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MAGAZINE







CHICAGO FIRE VVIN 2 IN A ROW



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Chicago Fire Soccer Club Defeats Minnesota United FC 2-0

The Chicago Fire Soccer Club (4-4-4, 16 points) defeated Minnesota United FC (4-4-3, 15 points) 2-0 at SeatGeek Stadium on Saturday. With the win, the Men in Red extended its unbeaten run to three games, notching its third straight clean sheet and second consecutive victory.

Receiving first half goals from midfielders Nicolás Gaitán and Aleksandar Katai, the Fire tallied its fourth home win of the season, which ranks as the second-most in MLS in 2019. Additionally, following Saturday's 2-0 result, the Fire have scored the second-most goals (16) at home this season, ranking only behind the Philadelphia Union (17).

The Fire struck the woodwork three minutes into the game when a deep throw in from defender Jorge Corrales

released forward Nemanja Nikolić in behind the defense. Running onto Corrales' throw, Nikolić played the ball back across the 18-yard box for Katai, who rattled his final effort off the post.

Five minutes later, the Men in Red created another solid opportunity when Katai drifted inside the right side of the 18-yard box and fired a low effort that forced a diving save from goalkeeper Vito Mannone. The goalkeeper's save deflected to Nikolić, who was charging toward goal, but the striker had to react quickly and knocked his final effort just wide of the target in the eighth minute.

In the 21st minute, the Fire took the lead after a well-orchestrated counter attacking sequence. The play started when midfielder Dax McCarty

recovered a loose ball on the edge of the Fire's 18-yard box and quickly combined with Gaitán, before springing midfielder Przemysław Frankowski into space. Carrying the ball deep inside Minnesota United's half, Frankowski unselfishly played the ball back across the 18-yard box for Gaitán, who took a touch past Mannone and calmly slotted his strike into the back of the net.

The Fire doubled its lead in the 34th minute of play when Katai scored his second goal of the season. The crafty midfielder was able to find the back of the net after defender Johan Kappelhof won the ball in midfield and knocked it forward to Katai, who ventured into the box and converted a left-footed finish from a difficult angle.

Continuing to press forward in the second half, the Fire created another chance through Katai in the 74thminute of play. Drifting inside the 18-yard box, Katai blasted a left-footed effort that forced a strong save from Mannone with just over 15 minutes remaining in the match.

Looking ahead, the Fire's next match will take place against the San Jose Earthquakes at Avaya Stadium on Saturday, May 18. Beginning at 2:30 p.m. CT, the match will be broadcast live on ESPN+ and transmitted locally on Univision Radio WRTO AM 1200.

Notes:

Gaitán recorded a goal for a second straight game. He has scored two goals this season.

Katai scored his second goal of the season.

Goalkeeper David Ousted posted the 46th clean sheet of his MLS career.

The Fire notched its fourth clean sheet of the season, which ranks tied as the third-most in MLS.

The Fire have tallied three straight clean sheets in seven days, holding its opponents scoreless for 270 minutes.

The Fire posted its fourth home win of the season, which ranks as the second-most in MLS.

The Fire also ranks second in MLS in goals scored at home (16).

The Men in Red's three clean sheets at home ranks tied as the most in MLS.



FC Cincinnati 2, Montreal Impact 1

Allan Cruz snapped FC Cincinnati's scoreless drought, substitute Fatai Alashe finished off a slick counterattack for a second, and 29-year-old interim boss Yoann Damet made more history by recording his first MLS coaching victory in Cincy's 2-1 triumph over the Montreal Impact on Saturday afternoon.

Spencer Richey snuffed out Anthony Jackon-Hamel's late breakaway to ensure FC Cincy wrapped up all three points at Nippert Stadium in their first match since the dismissal of coach Alan Koch, and snapped their winless stretch at seven matches.

Orji Okwonkwo pulled a goal back for the Impact 12 minutes after his entrance, and 15 minutes from full

time. But Montreal fell to their fifth defeat of the season, four of which have come during an Eastern Conference-most 10 away matches.

Goals 7' - CIN - Allan Cruz 62' - CIN - Fatai Alashe 75' - MTL - Orji Okwonkwo

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: While the result was important, the aesthetics under Damet may be even more promising for Cincinnati fans wanting to see signs Current Contempties Contempties Amerita Mills FARTASY MATCH Contempties Mills FARTASY MATCH Contempties Match Contemptie

of life. The hosts completed 571 passes, more than 100 more than their opponents, with an 83-percent completion rate. For Montreal, it's an opportunity lost to move atop the Eastern Conference standings, but with so many home matches to come, not a particularly damaging one.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: Alashe's came from some of the most incisive play we've seen from Cincinnati this year down the right flank. Leonardo Bertone sprung Roland Lamah down the right flank with his exceptional first-touch pass, and Lamah made the right decision by dragging his cross back toward the penalty arc where Alashe came through with a classy one-time finish.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Victor Ulloa. The FC Dallas academy product and holding midfielder kept the Orange and Blue tight and connected through most of the afternoon, a cohesion that showed up in the team passing stats and in both goals.



FC Dallas 1, New York Red Bulls 3

Sean Nealis headed in a Michael Murillo strike from just inside the box in the 58th minute for the gamewinner, and the New York Red Bulls stunned FC Dallas 3-1 Saturday at Toyota Stadium for their third win in four matches.

In a surprise move, Red Bulls head coach Chris Armas changed 10 of his 11 starters from Wednesday, when his team lost 2-1 to the Montreal Impact at Red Bull Arena. Luis Robles, Bradley Wright-Phillips, Daniel Royer, Marc Rzatkowski and Aaron Long did not travel with the team to Texas.

Cristian Casseres Jr. gave the visitors the early lead in the 12th minute, the 19-year-old making the most of his fifth start of the season. Casseres Jr. had a clear shot after



Andreas Ivan's pass reached him from the wing, and the Venezuelan put away his second goal of the season.

Jesus Ferreira drew FC Dallas even in stoppage time of the first half with his fourth goal of the season, heading in Jacori Hayes' service into the box. Ferreira entered the game as substitute when Dominique Badji went down with an injury in the 28th minute and had to come off the pitch.

Ryan Meara stopped second-half substitute Zdenek Ondrasek's shot with a dive and deflection in the 71st minute before Brian White finished off FCD with a goal in the 85th minute.

Goals 12' – NYRB – Cristian Casseres 45'+2 – DAL – Jesus Ferreira 58' – NYRB – Sean Nealis 85' – NYRB – Brian White

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: Despite two wins in three matches, the Red Bulls went with a lineup overhaul. It got results even though FC Dallas dominated possession. For Dallas, it was another frustrating afternoon a week after having a game-tying goal in stoppage time wiped out.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: Meara made sure FC Dallas didn't take over in the second half. He stretched out to stop Ondrasek and keep the Red Bulls in front.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Meara, with his five saves, helped lead a team full of young players to a confidencebuilding road victory.





Toronto FC 1, Philadelphia Union 2

Jamiro Monteiro scored his second MLS goal on a swift counter-attack in the 68th minute, and the Philadelphia Union bolstered their spot atop the Eastern Conference with a professional 2-1 victory over Toronto FC on Saturday afternoon at BMO Field.

Chis Mavinga was also pressured into an early own goal by Kai Wagner's cross toward Fafa Picault to put the visitors

in front en route to a third consecutive victory. They'll finish the weekend at worst tied for first on points with D.C. United, who could make up a three-point gap with a win Sunday but currently trail by six in the goal-differential tiebreaker.

Toronto playmaker Alejandro Pozuelo answered with a set piece strike shortly after the break. But the Reds couldn't find a second equalizer even after Jozy Altidore's return from a hamstring ailment in the 72nd minute, one marred by injury exits of Auro and Laurent Ciman.



Goals

25' - PHI - Chris Mavinga (OG 51' - TOR - Alejandro Pozuelo 68' - PHI - Jamiro Monteiro

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: The Union are rolling, solidifying their position atop the Eastern Conference with only their third-ever win in 12 all-time trips to Toronto. In fact, Philly are off to their best start in club history, having won an unprecedented seven of their last nine matches. Meanwhile, Toronto have lost two straight overall and at home, and their defensive struggles have returned.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: The Reds had been looking more likely to take the lead after Pozuelo's fifth MLS goal, but perhaps were chasing that goal too agressively when they were ruthlessly punished. Monteiro combined expertly with Kacper Przybylko down the left, then finished the devastating move himself.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Kacper Przybylko. The Polish national has been increasingly influential of late for Philadelphia. On Saturday, he was involved on the buildup to both goals and a recurring threat down the left flank on the counterattack. After scoring in each of the Union's last three matches, he picked up his first MLS assist and would've had a second if Philly's opener hadn't been correctly ruled an own goal.

New England Revolution 3, San Jose Earthquakes 1

A few days after parting ways with Brad Friedel, the New England Revolution put forth an inspired performance to defeat the San Jose Earthquakes, 3-1, Saturday night at Gillette Stadium.

Under interim coach Mike Lapper, the Revs snapped a four-match winless streak, which included three lopsided defeats. The Earthquakes, meanwhile, had their four-match unbeaten streak snapped.

Juan Agudelo opened the scoring in the 18th minute, calling for, and then, latching onto an Edgar Castillo cross, beating Nick Lima to the edge of the six-yard

box before burying the volley.

New England doubled its advantage just before the half-hour mark on a Cristian Penilla corner kick. Teal Bunbury ran onto a Brandon Bye long ball, spun Harold Cummings before the Panamanian defender grabbed him on the shoulder. Bunbury went down and referee Guido Gonzales Jr. pointed to the spot.

There was also a Video Review for a red card for possible DOGSO, but Cummings was only shown a yellow card.

Carles Gil put the Revs third win of

the season away in the 68th minute. Fresh off the substitute's bench, Tajon Buchanan took on Lima, who blocked his initial shot. The ball bounced back to Buchanan, who poked a pass to Gil, who settled quickly before finishing from close range.

After Chris Wondolowski was denied on a back heel from in front of the net, Vako pulled the Quakes within two goals two minutes from full time.

Goals

18' — NE — Juan Agudelo 29' — NE — Cristian Penilla (PK) 68' — NE — Carles Gil 88' — SJ — Vako

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: Andrew Farrell said before the game the Revs wanted to score a lot of goals, not concede any and win the game. Mission accomplished in Lapper's first game in charge as an interim coach. The Quakes offered little resistance outside of Vako's late goal in their first loss in nearly a month.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: The game hinged on this penalty kick decision. Did Gonzales Jr. get it right or was it too soft?

MAN OF THE MATCH: Farrell put in a solid shift defensively for a Revs team that was two minutes from their second clean sheet of the season. He had six clearances, three headed clearances, two tackles won and one interception in his go-minute effort.



LA Galaxy 0, New York City FC 2

NYCFC are rollin'.

Dome Torrent's side went to Dignity Sports Health Park and defeated the LA Galaxy 2-0, behind first-half goals from Heber and Maxi Moralez. They have now won four of their last five matches, while Zlatan Ibrahimovic and the Galaxy are trending in the opposite direction, losers of three consecutive games.

Heber gave NYCFC the lead in the first half, tapping home a rebound following an Anton Tinnerholm shot. He has three goals and three assists in his first seven appearances (five starts) since joining the club. Then, just moments before halftime, NYCFC doubled their advantage as Moralez converted a penalty after twice missing from the spot previously in 2019.

The second goal was subject to a VAR check for both offside and a potential penalty, eventually ruling that Tinnerholm was onside and that Uriel Antuna was guilty of a handball on the Swede's attempted cross. Prior to NYCFC's goals, Ibrahimovic thought he broke the deadlock against the run of play in the 27th minute, but the offside flag raised as the 37-year-old tapped into an empty net.

Fresh off their injury absences and snubs from the US U-20 World Cup roster, teenagers James Sands and Julian Araujo each started for their clubs. Recent Galaxy signing Giancarlo Gonzalez made his first start for the club, as Guillermo Barros Schelotto opted for a back three from the start, before switching to a back-four at halftime.

Goals 44' – NYC – Heber 45+6' – NYC – Maxi Moralez

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: Are NYCFC back? It certainly feels that way. They have just one loss this season and are starting to turn those frustrating draws into wins, particularly on the road with victories at Montreal Impact, D.C. United and now the Galaxy away from Yankee Stadium.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: After surprisingly struggling from 12-yards, Moralez scoring from the spot surely helped exorcize some demons.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Anton Tinnerholm. He dominated the right flank and created both goals, even if he wasn't credited with assists. It's been a stellar campaign so far for the Swede.



Colorado Rapids 2, Real Salt Lake 3

The Colorado Rapids set a new MLS record for worst 11-game start to a season (oW-9L-2D) after falling to an eighth straight defeat in a highly entertaining Rocky Mountain Cup rivalry game against Real Salt Lake on Saturday night in Colorado.

The Rapids gamely rallied from a 2-o deficit to tie the game early in the second half, only to fall behind again and then see 119-goal-scorer Kei Kamara, responsible for half of Colorado's 14 goals entering the game, denied on a second-half penalty kick by RSL goalkeeper Andrew Putna. The Rapids dropped to o-2 under interim head coach Conor Casey. In a game replete with Video Review decisions and possibilities, Colorado were even denied a 93rd-minute equalizer from on-loan newcomer Lalas Abubakar due to a narrow offside decision.

The win was the third in five games for Real Salt Lake (4W-6L-1D), who scored a highlight-reel goal to make it 2-0 when Nick Besler hit a fantastic long ball, brought down impeccably by 2018 Rookie of the Year Corey Baird, who then finished calmly with the outside of his right foot.

The game-winning goal came in the 50th minute when Damir Kreilach beat Deklan Wynne to the end line and dropped

the ball back toward the middle of the penalty area, where Sam Johnson scrambled it in for his fourth goal in five games, helping Salt Lake get back above the playoff line in the Western Conference.

Goals

25' – RSL – Albert Rusnak (PK) 27' – RSL – Corey Baird 45'+3' – COL – Kellyn Acosta 47' – COL – Danny Wilson 50' – RSL – Sam Johnson

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: For all the momentum swings and controversies that featured in Commerce City on Saturday night, the result only served to reinforce Real Salt Lake's status as playoff contenders and just how far

Colorado are behind the pack when it comes to defending.

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MOMENT OF THE MATCH: Real Salt Lake are used to clutch penalty-kick saves, but instead of Nick Rimando, it was Andrew Putna making the stop in the 59th minute, albeit from a Kei Kamara mis-hit.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Sam Johnson. It was not an overwhelming performance from Real Salt Lake or their Liberian Designated Player, but after demanding the ball following last week's loss to Portland, Johnson made good on his promise by scoring the game-winning goal. He also delivered a dynamite 70-yard run from his own penalty area following a corner kick, leading to a chance Joao Plata ripped off the post. RSL had better get him the ball.



Seattle Sounders 1, Houston Dynamo 0

An early wonder strike from Cristian Roldan was the difference for the Seattle Sounders, as they collected a 1-0 win over the Houston Dynamo on Saturday night.

Roldan's 5th-minute volley was hit with venom and precision, as he went chest-drop-shot into the top corner. It was midfielder's second straight golazo, as he left Minnesota United's Vito Mannone with no chance last week before doing the same to Houston's Joe Willis.

The Dynamo registered one shot on target all evening, though they enjoyed no shortage of quality chances. Alberth Elis, Mauro Manotas and Tommy McNamara all had golden opportunities to equalize, but were off the mark. It was just one of those days for Houston.

Raul Ruidiaz made his return to the XI for the Sounders, though Victor Rodriguez was subbed off in the 15th minute for Harry Shipp with a hamstring injury. Shipp forced a brilliant save from Willis in the 47th minute, while Nicolas Lodeiro struck the crossbar in the 43rd minute.

Goals 5' – SEA – Cristian Roldan

Three Things

THE BIG PICTURE: Houston entered with a league-best 2.38 points per game and often carried play against the Sounders. But the Dynamo lacked conviction in the final third and promptly dropped their second road game of the year. Seattle, slowly getting their



full XI back healthy, will take the three points to keep the pack tight atop the Western Conference standings. Alongside New York City FC and LAFC, they're one of three teams with one loss all season.

MOMENT OF THE MATCH: Take a bow, Cristian Roldan. For the second straight week, the US national team midfielder struck a picture-perfect volley to get the Sounders on the scoreboard. Chest, bounce, strike. It was a thing of beauty to make it 1-0 in the 5th minute.

MAN OF THE MATCH: There's no guarantee that Brad Smith finishes the year in Seattle, with his loan from Bournemouth set to last through June 30. However, the Australian left back keeps on putting in solid performances for the Sounders. His latest assignment was keeping Alberth Elis under wraps, and he passed the test with flying colors. Smith also boomed forward and joined the attack, whipping in crosses and combining with teammates.



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