

# SPORT

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## FC Timisoara 0 - 1 Man City

**Manchester City's £24m striker Mario Balotelli came off the bench to score on his debut as they won their Europa League play-off first leg in Timisoara.**



Balotelli struck minutes after coming on for his debut in Romania

Balotelli came on with City struggling against the little-known Romanians and with 18 minutes left he coolly fired in after good work from Emmanuel Adebayor.

Timisoara had started well and had two penalty appeals turned down as City laboured for long periods.

But soon after Yaya Toure hit the post, Balotelli grabbed the decisive goal.

The 20-year-old's dream start to his City career makes his new club very strong favourites going into the second leg at Eastlands next Thursday.

City manager Roberto Mancini had asked for time for his new signings to gel prior to the game and, showing three changes from the 0-0 draw at Spurs on Saturday, it took them a while to find their feet in the Dan Paltinisanu Stadium.

Timisoara, sixth in the Romanian league, began in enterprising fashion and the majority of the 20,000-strong crowd were left dismayed when referee Florian Meyer turned down their appeals for a spot-kick after Pablo Zabaleta appeared to catch Cosmin Contra in the City box.

**606: DEBATE**

“Balotelli, what an asset!! Hope he's not seriously injured though”

swedenBluemoon

City were struggling to string passes together and they survived another penalty shout when the ball struck Vincent Kompany's arm before Contra's follow-up shot dribbled into the arms of Joe Hart.

It was not so much City weathering a Timisoara storm as the visitors completely failing to get their act together, but that did not last and around the half-hour mark Mancini's multi-million pound side started to show glimpses of their class.

Carlos Tevez's control was a touch too heavy to collect Gareth Barry's cross or he would have been in on goal, while moments after the break David Silva had a shot blocked after a good pass from Tevez.

City had raised the tempo to a level Timisoara were struggling to cope with and the arrival of former Inter Milan striker Balotelli on 57 minutes proved the catalyst for them to go on and win the game.

He was immediately in the action when he shot over from 20 yards and then fired into the side-netting after Timisoara failed to clear a corner.

Moments after Yaya Toure's right-foot thunderbolt slammed back off the post, Balotelli gave City the goal their play had warranted, sweeping in from close range after Adebayor had created the chance.

The visitors narrowly failed to increase their lead in the closing stages as Yaya Toure's shot forced a good save from Costel Pantilimon and then the irrepressible Balotelli shot over.

The Italian's captivating cameo ended when he picked up a knock in injury time. After such a sizzling start in a City shirt, Mancini will hope his new star is available for the visit of Liverpool to Eastlands in the Premier League on Monday.

### Europa League Q'fying results

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AIK Solna	0-0	Levski Sofia	FT
AZ Alkmaar	2-0	FC Aktobe	FT
BATE Borisov	3-0	Maritimo	FT
Bayer Leverkusen	3-0	Tavriya Symferopol	FT
Borussia Dortmund	4-0	FK Qarabag	FT
Celtic	2-0	FC Utrecht	FT
Club Bruges	2-1	Dinamo Minsk	FT
CSKA Moscow	4-0	Ano's Famagusta	FT
CSKA Sofia	3-0	The New Saints	FT
Debrecen	2-0	Litex Lovech	FT
Dnipro	0-1	Lech Poznan	FT
Dundee Utd	0-1	AEK Athens	FT
FC Timisoara	0-1	Man City	FT
FC Vaslui	0-0	Lille	FT
Feyenoord	1-0	AA Gent	FT
Galatasaray	2-2	Karpaty Lviv	FT
Genk	0-3	FC Porto	FT
Getafe	1-0	Apoel Nicosia	FT
Gyor ETO FC	0-2	Dinamo Zagreb	FT
Hajduk Split	4-1	U Urziceni	FT
Lausanne Sports	1-1	Lokomotiv Moscow	FT
Liverpool	1-0	Trabzonspor	FT
Napoli	1-0	Elfsborg	FT
Odense BK	2-1	Motherwell	FT
Omonia Nicosia	0-1	FC Metalist Kharkiv	FT
Palermo	3-0	NK Maribor	FT
PAOK Salonika	1-0	Fenerbahce	FT
Paris SG	2-0	Macc Tel-Aviv	FT
Rapid Vienna	1-1	Aston Villa	FT
Sibir Novosibirsk	1-0	PSV Eindhoven	FT
SK Sturm Graz	1-2	Juventus	FT
Slovan Bratislava	0-1	VfB Stuttgart	FT
Sporting	0-2	Brondby	FT
Steaua Bucharest	1-0	Grasshoppers	FT
Villarreal	5-0	Dnepr Mogilev	FT

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