

No recipe for PSG miracle

BY WINSOR DOBBIN

in Paris

Big-spending Paris St. Germain is facing another crisis. PSG slumped to a 3-1 loss at home to modest Guingamp in the French First Division and then went down, 4-0, at home to Auxerre in the French Cup.



JEAN-CHRISTOPHE KAHN/REUTERS

PSG's Bernard Mendy races Deportivo Coruna's Victor in the Champions League, where PSG opened the second phase with two losses.

"Shame" blazed the front-page headline in the tabloid *Le Parisien*.

Fans greeted PSG players at their training center with shouts of abuse and insulting banners.

After leading the First Division for five weeks earlier in the season, PSG is now in 11th place and looks unlikely to qualify for any European competition next season.

That's a crippling blow for a club that has spent millions on the transfer market for the likes of French star Nicolas Anelka and Brazilian Ronaldinho, who is set to join PSG next season.

The bad news for Coach Luis Fernandez, who replaced Philippe Bergeroo late last year, is that PSG is performing even worse under his leadership than it did under Bergeroo.

PSG managed 25 points in its first 18 league matches under Bergeroo, who was unpopular with the players, but has managed only eight in eight league matches under Fernandez.

In addition, PSG has been eliminated from both domestic cup competitions and has little chance of advancing in the Champions League, where it opened the second phase with two losses.

"We are not winning at the moment," said a defiant Fernandez, "but the players are still fighting. I'm not going to be getting rid of anyone."

Fernandez had reshuffled his deck over the winter break.

He signed Argentine defender Mauricio Pochettino from Spanish club Espanyol, brought back French defender Didier Domi from Newcastle and acquired Brazilian midfielder Vampeta from Inter Milan for troubled midfielder Stephane Dalmat.

Unfortunately, they've had little impact.

"There is no recipe for miracles," said PSG president Laurent Perpere. (*Reuters*)