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Australia's Hazlewood to miss first India Test



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Kane becomes Spurs' record scorer as City suffer title blow



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FOCUS

Top horses to take part in Amir Sword Festival: QREC chairman

HH The Amir Sword Festival to be run over three days at the Al Rayyan Racecourse from February 16-18

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Some of the top horses of the world would be seen in action during this year's prestigious HH The Amir Sword Festival which has attracted 24 international entries.

This was informed by Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC) Chairman Issa bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi during an agreement-signing ceremony held at QREC's grand and renovated old clubhouse yesterday.

The Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club signed agreements with Zoom Events & Production, Qommunication, and The Social & Sport Contribution Fund (Daam) in the run-up to the prestigious HH The Amir Sword Festival to be run over three days at the Al Rayyan Racecourse from February 16-18.

QREC's sponsors for this year's HH The Amir Sword Festival include: Al Emadi Enterprises/Al Hazm: Sponsor of the festival and the HH The Amir Sword Race; Daam: Supporting Partner of all racing events and shows organised by QREC; Longines: Official timekeeper of Al Rayyan Racecourse and sponsor of the HH The Amir Trophy Race; QNB: Sponsor of the HH The Amir Silver Sword Race; Qatar Airways: Official Carrier of the festival; Event management: Zoom; PR: QCommunication.

This year's HH The Amir Sword Festival is much bigger both in terms of races, participation of international entries and its prize money.



QREC Chairman Issa bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi (third from left), QREC Acting CEO Bader al-Darwish (second from right) and QREC Racing Manager Abdulla Rashid al-Kubaisi (second from left) pose with the sponsors of HH The Amir Sword Festival yesterday. **PICTURE:** *Juhaim*

The QREC has already announced a huge increase in the total prize money by more than the double to nearly $10mn - the highest-ever in the history of the festival.

Providing more details, al-Mohannadi said: "This year's festival is going to be unique because of a number of reasons. First of all, the prize money has been doubled. Now $10mn for the festival in prize money itself shows how it is becoming now one of the major festivals in the region."

He said: "The prize money has attracted many international runners. There are 24 horses coming from outside Qatar.

This is a remarkable and unique number that we haven't reached before. We have a number of horses coming from well-known countries known for their racing capabilities. These include the UK, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates.

"Horses from Godolphin, for example, would be coming to participate. There are other also other very strong level of horses and Group one listed horses coming to join us at this year's festival. Some top trainers also coming to join us. So the technical side of this festival has already gained a lot of momentum and it is already reaching a good level that we're happy with."

Al-Mohannadi also stressed that HH The Amir Sword Festival 2023 will also see a lot of entertainment activities on the sidelines on all three days.

"The associated activities that will come with this year's races are also unique for this festival. We have for the first time a museum that will tell you the story about the horseracing history in Qatar," he said.

"We will also have a number of activities for the kids and families that we normally do, but this year will be much more and much elevated. So overall, this will be a unique festival and we look to attract many people and many visitors from Qatar and the region."

The QREC chairman said the racing standards in Qatar have always been high but now top horses are coming to participate is what makes the competition all the more engaging.

"We have always been highly regarded internationally but the difference now is that we have been able to attract big names and that's what makes this festival unique compared to previous festivals. Now this year's festival has started to attract attention and bring international names, which is good for us," he said.

HH The Amir Sword Festival 2023 will start on February 16 (Thursday) with the Sand Championships Day - QREC's 32nd Race Meeting in the current season's calendar.

The meeting will involve eight races and each will have a purse of $100,000.

On the following day, the Al Zubara Trophy Day will have a nine-race card with a purse of $100,000 for the first seven races and $200,000 for each of the last two races of the day.

The third day and finale of the festival will see the most prestigious and valuable races and, for the first time in QREC's history, with total prize-money of over $8mn.

The day will feature nice races, including three with a purse of $500,000 each and four with a purse of $400,000 each.

The huge increase in prize-money will be in the day's feature, the HH The Amir Sword (Gr1 PA), and the penultimate race of the meeting, the HH The Amir Trophy (Gr1 QA) as each of them will have $2.5mn on offer respectively.

QNB STARS LEAGUE

Al Markhiya beat Qatar SC 4-0, Al Sailiya win

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Markhiya registered a convincing 4-0 win over Qatar SC in the QNB Stars League at the at Suheim Bin Hamad Stadium yesterday.

Aymen Hussein (24th minute penalty), Ayoub Assal (76th minute), Ali Nasser al-Marri (85th minute) and Abdelghani Laallam (90+3) scored the goals as Al Markhiya raised their tally to 12 points with their third victory.

High-flying Qatar SC remained on 19 points after suffering their fourth defeat.

Qatar SC were coming off three consecutive victories after the long break, against Al Gharafa, Umm Salal and Al Arabi. Qatar SC were reduced to 10 men after Javier Pastore was sent off in the 80th minute.

Al Markhiya were deserving winners, having played a good match and were easily the best, especially on the offensive front.

Qatar SC suffered greatly due to the absence of influential Iraqi midfielder Bashar Resan due to the red card he received in their previous match against Al Arabi. The Kings thus lacked offensive solutions and the ability to penetrate into the rival penalty area.

From the beginning, Al Markhiya succeeded in taking advantage of the opponents' weaknesses and pressed hard. The Oryxes understandably took the lead halfway through the first half through Iraqi ace Aymen, who converted from the penalty spot.

At the other end, Qatar SC failed to repeat their good form and also to make inroads into the rival territory. Al Markhiya continued from where they left off in the second half and succeeded in adding three more goals, with Assal, al-Marri and Laallam finding the target.

Later in the day, Al Sailiya scored a resounding 5-0 win over Al Shamal. The star of Al Sailiya's win was Mehrdad Mohammadi Keshrazi who scored a hat-trick (76th minute (P), 80th minute, and 90+1 minute) while Carlos Strandberg (45+1 minute) and Mohamed Muddather (60th minute) scored a goal each.

Registering their second win of the league, Al Sailiya showed superb coordination and finishing skills. While it took The Peregrines a little while to get their first goal on board, they ran roughshod over their rivals in the second half.

The breakthrough was provided by Al Sailiya's Swedish striker Carlos Strandberg in the added time of the opening half. Put through with a fine ball from the left by Ahmed Al Minhali, Strandberg made big strides to get to it and went on to beat an onrushing goalkeeper Babacar Seck, scoring from an acute angle and just past the left post.

Sudanese forward Muddather soon doubled the lead in the second half with a solid strike from well outside the box as the kick beat the diving goalkeeper to his right. Al Shamal then tried to counter attack but many of their attempts in front of the goal couldn't materialize. Their corner kicks were well directed but the players couldn't find a proper connection to trouble the rival defence and goalkeeper.

Later when Strandberg provided a golden ball inside the 'D', Al Shamal's Landre Loick held on to Ismail Khafi who appealed and the referee had no hesitation in signalling to the spot.

Mehrdad stepped up to score the penalty and his first goal. His second followed off a great cross from Strandberg from the left as Mehrdad ran in into the box and scored, beating the goalkeeper.

His third and hat-trick goal was a fine solo effort as Mehrdad broke past the defenders, kept the ball in control off a rebound from a defender's feet and charged in to strike from the right. Al Sailiya's win takes them a spot up in the standings to 11th with 7 points from 12 matches while Al Shamal are 10th with 10 points from 10 games.



Al Markhiya players celebrate a goal during their QNB Stars League match against Qatar SC at Suheim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha yesterday.

SPORT

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Blow for Australia as Hazlewood to miss first India Test

Coach Andrew McDonald says influential all-rounder Cameron Green could be considered for the opening Test match which begins in Nagpur on Thursday

Reuters
Mumbai

The Australian cricket team's injury concerns continue to mount before their first Test against India with seasoned fast bowler Josh Hazlewood ruled out of next week's opener in Nagpur, which begins on Thursday.

Hazlewood, 32, has been struggling with an Achilles problem sustained during Australia's Test against South Africa in Sydney last month and said yesterday he will miss at least the first Test of the four-match series.

Left-arm quick Mitchell Starc has already been ruled out of the opener while all-rounder Cameron Smith is doubtful, with both picking up finger injuries.

Hazlewood, who did not bowl during Australia's training camp on the outskirts of Bengaluru, is now racing to be fit for the second Test in Delhi, which starts on Feb. 17.

"It's still lingering from the (Sydney) Test match," said Hazlewood, who has featured in only four Tests in the last two years due to a string of injuries. "Not sure about the first Test. It's still a few days away but it's sneaking up pretty quickly.

"Second one is obviously straight after as well. So, we'll play it by ear over the next week and next few days... It's been frustrating playing one Test at a time. It always feels the hardest Test to play.

"They sort of get easier as they go and you get to the other side, the end of the series, it gets hard again. Hopefully I can string a couple together on this tour."

Australia coach Andrew McDonald remains hopeful Green can feature in the first Test against India, saying he still had progress to make before he could be considered for the series opener.

Green damaged his right index finger during the Boxing Day Test win over South Africa in Melbourne and was only given clearance to return to training by his doctor on Monday following surgery.

The 23-year-old bowled with soft balls for 30 minutes in the nets at the Australian camp before doing an hour's batting practice.

"He's made some significant steps forward in the last couple of days, probably to my surprise. There's still an outside chance that, everything going well, he might be on the team sheet," McDonald told reporters. With Green unlikely to be able to bowl in the first test, captain Pat Cummins acknowledged the make-up of Australia's bowling line-up remained unclear.

"I wouldn't say (picking two spinners) is a given," he said. "It's very conditions dependent, particularly this first test, so once we get to Nagpur, we'll see.

"I think sometimes, talking about a couple of spinners, you forget how good a lot of our fast bowlers have been in all conditions. We'll obviously pick the bowlers that we think can take 20 wickets – how are we going to split that up I'm not 100% sure yet."


India's opener Shubman Gill during a training session at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur. India will host Australia for the first Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series at the same venue from Feb 9, 2023.


Australia's Cameroon Green

Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2023
February 9-13: First Test, Nagpur
February 17-21: Second Test, Delhi
March 1-5: Third Test, Dharamsala
March 9-13: Fourth Test, Ahmedabad

Squads:
Australia: Pat Cummins (c), Ashton Agar, Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Peter Handscomb, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Lance Morris, Todd Murphy, Matthew Renshaw, Steve Smith (vc), Mitchell Starc, Mitchell Swepson, David Warner
India: (for the first two Tests) Rohit Sharma (c), KL Rahul (vc), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KS Bharat, Ishan Kishan, Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Suryakumar Yadav

FOCUS

Centuries for Chanderpaul and Brathwaite on rain-affected day

wAFP
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Tagenarine Chanderpaul struck his first Test century and fellow opener Kraigg Brathwaite also reached three figures as the West Indies reached 221 without loss yesterday after a rain-affected second day of the first Test against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo.

Captain Brathwaite recorded his 12th Test ton as he made 116 while Chanderpaul, son of West Indies great Shivnarine, closed on 101.

It is the highest opening partnership by West Indians since Chris Gayle and Kieran Powell scored 254 against New Zealand in Antigua 11 years ago.

Saturday's play had been abandoned because of rain soon after lunch with the tourists 112-0 and the inclement weather intervened again.

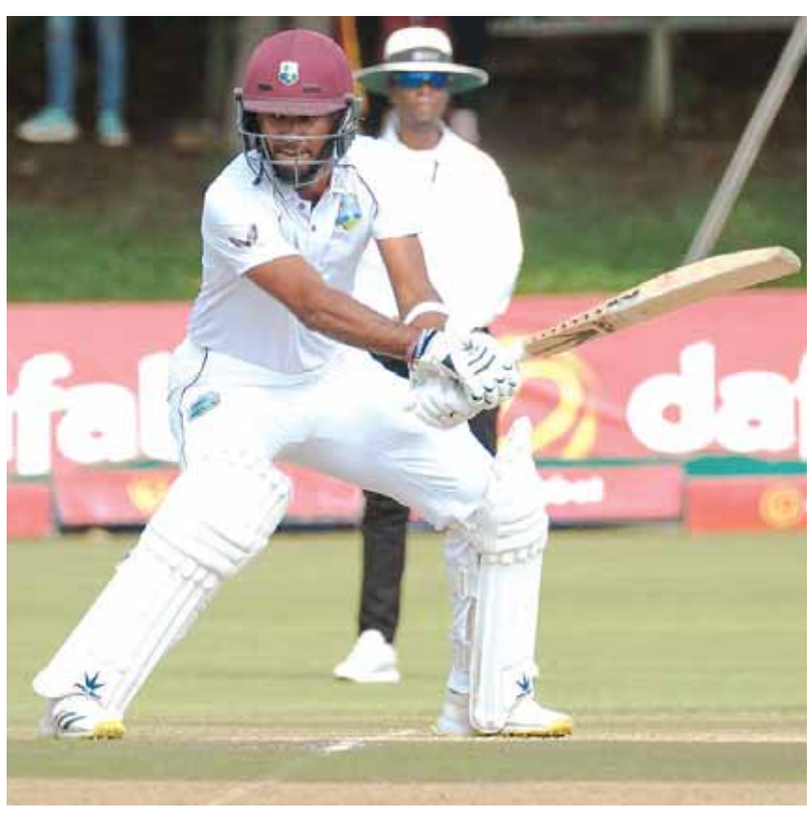
Play was only able to start at 1500 local time (1300 GMT) yesterday after sawdust had been scattered across the damp areas in the outfield.

As was the case on the opening day, the West Indies openers took few chances, scoring at fewer than two and half runs per over against some tight Zimbabwe bowling on a sluggish pitch.

Brathwaite, who has been in a rich run of form, looked the more comfortable and was the first to reach his century.

By the close he had faced 246 balls and hit seven fours.

Chanderpaul was more circumspect although there were moments when he played like his father who only retired from Test cricket eight years ago, having racked up 30 centuries in 164 Tests. While it took his father 19 Tests to reach his first century, Chanderpaul junior has needed just three.


Carlos Brathwaite of the West Indies plays a late cut during the second day of the first Test against Zimbabwe at Bulawayo yesterday.

The 26-year-old left-hander only made his debut in Perth against Australia in November when he scored 51 and 45.

He followed that with 47 and 17 in Adelaide and looked at home alongside Brathwaite in Bulawayo.

He struck 10 fours and a six during the course of his innings, bringing up his century with a neat tuck behind square for a single.

"He (Chanderpaul) looks to be world-class and is a top opener," said Brathwaite at the close.

"Glad we have got some big partnerships thus far and would love to continue."

Each of the Zimbabwe bowlers deserves credit for keeping a tight rein on the West Indies scoring, spinner Wellington Masakadza conceding just 30 runs from a tight 16 overs which included six maidens.

The match, which is the first for the West Indies with batting legend Brian Lara acting as performance mentor, is the first of two in a Test series to be completed in Bulawayo.

The second Test match is scheduled to start on February 12.

SCOREBOARD
West Indies I Innings

K. Brathwaite *not out*	116
T. Chanderpaul *not out*	101
Extras (b1, nb3)	**4**
Total (0 wkt, 89 overs)	221

Bowling: R. Ngarava 15-4-40-0 (1nb), V. Nyauchi 21-5-53-0, B. Evans 18-3-44-0 (2nb), W. Masakadza 16-6-30-0, B. Mavuta 19-2-53-0

Charlotte Edwards to coach Mumbai Indians WPL side

Mumbai: Mumbai Indians yesterday named England's **Charlotte Edwards** as chief coach of its Women's Premier League team ahead of the inaugural tournament to be held in India in March.

The 44-year-old former England captain has coached cricket teams in Australia and her own country for the last five years.



The Mumbai Indians, owned by tycoon Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries, are the most successful franchise in the men's Indian Premier League with five trophies.

Last month, India's cricket board auctioned off five women's WPL teams for $572.5mn.

The franchise also announced Jhulan Goswami as the team's mentor and bowling coach alongside all-rounder Devika Palshikaar as batting coach and Trupti Chandgadkar Bhattacharya as team manager.

Goswami topped the ICC Women's ODI bowling rankings in 2016 and also holds the records for the highest number of wickets (350) in women's ODI history and the most wickets in women's World Cups.

Palshikaar has coached teams in India and Bangladesh and won the Asia Cup with the latter in 2018. Bhattacharya is a former manager of the Indian women's cricket team.

"It is wonderful to see more and more women in sport, excelling not just as players, but also as coaches, administrators, and support staff," Nita Ambani, a director at Reliance and Mukesh's spouse, said in a statement.

"This is an exciting time for women's sport in India," she said.

GOLF

Malnati leads as high winds halt play at Pebble Beach

AFP
San Francisco

American Peter Malnati was atop the leaderboard when gusting winds halted play at the Pebble Beach Pro-Am on Saturday, with US PGA Tour officials now expecting the tournament to finish on Monday.

Only a couple of players had completed the third round when gusting winds forced organizers to suspend play because balls wouldn't hold on at least one green.

A planned resumption never materialised as the winds sweeping in from the Pacific Ocean continued blow.

Malnati admitted he had mixed feelings when play was halted.

He had six birdies through 12 holes on the par-72 Pebble Beach Golf Links, one of three courses in use over the first three rounds along with par-72 Spyglass Hill and par-71 Monterey Peninsula.

"I got to play eight holes before the weather got bad, so that was nice," said Malnati, who teed off on 10 and birdied the 11th, 12th and 13th.

"Then made the turn and made three birdies into the wind on one, two and three.

"Honestly, like where I was, I was on the fourth green, I was getting ready to go play five, six, seven into the teeth of that wind, so who knows.

"I wish we were still out there playing for the sake of the tournament, but for me maybe it was a good break getting out of there at the time that I did."

Malnati was 12-under when play was halted, two strokes clear of Joseph Bramlett and Keith Mitchell.

Bramlett was through 13 holes and Mitchell through 10.

Officials said the amateur competition, which attracts such celebrity golfers as Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers and former Wales captain Gareth Bale, would be shortened to 54 holes.

PGA Tour pros will complete the third round on Sunday and after the cut – made after three rounds rather than two because of the three courses in use – would begin the final round.


Peter Malnati of the US prepares to putt on the seventh green during a continuation of the third round of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am at Pebble Beach Golf Links in Pebble Beach, California. *(AFP)*

LIV rebels set for legal case on DP World Tour status

London: The latest battle in golf's civil war will take place off the course this week as an arbitration panel meets in London to decide whether the LIV Golf rebels are able to continue playing on the DP World Tour.

A total of 13 players are seeking clarity on their ability to participate in future events.

The case arose when players requested releases from the DP World Tour in order to play the inaugural LIV Golf event in Hemel Hempstead last June.

Those requests were denied but the players competed in LIV's lift-off event regardless.

The DP World Tour retaliated with £100,000 ($121,000) fines and bans from the Scottish Open.

But an appeal from Ian Poulter, Adrian Otaegui and Justin Harding saw the punishments suspended pending a substantive appeal.

That allowed LIV players to continue playing on the DP World Tour, with Otaegui winning the Andalucia Masters in October.

They have since been joined by Lee Westwood, Sam Horsfield, Richard Bland, Shaun Norris, Laurie Canter, Wade Ormsby, Patrick Reed, Bernd Wiesberger, Graeme McDowell and Martin Kaymer.

The number of appellants had grown to 16, but Sergio Garcia, Charl Schwartzel and Branden Grace have since withdrawn from the case.

The case is separate to the anti-trust lawsuit between LIV and the PGA Tour in the United States.

"The hearing centres solely on our conflicting event release regulation and our ability to enforce it," said the DP World Tour's director of communications Scott Crockett.

The LIV players argue that releases have previously been granted to play on the PGA Tour, with whom the DP World Tour have a strategic alliance.

TENNIS

Wawrinka seals win for Swiss, US crush Uzbekistan

The three-time Grand Slam champion rolls back the clock for a battling victory

Reuters
Paris



Finland's Emil Ruusuvuori is thrown into the air as Team Finland celebrate after a 3-1 victory against Argentina during their Davis Cup clash in Espoo, Finland, yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Three-time Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka rolled back the clock to secure a thrilling win for Switzerland over Germany in their Davis Cup qualifier on Saturday.

The 37-year-old, part of the Swiss 2014 Davis Cup winning team but who had not played in the event since 2015, beat Daniel Altmaier 6-3 5-7 6-4 to seal a 3-2 win in Trier.

It was Wawrinka's first win of the tie after losing to Alexander Zverev on Friday and the doubles on Saturday.

Switzerland will now grab one of the 12 spots up for grabs for the 2023 Davis Cup Finals group stage in September.

A busy weekend of ties had 24 nations competing with the 12 winners joining 2022 champions Canada, runners-up Australia and wildcards Spain and Italy.

The United States swept Uzbekistan aside with a 4-0 victory while the Ymer brothers, Mikael and Elias, guided Sweden to a 3-1 win over Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Mackenzie McDonald and Tommy Paul had given the Americans a 2-0 lead on Friday before the doubles pairing of Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram beat Sergey Fomin and Sanjar Ayziev 6-2 6-4 to give the record 32-time winners an unassailable lead.

Britain also made it through as Cameron Norrie sealed a 3-1 lead against Colombia in Bogota by beating Nicolas Mejia 6-4 6-4.

World number 253 Mejia had given Colombia the lead on Friday by upsetting Dan Evans on the clay.

In Stockholm, Mikael and Elias Ymer each won their singles rubbers in straight sets but Bosnia clawed back a point in the doubles thanks to a win for Mirza Basic and Tomislav Brkic.

Mikael Ymer then saw seven-times champions Sweden through with a 6-1 1-6 6-3 victory over Damir Dzumhur where he fired 22 winners in the third singles match.

"I'm super, super proud (of our team). It's fantastic that me and my brother and the team could get us through to the finals again," Mikael said.

"I think we have proven that we can compete with the best teams in the world and I think we are all ready for it."

France came back from 2-1 down against Hungary to win 3-2 as Adrian Mannarino and Ugo Humbert turned things around in the second batch of singles rubbers, beating Marton Fucsovics and Fabian Marozsan respectively in straight sets.


Stan Wawrinka

"I'm very happy that we're in the Finals. Playing in Davis Cup means a lot for me because it's an unbelievable competition and I'm very proud of myself today," said debutant Humbert, who had also won his first singles rubber on Friday.

Serbia also qualified after Nikola Cacic and Filip Krajinovic won their doubles match 6-4 3-6 6-3 against Norway to give their team a 3-0 lead.

Switzerland had looked to be heading for defeat when Wawrinka and Dominic Stricker lost to Tim Puetz and Andreas Mies to give Germany a 2-1 advantage.

But Zverev was stunned by Marc-Andrea Huesler in straight sets to leave the stage for Wawrinka.

"I'm very happy I won the point, and the last one was the most important," Wawrinka, now ranked 135th in the world, said.

"I was happy to come back if they need me to help."

PARKS UPSETS GARCIA IN LYON TO WIN FIRST WTA SINGLES TITLE

Alycia Parks won her first WTA singles title at the Open de Lyon yesterday, wrapping up her breakthrough week on the Hologic WTA Tour with her first Top 5 victory.

The 22-year-old American upset No.1 seed and local hope Caroline Garcia, 7-6(7), 7-5, collecting the champion's trophy after 2 hours and 7 minutes of power tennis by both.

Having already made her first tour-level semifinal and final this week, Parks went all the way to the title by stunning World No 5 Garcia and denying the Frenchwoman her 12th career WTA singles title at her hometown event.

By the numbers: Parks again reached double digits in aces, firing 15 during the final. That total was more than half of her 28 winners in the match, while Garcia finished with 13 winners, including four aces.

Both players were superb on serve, with Parks erasing all four of the break points she faced, and winning 85 percent of her first-service points.

Parks also fended off a set point with an unreturnable serve at 7-6 in the first-set tiebreak.

Garcia also neared an 80 percent success rate behind her first serve, and she almost got out of the match without being broken as well. But Parks converted her third and final break point of the day - on championship point, where Garcia double faulted.

Victory in the final marks the second Top 10 win for Parks, who defeated No 7 Maria Sakkari last year in Ostrava.

But this was the American's first victory over a player currently ranked inside the Top 5, having previously lost to then-No 4 Ons Jabeur in Berlin last year.

RUGBY

France survive big scare to edge out Italy in Six Nations


France's centre Gael Fickou (top) tackles Italy's full back Ange Capuozzo during the Six Nations match at the Olympic Stadium in Rome yesterday. *(AFP)*

Reuters
Rome

France survived a huge scare as they started their Six Nations campaign with a nerve-racking 29-24 away victory over Italy yesterday.

The defending champions were 24-22 down going into the last 15 minutes before replacement flyhalf Matthieu Jalibert scored the decisive try after Thibaud Flament, Ethan Dumortier and Thomas Ramos, who kicked the other points, had touched down in the first half.

Italy, who made the most of France's poor discipline, responded with Ange Capuozzo's try, a penalty try and points from the boot of Tommaso Allan, showcasing their newly found flair and self-confidence but coming up just short as Les Bleus claimed their 14th test victory in a row. France, who had 18 penalties against them, travel to Ireland next Saturday with Italy taking on England at Twickenham next Sunday.

"We were against one of the top teams in the world. There are regrets but also a lot of pride," said Italy fullback Capuozzo, who scored his sixth try in eight international appearances.

France were more relieved than proud.

"We're going to try and keep the positives from this test but obviously there were more negatives than positives," said captain Antoine Dupont.

It all started well for Fabien Galthie's side but things began to unravel before the interval and it took the huge depth of their bench to finally prevail at the Stadio Olimpico.

Their aggressive defence made the difference early on as Flament charged down a kick from Stephen Varney before scoring between the posts.

Italy made it to the board with Allan's first penalty but the Azzurri were on the brink. Shortly after Charles Ollivon had a try ruled out for a knock-on, Ramos picked up the ball that Damian Penaud and Capuozzo were competing for following Romain Ntamack's cross-field kick to touch down and give the visitors a nine-point lead.

Allan slashed it to six with another penalty as France paid for their ill-discipline - a shortcoming they failed to correct after the break. But another cross-field kick from Ntamack was collected by Dumortier, who finished his run between the posts to celebrate his maiden cap with a try.

Italy, however, hit back through Capuozzo, who dived for the corner after evading Gregory Alldritt's tackle, before Allan reduced the arrears to five points with another penalty kick.

Following an early penalty for France, Italy were awarded a penalty try and Ollivon was sin-binned for collapsing the maul.

With an extra man on the field and a one-point deficit, the hosts were fired up and they took the lead just before Ollivon returned to the field with Allan's fourth penalty. Galthie's changes, however, quickly paid off as Jalibert dived over after being set up by fellow replacement Romain Taofifenua to restore France's lead for good.

NBA

Giannis guides Bucks to seventh straight win

AFP
New York

Giannis Antetokounmpo recorded a triple-double of 35 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists as the host Milwaukee Bucks recorded their first win in three tries against the Miami Heat this season with a 123-115 decision on Saturday.

Khris Middleton scored 24 points off the bench for the Bucks, who won their seventh straight game. Milwaukee led almost the entire way but never by more than 12 points and with eight ties - including 92-92 late in the third quarter. The Bucks went on a 10-0 run from that point to take a lead they never relinquished.

Jimmy Butler helped keep Miami within striking distance throughout the night, logging a team-high 32 points in his most prolific scoring performance since Jan. 16. Tyler Herro added 24 points despite shooting just 2 of 8 from 3-point range, and Bam Adebayo recorded a double-double of 16 points and 11 rebounds.

With the win, Milwaukee has won nine of its last 10 for its best stretch since opening the season 9-0. Grayson Allen shot 4 of 7 from deep en route to 19 points, Pat Connaughton converted 4 of 9 treys for 14 points and Jrue Holiday made 3 of 5 beyond the arc in a 15-point performance.

Clippers 134, Knicks 128 (OT)
Los Angeles squandered a 17-point lead in the fourth quarter, but Nicolas Batum hit a late 3-pointer to force overtime before his team pulled away at the free-throw line to earn a win over host New York.

Kawhi Leonard scored 35 points to lead six players in double figures for the Clippers, who have won seven of their last nine games. Paul George had 30 points while Norman Powell finished with 24 points off the bench. Jalen Brunson scored 41 points, three shy of his career high, while Julius Randle posted 28 points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks.

Warriors 119, Mavericks 113
Golden State snapped a two-game losing streak but lost All-Star Stephen Curry to a knee injury in the third quarter of a victory over Luka Doncic-less Dallas in San Francisco.

Curry had a team-high 21 points in 26 minutes and Draymond Green chipped in with 17 points, a game-high nine assists and a game-high-tying nine rebounds for the Warriors, who were leading 98-78 with 2:01 remaining in the third period at the time of Curry's injury.

Nuggets 128, Hawks 108
Nikola Jokic recorded his 18th triple-double of the season and Jamal Murray scored a season-high 41 points to give Denver a win over visiting Atlanta and extend its winning streak to three games.

Jokic had 14 points on 5-for-8 shooting with 18 rebounds and 10 assists. He has put up triple-doubles in nine of his last 11 games, and the Nuggets have won all 18 this season when he achieves the feat.

Pelicans 131, Lakers 126
Brandon Ingram scored 35 points and led a fourth-quarter surge as host New Orleans ended a 10-game losing streak by defeating Los Angeles.

CJ McCollum added 23 points, Trey Murphy III scored 21 and Jonas Valanciunas had 18 points and 14 rebounds for the Pelicans.

LeBron James finished the game with 27 points to pull within 35 points of NBA icon Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career scoring record, and Anthony Davis led the Lakers with 34 points and 14 rebounds.


Miami Heat forward Haywood Highsmith (24) reaches for the ball against Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (left) in the second half of their NBA game at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. *(USA TODAY Sports)*

Nets 125, Wizards 123
Cam Thomas scored 19 of his career-high 44 points in the fourth quarter and converted the go-ahead three-point play with 12.2 seconds remaining as Brooklyn rallied from a 23-point deficit to beat Washington in New York.

Thomas joined Stephon Marbury as the only player in franchise history to score 40-plus points in under 30.

Suns 116, Pistons 100
Deandre Ayton powered his way to 31 points and 16 rebounds and visiting Phoenix never trailed while defeating Detroit. Ayton made 13 of 15 field goal attempts. Mikal Bridges supplied 24 points for Phoenix, which defeated Eastern Conference leader Boston on Friday.

Cameron Johnson, who sat Friday due to right knee injury management, had 20 points. Torrey Craig contributed 14 points and Chris Paul had 14 assists as Phoenix shot 56 percent from the field. Star guard Devin Booker missed his 21st consecutive game due to a left groin strain.

Bulls 129, Trail Blazers 121
Zach LaVine scored 36 points to help host Chicago overcome a 17-point deficit in the third quarter and post a victory over Portland.

LaVine made 11 of 18 shots from the floor - including 5 of 10 from 3-point range. He also made all nine of his free-throw attempts. DeMar DeRozan collected 27 points, seven assists and seven rebounds, and Nikola Vucevic had 23 points and 11 rebounds. Portland's Damian Lillard scored 28 of his 40 points in the first half.

Thunder 153, Rockets 121
Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 42 points to help lift host Oklahoma City to a blowout victory over Houston.

The Thunder's 153 points marks a franchise record (not including time as SuperSonics), topping the 150 points they scored in a win over the Boston Celtics earlier this season.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Kane breaks Greaves' Tottenham record as City suffer title blow

The 29-year-old becomes only the third player to score 200 Premier League goals

wAFP
London


Tottenham Hotspur's striker Harry Kane celebrates after scoring his team's first goal during the English Premier League match against Manchester City at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London yesterday. *(AFP)*

Harry Kane became Tottenham's all-time record scorer as his 267th goal for the club sealed a 1-0 win against Manchester City that severely damaged the champions' bid to retain the Premier League title.

Kane's historic first-half strike at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium took him past Jimmy Greaves into sole possession of the hallowed record.

Greaves had held the milestone since 1970 before Kane moved level with him in his previous appearance against Fulham on January 23.

Kane's landmark moment also made him only the third player to score 200 Premier League goals after Alan Shearer (260) and Wayne Rooney (208).

It has been an unforgettable period for Kane, who drew level with Rooney as England's joint record scorer on 53 goals when he netted against France at the World Cup in December.

Passing Greaves had become increasingly inevitable for the prolific Kane, although ironically City could have ended his record chase if they had been successful in their attempt to sign him in 2021.

However, Kane's remarkable goal feats seemed a distant dream during a difficult start to his career that featured several failed loan spells before he finally emerged as a star. Greaves, who died aged 81 in 2021, is regarded as one of the most natural goalscorers in football history.

A member of England's 1966 World Cup-winning squad, who netted 44 times for his country, Greaves is the highest scorer in English top-flight history with 357 goals.

For Kane to be alongside such a legendary player is a tribute to his predatory instincts and his perseverance.

The 29-year-old's first Tottenham goal came back in 2011 against Shamrock Rovers in the Europa League. If that was a low-key way to start an incredible career, his record strike carried far more significance.

Arsenal's shock 1-0 defeat at struggling Everton on Saturday had given City renewed hope they could overhaul the leaders.

But instead Kane's 19th goal in all competitions this season leaves second-placed City trailing five points behind Arsenal, who have a game in hand and host Pep Guardiola's men in a crucial clash on February 15.

Without boss Antonio Conte after emergency surgery to remove his gallbladder, Tottenham were led by his assistant Cristian Stellini and this result surely lifted the recuperating Italian's spirits.

Tottenham's win moved them within one point of fourth-placed Newcastle as they chase Champions League qualification. It took Kane just 15 minutes to make history as Rodri's careless pass on the edge of the City area allowed Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg to rob Manuel Akanji. Hojbjerg slipped his pass to Kane and, with immortality in his sights, the striker guided a slightly scuffed low shot past Ederson with typical efficiency.

Sprinting away to soak up the acclaim, Kane waved towards his family, who were sitting below a scoreboard emblazoned with the message "Congratulations Harry" alongside pictures of him celebrating previous goals for the club. The England captain was serenaded by Tottenham fans chanting "Harry Kane, he's one of our own" as the product of the club's youth academy walked back to the centre circle beaming a broad grin.

City's response was laboured and Guardiola grew tetchy on the touchline, ranting in frustration after the subdued Erling Haaland opted to pass instead of shoot.

Riyad Mahrez was inches away from easing Guardiola's angst when he crashed a fierce volley against the crossbar.

City came from two goals down at half-time to beat Tottenham 4-2 at the Etihad Stadium in January.

But with City showing no signs of emulating that fightback, Guardiola sent on Kevin De Bruyne, having surprisingly left the Belgium midfielder on the bench for "tactical" reasons.

De Bruyne's presence lifted City and Julian Alvarez's deflected shot looped over before Akanji appealed in vain for a penalty when his shot hit Cristian Romero's arm. In a tense finale, Tottenham had to play last three minutes with 10 men after Romero was dismissed for a second booking as he chopped down Jack Grealish.

Earlier in the day, Leeds boss Jesse Marsch admitted time is running out for him to avoid the "stress" of a relegation battle after a 1-0 defeat to Nottingham Forest. Marsch's men have not won in the league since November and sit outside the drop zone only on goal difference.

Brennan Johnson's stunning strike earned Forest victory as they moved six points clear of the bottom three in 13th. Not for the first time in recent weeks, Leeds dominated the majority of the game after falling behind early on. But they could not find a way past the inspired Keylor Navas on his Forest debut.

"It is my responsibility and I understand their frustration and I accept it," said Marsch of calls for him to go by some section of the Leeds support.

LA LIGA

Nacho blunder gifts Mallorca upset win over Real

AFP
Palma, Spain


Real Madrid's coach Carlo Ancelotti (left) comforts Marco Asensio after he missed a penalty during the La Liga match against Mallorca yesterday. *(AFP)*

Real Madrid's hopes of retaining the La Liga title were dented yesterday as the champions lost 1-0 at Real Mallorca, to remain five points behind leaders Barcelona.

The Catalans host Sevilla later on and can open up an eight-point lead after a frustrated Madrid fell short against Javier Aguirre's side, with Marco Asensio missing a penalty against his former club.

Nacho's 13th-minute looping header into his own net separated the teams in a hard-fought clash, frequently slowed by various fouls from the hosts. Amid a constant battle between winger Vinicius Junior and Mallorca's players and supporters, the islanders held off Los Blancos to record an impressive victory.

Vinicius suffered 10 fouls and Mallorca committed 29 in total."I think there's an atmosphere developing around Vinicius that doesn't favour anybody, not the player, not football, not the fans, who in the end get involved with the kid," Nacho told Movistar.

"Between us all we have to enjoy football which is a beautiful sport – we have to leave controversies and nonsense to one side."

Real Madrid were without goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, hurt during the warm-up, along with the injured Karim Benzema, Eder Militao and Ferland Mendy, among other absentees.

The match was heated from the start, largely due to historic bad blood between Vinicius and Mallorca.

Mallorca captain Antonio Raillo has criticised the Brazilian winger on multiple occasions for lacking respect towards opponents and said he wouldn't hold him up as an example to his son.

Home fans whistled Vinicius when he was on the ball and chanted Raillo's name. Carlo Ancelotti was also frustrated his team were playing in the early afternoon after having faced Valencia on Thursday night and Madrid started sluggishly.

Mallorca took an early lead when Nacho's attempted header sent Dani Rodriguez's in-swinging cross from the left looping over Courtois's standin Andriy Lunin and dipping just under the crossbar. Nacho was under pressure from Mallorca target man Vedat Muriqi, who initially appeared to have scored the goal.

"It's been six games since I scored but I don't care that it's not mine, if we win, I don't care," said Muriqi.

The hosts shackled Vinicius well in the first half and reduced Madrid to pot-shots from distance.

Vinicius was booked for stepping on Pablo Maffeo's foot, leaving the Brazilian incredulous after various fouls against him had not been punished with a card.

Dani Ceballos protested vehemently to the officials as the teams went in at the break and was also booked, as temperatures rose in the Mallorcan sun.

Vinicius pulled at the Madrid badge on his shirt while looking at the home fans to agitate them further.

Early in the second half Raillo responded by offering Vinicius the Mallorca badge on his shirt to kiss.

Madrid had a golden chance to level before the hour mark when Mallorca goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic brought down Vinicius, but the Serbian denied Asensio from the spot.

The Madrid forward tried to find the bottom right corner but Rajkovic flung himself full-length to tip away his penalty.

Madrid will have to put defeat behind them quickly as they travel to Morocco midweek to take part in the Club World Cup.

Osimhen, Kvaratskhelia combine at Spezia to send Napoli 16 clear

Victor Osimhen and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia were again the stars of the show for Napoli as the Serie A leaders won 3-0 at Spezia to extend their advantage to a whopping 16 points.

Wing wizard Kvaratskhelia put Napoli ahead from the penalty spot two minutes after the break on the Italian Riviera before Osimhen netted twice, taking his league tally to 16. Nigeria forward Osimhen pounced on a defensive error to double Napoli's lead in the 68th minute and five minutes later rolled home an easy finish after Mattia Caldara passed straight to Kvaratskhelia on the edge of his own area. "All the victories are important, we need to keep the momentum and try to win all games," said Osimhen to Sky in Italy."It is not going to be easy of course, Serie A is a very competitive league and we have to be on top of our game. We go back, we prepare for the next game, that is the most important thing."

Osimhen ended the day on top of the world after beginning it going into to the stands at the Stadio Picco to apologise to a woman fan who hit with a off-target pre-match practice shot.

The 23-year-old hugged the woman and posed for selfies before going on to continue Napoli's unstoppable looking title charge.

CHEBLI EMERGES CHAMPION



Lebanese driver Mansour Chebli won both Open 1 and Production 1 category events in the second round of the Qatar National Sprint on Saturday at the Lusail Circuit Sports Club Karting Track. Chebli, driving his Renault Clio, registered the second fastest lap of the day when he registered a time of 1:12.671s in Open Class 1 before clocking a time of 1:15.066s in the Production 1 event. His compatriot Jad Alawar, driving a Mitsubishi Evo 8 became the fastest of the day when he stopped the clock at 1:11.354s in Open Class 2 event. Paige de Jagger won Open Class 3 and the Women's Class in Mitsubishi Eclipse. Qatar's Maher Serre won the P2 class in his Porsche Cayman GTS, clocking a time of 1:16.873 in his only attempt. Qatar's Abdulla Ali al-Abbasi, driving a Lotus Exige, won the Production 3 class in 1:17.732s.

BUNDESLIGA

Bayern back on top with 4-2 victory at Wolfsburg

Reuters
Wolfsburg, Germany


Bayern Munich's Jamal Musiala celebrates scoring their fourth goal against Wolfsburg yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Bayern Munich scored three times in a stellar 10-minute spell in the first half to battle past hosts VfL Wolfsburg 4-2 yesterday, ending their three-game winless run in the league and reclaiming the top spot.

The Bavarians went into the match with club bosses locked in a public spat with injured keeper Manuel Neuer over the sacking last week of his close friend, goalkeeping coach Toni Tapalovic, and three consecutive 1-1 league draws since the season restarted in January.

Bayern, who face Paris St Germain in nine days in the Champions League Round of 16, were desperate for a win and it took them only nine minutes to show they meant business.

Kingsley Coman's cross flew past Wolfsburg keeper Koen Casteels and into the far corner after Bayern's Thomas Mueller failed to connect in front of goal. There was nothing lucky about Coman's second goal in the 14th with the France winger thundering in a volley at the far post from a pinpoint Joao Cancelo cross.

Bayern made it 3-0 five minutes later through Mueller, who equalled the late Gerd Mueller's all-time club record for an in-field player with his 427th Bundesliga game. They then took their foot of the gas, allowing Wolfsburg far too much space.

Bayern were punished for their complacency a minute before the break when Jakub Kaminski caught the visitors' mercurial defence napping with a quick one-two and a fine finish. Things got even worse after the break with Bayern's Joshua Kimmich sent off with a second booking for the first time in his Bundesliga career and the Wolves missing golden chances through Mattias Svanberg and Baku Ridle.

On the bench, Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann was fuming about his team's defensive operation before Jamal Musiala briefly settled their nerves with a superb solo effort in the 73rd.

Svanberg cut the deficit once more eight minutes later and then saw keeper Yann Sommer save his stoppage-time shot as the visitors held on for a win to move up to 40 points, one above second-placed Union Berlin. Borussia Dortmund are third on 37.