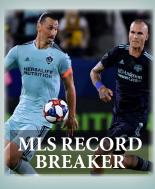
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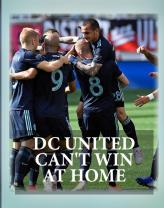
APRIL 2019

WEEK 17













Chicago Fire Soccer Club Dominates the Colorado Rapids in 4-1 Win

The Chicago Fire Soccer Club (2-2-3, 9 points) recorded a strong 4-1 win over the Colorado Rapids (0-6-2, 2 points) at SeatGeek Stadium on Saturday afternoon, extending its unbeaten run to four games. Four different players scored in the win for the Men in Red, including forward Nemanja Nikolić and midfielders Aleksandar Katai, Djordje Mihailović and CJ Sapong.

Additionally, midfielder Nicolás Gaitán, who made his second consecutive start in the match, tallied his first two assists in MLS play, setting up Nikolić and Mihailović for close-range finishes in the second half. The Fire also received assists from Katai, Sapong and team captain Dax McCarty, as the team routed the Rapids in its largest margin of victory in 2019.

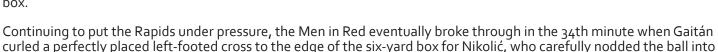
With the 4-1 result, the Fire extended its all-time regular season record against the Rapids to 20-14-10, including a 17-4-2 mark at SeatGeek Stadium.

The Fire's first chance of the match came from a piercing through ball from Gaitán in the 15th minute of play. Receiving the ball in space in the attacking third, Gaitán played a diagonal through ball in behind the Rapids defense for Sapong, who attempted to find Nikolić with a cross inside the six-yard box but narrowly missed the striker.

With the game approaching the 30th minute mark, Katai nearly provided the



the back of the net to tally his third goal of the season. The finish marked Nikolić's third straight match with a goal.



One minute later, with the Fire on the front foot, Katai came close to doubling the team's lead through a counter attacking play on the left wing. Cutting in on his right foot, Katai curled a high and powerful effort that sailed just wide of the top corner.

With five minutes remaining in the first half, Colorado managed to level the score off a corner kick when forward Kei Kamara's header deflected into the goal.

After a tightly contested first half, the Fire jumped out to a strong start in the final 45 minutes by scoring twice in an eight-minute span. The Men in Red's second goal of the game stemmed from winning possession of the ball near the center circle. McCarty then sprayed the ball wide to Katai who sprinted into the box and played the ball across the face of the goal. Attacking Katai's pass, Sapong slid and converted from close range to regain the lead and notch his team-leading fourth goal of the season.

Shortly after Sapong's finish, the Fire doubled its lead when a sublime build-up play led to Mihailović's first goal of the season in the 61st minute. The sequence started with Sapong clipping a pass inside the 18-yard box for Gaitán, who played a no-look pass back across the goal to create a comfortable tap-in for Mihailović.

With just over 10 minutes remaining in the game, Katai provided the final goal with a superb effort from distance. After receiving a driven ball from midfielder Mo Adams, Katai drifted inside and curled a powerful effort into the far corner from just outside the 18-yard box, notching his first goal of the 2019 campaign.

Next up, the Fire will begin a three-game road swing when the team travels to face New York City FC at Yankee Stadium on Wednesday, April 24. Beginning at 6:00 p.m. CT, the match against NYCFC will be broadcast live on ESPN+ and transmitted locally on Univision Radio WRTO AM 1200.



Chicago Fire Soccer Club continued...

Match notes:

Nikolić scored for a third straight game in Saturday's match, scoring the opening goal to post his third of the season. The striker's 42 regular season goals rank as the third-most in Club history, dating back to 1998.

Sapong scored his teamleading fourth goal of the season. He also posted his second assist of the season. Mihailović tallied his first

Mihailović tallied his first goal of the season and the third of his MLS career. Katai notched his first goal of the 2019 season. McCarty posted his first assist of the season. On Friday morning, McCarty and wife Jennifer announced the arrival of their newborn son, Callum Jerry McCarty (article). Gaitán tallied two assists in the 4-1 win, marking his



first pair of assists with the Chicago Fire.

With the win, the Fire are unbeaten in its last four matches in league play.

Since 1998, the Fire have posted a 20-14-10 record against the Rapids, including a 17-4-2 mark at home.

The four goals scored against Colorado ranks as a team-high in 2019.

Box Score:

Chicago Fire 4:1 Colorado Rapids

Scoring Summary:

CHI – Nikolić (3) (Gaitán) 34' COL – Kamara (5) 40' CHI – Sapong (4) (Katai, McCarty) 53'

CHI – Mihailović (1) (Gaitán, Sapong) 61' CHI – Katai (1) 80'

Misconduct Summary:

COL – Rubio (Caution) 31' CHI – Adams (Caution) 84' COL – Price (Ejection) 86'

Chicago Fire: GK Ousted, D Kappelhof, D Marcelo, D Schweinsteiger, D Gutjahr, M McCarty ©, M Mihailović (Adams 62'), M Katai, M Gaitán, M Sapong (Moreno 84'), F Nikolić (Bronico 76')

Subs not used: Sánchez, Campos, Lillard, Martinez

Shots: 13 Shots on goal: 5 Fouls Committed: 8 Fouls Suffered: 14 Offsides: 6 Corners: 5

Colorado Rapids: GK Howard ©, D Rosenberry, D Opare, D Smith, D Vines, M Feilhaber, M Price, M Acosta (Nicholson 46'), M Mezquida (Serna 65'), F Rubio (Bassett 90'), F Kamara

Subs not used: GK Irwin, D Sjoberg, D Anderson, F Shinyashiki

Shots: 9 Shots on goal: 2 Fouls Committed: 14 Fouls Suffered: 8 Offsides: 2 Corners: 1

Referee: Dave Gantar Assistant Referees: Apolinar Mariscal, Chris Wattam

Fourth Official: Tim Ford VAR: Kevin Terry Jr

Attendance: 12,967

CREDIT: CHICAGO FIRE SOCCER CLUB

















DC United 0, New York City FC 2

New York City FC, at long last, have their first victory of the 2019 season, as they left Audi Field with a 2-0 win over D.C. United in Week 8.

The star of the show was Heber, starting in his first-ever game since arriving in late March from Croatian club HNK Rijeka. He laced hem in the 56th minute, putting a game to bed that was already belonging to NYCFC after Alexandru Mitrita riffled home a 35th-minute strike that deflected off D.C. center back Frederic Brillant.

The scoreline could have been more lopsided if not for some misfortune for NYCFC's Maxi Moralez, who smashed a penalty kick off the post in first-half stoppage time. Moralez then hit the post yet again in the 56th minute, evading a full-stretch dive from Bill Hamid.

D.C., now winless in three games at home, was bereft of ideas in the attacking third. Their best chances came off set pieces through Wayne Rooney, but otherwise Luciano Acosta was held quiet.

A big part of D.C.'s quiet afternoon came down to a formation change from head coach Dome Torrent. He deployed NYCFC with three center backs, with 18-year-old James Sands anchoring the group with play beyond his years.



Goals

35' – NYC – Alexandru Mitrita

56' - NYC - Heber

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: For the third straight match, D.C. United failed to secure all three points and were held scoreless at Audi Field. This oW-2L-1D home stretch is the club's worst at their new soccer stadium. Meanwhile, NYCFC put forth their best performance of 2019 with the win giving the Cityzens their first of the season, leaving the Colorado Rapids as the only winless club in MLS.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: When Maxi Moralez smashed his first-half penalty kick off the post, it looked as though D.C. had received a lifeline to crawl back in the second 45 minutes. The opposite happened, though, as the home side failed to build much offense and NYCFC put the game to bed. A possible momentum swing dissipated as quickly as it arrived.

MAN OF THE MATCH: The only logical option here is Heber, who produced quite the first start in MLS. He laced home a left-footed shot in the second half to make it 2-0, having already assisted Alexandru Mitrita's eventual game-winner. It's too early to call Heber a David Villa replacement, but it's becoming clear why the Brazilian scored 25 goals in 38 appearances last year for Croatian side HNK Rijeka.



Tu estacion orgullosamente latina !!!

Atlanta United FC 1, FC Dallas 2

Jesus Ferreira scored for the second consecutive game and FC Dallas survived a second-half onslaught before a late Bryan Acosta insurance goal to defeat Atlanta United, 2-1, Saturday afternoon at Mercedes Benz Stadium.

Ferreira's goal started with a tremendous turn into space in midfield to avoid a sliding Leandro Gonzalez Pirez by Michael Barrios, who played to Ferreira inside the box. The 18-year-old took a touch with the outside of his right foot before calmly slotting past Brad Guzan and with Michael Parkhurst bearing down.

The sixth-minute strike was Ferrera's third in his last four appearances.

Ezequiel Barco, who struck for his first MLS brace in a tidy 2-0 win over the New England Revolution last weekend, had a pair of chances to level 10 minutes apart in the first half, but he smashed a shot off the post and was denied by Jesse Gonzalez, who punched away his free kick.



The young Argentine caromed another attempt off the crossbar with a free kick just past the hour mark.

Gonzalez came up huge in the 79th minute, diving to push aside a Josef Martinez shot inside the box and denying the reigning MLS Golden Boot presented by Audi award winner in the waning moments, diving to his right to slap away his close-range shot.

Completely against the run of play, Acosta latched onto a Barrios cross and smashed home the insurance goal.

Martinez scored from the penalty spot deep in second-half stoppage time to give the hosts a late lifeline, but the final whistle came moments later, followed by a chorus of boos from the home fans.

Goals

6′ — DAL — Jesus Ferreira 84′ — DAL — Bryan Acosta 90′+7′ — ATL — Josef Martinez (PK)

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: A match between two teams with a lot of young, attacking talent, this one didn't disappoint. FC Dallas made a big statement with a win at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, something only three other teams have been able to accomplish. Meanwhile, all those good feelings from the defending MLS Cup champion's first win of the year are out the window, especially from the hordes of their passionate, yet frustrated, fans.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: It's debatable what's more impressive, the turn at midfield by Barrios or the mature finish by Ferreira, a big part of FC Dallas' impressive youth movement.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Barrios was a thorn in the side of the Five Stripes, especially Gonzalez Pirez, who he left in the dust in the buildup to the game's first goal. For good measure, he also assisted on Acosta's goal that sent the fans to the exits early.

CREDIT: Dylan Butler Contributor



San Jose Earthquakes 4, Sporting Kansas City 1

The San Jose Earthquakes rode two early Danny Hoesen goals and cruised to a convincing 4-1 win over Sporting Kansas City in Week 8 action at Avaya Stadium.

Hoesen opened the scoring both of his goals inside the first 12 minutes of play. On the first, Anibal Godoy sent a long ball from his own half over two defenders that Hoesen brought down with his chest inside the box and shot past onrushing goalkeeper Tim Melia.

Hoesen then did well to beat an offside trap — as confirmed by Video Review — to catch up to a chip from Jackson Yueill over the SKC defense. The Dutchman entered the area from the left, then cut back on a defender to his right and shot past Melia for his brace.

Unfortunately for the visitors, defender Matt Besler went down injured on the play and was forced to leave the match.

Sporting had a chance to cut into the lead not long after, but Krisztian Nemeth sailed his penalty kick attempt over the crossbar.



San Jose essentially put the game away just seconds after the break when Shea Salinas entered the box from the left side and curled in a beautiful ball to the far corner.

Magnus Eriksson added a fourth before Sporting Kansas City's Felipe Guterrez converted a penalty kick to avoid the shutout.

Goals

6' — SJ — Danny Hoesen

12' — SJ — Danny Hoesen

46' — SJ — Shea Salinas

61' — SJ — Magnus Eriksson

66 — SKC — Felipe Gutierrez (PK)

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: After starting the season with four straight losses and leaking goals at a high rate, San Jose has now had three straight solid outings — including two wins by three-goal margins. Sporting Kansas City had come from behind to earn points in three of their last four matches, but the hole tonight was too deep.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: Sporting supporters are only left to wonder how differently the match would've played out had it not been for this penalty kick miss by Krisztian Nemeth which could've cut the deficit to a single goal:

MAN OF THE MATCH: Danny Hoesen set the tone with his two early and quick goals, allowing San Jose to play free in their highest scoring match of the season.

CREDIT: German Sferra Contributor

Ibrahimovic closes in on MLS record with penalty strike against Houston

The Swede struck again from the penalty spot, pulling him within striking distance of a long-standing MLS record Zlatan Ibrahimovic continues to light up Major League Soccer, and is closing in on a historic mark as he nears a full-season worth of matches for the LA Galaxy.

Ibrahimovic was on target again on Friday night, scoring from the penalty spot as the LA Galaxy took a 2-1 win over the previously unbeaten Houston Dynamo.

The 37-year-old forward netted his seventh goal of the current MLS season on Friday, putting him second in the scoring charts behind crosstown rival Carlos Vela.

More importantaly, the goal was the 29th scored by the former Manchester United and PSG star since joining the league, with that total coming in just 32 matches.

That total leaves Ibrahimovic just three goals shy of Mamadou Diallo, who holds the record for the best full-season start in MLS history with 32 goals in his first 34 matches back in 2000 and 2001.

His two chances to break that mark will, should he not be rested, come against Minnesota United on Wednesday and

Real Salt Lake next Sunday.

"We're doing good, I know we can do more," Ibrahimovic told the club's website earlier this week. "We work hard. Individually I feel very good. I feel comfortable, safe with what I'm doing.

"And I want to do more. I have a lot of will, a lot of hunger to achieve my objectives. work hard for it and I'm not satisfied with what I have done so far. I want more."

@LAGalaxy
You can't stop @lbra_official_You

You can't stop @Ibra_official. You can't hope to contain him either.

3,689 10:47 PM - Apr 19, 2019 475 people are talking about this



Another player off to a flying start in MLS is Toronto FC's Alejandro Pozuelo, who netted twice in a 4-3 win for TFC on Friday night over Minnesota.

The man brought in to replace Sebastian Giovinco has lived up to the billing and leads the league in assists, but turned into a scoring machine against the Loons.

With his club down 1-0 in the first half, Pozuelo scored twice in the space of 110 seconds, tying a club record, to put his team out in front heading into halftime.

Minnesota United came back with two goals of their own before a late Jordan Hamilton double handed TFC its fourth win in six matches to open the season as the club battles with D.C. United for the top spot in the Eastern Conference.

CREDIT: www.goal.com



Toronto FC 4, Minnesota United FC 3

In a match with seven goals scored, three braces and four lead changes on the night, substitute Jordan Hamilton was the hero as the Toronto FC Homegrown forward notched a late double to cap a wild 4-3 win over Minnesota United at BMO Field on MLS Friday Night on TSN.

Minnesota took the lead in the 17th minute, as Darwin Quintero beat goalkeeper Alex Bono to a ball in Toronto's box and tapped it into the open net. It was the Colombian's fourth goal in six games this season.

But Alejandro Pozuelo scored a quick-fire brace to flip the scoreline for Toronto. His first goal came on an open-field counterattack, as he was afforded space and unleashed a rocket from outside the 18-yard box. Then, two minutes later he hammered home another goal from a low cross in the box to put his team up 2-1.

The Loons didn't give up, and striker Angelo Rodriguez headed in a cross from right back Romain Metanire just before the hour mark to make it 2-2. Rodriguez also drew a penalty from a Chris Mavinga foul, and Quintero scored from the spot in the 70th minute to put the visitors ahead once more 3-2.

The game turned again when Hamilton entered off the bench for TFC, and he scored two goals of his own in two minutes, his first career MLS brace. It put the home side up 4-3 late and Toronto held on against nine-man MNUFC after two late red cards to Jan Gregus and Francisco Calvo.

Goals

17' - MIN - Darwin Quintero

28' - TOR - Alejandro Pozuelo

30'-TOR-Alejandro Pozuelo

57' - MIN - Angelo Rodriguez

70' - MIN - Darwin Quintero (PK)

77' – TOR – Jordan Hamilton

79' – TOR – Jordan Hamilton



Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: Although they are conceding more goals in 2019 (11 in just 6 matches), Toronto FC (4W-1L-1D) are showing they're comfortable winning high-scoring affairs. Minnesota will be disappointed they gave up a lead twice on the road, but the late meltdown showed they have room for growth yet.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: Hamilton's winner was a near-mirror image of his first, as he battled defender Michael Boxall to a ball, beat the defender, and punched it in.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Hamilton's brace leads the story of the game, but Pozuelo was most influential, with two goals and an assist on the winner to deliver three points to TFC.

CREDIT: Alicia Rodriquez Contributor



FC Cincinnati 0, Real Salt Lake 3

A brace by Albert Rusnak and an additional goal by Sam Johnson propelled Real Salt Lake to their first away win of the year, 3-o, over FC Cincinnati at Nippert Stadium on Friday night.

FC Cincinnati dominated much of the first half, setting up scoring opportunities with nine corner kicks (to RSL's zero), with one of their best chances boldly headed off the line by Jefferson Savarino. But mere minutes after getting hit with a yellow card and then dislocating his finger, Rusnak got in great position to slam home a rebounded Corey Baird shot for the opener. Then, just before halftime, multiple RSL players converged on goal for a multiple-shot sequence; Johnson finally got over the line with his attempt.

Though FCC looked keener coming out of the break, hitting the post on a corner kick four minutes in the half,

they ended up helping out RSL further close to the hour mark. Mathieu Deplagne chopped Savarino down with a tackle in the box, and Rusnak took the resulting PK for his second goal of the night.

Goals

42' – RSL – Albert Rusnak 45' + 2' – RSL – Sam Johnson 59' – RSL – Albert Rusnak (PK)

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: Real Salt Lake have to be happy to get their first road win of the year, after breaking a four-match losing skid last weekend during a particularly tough part of their schedule. They look up for the battle that Western Conference playoff qualifying will provide. At



first, this might look like a random Friday night loss for FC Cincinnati. However, it's the fourth straight match in which FCC have failed to score from open play, and that should be cause for concern.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: It only took one goal for RSL to win the match, and Rusnak — with adrenaline no doubt still coursing through his body after his gruesome finger injury — did well to calmly finish a blocked attempt.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Though this clearly belongs to Rusnak, an additional special mention should go out to RSL 'keeper Andrew Putna, who started for a held-back Nick Rimando and recorded a shutout.

CREDIT: MLS SOCCER Phil West Contributor



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