

# Mbappe at PSG to stay after flattening Monaco in title party

● **Neymar made his return for newly-crowned Ligue 1 champions Paris Saint-Germain as Kylian Mbappe fired a hat-trick past Monaco**

● **Edinson Cavani also returned for Paris Saint-Germain, reuniting the French champions famed front three**

AFP | Paris

**K**ylilan Mbappe committed his future to newly-crowned Ligue 1 champions Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday after sweeping aside Monaco with a hat-trick in a 3-1 win that also saw the return of superstar strike partner Neymar.

"I'm here, I've signed up to the project," said Mbappe, who has been linked with Real Madrid, to TV station Canal+.

"Good for Real Madrid if there is Zizou (Madrid manager Zinedine Zidane), I will watch their matches as an admirer."

Mbappe took his league tally for the season to 30 following his treble on Sunday, which came just hours after PSG were crowned champions for the sixth time in seven years when closest challengers Lille dropped points.

Their goalless draw at Toulouse left them 16 points behind PSG with only five games to play before kick-off in Paris and allowed the capital club to celebrate the title after missing chances to seal it in their previous three matches.



Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (L) vies with Monaco's French defender Benoit Badiashile

"I'm happy, the season isn't finished yet, and I want to score more," said Mbappe to Canal+.

The 20-year-old is targeting the domestic double ahead of next week's French Cup final against Rennes after his side crashed out in the last 16 in the Champions League.

"We're disappointed for what happened with Manchester United, but the game goes on," added Mbappe, referring to his team throwing away a

2-0 first-leg lead to the Premier League outfit.

"We obviously expected more from the Champions League but we can't let ourselves be demoralised."

Neymar's return at the start of the second half replacing Layvin Kurzawa is the cherry on the cake for Thomas Tuchel's side, who had been without the Brazilian superstar since January 23 with a right foot

injury.

Edinson Cavani also returned to action for injury-ravaged PSG as a second half substitute, having a late strike correctly ruled out for offside, meaning that their famed front three are back together after months apart.

## Thriving Mbappe

Mbappe has thrived in the absence of his strike partners, and gave his side a 2-0 first-half lead with two neat finish-

es, the first coming in the 15th minute and the second seven minutes before the break after a beautiful pass from Dani Alves.

The World Cup winner then put the three points beyond doubt when he tapped in Alves' low cross nine minutes after the break.

Aleksandr Golovin rolled home a consolation for the away side, who remain in trouble in 16th place and are only four points away from the relegation play-off spot.

"We've not been in the best of form but we played well today. We won again, and that's important," said Tuchel.

"The Champions League is a huge goal, but a club like Juventus has been waiting more than 20 years to win that trophy, and that's Juventus."

The Parisians have struggled with key injuries in recent weeks and they lost Italian international midfielder Marco Verratti with what looks like a knock to his left ankle.

PSG took the field wearing a shirt with a large image of Notre Dame replacing the usual sponsor's logo. "Notre-Dame" replaced the player names on the back of the shirts.

The iconic Paris cathedral was damaged in a spectacular blaze last Monday.

The club said that they would put a limited edition of the shirts on sale on line during the match for 100 euros each. The club said the money "will be donated to associations related to firefighters".

The club also posted a "Homage to Notre Dame" video on their web site in which players praised the team-work of the Paris fire brigade and made a gesture that imitates the two famous towers that form part of the cathedral's facade.

## Young confident misfiring United will be ready for City

Reuters | London

**M**anchester United's players are well aware of the importance of Wednesday's Premier League clash against champions Manchester City and need no extra motivation after a 4-0 hammering at Everton, defender Ashley Young said.

Sixth-placed United's chances of finishing in the top four were dealt a blow at Goodison Park and the nature of Sunday's defeat prompted manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer to issue an apology to fans ahead of the clash with their city rivals.

"We know how important that (derby) is going to be. If you can't get yourselves up for the Manchester derby, there's something wrong," Young told the club's website.

"I've got confidence that we're going to be ready for Wednesday... we've got to dust ourselves down fairly quickly and go again this week... we've got four games left, we've got four wins to get. It's going to be tough but I'm sure we can do it."

United, who have 64 points from 34 games and sit two points adrift of Arsenal in fourth, face Chelsea, Huddersfield Town and Cardiff City in their final three matches of the season.

Ashley Young



Gareth Bale

## Zidane bemused as Spanish press round on Bale

Reuters | Madrid

**R**eal Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane is bemused by his team's fans' attitude towards Gareth Bale after they booed the Welsh forward during Saturday's 3-0 La Liga victory over Athletic Bilbao.

When quizzed on why a player who has won four Champions Leagues in five seasons in Madrid - in-

cluding scoring decisive goals in two of the finals - is given such a hostile reception by fans Zidane said: "I don't know. Honestly, I don't understand it."

Bale came on as a substitute after being left out from the start for the second consecutive game by Zidane and irked the Bernabeu faithful by missing a one-on-one chance.

The reaction was in stark contrast to the one that greeted Isco, who came on to the pitch at the same time as Bale to much delight from the stands.

For his part, Bale shrugged off missing the presentable opportunity by unselfishly teeing up Karim Benzema for his hat-trick but that did not save him from a mauling by local media yesterday.

"The intention is to sell him, but there's no offers forthcoming," read the front page of Marca, accompa-

nied by a picture of the 29-year-old Bale looking sullen.

"They're now open to the idea of loaning him out," the paper continued. The same newspaper reported recently that Chelsea's Belgian forward Eden Hazard will be signed to take Bale's place in the squad.

A scathing opinion piece in the paper went further.

"Madrid, or rather their president, have been procrastinating with Bale. He finished last season as a substitute for not playing well enough and it will happen again this season," it said, omitting to mention Bale's two goals, including a stunning overhead kick, in last year's Champions League final with the game finely poised.

"He keeps on saying 'good morning' rather than 'buenos dias' when he arrives at the training ground; that's if he even says anything," Marca said.

## Djokovic extends lead as world no. 1

AFP | Paris

**N**ovak Djokovic stretched his lead over Rafael Nadal at the top of the ATP rankings yesterday, after the Spaniard's failed bid to win a 12th Monte Carlo Masters title.

Djokovic, winner of the last three Grand Slam tournaments, is now over 3,000 points clear of old rival Nadal despite a quarter-final defeat by Daniil Medvedev in the Principality last week.

World number two Nadal dropped ranking points after his title defence ended with a shock semi-final loss to eventual champion Fabio Fognini.

The 31-year-old Italian reached a career-high ranking of 12th after claiming his maiden Masters trophy with a straight-sets win over unheralded Serbian Dusan Lajovic in Sunday's final.

Fognini jumped six spots to close on the top 10, while Lajovic climbed 24 places to 24th.

### ATP top 10

1. Novak Djokovic (SRB) 11,160 pts
2. Rafael Nadal (ESP) 8,085
3. Alexander Zverev (GER) 5,770
4. Roger Federer (SUI) 5,590
5. Dominic Thiem (AUT) 4,675
6. Kevin Anderson (RSA) 4,115 (+1)
7. Kei Nishikori (JPN) 3,690 (-1)
8. Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE) 3,240
9. Juan Martin del Potro (ARG) 3,225
10. John Isner (USA) 3,085

Novak Djokovic

