

Bayern Munich's Mats Hummels (R) vies with Moenchengladbach's Josip Drmic during a German Bundesliga match between Bayern Munich and Borussia Moenchengladbach, in Munich, Germany, on April 14, 2018.

Ricardo Walther of Germany competes during the men's singles final match against Panagiotis Gionis of Greece during the 2018 ITTF Challenge Zagreb Open in Zagreb, Croatia on April 14, 2018.



West Ham look to boost survival hopes with Stoke win

LONDON, Apr 15

West Ham United are under no impression that they are safe in the Premier League but a victory against Stoke City will greatly improve their chances of staying in the top flight, defender Arthur Masuaku said.

West Ham are on 34 points and a win at the London Stadium on Monday will put them within touching distance of the 40-point figure normally associated with survival. Stoke have lost their last four league matches to sit second from bottom with 27 points and Masuaku believes his team can take advantage of their rivals' struggle for consistency. West Ham come into the clash high on confidence after a 3-0 victory over Southampton and a 1-1 draw at defending champions Chelsea in their previous two league games.

"It's a big opportunity because they (Stoke) are behind us and we can put 10 points between them and us," Masuaku added.

"If we take the game as we played against Southampton or Chelsea, I think we'll win." Reuters

Commonwealth Games

New Zealand strike double gold in rugby sevens

GOLDCOAST, Apr 15



Watching New Zealand's women win the first rugby sevens Commonwealth Games title had inspired the men's team to complete a golden double against their respective Rio Olympic champions on Sunday, Tim Mikkelsen said.

The World Cup holders in the shortened version of the game had not been favoured in either final after some inconsistent performances on the world sevens circuits.

Facing a ferociously partisan crowd in the women's final against Australia, Kelly Brazier's 60-metre dash deep into extra-time had given the New Zealand women a 17-12 victory.

The men's team then followed that up with a 14-0 win over Fiji to clinch their fifth Commonwealth Games title.

"We watched the women go into overtime and their win at the end really inspired us to get the double," Mikkelsen said. "It's pretty satisfying."

Brazier's dash had earlier silenced a boisterous local crowd at Robina Stadium, so they switched their support to Fiji for the men's decider.

However, New Zealand quietened them once more by jumping out to a 14-0 lead against the Rio champions inside the first four minutes and were never really threatened thereafter.

New Zealand even had an opportunity to put the game completely beyond doubt when Fiji's Sevuoni Mocenecegi was given a yellow card for an early tackle on Sam Dickson.

The champions put Ware across as Mocenecegi watched on from off the field to extend their lead to 19-0, only for the try to be ruled out when a video replay showed the 23-year-old had lost control of the ball over the line.

Fiji looked to recover when they were restored to a full complement but Scott Curry produced two desperate cover tackles to stop what would have been sensational tries and ensure they regained the title they lost in Glasgow.

"Not many guys in this team would know the feeling of a gold medal," Mikkelsen added.

"I got one in Delhi and was part of the team that lost in Glasgow (2014), so to get this win is amazing."

The women's final was also characterised by a strong first half performance from New Zealand and some desperate defence before Brazier stepped up to end home hopes

of victory.

Brazier's lung-bursting effort, however, would have been in vain had Michaela Blyde, who scored one of New Zealand's two tries in the first half, not produced two sensational cover tackles as Australia pressed in the second half.

New Zealand had opened up a 12-0 halftime lead after tries to Portia Woodman and Blyde, before Emilee Cherry exploited some poor tackling close to the line and Ellia Green outpaced the cover defence to send the contest into extra time.

"I looked at our captain (Sarah Goss) when we got the penalty and she gave me the heads-up that we're not kicking the ball out," Brazier said.

"We tapped it to play on and there was a gap in front of me and I went."

"I probably held back a bit looking for a pass but no-one came, so I pinned the ears back and got over the line."

England had earlier won both bronze medals with the men beating Glasgow Games champions South Africa 21-14 while the women beat Canada 24-19. Reuters

Manchester City close in on Premier League title by beating Spurs

LONDON, Apr 15

After exiting the Champions League, Manchester City regained its swagger and closed in on the English Premier League title. Losing to Manchester United last weekend prevented City sealing top spot but Pep Guardiola's side beat Tottenham 3-1 at Wembley Stadium on Saturday to go within one win of being crowned champions.

Or it could be achieved on Sunday, without playing, if last-place West Bromwich Albion wins at United. For now, City is 16 points in front of United with five games to go after impressively inflicting fourth-place

Tottenham's second home loss of the season.

Gabriel Jesus, Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling scored in a commanding display that shows why City has 28 wins from 33 matches in the league.

Beating an English rival, though, proved beyond City in the Champions League going out in the quarterfinals to Liverpool on Tuesday.

Juergen Klopp's third-place side looks set to seal a place in the continent's top competition even if it doesn't lift the European Cup after beating Bournemouth 3-0 to stay 10 points clear of fifth-place champion Chelsea. Tottenham still occupies the fourth Champions League

spot, although Chelsea closed the gap to seven points after coming from behind to beat Southampton 3-2.

By throwing away a two-goal lead, Southampton endangered its chances of avoiding the drop.

Crystal Palace and Huddersfield moved further clear of the drop zone with wins.

Wilfried Zaha scored twice as Palace beat Brighton 3-2 to move six points clear of Southampton, which occupies the final relegation place.

Huddersfield was a point above Palace after Tom Ince's stoppage-time goal beat Watford 1-0.

Swansea moved five points ahead of Southampton after drawing with Everton 1-1.

Burnley's unlikely pursuit of a Europa League spot continued with a 2-1 victory over Leicester thanks to goals from Chris Wood and Kevin Long. Burnley is seventh, two points behind Arsenal, which plays on Sunday at Newcastle.

Wolverhampton Wanderers will be returning to the Premier League next season after a six-year absence. Promotion was secured from the League Championship after Fulham drew with Brentford. AP

Memorable Matches of FIFA World Cup

Mexico 1986 Quarter Finals : France-4, Brazil-3 (via penalty after 1-1 draw)

Michel Platini of France had scored goals in the first half of the 90-minute regulation game and after the two 15-minute overtime periods went scoreless.

It was the second consecutive World Cup in which France went into penalty kicks, but this time the Frenchmen emerged victorious. In Spain four years ago, France lost in the semifinals to West Germany when the Germans won the penalty-kick portion, 5-4.

The capacity crowd of 68,000 that decorated Jalisco Stadium in the colors of the two world soccer powers - green and yellow for Brazil and white and blue for France - and deafened it with chants of "Arriba Brazil" and "Allez France," watched a match that was truly on a world-class level.

The French had the best chance to win in the second of the two 15-minute overtime periods, but the referee, Ioan Igna, a 46-year-old teacher from Rumania, denied the French an obvious advantage near the Brazilian penalty area when the Brazilian goalkeeper, Carlos, fouled Bruno Bellone.

"I always believe that justice is done," Henry Michel, the coach of France, said about what he viewed as the referee's oversight in the waning moments of the overtime.

Brazil had a marvelous opportunity to win the game in the 74th minute of regulation, when a devastating run by Branco on the left created gaps in the French defense and resulted in a penalty kick for Brazil. Branco created the penalty by passing in the middle to Zico, who returned the ball to Branco running into the penalty area.

Once Branco gained possession in-

side the penalty area, he was brought down by the French goalkeeper, Joel Bats, and Zico stepped up to take the penalty kick. His shot was rather weak and toward the side to which Bats plunged, so the goalkeeper made the save.

Santana obliged the thousands of Brazilian fans who had pleaded for Zico's entrance earlier in the game by inserting the Brazilian in the 71st minute for Muller. But the fans fell silent when their hero's shot was parried by Bats and his defense cleared the ball.

The Brazilians had trouble penetrating the French defense for most of the second half and they resorted to a system rather unsuitable for them. They pushed the ball wide to the flanks, mostly to the right, for crosses in front of the goal, a tactic the French defenders had little trouble dealing with, especially after Michel moved Manuel Amoros from the left side to the right of the French defense.

Brazil's shutout goaltending of the previous four games, when they scored nine goals without allowing one, was finally spoiled by Platini, the French captain and best schemer in the tournament. His goal in the 41st minute ended 401 minutes of play without allowing a goal for Carlos, the Brazilian goalkeeper, who must take a great deal of the blame for the goal.

Carlos allowed Dominique Rocheteau's cross from the right to sail alongside the six-yard line to the onrushing Platini on the left, with

the goalkeeper's only excuse the fact that Yannick Stopyra tried to distract him from gathering the low cross.

The ball went through Carlos and Stopyra and was next touched by a gentle tap of Platini's left foot. The goal enabled the heralded midfielder to celebrate his 31st birthday the best possible way - with a goal in the World Cup against a formidable opponent.

Platini's goal simply tied the game as Brazil had opened the scoring after a marvelous combination involving four players. It started in the 17th minute on the right side of the attack with Muller, who passed to Socrates in the middle. Socrates pushed the ball to Junior, who relayed it to Careca, Brazil's leading scorer in the tournament.

Careca received the ball on the left side of the penalty area and let fly a bullet shot past Bats, who had little chance. Bats did very well in the penalty kicks, however, saving the first one, from Socrates, and opening the way for his countrymen to make it to the semifinals.

As if the excitement from today's two quarterfinal games was not enough, soccer fans were expecting more Sunday, when Argentina and England clash at Mexico City and Belgium and Spain play at Puebla. Argentina is the only South American team remaining in the World Cup, which has never been captured by a European team when played outside Europe. Brazil is the only South American country with a victory in Europe, in Sweden in 1958.

But this time, Brazil, which captured its third World Cup in 1970 after winning in 1958 and 1962, is going home empty-handed again.

The New York times

Mo Salah nets 40th goal of season as Liverpool beat Bournemouth

LIVERPOOL, Apr 15

Mohamed Salah became the third Liverpool player in history to score 40 goals in a single season by netting once again in a 3-0 win over Bournemouth on Saturday.

The Egypt forward joined Roger Hunt and Ian Rush in the 40 club with a second-half header that added to Sadio Mane's early strike and preceded Roberto Firmino's late goal.

Salah's goal, his English Premier League-leading 30th, increased his advantage over Harry Kane in the Golden Boot race while strengthening Liverpool's grip on a top-four finish.

Juergen Klopp's third-place side has a 10-point cushion over fifth-place Chelsea. The victory rounded off a fine week for Liverpool, which sealed a Champions League semifinal against Roma by beating Manchester City 5-1 on aggregate.

Klopp acknowledged on Friday the forthcoming tie with Roma would be at the forefront of fans' minds, but his immediate priority of securing a top-four league



finish was evident by the fact he made just one change to his team.

And four days after beating City his players backed up that attitude by making a flying start.

Salah could have scored after three minutes, prodding a great opportunity wide from Trent Alexander-Arnold's whipped cross, but the first goal came in the seventh minute.

Jordan Henderson, who was brought into the XI for James Milner, spotted Mane in the box. Although the Senegalese's header was saved by Asmir Begovic, the ball came back to him to stick away the rebound.

It continued to be one-way traffic in the opening 45 minutes and Begovic denied Alexander-Arnold and Salah before Bournemouth finally threatened.

Yet even that attack was halted by the assistant's flag as Ryan Fraser was offside prior to collecting Charlie Daniels' back-heel and crossing for Jermain Defoe to tap home. AP

For all of Liverpool's dominance, the hosts had only one goal to show for it in the first half as Salah continued to be frustrated, with Steve Cook's brilliant challenge denying him.

There was a lack of intensity from both sides at the start of the second period, understandable given the early advantage Liverpool claimed and Bournemouth's position well clear of the relegation zone.

Salah certainly still had motivation in his battle to beat Kane to the Golden Boot, but there was a sense it might not be his day when he failed to win a penalty after a coming together with Nathan Ake.

Referee Chris Kavanagh was unmoved, but that ball over the top to Salah showed the way to get him in and he finally scored in the 69th.

Alexander-Arnold clipped a pass over Ake's head and on to Salah, who nodded superbly over Begovic and into the net for his 40th goal of a remarkable debut campaign at Anfield.

Mane and Firmino both came close to adding a third while at the other end Dan Gosling fired at Loris Karius.

Then, the only player in Liverpool's attacking triumvirate without a goal found the target. Firmino collected a pass inside the box from Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, took a touch inside and steered a shot through Simon Francis' legs and past Begovic's dive. AP

CWG 2018 restored Australia's reputation after ball-tampering low, says Games OC Chairman

GOLDCOAST, Apr 15

The Gold Coast Commonwealth Games have restored Australia's global sporting reputation that had taken a hit during the recent ball-tampering scandal, Games Organising Committee Chairman Peter Beattie said today.

"This has more than restored Australia's global reputation. Our sportsmanship on show during the Commonwealth Games is what the essence of Australia is about - fair sport, no cheating and applauding the winners," Beattie said during the daily media briefing here.

Australia's sporting culture had come in for severe criticism when Steve Smith, Cameron Bancroft and David Warner were found guilty of plotting and trying to tamper the ball in a Test match against South Africa in Cape Town.

Smith and Warner were subsequently banned for a year and stripped of their leadership roles, while Bancroft was handed a nine-month suspension.

This, after the three players offered tearful apologies for their actions, something that softened the backlash they were facing from the Australian fans.

In fact, the incident cast a shadow on the Games too and Australian swimming team coach Jacco Verhaar had asked his wards to be on their best behaviour.

Gold Coast played the perfect host and provided smooth logistics for athletes and visitors during the Games that wind up today. PTI

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