

Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 15

With no side keeping a clean sheet, it was goals galore in Matchday 15...

By [George Cook](#) and [Patrick Hook-Willers](#)

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West Ham 3-1 Cardiff City: A brilliant second half display from the 1966 World Cup Winners earned them another important three points, and they can now focus on ensuring their Europa League qualification for next season. Relieved.

It could've all been very different though, had Joe Ralls' first-half penalty gone in. Unfortunately for Cardiff, Lukasz Fabianski just kept it out, once again proving himself as West Ham's best buy of the summer. The home side were forced into an early change when Marko Arnautovic had to go off. It now appears he'll be out until January, which is a huge blow for the East Enders. Lucas Perez came on to replace him, and certainly made his mark. He grabbed two goals in the space of five minutes early into the second half to give the Hammers a comfortable lead. Just seven minutes after his second, Michail Antonio all but wrapped up the victory with his header thirty minutes from time. Josh Murphy grabbed a last-minute goal for Cardiff, which at least lowers their goal difference, something that could be crucial come the end of the season. Neil Warnock's side didn't play particularly badly, they just lacked (as they seem to do in general) a creative flare going forward. They sit in 16th and take on struggling Southampton in South Wales on Saturday. West Ham face Crystal Palace, looking to get their third win in as many games.

Tottenham Hotspur 3-1 Southampton: After a weak showing in the North London Derby on Sunday, Tottenham arrived at a Wembley with one of the lowest attendances that Spurs have accrued at Wembley, which is testament to the frustration of the fans at the contempt with which they have been treated by the odious, greedy owners by refusing to show for this midweek chore of a game, myself included. The scoreline flattered Spurs on the whole, who had a decent showing in the first half, going ahead after nine minutes through Harry Kane. After the break, Spurs struck twice in quick succession to cement the points, Lucas Moura and Heung-Min Son netting on the 51st and 55th minutes taking the score to 3-0. You might ask - did Spurs turn the screw and go for the jugular, keeping things tight at the back and seeing the game out? Did they fuck. Instead, they decided to lose the plot entirely, allowing

Southampton wave after wave of dangerous attack, which if playing any other half-decent team would have led to another characteristic bottling. Luckily, Hugo Lloris decided not to be a clown this week and put in a man of the match performance, which combined with Southampton's three strikes hitting the crossbar kept the Saints at bay until the last seconds of stoppage time, when the defence decided that they wanted to get home for I'm A Celebrity... and couldn't be arsed to defend anymore. Still, above Arsenal again so that's okay, not that it even matters because that's just the norm now.

Manchester United 2-2 Arsenal: This game sparked into life with a total howler from the game's so-called 'best keeper in the world'. A rather tame effort from Arsenal defender Shkodran Mustafi seemed an easy grab for David de Gea, who shockingly let the ball slip through his hands and into the net, despite Ander Herrera's best efforts to clear off the line. Just four minutes later, a Marcos Rojo free kick was palmed into the path of Herrera, who crossed back across the face of goal for Anthony Martial to score his eighth goal of the season. Arsenal's second goal was a little bit rubbish, typical of the league's jammiest side who have spent the last few days pretending North London is red... Rojo made a challenge at the last second, only for the ball to rebound back off his foot to roll into the net. United were level within thirty seconds when Sead Kolasinac remembered that playing slightly well against Ben Davies is not a difficult feat at all, passing straight to Jesse Lingard in his own area, costing his team a win at one of the worst Manchester United sides in living memory. I've seen traffic lights stay red longer than North London...

Brighton & Hove Albion 3-1 Crystal Palace: The M23 derby (as it doesn't seem to have any other name) provided plenty of excitement for Brighton and neutrals but would no doubt have been hard to stomach as a Palace fan. Roy Hodgson's side were comfortably beaten, made even worse given that Brighton had 10 men for much of the game. Glenn Murray got the opener, punishing his old club from the penalty spot after Jose Izquierdo was brought down. However, he would be off with an injury just moments later, as would teammate Shane Duffy, after headbutting Patrick van Aanholt. Bizarrely, this had the opposite impact to what one might expect, as Murray's replacement Leon Balogun scored almost instantly after coming on. Romanian international Florian Andone got Brighton's third on the stroke of half time, all but securing the bragging rights against their rivals. Crystal Palace actually had a vast majority of the possession in this game and had more shots on target than the Seagulls. However, Luka Milivojevic got their only goal of the game, an 81st minute penalty after a poor tackle on Wilfried Zaha. Palace will look to redeem themselves away to West Ham on Saturday, whilst Brighton could go as high as 6th with a win away at Burnley.

Burnley 1-3 Liverpool: Liverpool maintained their unbeaten start to the league season with a hard-fought win away to Burnley. Jack Cork put the hosts in front in the second half, leading many to believe a much-needed home win was on the cards for Burnley. However, a pin-point effort from James Milner into the bottom right corner of Joe Hart's net dragged the Reds back level. Seven minutes later, Roberto Firmino scored his first goal in an age to score what proved to be a crucial goal. Xherdan Shaqiri cemented the three points deep into stoppage time, capping off a swift counter-attacking move.

Watford 1-2 Manchester City: Pep Guardiola's men survived a late scare at Vicarage Road to maintain their unbeaten record in the Premier League this season. It was a much-changed City side, attempting to rest key players given they have 11 matches to play in the next 42 days. Nonetheless, they still dominated Watford, and took the lead when Sane tumbled in a cross from Riyadh Mahrez. Early in the second-half, Mahrez himself got on the scoresheet, coming in at the far post to finish Gabriel Jesus' ball. Watford have now won just two of their last 11 games, but they can certainly take positives from their battle with the champions. Abdoulaye Doucoure got one back for them in the 85th minute, and Man City were on the ropes for the remaining minutes of the game. The hosts had three corners following their goal, but just couldn't find a way through to get an equaliser. They now have an extended period until their game with Everton on Monday night. Manchester City, meanwhile, must get themselves prepared for a trip to Stamford Bridge on Saturday night. Could Maurizio Sarri be the man to end Guardiola's unbeaten run?

Wolves 2-1 Chelsea: Wolves got their first win since October 6th with a brilliant comeback against Chelsea. Maurizio Sarri's men had the lead after 18 minutes, when Reuben Loftus-Cheek's shot was

deflected in by Conor Coady. Chelsea had plenty of chances to extend their lead throughout the remainder of the first half but weren't clinical enough. They probably should have had a penalty at the beginning of the second half, when the struggling Alvaro Morata was fouled. Wolves equalised after 59 minutes through Raul Jimenez – his strike getting the better of Kepa. Just four minutes later, the game was turned around completely. Diogo Jota popped up at the back post, to finish off Matt Doherty's ball and get the first Premier League goal of his career. The defeat sees Chelsea slip even further behind the league's big guns, with the gap to Liverpool now a staggering eight points. They take on Manchester City on Saturday night, where the points difference between them and Pep Guardiola's side could reach 13 points. Wolves travel to Struggling Newcastle, knowing a win could push them into the top half.

Fulham 1-1 Leicester City: For Claudio Ranieri's first match at Craven Cottage as Fulham boss, a better opponent could not have been planned, the Italian charged with overcoming the side at which he achieved the famous 5000-1 Premier League title. For a long time, it looked like Fulham were finally going to free themselves from rock bottom of the league, taking the lead through Aboudakar Kamara just before half-time. However, with just 16 minutes to go, James Maddison scored for the second successive match to tie the game up, making up for his red card against Brighton. Neither side found a decisive blow, which means that Fulham remain at the foot of the table, while Leicester stay plugging away in ninth.

AFC Bournemouth 2-1 Huddersfield Town: Bournemouth got back to winning ways after a run of four straight defeats, but the performance was far from glamorous. Callum Wilson gave the Cherries an early lead, heading in after just five minutes. He scored eight goals in total last season, but his opener against Huddersfield puts him on that number already this campaign. Things would get better for Eddie Howe's men, when Ryan Fraser doubled the lead a quarter of an hour later. Huddersfield pulled one back shortly before half-time, when Terrence Kongolo headed in a ball that had been floating around in the penalty area for some time. The visitors dominated the second half, keeping Bournemouth deep within their own half. However, Huddersfield just couldn't find a breakthrough. They were moving the ball around freely, but created only one clear-cut chance, which Aaron Mooy squandered. It really did highlight David Wagner's attacking woes. His side's goal in the first half finally lifted them into double figures with regards to goals scored this season, the last team in England's top four divisions to do so. It doesn't get any easier for them, when they travel to Arsenal on Saturday. Bournemouth will look to upset Liverpool in Saturday's early kick-off.

Everton 1-1 Newcastle: Everton would have gone home disappointed after this one, as despite falling behind to Salamon Rondon goal after just 19 minutes, a plethora of spurned chances meant that they had to settle for a point. On the stroke of the 38th minute, Richarlison again proved his worth when he levelled things up for Liverpool's original side, off the back of a disappointing loss in the Merseyside Derby at the weekend. Everton had 19 shots on target during this match, but wasteful finishing and good defending from Newcastle meant that bar Richarlison's effort, the Newcastle goal remained un-breached.



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