
Messi scores 400th Barcelona goal to preserve two-point lead

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Lionel Messi scored the 400th goal of his Barcelona career as the Catalans beat Champions League-chasing Valencia 2-0 at the Camp Nou on Saturday.

Luis Suarez got Barca off to a flying start as he slotted home the opener after just 54 seconds from Messi's through ball to give the league leaders an early lead.

However, Valencia then went on to enjoy the majority of the chances but were left to rue Dani Parejo's missed penalty in the first half when the Argentine skipper scored a late second to seal the game.

Messi made sure of all three points with the final kick of the game after Diego Alves had saved his initial effort to reach the remarkable 400-goal mark.

"400 goals with Barcelona. Hopefully I can score many more," Messi posted on his official Facebook page. "But the most important thing was that we won three points in a very difficult match."

Defeat, meanwhile, leaves Valencia four points adrift of third-placed Atletico Madrid, who beat Deportivo la Coruna 2-1 thanks to a double from Antoine Griezmann.

"We played very well in the first-half and had a lot of good chances," lamented Valencia boss Nuno Espirito Santo. "We go away hurt, sad and angry because we wanted to win. In the first-half we had too many chances to end up with this result."

Malaga win comes at a price for Real

Real Madrid remain just two points behind Barca at the top of the table as goals from Sergio Ramos, James Rodriguez and Cristiano Ronaldo secured a 3-1 win over Malaga despite a rare missed penalty from Ronaldo.

However, victory came at a cost for the European champions as Gareth Bale and Luka Modric hobbled off with injuries just days before their decisive Champions League quarter-final clash with Atletico Madrid.

“Modric has a problem in his knee, Bale in his calf,” said Real boss Carlo Ancelotti. “Right now we can’t say anything. We will evaluate them in the coming days. They are not completely ruled out.”
