which could prove highly damaging, for example preventing the club from signing a replacement for Eden Hazard if the star player leaves the club.

"Chelsea FC categorically refutes the findings of the FIFA disciplinary committee and will therefore be appealing the de-

cision," said a statement on the club's website.

"Initially, Chelsea FC was charged... in relation to 92 players," it added. "We welcome the fact that FIFA has accepted that there was no breach in relation to 63 of these players, but the club is extremely disappointed that FIFA has not accepted the club's submissions in relation to the remaining 29 players."

The move follows a FIFA probe into Chelsea's signing of foreign under-18 players, including the club's former forward Bertrand Traore, a Burkina Faso international who now plays for French Ligue 1 club Lyon.

Traore signed professional forms for Chelsea in 2013 at the age of 18 but was not registered until January the following year.

Man City not expecting to bulldoze Chelsea again: Silva

Reuters | London

Manchester City must forget their 6-0 drubbing of Chelsea earlier this month and cannot afford to be complacent against the London side when they face off in Sunday's League Cup final, midfielder Bernardo Silva has said.

Chelsea's capitulation at the Etihad Stadium was their worst defeat in Premier League history and the London club have dropped to sixth in the standings.

Silva, however, said the recent result would not have a bearing on their next

Bernardo Silva

meeting at Wembley.

"To be honest we should forget that match because it won't happen again, we are not expecting the same result," Silva told reporters after City's 3-2 victory at Schalke in the first leg of the Champions League last-16.

"We are playing against one of the best sides in the world, even though lately their results are not the best for them.

However, the Brazilian goalkeeper played his side into trouble moments later to put pressure on Matip and when he was dispossessed by Robert Lewandowski, Kingsley Coman fired into the side-netting.

Liverpool were also posing plenty of problems at the other end, although their final ball often lacked precision.

"Against those kinds of players you can never relax, and if you give them time to think, time to play and time to decide they will destroy you."

Riffa Club triumph in HM the King Cup

TDT | Manama

Riffa Sports and Cultural Club won HM the King Cup following their well-earned 2-1 victory over Al Hidd in final match which took place on Thursday at Bahrain National Stadium.

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa congratulated the club and their fans on the achievement and paid tribute to HM the King's sponsorship and attendance to the final.

The First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Athletics Association said that the Royal patronage of the final match reflects HM the King's firm keenness to support and cheer Bahraini sportspeople in all occasions and venues. He stressed that HM the King's follow up to the final match has laid ground for a great game.