

# Barca humiliate Real

## Luis Suarez bags Clasico hat-trick in Camp Nou thrashing

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona ran riot in the Clasico yesterday as Luis Suarez scored the hat-trick that will surely spell the end of Julen Lopetegui's spell as Real Madrid coach.

Barcelona were 5-1 winners at the Camp Nou, dominant for all-but a 15-minute spell after half-time when the otherwise hapless Madrid briefly threatened a comeback.

All the failures that have underlined their recent problems under Lopetegui were on show here, poor finishing, dreadful defending and key players performing well below par, let alone their best.

Philippe Coutinho scored the first and Arturo Vidal the last but in between the game belonged to Suarez, who terrorised Madrid from start to finish and made light of Lionel Messi's injury-enforced absence.

For Lopetegui, it is now one win in six games, as Madrid fall seven points behind Barcelona, who return to the top of the table.

This defeat was reminiscent of the 4-0 thrashing that spelt the end of Rafael Benitez's time in charge two years ago but while Benitez survived two more months, Lopetegui may not last the week.

Much was made of this being the first Clasico without either Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo in 11 years but Suarez's masterclass will mean this contest lives long in the memory.

Madrid looked dazed in possession and dizzy out of it as Barca repeatedly opened them up down the left early on.



Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez (L) scores a goal

Sergio Busquets was allowed time to wait for Jordi Alba's zooming run past both Gareth Bale and Nacho, with the full-back's touch on the run perfectly pushed into the area.

Suarez rushed past but Coutinho held his ground by the penalty spot, where Alba found him with the cut-back. It was the move's 30th pass, the most

for a goal in a La Liga Clasico in 13 seasons.

### Lopetegui motionless

On the touchline, Lopetegui stood motionless. Varane clapped but his team-mates looked shell-shocked. Sergio Ramos thrashed a pass across his own box to Nacho, who hacked it to the feet of Arthur, his shot

5

Barcelona score 5 goals and were dominant for all-but a 15-minute spell after half-time when the otherwise hapless Madrid briefly threatened a comeback

parried away by Courtois.

Still, Barca needed the help of VAR for the second. Suarez was too quick to the ball at the near post and Varane bundled him over. It was a clear penalty, which Suarez converted for his seventh goal in 11 games against these opponents. His eighth and ninth were still to come.

Gerard Pique should have

headed in while a promising Madrid free-kick somehow ended with another Barca sprawl on the counter-attack. The visitors were fortunate to be only two down at half-time but the game was a mirror image after the restart.

Varane had gone off, with a muscle problem the club said, for Lucas Vazquez, with Nacho moving to centre-back. Vazquez was key to Madrid's goal, his disguised pass allowing Isco to pick out Marcelo, who finished for his third in three games.

Suddenly, it was Barca making the mistakes. Sergio Ramos headed over, Luka Modric hit the inside of the post and Isco's finish was blocked after Rafinha ran into trouble.

Madrid were less transformed at the back, where Suarez acrobatically volleyed onto the post before Alba fired just wide. As Madrid's momentum faded, Suarez landed the knock-out blow.

Sergi Roberto chipped a cross into the box but the ball had neither the pace nor the angle to be headed in easily. Suarez, however, generated both himself to leave Courtois stranded.

If that was a masterclass in adaptation, his third was a demonstration of finesse. Ramos was pushed off the ball by Sergi Roberto, who freed Suarez. Suarez feathered the ball over Courtois for his hat-trick.

Madrid were finished but the humiliation was not over yet as Ousmane Dembele crossed for Vidal to head home a fifth. Suarez could even have had a fourth in injury-time but Courtois saved. Five was more than enough.

## United ease pressure on boss, Chelsea cruise

AFP | London

Manchester United eased the pressure on manager Jose Mourinho by seeing off Everton 2-1 at Old Trafford yesterday, as Chelsea leapfrogged Manchester City into second with a 4-0 thrashing of Burnley.

Arsenal's 11-game winning run was finally ended, though, as two Luka Milivojevic penalties earned Crystal Palace a much-needed point in a 2-2 draw at Selhurst Park.

yesterday's action on the field was overshadowed by the ongoing investigation into the helicopter crash on Saturday evening that is feared to have killed Leicester City owner Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha.

A minute's reflection both in honour of Remembrance yesterday and the crash was held before kick-off at all three matches. United's fifth defeat of the season to Juventus in the Champions League on Tuesday had put Mourinho's position in peril once more.

But he got the slice of luck he needed when Paul Pogba's penalty was saved by England number one Jordan Pickford, but rolled kindly back into the Frenchman's path to slot home the opener.

The United fans still weren't happy with Pogba, though, as he

received jeers for his laboured run-up to the spot-kick.

Pogba made some amends as it was from his pass Anthony Martial curled home a fine second four minutes into the second half.

However, another sloppy pass from Pogba helped get Everton back in the game as Gylfi Sigurdsson scored from the penalty spot after Chris Smalling chopped down Richarlison.

### Chelsea fill Hazard void

Chelsea enjoyed a far more comfortable afternoon to close

to within two points of Liverpool at the top of the table despite the absence of top scorer Eden Hazard with a back injury.

Alvaro Morata, Ross Barkley, Willian and Ruben Loftus-Cheek were all on target to ease concerns over who could carry the goalscoring burden without the Belgian for Maurizio Sarri's side.

The Italian remains unbeaten since taking charge at Stamford Bridge, and Sarri was also happy with a better defensive display than in recent weeks.

The Gunners' winning run

had raised hopes of an unexpected title challenge from Arsenal.

However, their defensive deficiencies were shown up in rash challenges by Shkodran Mustafi and Granit Xhaka to give Milivojevic the chance to earn Palace a share of the spoils.

In between the Serbian's spot-kicks, a brilliant Xhaka free-kick and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's controversial ninth goal of the season, after he pounced on a knockdown from Alexandre Lacazette's hand, had put Arsenal in front.



Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba has this penalty saved (but it rebounds back to him to score the opening goal)

### English Premier League

Burnley	0	4	Chelsea
Crystal Palace	2	2	Arsenal
Manchester United	2	1	Everton

### Scottish League Cup

Heart of Midlothian	0	3	Celtic
Aberdeen	0	0	Rangers

### Italian Serie A

Sassuolo	2	2	Bologna
Cagliari	2	1	Chievo
Genoa	2	2	Udinese
SPAL	0	3	Frosinone
Milan	2	2	Sampdoria
Napoli	v.		Roma

### German Bundesliga

1. FC Nürnberg	1	1	Eintracht Frankfurt
RB Leipzig	0	0	FC Schalke 04
SV Werder Bremen	0	3	Bayer 04 Leverkusen

### Spanish La Liga

Getafe	2	0	Real Betis
Barcelona	5	1	Real Madrid
Alaves	0	1	Villarreal
Sevilla	v.		Huesca

### French Ligue 1

Rennes	0	2	Reims
Bordeaux	0	1	Nice
Marseille	v.		Paris Saint-Germain

\*Scores as of closing