

Everton stun Brighton as Fulham hit Leicester for 5

AFP | London

Everton moved out of the Premier League relegation zone with a stunning 5-1 win at Brighton on Monday, while Leicester's hopes of survival are hanging by a thread after a 5-3 defeat at Fulham.

Brighton are in the hunt to qualify for Europe for the first time in the club's history, but a heavy schedule looked to have taken its toll on Roberto De Zerbi's men as they were torn apart by an Everton side that had not won away since October.

The Toffees had the dream start as Abdoulaye Doucoure opened the scoring after just 34 seconds.

Doucoure's brilliant volley from Dwight McNeil's cross doubled Everton's lead before Brighton goalkeeper Jason Steele deflected McNeil's cross into his own net.

De Zerbi responded by making four half-time substitutions and Brighton peppered the



Fulham's Jamaican striker Bobby Decordova-Reid runs with the ball during the English Premier League football match

Everton goal but were caught out on the counter-attack when McNeil showed great poise to round Steele to make it 4-0.

Alexis Mac Allister finally pulled a goal back after Kaoru Mitoma's initial effort came off the post.

But McNeil fittingly had the final say as he rounded off a

brilliant performance in stoppage time by smashing into the top corner.

A first win in eight games lifts Sean Dyche's men two points clear of the drop zone.

Brighton remain in seventh, two points behind Tottenham with two games in hand, but their outside shot at a top-four

finish now appears gone.

Leicester's mental struggles - Leicester boss Dean Smith admitted his players might be struggling with the pressures of a relegation battle after a disastrous defensive display at Craven Cottage.

The Foxes, who won the Premier League in stunning fashion in 2016 and lifted the FA Cup two years ago, are staring relegation in the face.

Leicester remain outside the relegation zone on goal difference for now but could end the day in the bottom three should Nottingham Forest avoid defeat at home to Southampton.

Smith's men also face a tough run-in with Champions League-chasing Liverpool and Newcastle to come before ending the season at home to West Ham.

Only Leeds and Bournemouth have conceded more goals than Leicester in the Premier League and defensive deficiencies were again their undoing at Craven Cottage.

Sunderland into Championship play-offs after Millwall collapse

London

Sunderland secured their place in English football's Championship play-offs with a 3-0 win away to Preston yesterday but only after Millwall suffered an extraordinary loss at home to Blackburn Rovers.

The final day of the regular second-tier season kicked off with Millwall knowing a win would guarantee their place in the play-offs that decide the last available spot on offer in next term's lucrative Premier League.

Burnley, the champions, and second-placed Sheffield United were already assured of automatic promotion.

But the identity of the clubs finishing fifth and sixth -- the teams that would join third-placed Luton and fourth-placed Middlesbrough in the play-offs -- had still to be decided.

All seemed set fair for south London club Millwall when they led 3-1 at the interval following two goals from Duncan Watmore and one from Oliver Burke.

But with Joe Rankin-Costello having reduced the deficit,



Sunderland's English goalkeeper Anthony Patterson (C) watches the ball from a shot that went over the bar by Fulham's Brazilian midfielder Andreas Pereira (2L) during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between Fulham and Sunderland at Craven Cottage in Fulham, west London

Ben Brereton Diaz's second-half double inspired a Rovers revival as they won 4-3 at the New Den. "As soon as their (Blackburn's) second (goal) went in, you could see the nerves appear in the team," said Millwall manager Gary Rowett.

Sunderland's win at Preston meant the northeast side took sixth place, with Blackburn leapfrogging Millwall only to be denied a play-off position of their own on goal difference.

"I felt as though we could come here and control the game," said Sunderland manager Tony Mowbray.

He added: "We didn't have harsh words at half-time, but we discussed that we needed to control the game better. We became more confident and, off the back of the first goal, we controlled things. It was a solid performance."

Coventry, meanwhile, claimed a final day point to finish fifth

and secure a play-off berth following a 1-1 draw at Middlesbrough -- who they will now meet in a two-legged semi-final.

Gustavo Hamer put the Sky Blues ahead before Cameron Archer equalised in first-half stoppage time.

West Brom, the other team that started the day with a chance to finish in the top six suffered a 3-2 defeat at Swansea, for whom Joel Piroe scored a stoppage-time winner.

Luton drew 0-0 at home to Hull and will now face Sunderland in the play-off semi-finals.

Burnley won 3-0 at home to Cardiff, with Josh Brownhill, Ashley Barnes and Scott Twine all scoring at Turf Moor as Vincent Kompany's team finished with 101 points, while Sheffield United won 2-1 at Birmingham.

Of the three relegated sides, Blackpool won 1-0 at Norwich thanks to Morgan Rogers's early goal and basement club Wigan drew 0-0 at home to Rotherham. Meanwhile, Reading lost 2-0 at Huddersfield, who had already secured their Championship status with a game to spare.

Apologetic Messi returns to training with PSG



Argentina's forward Lionel Messi, his wife Antonela Rocuzzo and their children visiting a horse stable in Riyadh

AFP | Paris

Monday.

Lionel Messi returned to training with Paris Saint-Germain yesterday six days after Argentina's World Cup-winning captain was suspended for going on an unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia.

"Leo Messi returns to training Monday morning," tweeted the club along with a photo of the 35-year-old in action.

His return makes it likely he will feature in PSG's home match with relegation-threatened Ajaccio next Saturday.

PSG hold the whip hand in defending their Ligue 1 title, a six point lead over Lens with four matches remaining.

He was suspended by the Qatar-owned club after failing to turn up for training last

Monday. Instead, the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner travelled to Saudi Arabia without PSG's permission to fulfil commitments as part of a contract with the country's tourist office.

Messi subsequently apologised in a video posted on Instagram to his 458 million followers.

"I had organised this trip to Saudi Arabia having cancelled it previously. This time I couldn't cancel it. I am sorry for what I did and I wait to see what the club decides to do."

The affair has made it increasingly unlikely that Messi will remain at PSG beyond this season, when his two-year contract with the club expires.

India name Kishan for World Test final against Australia

New Delhi

Batsman Ishan Kishan was yesterday named in India's squad for the upcoming World Test Championship final against Australia in place of the injured K.L. Rahul.

Rahul captains Lucknow Super Giants in the lucrative Indian Premier League but has been sidelined from the rest of the tournament with a right upper thigh injury.

The batsman, 31, will undergo surgery followed by rehab at the National Cricket Academy, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said in a statement.

"He is ruled out of the upcoming ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia," it said.

A decision on Jaydev Unadkat, who hurt his

left shoulder while training in the IPL, for the WTC final will be taken later, the statement added.

Kishan, 24, is uncapped in Test cricket, but has played 14 ODIs and 27 T20Is so far, and was also in the Test squad for the home series against Australia earlier this year.

He is the second wicketkeeper in India's WTC squad behind K.S. Bharat, who made his Test debut against Australia in February in the absence of Rishabh Pant.

Pant is recuperating after a car accident in December. The WTC final will be played at the Oval from June 7-11.

It will be India's second WTC final after they lost the decider in the inaugural edition to New Zealand in 2021.

Ishan Kishan

Alonso admits watching Miami action on TV mid-race

Miami Gardens

You might think that Formula One drivers powering around a track at average speeds of around 220 kph (136 mph) would have their eyes fixed solely on the road ahead and their rivals.

Not always it seems.

Veteran Aston Martin driver Fernando Alonso admitted he was following the action on the giant TV screens at the Miami

Grand Prix while driving to a third-place finish on Sunday.

Alonso gave the game away with his radio communication to his team where he commented on a move

with around 10 laps to go from his Canadian teammate Lance Stroll, who overtook Alex Albon in the Williams.

"Which position is Lance? Great

move into turn one," Alonso was caught saying on the team radio.

His comment caused puzzlement and amusement on the race broadcast commentary and when asked by reporters about the observation, he admitted he had seen the action on the course's big screens.

"I think this circuit, we have big TV screens out of some of the low speed corners. So it was very easy to follow the race on TV," he told the post-race press conference.

"I saw one overtake.. it was a little bit unexpected lonely race for us, we were thinking (we would have) a more difficult race."



Formula One World Champion Fernando Alonso is affected by Poland syndrome; he is missing the right pectoral muscle. Poland Syndrome was named for the investigator (Poland A) who initially described the condition in 1841. According to reports in the medical literature, Poland Syndrome appears to be three times as common in males as females

