

Sevilla recover third place on comeback win over Villarreal

Sevilla recovered third place in the Spanish league with an eventful 3-2 home win over lively Villarreal, with two goals from Brazilian hitman Luis Fabiano.

Sevilla now have 22 points from 10 games, one point more than Valencia, who beat Zaragoza 3-1 earlier Sunday. Sevilla are three points behind second-place Real Madrid, 3-2 winners over luckless Atletico in Saturday's Madrid derby.

Real are now just one point behind leaders Barcelona, who thrashed Mallorca 4-2 Saturday.

'We had to work really hard for this victory,' Sevilla's Sergio Sanchez said. 'They made things hard for us all match, and we had to really take our chances tonight.'

Luis Fabiano gave Sevilla the lead after just 10 minutes, only for the ageless Robert Pires to make it 1-1 on the half hour.

David Fuster put Villarreal ahead in the 59th minute, but Luis Fabiano quickly made it 2-2 before Frederic Kanoute headed in the winner.

Villarreal, who reached the quarter-finals of the Champions League last season, are now fifth from bottom.

Earlier Sunday, Valencia beat defensively feeble Zaragoza with first-half goals from Spanish internationals Juan Mata, David Villa and Pablo Hernandez.

'This is our third consecutive win,' said Pablo, 'which shows that we are improving as a team.'

Zaragoza coach Marcelino Garcia had his defence too far forward, which allowed Valencia to hit balls over the top and take advantage of the speed of Mata, Villa and Pablo.

In the 17th minute, Mata made it 1-0 with a deft finish, despite a suspicion of offside.

Five minutes before half-time, Pablo latched on to a long ball and centred for Villa - league top scorer with eight goals - to make it 2-0. Villa returned the complement two minutes later, setting up Pablo for the third.

Valencia eased up in the second half, and the promising Abel Aguilar pulled a goal back for Zaragoza, but the visitors never seemed capable of saving the day.

Sunday brought wins for Sporting Gijon, Athletic Bilbao and Almeria.

Gijon moved up to seventh with a 1-0 home win over Espanyol. The only goal was scored by Mate Bilic after just four minutes, after being set up by Diego Castro.

In eighth place, level on 16 points with Gijon, are Bilbao, who won 2-0 at Racing Santander on goals from Carlos Gurpegi and Andoni Iraola.

Almeria, meanwhile, were beating Osasuna 2-0, thanks to an own goal from Osasuna defender Josetxo and a late strike from Kalu Uche.

Sunday's other early game was a colourless 0-0 draw between Valladolid and Xerez.

These results leave Malaga bottom with just five points. Then come Xerez on six and Atletico Madrid and Santander on seven, followed by Villarreal on eight.

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