

Novak Djokovic paid a warm tribute to Roger Federer, saying they had enjoyed 'a decade of incredible moments and battles.'



## Sport News

NEWCASTLE HELD BY BOURNEMOUTH

# Premier League 'draw specialists' drop 2 points

Howe brings Bruno Guimaraes straight back into the side in place of Sean Longstaff

Liam Kennedy Newcastle

**Newcastle United are making a name for themselves in the Premier League this season — but it is a moniker they would ideally want to avoid.**

Many see United not as European contenders or top six breakers, but as the top flight's "draw specialists" after they recorded their fifth draw in their opening seven games.

For Eddie Howe, against his former club, it yet again feels like two points dropped, rather than one gained.

And when you hit a cherry-red wall, you need a spark or some quality to break it down — and for Newcastle, as has been the case so often this season, they have found themselves wanting in that department yet again — that, despite the return to the side of Brazilian midfielder maestro Bruno Guimaraes.

Howe's men fell behind in the 62nd minute when Philip Billing poked home a cross from the left against the run of play. United bit back almost instantaneously as Alexander Isak hammered home from the spot, but that proved to be the final decisive action of yet another frustrating Tyneside encounter, just a fortnight after a similarly blunt draw, and opportunity missed, against Crystal Palace.

On the selection front, Howe brought Guimaraes straight back into the side in place of Sean Longstaff, with Dan Burn preferred to Sven Botman in the heart of defense.

And while the Magpies dominated the opening exchanges in terms of field position and possession, it was the visitors who created the first real goalscoring opportunity of the afternoon.

On the break, as they so often were, a ball in from the United right fell kindly on to the head of the impressive Marcus Tavernier, a former Newcastle academy



Bournemouth's Neto in action during Saturday's Premier League match against Newcastle at St. James' Park in northeast England. Reuters

graduate, but with Nick Pope beaten the effort looped wide.

Finding spaces in dangerous areas was not hard for United — they had that one locked down. But creating anything meaningful from it was another story altogether.

All too often Bournemouth keeper Neto was made to look like a world-beater as ball after ball was lobbed into his grateful grasp, from left and from right.

Some persistent play from the ever energetic Miguel Almiron saw him win the ball high and curl at goal, but again Neto was equal to it.

Trippier, often United's match-winner, then struck the post from an almost identical spot to his Manchester City free kick.

An injection of purpose and

tempo seemed to up the levels in the second half as Ryan Fraser, booed at every opportunity by the fans of his former club, curled just inches wide, then much to everyone's surprise, it was the back-foot Cherries who managed to turn an already sombre St James' Park even more deathly silent.

On 62 minutes United were caught on the break as a swift Bournemouth move down the left looked to find an opening. The first wave of progress was thwarted by the United backline only for Jordan Zennaro to curl a perfect ball into the area, and the advancing Billing to flick in at the near post with Pope helpless.

Far from retreating into their shell, United kept probing, with

Trippier their only real outlet on the right — and it was the England international who created an opportunity which led to the equalizer.

His low cross, which was searching for Isak at the back post, was diverted away from danger by the hand of a Bournemouth defender. And although his contribution to that point had been minimal, Sweden international Isak picked the ball up to send Neto the wrong way for 1-1.

And while the Magpies pushed for more, and looked the more likely to get another, their quest was to prove ultimately fruitless.

While the draw with Palace was recorded without trio Guimaraes, Allan Saint-Maximin and Callum

Wilson, this one did at least see the former return to the midfield.

And although that was a pre-game boost, it did not provide anywhere near the level of creativity United needed in the middle.

On this showing, it is more obvious than that the side misses Saint-Maximin more than most.

Even when not playing at the top of his game, the Frenchman is a constant source of headaches for the opposition. He stretches defenses and commits bodies. The only player who even got close to that level of influence at St James' Park was Trippier. But from right back, the England international was hardly going to win this one on his own. He gave it a good go, though.

## CAREER SUCCESS

# Indian tennis superstar Sania Mirza wants to inspire young athletes at Dubai academy

Winner of six Grand Slam titles announced her retirement this year, but says she is 'unsure' about her plans

Shaheera Anwar Karachi

When Sania Mirza became the first Indian to win a Women's Tennis Association event in 2005, the victory marked the beginning of her contributions to several firsts for tennis in the country.

Now, after an illustrious career that has turned Mirza into a symbol of confidence and resilience, the 35-year-old is carving out plans for a future beyond the court, where she hopes to inspire and nurture young talents in the sport she loves.

"For me, playing tennis was not about wanting to be famous one day or getting a lot of wealth; it was my love for it that overtook everything else," Mirza told Arab News in an exclusive interview.

"If I'm able to inspire even one girl to pick up a tennis racket, it would mean a lot."

India's most accomplished woman tennis player said that she has spent the past year setting up her tennis academy in Dubai, after establishing several facilities in her home country.

In the UAE, two chapters are currently up and running, with the

newest location, opened earlier this month, located in the Old Mehas area, where many people from the subcontinent reside.

"Dubai is my second home, it has been for a long time," she said, speaking from her UAE house.

"Our dream is to try to encourage young boys and girls to not just pick up cricket, but to pick up tennis and actually be good at it. Who knows, maybe we'll have a champion from Dubai someday."

As her conversation with Arab News briefly touched on the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Mirza said that the British monarch's passing felt like "an end of a couple of eras."

"It is definitely sad and I think it was personal on different levels for all of us, for many different reasons. I love royalty, so for me it was heartbreaking."

Mirza's own headline-making announcement occurred earlier this year in January, when she revealed that planned to retire from competition at the end of the 2022 season.

But the plan might change after injury forced her to pull out of the US Open last month.

"I still haven't recovered from



Sania Mirza has spent the past year setting up her tennis academy in the UAE, where she hopes to encourage a new generation of young athletes. Supplied

my injury, so I am unsure about my plans at the moment," she said. "Once I recuperate and begin training and playing, I will plan my next move."

Mirza, who first picked up the racket when she was six, has won six Grand Slam titles, including three mixed doubles trophies.

When her singles career was cut short by wrist injuries, she reinvented herself as a doubles

player and went on to become the first Indian to reach the top of the WTA doubles rankings in April 2015.

But the accomplishments that catapulted her to international fame were not without their challenges, Mirza said.

"I was the first to be able to win so many titles, but what people don't realize is that it was difficult to be the first one because there is

no path to follow; you're learning from your own mistakes," she said.

"The amount of work that goes into becoming a professional athlete and staying one for over two decades is hard. What everybody sees is only a few hours we're on the court, which is actually the easiest part."

After the athlete took maternity leave in 2018 to give birth to her first child with Pakistani cricket player Shoaib Malik, she faced scrutiny when she decided to return to the court.

"People are constantly judging my abilities as a mother. I should not have to choose between being a good mother and being a tennis player. Why can't I be both? Why am I being questioned if I'm able to give my family time, but a man is not being questioned for the same thing?"

Before she became pregnant, Mirza said that people had assumed the couple could not have children.

"It didn't occur to them that I am a professional athlete and that maybe my career was more important to me than having a child at that time," she said.

## Sport Briefs

THE BEST OF THE REST

Jan Oblak returns

**Real Madrid's Benzema to miss Atletico game**

Real Madrid will be without striker Karim Benzema for the Madrid derby clash with rivals Atletico Madrid, coach Carlo Ancelotti has confirmed.

The French forward has missed the team's last two games with a thigh injury and was hoping to be fit, but did not train with the team on Saturday.

"Benzema will not make the game," Ancelotti said ahead of Sunday's derby at the Wanda Metropolitano.

"He has started to work individually. He'll stay here during the international break to be ready to return when La Liga is back."

Atletico Madrid will have goalkeeper Jan Oblak back from injury, after he missed the 4-1 win over Celta Vigo in La Liga and Tuesday's 2-0 defeat at Bayer Leverkusen in the Champions League. **AFP**

Uproar in Brazil

**Outcry over 'racist' remark on Vinicius Junior**

Pele, Neymar and other big names in Brazilian football voiced outrage over a Spanish agent's allegedly racist comments on Brazil and Real Madrid star Vinicius Junior, whom he urged to stop "acting like a monkey."

Pedro Bravo, the head of the Spanish Football Agents' Association, made the comment on the "Chiringuito Show," one of Spain's top football TV programs, telling the 22-year-old player to stop celebrating his goals with his trademark dance moves.

Following the outpouring of support from fans and fellow footballers, Vinicius Jr. released a statement of his own. **AFP**



Prolific striker

**Haaland can get even better, says Guardiola**

Pep Guardiola has described Erling Haaland as the "perfect person" to manage but says the prolific Manchester City striker can get even better.

Guardiola compared the Norwegian to Johan Cruyff in midweek after his superb late winner against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League.

The strike was Haaland's 13th in just nine appearances since his £51 million (\$58 million) move to the Etihad Stadium from Dortmund in the summer transfer window.

"He's an exceptional striker, I've said it many times," City boss Guardiola said. **AFP**

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