Title: Arsenal 4-1 Newcastle: Giroud makes Magpies suffer again

Olivier Giroud and Santi Cazorla both scored twice as Arsenal claimed a 4-1 victory over Newcastle United to return to winning ways and give manager Arsene Wenger a boost.

Giroud came out in defence of his manager after the 3-2 defeat by Stoke City last weekend and, following a 4-1 UEFA Champions League victory against Galatasaray in midweek, Arsenal carried that momentum into Saturday's Barclays Premier League match to record a resounding win.

Newcastle went into the match having lost just one of their last 10 in all competitions but rarely looked like extending that run at Emirates Stadium. Giroud opened the scoring in the 15th minute with a precise header, before Cazorla, celebrating his 30th birthday, doubled the advantage nine minutes after half-time.

Giroud got his second, and his sixth against Newcastle, four minutes later by turning home Hector Bellerin's low cross, rendering Ayoze Perez's 63rd-minute effort nothing more than a consolation. Cazorla added a fourth from the penalty spot with two minutes left as Arsenal moved to within two points of the top four.

Injuries and Calum Chambers' suspension forced Wenger to deploy former Newcastle right-back Mathieu Debuchy in central defence. It was Debuchy's centre-back partner, Per Mertesacker, who went close to opening the scoring in the eighth minute. His header from Cazorla's corner cannoned off the crossbar with Jak Alnwick well beaten.

Alnwick, the third-choice goalkeeper, was making his first start for Newcastle having come on for the injured Rob Elliot in last weekend's 2-1 win over Chelsea and, just seven minutes after Mertesacker's chance, the 21-year-old was picking the ball out of the net. Giroud rose highest to meet Alexis Sanchez's cross and power the ball home with a well-directed header.

Arsenal were denied a second by referee Lee Mason shortly afterwards. Danny Welbeck cut in from the left and cleverly lofted the ball over Alnwick, but Mason ruled that the striker had fouled Daryl Janmaat in the build-up.

Welbeck then volleyed wide from Sanchez's chipped pass before appearing to handle the ball in the area at the other end. Newcastle's claims for a penalty were dismissed, but the visitors could still have levelled in the 34th minute had it not been for a double save from Wojciech Szczesny to deny Yoan Gouffran and Papiss Cisse.

Arsenal went into the break 2-0 up after Cazorla latched on to Sanchez's pass to lift the ball over a sliding Fabricio Coloccini before firing past Alnwick at his right post.

Newcastle's defence, depleted by the suspension of centre-half Steven Taylor, struggled to live with the creativity and speed of the Arsenal attack, which was rewarded again when Giroud flicked in Bellerin's low ball across the face of goal.

Perez gave Newcastle hope by glancing in Jack Colback's free-kick after 63 minutes for his fourth goal of the season.

However, Arsenal were comfortable in seeing the match out, with the home fans serenading Wenger with supportive chants before Cazorla's delicately chipped spot-kick after Dummett had felled Welbeck.