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Bucs boost play-off hopes while Packers, Rams win



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Maguire on course to return for Forest game



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Azam, Sarfaraz punish sloppy New Zealand in first Test

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FOCUS

Qatar's al-Attiyah gearing up for Dakar Rally

By Sports Reporter Doha

Four-time champion Qatar's Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah is gearing up to defend his Dakar Rally title starting later this week. The hugely popular event will be held from December 31 to January 15 in Saudi Arabia.

The 45th edition of the Dakar Rally 2023 will be the fourth year in a row that the prestigious event is going to be held in the Arabian Kingdom.

Al-Attiyah saw off a strong challenge from France's Sebastien Loeb to win the title earlier this year. His earlier victories have come in 2011, 2015 and 2019.

Al-Attiyah, who is representing Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR), will be accompanied by French co-driver Mathieu Baumel and they are aiming for a repeat performance early in the new year. The Toyota team had tested a new version of their Hilux in Namibia earlier this month and the Qatari driver was happy with the trial.

"The Dakar Rally really is the big one! We've had a great year,

winning the first ever W2RC title. But we'd love to add another Dakar victory to the list, and we are sure that the car is good enough to bring us that win," al-



Attiyah said.

The 11km-long prologue for the race, which is used to determine the starting orders for the first stage, will get the action under way during the Saturday afternoon, before the race itself kicks off on New Year's Day 2023. Fourteen competitive stages will follow, with a rest day following Stage 8.

Al-Attiyah's teammate Giniel de Villiers, from South Africa,

has one of the best Dakar records in history, having competed in twenty Dakars to date. He won the race in 2009, and has been on the podium seven additional times.

He has only finished outside the Top 10 once in twenty races, and will be aiming for another solid result, again with co-driver Dennis Murphy, also from South Africa, beside him.

For the South African pairing of Henk Lategan and co-driver Brett Cummings, their first two Dakar Rallies together proved learning experiences. In their first outing, in 2021, the pair crashed heavily during Stage 5 of the rally, resulting in a broken collarbone for Lategan. In 2022 they bounced back and took two stage victories.

Dakar 2023 promises to be one of the toughest yet, consisting of 14 stages rather than the dozen that has become the norm over the last few editions of the race. Not only that, but the route also ventures further into the so-called Empty Quarter of Saudi Arabia than ever before. Add to that the Rest Day, which comes well after the mid-point of the



race, as well as the removal of mid-stage rest-and-refuel points, and it is clear that the upcoming rally will be tough.

The route for the upcoming Dakar Rally starts at the so-

called Sea Camp, on the North-Western coastline of Saudi Arabia. Both the prologue and Stage 1 will be staged from here, before Stage 2 takes the rally towards the stunning rocks and

canyons around Alula. Next up is Stage 3 towards Ha'il, where the bivouac will remain in place for three days before shifting to Al Duwadimi for two days. Stage 8 will see the rally reach the Saudi

capital of Riyadh, for a much-needed Rest Day.

From here, the route continues in an Eastward direction towards Haradh, before shifting into the Empty Quarter for the final few days of the event. This year's Marathon Stage - where the crews race away from the bivouac to an unsupported camp in the desert, before racing back the following day - will take place near the end of the race, and may well change the outcome of the event.

The final stages of the race will take the crews from Shaybah to Al Hofuf, and on to the city of Dammam, on the Arabian Gulf. While the closing three stages of the rally all feature distances under 200km, the organisers have cautioned that these stages may well prove the toughest of the event, and that competitors should not take them lightly based purely on their relatively short distances. Dakar 2023 is scheduled to finish in Dammam on Jan 15. This will be the Dakar's first visit to the city, and also the first time that the race spans across the entire Saudi Arabian landscape from coast to coast.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Kane bounces back for Spurs as Newcastle, Liverpool win

SOUTHAMPTON SLIP TO THE BOTTOM OF THE TABLE AFTER A 3-1 HOME DEFEAT AGAINST BRIGHTON

AFP Birmingham

Harry Kane bounced back from his World Cup heartbreak to earn Tottenham a 2-2 draw at Brentford as Newcastle climbed to second place in the Premier League with a 3-0 win at Leicester yesterday.

Liverpool also made a winning return from the World Cup break as Mohamed Salah, Virgil van Dijk and 18-year-old Stefan Bajcetic struck in a 3-1 victory over Aston Villa.

In the first Premier League fixture since mid-November, Tottenham were in danger of a damaging defeat after Vitaly Janelt and Ivan Toney put Brentford in command at the Community Stadium.

But Kane netted with a 65th minute header to start the Tottenham recovery in his first game since missing a crucial penalty in England's World Cup quarter-final defeat against France.

Brentford have not beaten Tottenham since 1948 and their long wait for a victory over the north Londoners goes on after Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg curled home with 19 minutes left.

Tottenham boss Antonio Conte praised England captain Kane for his contribution following his World Cup disappointment.

"When he came back he was good. We know the importance of Harry for us, his personality, his character. He's the best player we have. I'm happy that he scored today," Conte said.

Tottenham stay fourth in the



Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane celebrates scoring their first goal with Dejan Kulusevski against Brentford in London yesterday. (Reuters)

table, four points ahead of fifth-placed Manchester United in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

Liverpool closed to within five points of Spurs and with a game in hand to come by inflicting Unai Emery's first league defeat as Villa boss.

Salah swept home his 15th goal of the season in a frantic opening with chances aplenty at both ends.

The Egyptian then teed up Van Dijk to give Liverpool breathing space before half-time.

Ollie Watkins gave Villa hope with a towering header midway through the second half but Bajcetic's first senior goal secured a third consecutive league win for Jurgen Klopp's men.

Newcastle's charge towards a return to the Champions League was not halted by the break as

the Magpies scored twice in the first seven minutes at Leicester.

Chris Wood opened the scoring from the penalty spot before Miguel Almiron played a one-two with Bruno Guimaraes and slotted past Danny Ward for his eighth goal in his last eight league games.

Joelinton headed home from a corner in the 32nd minute as Newcastle made it six successive league victories - their best run in the competition since 2012.

"We can do anything," said Newcastle manager Eddie Howe on the possibility of a title challenge with his side just four points behind leaders Arsenal.

"The season is still young enough for all possibilities to exist for us. I want the fans to believe we can do anything."

Arsenal can extend their advantage at the top when they



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (right) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's first goal during the English Premier League match against Aston Villa in Birmingham yesterday. (Reuters)

West Ham later. At the other end of the table, Everton suffered a damaging 2-1 defeat against relegation rivals Wolves as Rayan Ait-Nouri struck in final seconds for the visitors at Goodison Park.

Yerry Mina gave Everton a seventh minute lead, but in Julien Lopetegui's first game in charge, Wolves levelled through Daniel Podence's volley.

Ait-Nouri poked home from close range after Everton failed to deal with a counter-attack in the fifth minute of stoppage-time. Everton are now just one point above Wolves in the final relegation place.

"We are in one (relegation battle)," admitted Lampard. "We've got to fight."

Fulham won 3-0 at nine-man Crystal Palace, who had Tyr-

ick Mitchell and James Tomkins sent off. Bobby De Cordova-Reid, Tim Ream and Aleksandar Mitrovic scored Fulham's goals. Southampton slipped to the bottom of the table after a 3-1 home defeat against south-coast rivals Brighton.

Adam Lallana headed Brighton in front against his former club in the 14th minute and Romain Perraud's own goal in-

creased the lead 10 minutes before half-time.

Brighton struck again early in the second half through Solly March's long-range blast.

James Ward-Prowse reduced the deficit on the rebound after his penalty was saved by Robert Sanchez, but it wasn't enough to avoid defeat in boss Nathan Jones' first home league game in charge.

RESULTS

Liverpool	3	Aston Villa	1
Brentford	2	Tottenham	2
Fulham	3	Crystal Palace	0
Wolves	2	Everton	1
Newcastle	3	Leicester	0
Brighton	3	Southampton	1

FOCUS

CA names top Test award after Shane Warne

AFP
Melbourne

Australia's men's Test Player of the Year award will be renamed in Shane Warne's honour, officials said yesterday, as tributes were paid to the late spin-king at the Boxing Day Test against South Africa.

Warne, considered by many as second in stature only to Donald Bradman in sports-mad Australia, died unexpectedly aged just 52 in March.

The Shane Warne Men's Test Player of the Year award will be presented annually, second only to the prestigious Allan Border Medal for the most outstanding player across all formats.

"As one of Australia's all-time greats, it is fitting we acknowledge Shane's extraordinary contribution to Test cricket by naming this award in his honour in perpetuity," said CA chief executive Nick Hockley.

"Shane was a proud advocate of Test cricket and you only have

to look around at all the fans who came out to the MCG in their floppy hats and zinc on Boxing Day to realise what a profound impact he had on the game."

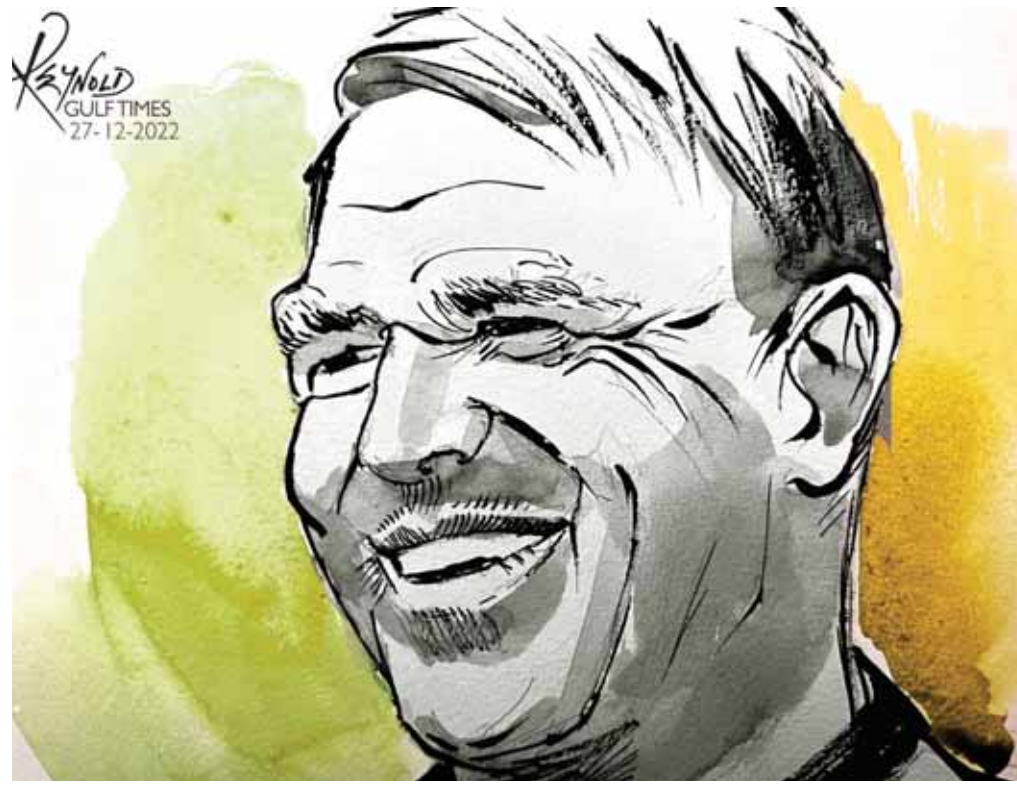
"The whole cricket community continues to mourn his loss and our thoughts, as always, are with Shane's family and friends, particularly his children Brooke, Jackson and Summer."

The announcement came on the opening day of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Warne's home venue where he achieved many memorable feats, including an Ashes hat-trick and his 700th Test wicket.

Warne's Test cap number 350 has been painted square of the wicket for the duration of the match, while both the Australian and South African teams wore floppy white hats in his memory during the national anthem ceremony.

"His place as a legend of Australian and world sport is assured," added Hockley.

"Whilst we continue to mourn his passing, it is fitting that we



honour Shane at his beloved Boxing Day Test at the MCG."

A stand at the venue has already been named in his honour.

At exactly 3.50pm on the opening day of the second Test yesterday, players of both teams and fans stood and applauded the memory of Warne.

IT'S A BEAUTIFUL MOMENT
"It's a beautiful moment," Warne's former teammate Adam Gilchrist says on Fox Cricket.

Melbourne's Wurundjeri elder Aunty Joy became emotional when paying tribute to Warne and his former teammate Andrew Symonds, who tragically died in a single-vehicle car crash in May.

"I want to pay a special tribute to our beautiful brother Andrew Symonds, who is no longer with us but is resting with his ancestors," Aunty Joy told the MCG.

"Today we celebrate the legendary Shane Warne. To his family and friends, which is each and every one of you here today, what a legend."

"It is a wonderful opportunity it is that I have to say that this

will always be his resting place here on Wurundjeri country."

"The happiness outweighs the sadness tenfold," Warne's son Jackson said on Fox Cricket.

"To see all the zinc cream on everyone's faces, to see everyone with the floppy hats is unbelievable. To be also in front of the greatest man ever - in front of the Shane Warne stand - is just awesome."

Credited with reviving the art of leg-spin, Warne took 708 Test wickets as part of a dominant Australian team in the 1990s and 2000s before becoming a respected commentator.

On March 4, 2022, when he was on holiday in Thailand, Warne died of a suspected heart attack.

An icon who transcended boundaries, he received an outpouring of tributes from both the cricket world and the wider community in Australia and across the globe.

A memorial service to farewell Warne held at the ground in March was attended by more than 50,000 people.

FIRST TEST

Babar, Sarfaraz guide Pakistan after dodgy start

'IT'S SOMETHING I AM SAD ABOUT, BUT THEN I LOOK BACK AND THINK, 'WHAT IF I HAD FALLEN WITHOUT SCORING?'

AFP
Karachi

Babar Azam knocked a fighting hundred and the recalled Sarfaraz Ahmed hit a half century to guide Pakistan to a healthy 317-5 on the opening day of the first Test against New Zealand in Karachi yesterday.

The pair led Pakistan's recovery from 110-4 during a 196-run fifth wicket stand, as the home team lost only Sarfaraz in the last two sessions.

New Zealand spinners had taken three early wickets on a spin-assisting National Stadium pitch and one before lunch but had to wait until the closing moments when Ajaz Patel got Sarfaraz caught in the slip for 86.

At close, Babar was unbeaten on 161 and Agha Salman three as the home team looked to lift from last week's 3-0 loss at the hands of England, their first ever whitewash at home.

Babar now has 1,170 runs in nine Tests this year - the highest run scorer in Tests in 2022.

He also beat Mohamed Yousuf's 2006 aggregate of 2,435 in all three formats, taking 2,584 runs across the board this year.

The Pakistan skipper swept spinner Michael Bracewell for a six towards mid-wicket to reach his ninth Test century. He has also hit 16 boundaries.

Sarfaraz, playing his 50th Test and first since January 2019, cracked nine boundaries in his 256-minute knock but missed out on a century.

"It's something I am sad about, but then I look back and think, 'what if I had fallen without scoring?'" he said.

Happy to return to the field after fearing he would not play for his country again, he confessed to needing some support from his team.

"When I went in and played the first three deliveries I had a very fast heartbeat, so during the lunch break my fellow players and Babar told me to relax, so I was calmer afterwards," he said.

New Zealand will be ruing letting Azam off the hook when he was on just 12, after Daryl Mitchell spilled a regulation catch at slip off Bracewell. The tourists also failed to run out Azam on 54 when Devon Conway missed the stumps, with the Pakistan skipper well short of his crease.

"Babar made the most of his chance and batted really well," said Patel. "Obviously no one wants to drop catches but it happens sometimes, it's just the nature of the game."

New Zealand's spinners dominated the first session, with Bracewell dismissing Shan Masood for three and Imam-ul-Haq for 24, while Patel took the early wicket of Abdullah Shafique for seven.



Pakistan's captain Babar Azam plays a shot during the first day of the first Test against New Zealand at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday. (AFP)



Pakistan's Sarfaraz Ahmed celebrates after scoring a half-century during the first day of the first Test against New Zealand. (AFP)

In the penultimate over before lunch, fast bowler Tim Southee dismissed Saud Shakeel for 22 to complete a successful session for the tourists, playing their first Test series in Pakistan since 2002.

New Zealand's decision to play with

three spinners appeared justified, as the National Stadium pitch took turn right from the start. Patel came on to bowl in just the fourth over of the innings.

He turned his third ball across a forward-playing Shafique, and had him

stumped by wicketkeeper Tom Blundell. Bracewell then had Masood stumped in his second over before Haq miscued a drive off him and was caught at mid-off.

This is the first time in Test cricket history that the first two dismissals in an innings were both stumped.

Pakistan brought Sarfaraz, Mir Hamza and Haq to the side - with wicketkeeper Mohamed Rizwan dropped after playing 26 consecutive Tests.

SCOREBOARD
Pakistan 1st innings

Abdullah Shafique st Blundell b Patel	7
Imam-ul-Haq c Southee b Bracewell	24
Shan Masood st Blundell b Bracewell	3
Babar Azam not out	161
Saud Shakeel c Nicholls b Southee	22
Sarfaraz Ahmed c Mitchell b Patel	86
Agha Salman not out	3
Extras (b3, lb6, nb2)	11
Total (for five wks; 90 overs)	317
Fall of wickets: 1-12 (Shafique), 2-19 (Masood), 3-48 (Haq), 4-110 (Shakeel), 5-306 (Sarfaraz)	
Bowling: Southee 19-3-51-1, Wagner 16-2-37-0 (1nb), Patel 27-3-91-2, Bracewell 15-3-61-2, Sodhi 10-0-49-0 (1w), Mitchell 3-0-19-0	
Toss: Pakistan	

SPOTLIGHT

Green takes 5 wickets as Boxing Day Test starts

Reuters
Melbourne

Cameron Green celebrated a maiden five-wicket haul as Australia skittled South Africa for 189 before finishing 45 for one in reply at the end of day one of the second Test yesterday.

David Warner was 32 not out in his 100th Test, with Marnus Labuschagne on five, and Australia trailing by 144 runs but well in control to the delight of a festive Boxing Day crowd of 64,876 at a sun-drenched Melbourne Cricket Ground.

South Africa, beaten by six wickets in Brisbane and trailing 1-0 in the three-match series, needed more from their batsmen after home captain Pat Cummins won the toss and elected to field.

Instead, there were twin collapses either side of a doughty 112-run stand for the sixth wicket by all-rounder Marco Jansen and wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne, who each scored fifties.

Green triggered both collapses, dismissing number three Theunis de Bruyn for 12 as South Africa lost three wickets for two runs to be 58 for four before lunch.

The tall 23-year-old later crushed Jansen (59) and Verreynne's (52) rearguard, dismissing both behind the wicket, before bowling tail-enders Kagiso Rabada (four) and Lungi Ngidi (two) in an exhilarating finish.

"Kind of when you're not trying to get wickets, you get them," said Green, who was bought for Rs175mn (\$2.12mn) by Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League auctions last week. "It actually became a really nice wicket (for batting). The ball got old and wasn't doing much. "Thankfully (our) plan came off."

Having reached 179 for five on

the back of two well-set batsmen, South Africa lost their last five wickets for 10 runs to be bowled out for under 200 for a ninth straight innings.

Green, meanwhile, held the ball aloft to a roaring crowd after finishing with career-best innings figures of 5-27, a milestone for a cricketer long tipped for stardom. At the other end of the spectrum, Warner came to the crease under pressure to prove he still belongs in Test whites in his milestone match. The 36-year-old, who failed twice in Brisbane, saw off a maiden over before smashing Rabada to the fence, one of three boundaries.

SCOREBOARD
South Africa 1st innings

D. Elgar run out	26
S. Erwee c Khawaja b Boland	18
T. De Bruyn c Carey b Green	12
T. Bavuma c Carey b Starc	5
Zondo c Labuschagne b Starc	1
K. Verreynne c Smith b Green	52
M. Jansen c Carey b Green	59
K. Maharaj c Cummins b Lyon	2
K. Rabada b Green	4
A. Nortje not out	1
L. Ngidi b Green	2
Extras (b3, lb3, nb1)	7
Total (10 wickets)	189
Fall of wickets: 1-29 (Erwee), 2-56 (De Bruyn), 3-58 (Elgar), 4-58 (Bavuma), 5-67 (Zondo), 6-79 (Verreynne), 7-182 (Jansen), 8-186 (Rabada), 9-186 (Maharaj), 10-189 (Ngidi)	
Bowling: Starc 13-2-39-2, Cummins 14-4-30-0, Boland 14-2-34-1, Lyon 17-3-53-1, Green 10-4-3-27-5	
Toss: Australia	
Australia 1st innings	
D. Warner not out	32
Khawaja c Verreynne b Rabada	1
M. Labuschagne not out	5
Extras (lb5, nb2)	7
Total (1 wicket, 12 overs)	45
Fall of wickets: 1-21 (Khawaja)	
Bowling: Rabada 5-1-24-1, Ngidi 3-2-1-0, Jansen 3-0-8-0, Nortje 1-0-7-0	



Australia's Cameron Green (left) celebrates dismissing South African batsman Marco Jansen on the first day of the second Test against South Africa at the MCG in Melbourne yesterday. (AFP)

NFL

Brady's Bucs boost play-off hopes as Packers, Rams win

'They played really well on defence and we had some long fields and turnovers again but we grinded it out'

AFP
Miami

Tom Brady marched Tampa Bay 66 yards in nine plays in overtime to set up Ryan Succop's game-winning 40-yard field goal on Sunday that gave the Buccaneers a dramatic 19-16 victory at Arizona.

Seven-time Super Bowl champion Brady completed 32-of-48 passes for 281 yards and a touchdown, with two interceptions, but sparked the Bucs to score the final 13 points in a crucial triumph for Tampa Bay's NFL play-off hopes.

"Tougher than we should have had and tougher than we wanted," Brady said.

"They played really well on defence and we had some long fields and turnovers again but we grinded it out. And, yes, we found a way to win."

The 45-year-old quarterback, playing in his first Christmas contest, won his 11th regular-season overtime game as the Bucs improved to 7-8 to stay one game atop Carolina and New Orleans in the NFC South division.

Tampa Bay can clinch the division crown and a playoff berth with a home victory next Sunday over Carolina. Had the Bucs lost to Arizona, they would have needed to beat Carolina to keep

any playoff hope alive. "We'll lick our wounds, regroup and try to be at our best next week," Brady said. "We've got to go home and play a huge game on Sunday."

"It will take our best. We haven't had our best for 60 minutes yet. We've got to bring it. Going to be a really tough game."

James Conner's 22-yard touchdown run with 10:47 remaining gave Arizona a 16-6 lead, but just 2:44 later, Brady flipped a three-yard touchdown pass to Rachaad White to lift the Bucs within three.

Tampa Bay's William Gholston recovered a fumble with 4:53 to play at the Arizona 45-yard line to set up Succop's third field goal, a 42-yarder with 2:27 remaining, to lift the Bucs level and set the stage for overtime.

The Cardinals, already eliminated from play-off contention, suffered their seventh loss in eight games.

At Miami, Aaron Rodgers threw for 238 yards and a touchdown while Green Bay defenders intercepted three passes in the fourth quarter of the Packers 26-20 triumph over the host Dolphins.

The Packers improved to 7-8, level with Seattle and Detroit and one-half game behind Washington for the final NFC playoff berth.

Green Bay picked off Miami's Tua Tagovailoa to set up field

goals of 28 and 26 yards by Mason Crosby and a final Packers interception by Rasul Douglas in the dying seconds sealed their third victory in a row.

"A special day for us. Our defence came up and played outstanding," Rodgers said. "We were down 20-10 and scored the last 16 points. Offensively we struggled in the red zone. But this was special."

The Dolphins suffered their fourth consecutive defeat and fell to 8-7, clinging to the last AFC playoff berth by a single game over four rivals with two games remaining.

"I'm really proud of our team," Rodgers said. "We found a way to win and the way our defense stepped up the last few drives was outstanding."

The Packers finish with home games in frigid Green Bay against Detroit and Minnesota, who play in enclosed venues.

"Couple of dome teams coming in," Rodgers noted. "It has been cold up in Green Bay."

In a matchup of teams eliminated from play-off contention, the Los Angeles Rams routed visiting Denver 51-14.

Cam Akers carried 23 times for 118 yards and three touchdowns while Baker Mayfield completed 24 of 28 passes for 230 yards and two touchdowns for the Rams, who had four interceptions in the



Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady (12) throws a pass against the Arizona Cardinals at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, USA. (USA TODAY Sports)

NBA

Jokic's epic triple-double lifts Denver to lead

AFP
New York

Two-time reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Nikola Jokic delivered an epic triple-double to give Denver an overtime triumph on Sunday while Jayson Tatum powered NBA-best Boston to victory.

Serbian 27-year-old superstar centre Jokic scored 41 points, grabbed 15 rebounds and passed off 15 assists to spark the Nuggets over visitors Phoenix 128-125.

Jokic's point total, coming on 16-of-25 shooting from the floor, was the largest for any Christmas triple-double in NBA history.

"It's nice. It's just one game," Jokic said. "Everybody can have one good game."

It was Jokic's 83rd career triple-double and his seventh of this season.

The victory gave the Nuggets (21-11) a one-game Western Conference lead over Memphis, who lost Sunday at defending champions Golden State, and New Orleans.

"We keep fighting," Jokic said of the

comeback victory. "We have a lot of guys who can play."

"I'm just happy that we are winning. We're playing really good," he added after the game.

Denver's Aaron Gordon added 28 points, many on high-leaping slam dunks, and 13 rebounds while Jamal Murray had 26 points.

Murray's dunk with 11 seconds remaining in regulation sent the game to overtime tied at 113-113, while a late dunk and free throw in overtime by Gordon helped seal Denver's triumph.

"It was a crazy game, a lot of up and down, a lot of runs for both teams," Jokic said. "I think it's supposed to be easier game for us. We got the win. That's the most important thing."

Reserve Landry Shamut scored 31 points to lead Phoenix, who lost star Devin Booker to a groin injury after playing only four minutes.

At Boston, Tatum matched Jokic with 41 points to lead the Celtics over Milwaukee 139-118 in a showdown of the league's two top clubs.

Jaylen Brown added 29 points for the Celtics, who improved to 24-10 and stretched their Eastern Conference lead over the Bucks (22-11).



Denver Nuggets guard Bones Hyland (3) controls the ball under pressure from forward Michael Porter Jr (1) and centre Nikola Jokic (15) during their NBA game in Denver, Colorado, USA. (USA TODAY Sports)

"They are one of the best teams in the league and it's always special to play on Christmas," Tatum said.

"We just wanted to give our fans a present today and come out of here with a victory."

Tatum scored 20 points in the third quarter on 7-of-10 shooting as the Celtics boosted their 62-61 halftime lead to 100-86 entering the fourth quarter.

"We wanted to come out in the second half, especially at the start of that third quarter, with some pace and some energy," Tatum said.

Tatum delivered the most spectacular hoop of the game with a slam dunk over Milwaukee star big man Giannis Antetokounmpo, who finished with 27 points and nine rebounds but no blocked shots.

"You've got to attack the rim," Tatum said. "If you go in there and lay it up, he's going to send it to the parking lot."

Golden State, without injured top scorer Stephen Curry, defeated Memphis 123-109 to knock the Grizzlies from a share of the West lead.

Jordan Poole scored 32 points to lead Golden State before getting his second

technical foul and being ejected with 9:20 remaining.

The Warriors improved to 13-2 at home and 16-18 overall.

Ja Morant had 36 points, seven rebounds and eight assists to lead the Grizzlies. Klay Thompson added 24 points for the Warriors.

Joel Embiid and James Harden sparked Philadelphia's 119-112 victory at New York, the 76ers' eighth consecutive triumph.

Cameroonian star Embiid struck 35 points and eight rebounds while Harden contributed 29 points and 13 assists.

New York's Julius Randle scored 35 points and Jalen Brunson added 23 points and 11 assists before leaving with an apparent right-hip injury in the fourth quarter.

At Dallas, the host Mavericks got 32 points, nine rebounds and nine assists from Slovenian star Luka Doncic in downing the Los Angeles Lakers 124-115.

LeBron James scored a game-high 38 points with six rebounds and five assists but the Lakers (13-20) dropped their fourth game in a row since Anthony Davis was sidelined with a right foot injury.

BOTTOMLINE

Kathy Whitworth, top pro golfer in history, dies at 83

Reuters
New York

Kathy Whitworth, whose 88 LPGA Tour victories are the most ever by a player on a pro tour, passed away suddenly on Saturday while celebrating Christmas Eve with family and friends, her long-time partner Bettye Odle said. She was 83.

"It is with a heart full of love that we let everyone know of the passing of the winningest golf professional ever, Kathy Whitworth," Odle said in a statement. "Kathy left this world the way she lived her life, loving, laughing and creating memories."

The cause of death and location were not disclosed.

Raised in Jal, New Mexico, Whitworth first began playing golf at the age of 15 with her grandfather's clubs and after winning titles as an amateur and attending Odessa College in Texas, turned pro at 19 and joined the LPGA Tour.

"I was really fortunate in that I knew what I wanted to do," Whitworth said in a remembrance published on the LPGA Tour's website.

"Golf just grabbed me by the throat. I can't tell you how much I loved it. I used to think everyone knew what they wanted



In this file photo taken on May 6, 2018, Kathy Whitworth speaks at the trophy presentation following the 2018 Volunteers of America LPGA Texas Classic at Old American Golf Club in The Colony, Texas. Whitworth, the most successful LPGA golfer with a record 88 titles, has died at the age of 83. (AFP)

to do when they were 15 years old." Her mother and father supported her amid a sluggish start to her pro career and she won the first of her 88 LPGA Tour titles at the Kelly Girls Open in 1962.

"I'm glad when I look back on it that I didn't succeed right away," Whitworth

said. "When it happened, I was ready." She went on to claim six major championships, was named LPGA Tour's Player of the Year seven times and became the first LPGA player to pass \$1mn in career earnings. She claimed her final title at the United Virginia Bank Classic in 1985.

"Winning never got old," Whitworth said.

Her career included a rivalry with fellow late World Golf Hall of Famer Mickey Wright, who is second behind Whitworth in LPGA Tour wins with 82. Tiger Woods and Sam Snead are tied for the most wins on the PGA Tour with 82.

Her contemporaries said Whitworth's fiercely competitive nature is what set her apart.

"She just had to win," Betsy Rawls, another one of Whitworth's rivals, said on the LPGA website.

"A lot like Mickey Wright and Louise Suggs. There's just something that drives them. Kathy was a very intelligent person. It was unacceptable for her to make a mistake."

"She hated herself when she made a mistake. She was wonderful to play with - sweet as she could be, nice to everybody - but oh, man, she berated herself something awful. And that's what drove her."

LPGA Commissioner Mollie Marcoux Samaan praised Whitworth's impact both on and off the course.

"She inspired me as a young girl and now as the commissioner and I know she did the same for so many others," Samaan said on the LPGA website.

"We all mourn with Bettye, her family and the entire golf world."

US Open win 10 million times better, says Fitzpatrick

London: English golfer Matt Fitzpatrick says his shock US Open triumph was "10 million times better" than he had ever imagined. The 28-year-old swept to a maiden triumph at the majors at Brookline in June when he edged Masters champion Scottie Scheffler and Will Zalatoris by just one shot.

"It was 10 million times better than I thought it would feel after winning a major. It was so incredibly rewarding," Fitzpatrick told the BBC in a Christmas review.

However, he admitted to enduring mixed feelings in the aftermath of his breakthrough win.

"It's very weird. I've done it and it's like 'perfect let's go and try and win more' but at the same time I've had 'well I've done it now, why do I have to do any more?', he explained.

"I've spoken to a few people about it and it's a very common trait after they achieve success. I've always pushed myself hard, people always say you're too hard on yourself and I probably am."

"But it's been leading up to that moment to win a major championship. The first few weeks afterwards it's like pure elation and everything is amazing and then the dust settles and you've got to get yourself up and do that all over again."



PREMIER LEAGUE

United's Maguire on course to return for Forest game

'We'll be expecting United to be at their best and that's what we'll be preparing for'

Reuters
London

Manchester United centre back **Harry Maguire** is expected to return to the squad for today's Premier League game at home to Nottingham Forest after missing the last match due to illness, the club said yesterday.

England international Maguire missed United's 2-0 win over Burnley last week which sealed their place in the League Cup quarter-finals.

"We had some problems with illness like Harry Maguire, but he was back on the training pitch (on Friday) so I'm happy with that," manager Erik ten Hag told the club media.

Argentina defender Lisandro Martinez and France's Raphael Varane are unavailable because they are yet to return after playing in the World Cup final.

Ten Hag said the rest of the United players who played in Qatar were in good spirits. "(They had) massive impressions there, but now they are back, and you feel their energy. They are looking forward to the restart (of the Premier League)," he said.

"Rapha Varane and Licha Martinez, they are not there but we hope on their comeback (soon)," he added.

Dean Henderson is ineligible due to being on loan from United but Jesse Lingard is expected to feature on the opposing side at Old Trafford for the first time, after scoring in the Carabao Cup victory at Blackburn Rovers.

Forest boss Steve Cooper is hopeful Wales goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey will be available to deputise for the United man between the posts. Serge Aurier



and Morgan Gibbs-White could be fit in time but Omar Richards, Cheikhou Kouyate, Moussa Niasse and Guilian Biancone are out. "We'll be expecting Manchester United to be at their best

and that's what we'll be preparing for. We're also preparing to be at our best because that's what we're going to have to be to get a result from the game. "What I hope more than any-

thing is that we really commit and believe in ourselves because if you don't have 100% confidence in yourself then nobody's going to do anything for you so we need to look after ourselves

going into the game." United are fifth in the standings on 26 points after 14 matches, three points behind fourth-placed Tottenham Hotspur who have played a game more.

FOOTBALL

Saïss attributes Morocco's excellence to players' high spirit

QNA
Rabat

Morocco captain **Romain Saïss** attributed the excellence of his team at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 finals to the high spirit and family atmosphere that prevailed in the national team at the tournament.

Saïss, 32, said the historical achievement of Moroccan, Arab and African football is that by the time his country's national team reached the fourth place in the World Cup, after competing vigorously to reach the final, it could only have been achieved by the solidarity between the players and living as one family, which had an impact on the great success of the national team, which was awaited by the Moroccan street and delighted the African football and the Arab fans as the first Arab-African team to reach this level in the World Cup.

Saïss told the FIFA website yesterday that the presence of the players' families with them at the World Cup was a good idea that had a great impact on the team as a group and individuals, which raised the value of the competition and their enthusiasm to give their families a collective joy at the stadium, which morally motivated the players to provide the best return in the presence of their family members on the stadium stands. The captain of the Moroccan national team added that the fans of Morocco won stardom of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 by their continuous presence in support of the national team in a civilised appearance that impressed all the followers of the World Cup, stressing that what the fans have done and the success achieved by the national team is cause for pride and that they as players will work to achieve more successes in the future, taking advantage of the great public motivation they found at the World Cup in Qatar.

REGRAGUI IN RUN FOR IFFHS'S AWARD

Morocco coach **Walid Regragui** is in the run for the 2022 best coach award from the International Federation of Football History and Statistics (IFFHS), following his World Cup fourth-place finish. This is the first time for Arab and African coach to be nominated in the run for the award that is granted for national managers with big achievements with their national teams. The list of managers racing for the award included the Moroccan manager along with Argentine Lionel Scaloni, France coach Didier Deschamps and Croatian Zlatko Dalic, who claimed bronze.



COMMENT

Haaland can score 800 goals: De Bruyne

AFP
London

Kevin De Bruyne believes Manchester City teammate Erling Haaland can go on and score 800 goals before his career ends.

Haaland, who will return to the city of his birth when the champions resume their Premier League title defence at Leeds tomorrow, has scored 24 goals in just 19 appearances since his summer move from Borussia Dortmund.

"He already has about 200 goals, so he can probably go to 600, 700 or 800 if he stays fit and does the things that he does," said De Bruyne.

The Belgian international has played with a host of top strikers in his career and is well-placed when it comes to 22-year-old

Haaland's place in the pecking order.

De Bruyne enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the club's record goalscorer Sergio Aguero before the Argentinian left the Etihad Stadium in 2021.

He has also combined with Romelu Lukaku on international duty, former City teammate Gabriel Jesus and new World Cup-winner Julian Alvarez, a current fellow City player.

"It is very hard to compare because they are all totally different," said De Bruyne.

"They have all scored 300 or 400 goals. Erling is so obsessed with goals he can maybe go beyond that."

He added: "He is still a young boy enjoying his life and he takes his football very seriously. He loves scoring goals, so I think that is the most unique thing he has."

Juventus scandal rumbles on as accounts stay deep in the red

Juventus' troubles will continue today when the shareholders of Italy's biggest football club meet to approve the latest disastrous set of accounts following last month's mass boardroom resignations. Juve's entire board quit as an investigation by prosecutors in Turin into allegations of false accounting and irregularities in the transfer and loans of players led to 15 people and the club being charged with a variety of offences. Today revised losses for the 2021/22 season of 239.3m euros (255m dollars) will be ratified, the fifth straight set of annual accounts in the red. Juve are listed on the Italian stock market and in September announced record losses of 254m euros, a figure revised downwards after losses for 2020/21 were

revised upwards from 209m euros to 226m euros. Those accounts were modified following findings of stock exchange regulator CONSOB as well as auditors and prosecutors. Tuesday's meeting had been scheduled for November 23 but was pushed back just over a week before the board announced its decision to step down. Chairman Andrea Agnelli was among those to resign, bringing to an end a 12-year reign which brought a host of trophies and for a period re-established Juventus as one of Europe's best teams. However, Juve's run of nine straight league titles came to an end in 2021 and their performances on the continent plummeted after they spent more than 100m euros to sign Cristiano Ronaldo

from Real Madrid three years before. Ronaldo's arrival coincided with an increase in salary costs which combined with the Covid-19 pandemic led to two capital increases worth 700m euros from parent company Exor, controlled by the powerful Agnelli family. In documents seen by AFP, Juve are accused of artificially inflating transfer values and also lying to the stock market when announcing at the height of the pandemic that players would help the club save 90m euros by giving up their salaries for March, April, May and June 2020. Prosecutors say the club privately assured players they would only have to give up one month's salary, saving just 22m euros. Shareholders are set to meet again on January 18 to appoint

the new board which is to be led by Gianluca Ferrero, a Turin-born former head of coffee brand Lavazza who is trusted by Exor chairman John Elkann - Andrea Agnelli's cousin. A preliminary court hearing next month will decide whether those charged by prosecutors will be defendants in a trial which would provide a troublesome backdrop to the second half of what has already been a complicated season for Juventus. The Turin giants were knocked out of the Champions League after finishing the group stage with just three points and trail Serie A leaders Napoli by 10 points. Coach Massimiliano Allegri had been under fire following an appalling start to the campaign but a run of six league wins dragged Juve to third in Serie A.

ASEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Thailand score win over Philippines

Reuters
Bangkok

Teerasil Dangda led Thailand to a comfortable 4-0 win over the Philippines in the Asean Championship yesterday as the defending champions moved into a strong position to advance to the semi-finals.

Mano Polking's side won for the second game in a row to top the five-team Group A standings alongside Indonesia, who thrashed Brunei 7-0.

Teerasil headed in Theeraton Boonmatan's free kick in the third minute at Thammasat Stadium on the outskirts of Bangkok to give the Thais the perfect start against a Philippines side who had won one and lost one of their opening two games.

The former Sanfrecce Hiroshima striker doubled his side's advantage from the penalty spot with four minutes remaining in the half before turning provider in the 57th minute, setting up Adisak Kraisoron for Thailand's third. Suphanan Bureerat stabbed in the fourth six minutes later to complete the rout.

Earlier, Indonesia crushed 10-man Brunei, who collapsed after Alinur Jufri's 38th-minute sending-off for a second bookable offence in Kuala Lumpur.

Shin Tae-yong's side, who finished as runners-up in last year's competition, led by a 20th-minute goal from Syahrian Abimanyu when Alinur was dismissed, prompting a flurry of goals. Dendi Sulistyawan doubled the advantage before second-half goals from Egy Maulana, Ilija Spasojevic, Ramadhan Sananta, Marc Klok and Yance Sayuri completed Indonesia's second win in a row having also beaten Cambodia.

Thailand lead the group on goal difference from Indonesia, both teams on six points. Cambodia are third on three points, level with the Philippines who have played one game more.

Brunei are bottom of the group with zero points from three matches. The group phase of the Asean Championship will continue until Jan. 3 with the top two in each group advancing to the knockout rounds.

The semi-finals will be played on a home-and-away basis on Jan. 6 and 9 with the final on January 13 and 16.



Fabian O'Neill, hailed by Zidane as 'most talented player ever', dead at 49

Former Uruguay international midfielder Fabian O'Neill, once hailed by Zinedine Zidane as "the most talented player" he'd ever seen, died on Sunday after a long battle with alcoholism. He was 49. "Goodbye Wizard," tweeted O'Neill's formative club Nacional after he passed away due to chronic cirrhosis in a Montevideo hospital where he had been rushed on Saturday suffering from a haemorrhage. "The most talented player I've ever seen," was how French World Cup winner Zidane, a teammate at Juventus, described O'Neill. After making his debut for Nacional at the age of 18 in 1992, O'Neill was transferred to Cagliari in Italy three years later. In 2000, he moved to Juventus but after playing for the Turin giants for just one season, he was farmed out to Perugia. He then returned to Nacional before quitting in 2003. O'Neill earned 19 caps for Uruguay and scored two goals. He was part of the squad that was eliminated in the first round of the World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002 although he did not feature in any of the group games due to injury.