

Donnarumma mistake gifts Arsenal goal but doesn't cost Man City

BY STEVE DOUGLAS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANCHESTER, England — Manchester City knew it was getting possibly the world's best shot-stopper in signing Gianluigi Donnarumma as the team's first-choice goalkeeper for this season.

The problem with the Italy international, however, was his frailties with the ball at his feet.

Unfortunately for City, that was shown up Sunday in its biggest game of the season.

City had just taken the lead through Rayan Cherki in its much-anticipated Premier League title-race showdown with Arsenal when Donnarumma received a back pass from Matheus Nunes.

There seemed little danger when Donnarumma took a touch but he dallied on the ball, allowing Arsenal forward Kai Havertz to close him down. Donnarumma tried a hurried clearance but a nightmare ensued as the ball was charged down by Havertz's outstretched leg and rebounded back into the net.

Donnarumma looked down at the ground and was distraught. A number of his City teammates ran over to the goalkeeper and comforted him.

Being able to pass the ball out from the back has typically been a pre-requisite for goalkeepers used by City manager Pep Guardiola.

It was why the signing of Donnarumma seemed at

odds with City's playing approach that was reflected in the raking passes and calmness under pressure with the ball at his feet shown by long-time goalie Ederson Moraes for the previous eight years.

Donnarumma vowed to improve his passing out of the back upon joining City but his issues have proved costly, gifting Arsenal a way back into the game at Etihad Stadium on Sunday.

City fought back to clinch a 2-1 win, however, with Donnarumma atoning for his mistake with a crucial save low down from Havertz in the second half.

City manager Pep Guardiola refused to attach any blame on Donnarumma, saying it was the nature of being a goalkeeper.

"Gigi's mistake is our mistake," Guardiola said.

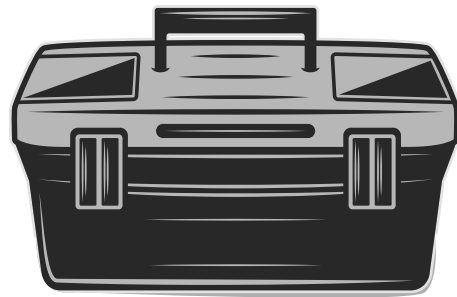
"I love seeing his teammates, how they support him unconditionally."



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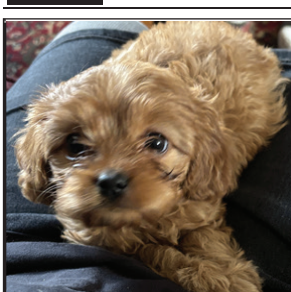
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