

## Hamburg, Wolfsburg advance in UEFA Cup

Bundesliga teams Wolfsburg and SV Hamburg brought some much-needed UEFA Cup joy to Germany with victories to secure their passage to the last 32.

Wolfsburg Thursday downed England's Portsmouth 3-2, helped by a blunder from keeper David James, while Hamburg were 2-0 winners at Slavia Prague to progress from the group stage with a game to spare.

The wins were a welcome boost for Bundesliga that saw both Schalke 04 and Hertha Berlin beaten and now facing an uphill struggle to qualify.

England's Aston Villa also progressed despite a 1-2 home defeat to Slovakian outfit Zilina, and now visit Hamburg for a match which will help decide who tops a group in which Ajax - not in action Thursday - are also through.

Portugal's Sporting Braga also progressed with Wolfsburg from Group E after coming from behind to beat Heerenveen 2-1.

Spain's Valencia joined the qualifiers after earning a 1-1 draw in Group G with Belgium's Club Brugge.

Wolfsburg joined already qualified Group E rivals AC Milan into the last 32 with a 3-2 victory over visiting Portsmouth, leaving the Premier League side crashing out without a win from three matches.

Felix Magath's Wolfsburg benefited from a blunder by England keeper James who directed a back pass straight to the feet of Zvezdan Misimovic who rounded the hapless goalie to slot in a 74th-minute winner.

The goal virtually ended any hopes for Portsmouth despite James making amends by saving an 80th-minute penalty weakly struck by Misimovic.

Wolfsburg had got off to a bright start when Edin Dzeko scored from close range in the third minute.

James had done well to set up Portsmouth's equalizer in the 11th minute when a long throw launched Armand Traore down the left. The Frenchman's cross was not dealt with by Diego Benaglio in goal and Jermaine Defoe was able to turn the ball over the line.

The Premier League side were in front three minutes later when Arnold Mvuemba beat Benaglio with a shot from outside the area.

Defoe came close to notching his second with a shot deflected just wide of the post, but the home side levelled in the 23rd when Christian Gentner's ball into the area sailed past friend and foe alike leaving James without a chance.

Portsmouth needed to win after Braga took the lead at Heerenveen, but their hopes were dashed by James' error.

SV Hamburg made sure of qualification from Group F where Ivico Olic on the half hour and fellow Croatian Mladen Petric with a penalty in stoppage time gave the Bundesliga side a 2-0 win over Slavia Prague.

England's Aston Villa slipped to a 2-1 defeat at home to Zilina but go through along with Hamburg and Ajax.

Valencia qualified from Group G thanks to a 1-1 draw with visiting Club Brugge. The Belgians led from the 19th minute through Antony Alcaarez but a goal on the hour by Nikola Zigic gave the Spanish side the point they needed.

Rosenborg were held 1-1 at Copenhagen, a result which now leaves the Danish side needing to beat Brugge.

In Group H, Vagner Love scored a hat-trick as already-qualified CSKA Moscow edged French outfit Nancy 4-3, while Lech Poznan and Deportivo La Coruna finished 1-1, leaving Nancy, Deportiva and Lech all still in with a chance.

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