

Beat: Sports

Zidane delighted with Real intensity after thrashing Betis

SPORTS NEWS

BARCELONA, 16.10.2016, 19:31 Time

USPA NEWS - Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane praised his side's attitude after they put a four-game winless run behind them by thrashing Real Betis 6-1 in a relentless display away from home on Saturday.

Real were missing captain Sergio Ramos and influential midfielders Luka Modric,

Casemiro and James Rodriguez but raced into the lead in the fourth minute when Raphael Varane nodded in Toni Kroos's cross from a freekick.

"The players are talented and intelligent, and they knew they had to begin the game in the way they did. When we play with that intensity from the start it's very difficult for our opponents," Zidane told a news conference.

"Now we have to remain consistent and this game was a great display, a reference point. It's not easy to play like this away from home."

German international Kroos, who signed a new contract with the club until 2022 on Wednesday, compensated for the absence of his usual midfield partners with a powerful display and also teed up Karim Benzema for Real's second.

Spain international Isco made the most of the opportunity his side's injury crisis afforded him by scoring Real's fourth and fifth goals either side of the break.

First he finished off a frenetic counter attack, tapping Pepe's pass into the net after an arrowed cross from Cristiano Ronaldo, and just after the hour mark he sent a majestic curled effort into the far top corner.

"He played very well and I'm very happy with his goals and his overall work. I'm delighted with his display," added Zidane.

"When you love football and you see your team score a goal like our fourth, with very few touches and with the speed of the transition, you just want to watch it again and enjoy it, and that's what I'm going to do."

Leftback Marcelo got on the scoresheet to mark his return from three weeks out through injury, and talisman Ronaldo grabbed the final goal to round off a happy night for Real after a difficult month.

"I'm very happy, after four draws we needed a display like this," added Zidane.

"I'm happy that Cristiano scored. I don't think he was anxious, he just always wants to score and that's normal. The important thing is that he transmits important energy to the rest of the team."

(Reporting by Richard Martin, editing by Pritha Sarkar)

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-9595/zidane-delighted-with-real-intensity-after-thrashing-betis.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSIV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Richard Martin

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619