

Blackburn fly over misfiring Arsenal

Two own goals add to Arsene Wenger's woes



■ Arsenal's Gervinho (right) scores the opening goal of the match against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on Saturday. AFP PHOTO

Agencies
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BLACKBURN: Ayegbeni Yakubu scored twice to turn up the heat on Arsene Wenger as Blackburn twice came from behind to defeat Arsenal 4-3 at Ewood Park on Saturday.

It leaves Arsenal with just four points from their opening five games and means Wenger's side have now conceded 12 goals in the last two away games in the Premier League.

The Gunners had taken the lead on 10 minutes, Alex Song splitting the defence with a weighted pass to find Gervinho who rifled a low angled shot beyond Paul Robinson.

But despite dominating play Arsenal were unable to add to their lead and were rocked on 25 minutes when Yakubu conjured a goal out of nothing, picking up David Hoilett's pass to finish past Wojciech Szczesny.

Arsenal were back in front within nine minutes, when new signing Mikel Arteta swept in Aaron Ramsey's cross with aplomb to put Arsenal 2-1 up.

However, the Gunners' aged-old defensive problems returned to haunt them as two own goals from Alex Song and Laurent Koscielny put Blackburn 4-2 up.

Marouane Chamakh ensured a nervous finish for Rovers when he headed in Robin van Persie's cross to pull one back for Arsenal on 85 minutes, but the home side hung on for their first win of the season.

The defeat leaves Arsenal with four points from five games, just two points above the relegation zone, and eight points behind leaders Manchester United, who face Chelsea on Sunday.

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

- Blackburn 4 - Arsenal 3
- Wolves 0 - QPR 3
- Bolton 1 - Norwich City 2
- Aston Villa 1 - Newcastle 1
- Everton 3 - Wigan 1
- Swansea 3 - West Brom 0

We had so many chances in the game and on top of that we scored two own goals so it is unbelievable to understand but we have to take it on the chin

ARSENE WENGER
Coach, Arsenal

FERGUSON WARY OF CHELSEA THREAT

MANCHESTER: Sir Alex Ferguson believes Chelsea still represent one of Manchester United's sternest challengers for the Premier League despite manager Andre Villas-Boas's relative lack of experience.

The spotlight has been off Chelsea, who have been challengers for the last seven years, and switched closer to home with Manchester City joining near-neighbours United at the top of the Premier League.

"They will be there at the end of the season, there is no doubt about that," Ferguson said. "At the moment, the two Manchester teams are enjoying the publicity that comes from the predictions that they are going to be involved in the winning of the league. In the background lurks Chelsea. They don't need the publicity. They will be enjoying being out of the profile at the moment."

Dempo, Bagan left stunned

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KOLKATA/PUNE: By way of first day upsets at the Federation Cup, former champions Dempo bore the ignominy against a fast and composed 10-man Pune FC.

Jeje Lalpekhlua set up Keita Mandjou with a searing cross from the right in the 7th minute and the Pune FC striker had no difficulty in drilling home the first goal. In the 19th minute Lester Fernandes provided a cross to Lalpekhlua who placed the ball past Dempo custodian Subhashish Roychowdhury.

Pune FC had Fernandes sent off in the 70th minute after it was found out that he had taken

to the field wearing a different numbered jersey. Peter Carvalho's extra-time strike from close came too late for Dempo to save the match.

Chencho fired in two goals as qualifiers Royal Wahingdoh stunned fancied Mohun Bagan 2-1 in their opening tie with strikes in the 49th and 54th minutes. Mohun Bagan reduced the margin in the 75th minute through Ashim Biswas.

Defending champions East Bengal were held by Mohammedan Sporting. Stanley Okoroji's 17th minute penalty, after East Bengal custodian Sandip Nandy tripped Han Wook, was cancelled by Sanju Pradhan's 25-yard strike.

'MARADONA TOOK BRIBES AS WELL'

BUENOS AIRES: Diego Maradona, who this week accused his successor as Argentina coach Sergio Batista of accepting bribes, is also tainted by corruption, according to a claim made here Saturday.

Gabriel Buono, Maradona's former private secretary, made the accusation, saying: "He talks about bribes but if you are looking for someone who is corrupt the first person is Maradona - I've got all the evidence."

AFP

INDIA THRASH SRI LANKA 13-0

NEW DELHI: India thrashed Sri Lanka 13-0 in the 3rd girls U-18 Asia Cup hockey tournament at Bangkok Saturday.

The goal scorers for India who led 7-0 at half time were Jaspreet Kaur (2nd minute) Neha Goyal (13th 22nd min) Poonam Rani (14th 34th min) Sandeep Kaur (19th min) Anupa Barla (33rd 65th min) Namita Toppo (37th min) Navjot Kaur (42nd and 55th min) and Lilima Minz (54th 70th min)

India earned fourteen penalty corners and converted five through Jaspreet Sandeep Neha Namita and Navjot. India had beaten Kazakhstan 12-0 in their tournament opener Friday. India next face South Korea Tuesday.

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