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Gill and Saha help Gujarat win IPL battle of brothers



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Alcaraz beats Struff to lift Madrid Open title on clay

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Gutsy Arsenal beat Newcastle United 2-0 to stay in the title hunt

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JUDO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - DOHA 2023

Tsunoda and Garrigos win gold on opening day

JUDOKAS CREATE A BUZZ AT ALI BIN HAMAD AL ATTIYAH ARENA

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The World Judo Championships - Doha 2023 kicked off in style yesterday at the Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena.

It was the first day of the hugely popular competition, which featured women under 48kg and men under 60kgs, battling it out for the championship crown.

In the women's under 48kg category, it was a closely fought contest, with the gold medal eventually going to Japan's Natsumi Tsunoda.

She was followed by France's Shirine Boukli in second place, and Japan's Koga Wakana and Italy's Assunto Scuto in third.

Meanwhile, in the men's under 60kg category, the gold medal was claimed by Spain's Francisco Garrigos.

In second place was Uzbekistan's Dilshodbek Baratov, while in third place was Korea's Lee Harim and Georgia's Giorgi Sardalashvili.

Speaking after the event, the Director of the Sports Committee for the championships, Eid Ali al-Muraikhi, said: "The Judo World Championship - Doha 2023 has kicked off with fiercely competitive games. We've seen exceptional performances from all the participating athletes, and we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners. Additionally, we'd like to highlight that the opening ceremony of the championship will take place tomorrow, Monday evening. We're looking forward to a momentous event that celebrates both Arab and Qatari cultures, while also serving as a global occasion."

The tournament is scheduled to take place from 7 to 14 May, and will witness the participation of 657 players from 99 countries across five continents, namely Europe, Africa, Oceania, Asia and America.

According to the International Judo Federation's draw, the competition features 343 players across seven weight categories for men's singles: under 60 kg (37 players), under 66 kg (55 players), under 73 kg (55 players), under 81 kg (51 players), under 90 kg (58 players), under 100 kg (44 players), and over 100 kg (43 players).

For women's singles, the competition has 314 players across seven weight categories: under 48 kg (45 players), under 52 kg (46 players), under 57 kg (50 players), under 63 kg (46 players), under 70 kg (49 players), under 78 kg (37 players), and above 78 kg (41 players).

For more information on the World Judo Championships - Doha 2023 and ticket purchases, fans can visit the official website, *judodoha2023.com*.





H E Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of World Judo Championships - Doha 2023, welcomed distinguished sports and Olympic officials as well as presidents of various judo federations at the Gala Dinner held at Doha Sheraton Hotel yesterday. **Right:** Spain's Francisco Garrigos (in white) on way to winning the gold in the men's under 60kg category against Uzbekistan's Dilshodbek Baratov.





Japan's Natsumi Tsunoda (left) and Spain's Francisco Garrigos celebrate winning gold medals on the opening day of the World Judo Championships - Doha 2023. **PICTURES:** *Shaji Kayamkulam*



Fans enjoy live action at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena in Doha yesterday.

FOOTBALL

Al Duhail, Al Arabi eye QNB Stars League glory

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Duhail face Al Shamal in perhaps the most decisive match in Week 22 (final round) of the 2022-2023 season QNB Stars League at the Al Duhail Stadium today. The kick-off is at 19:00.

Al Duhail are looking to win the coveted league shield for the eighth time in their history and after a gap of two seasons.

The Red Knights, under the tutelage of Hernan Crespo, need to win the game.

Al Duhail are leading the table with 48 points, two more than second-placed Al Arabi.

On the other hand, Al Shamal are placed ninth with 18 points. They had played out a 1-1 draw with Umm Salal in Week 21.

They are in struggle, along with Umm Salal (17 points), Al Rayyan (17 points) and Al Sailiya (16 points), to avoid relegation and Play-Off match.

Al Duhail would have emerged as champions had they beaten Al Sadd in the last round, when they were beaten 3-1 by the reigning champions. And Al Arabi won their game against Al Gharafa (3-0) to keep alive their title hopes to be on 46 points. Al Sadd are on 44 points.

Thus, the title race boiled down to the final round matches.

Al Shamal match is our last chance to win league: Al Duhail coach Crespo

Al Duhail coach Hernan Crespo spoke to the media ahead of their 2022-2023 season QNB Stars League Week 22 match against Al Shamal.

"The Al Shamal match is our last chance to win the league title," Crespo said yesterday.

"So far, we are still on top of the standings and we must complete our work by winning the league title, and there is an opportunity for that and we must take advantage of it, and we must trust ourselves.

"The team includes players with distinguished levels and depends on the spirit of the group, and there are players with distinguished levels such as Nam Tae-Hee, Edmilson and Almoez Ali, and there are young players who succeeded in appearing well, such as Yousef Ayman and Mohamed Al Nuaimi.

"Pressures are part of my practical life, whether when I was a player or after I went to training, and when you are in a club like Al Duhail that is always looking forward to winning championships, the pressure becomes positive," said Crespo.

Al Duhail captain Almoez Ali said yesterday: "The team is ready for the Al Shamal match, and as the coach described it, it is the last chance for us to win the league, and we want to win our third title this season (Ooredoo Cup and Qatar Cup being the other triumphs) and show good performance and a great show.

"We know very well the importance of this match, and that it will not be easy, as we are facing a team that will play in order to escape relegation, and will certainly do everything in their power to survive.

"We will play it in order to win the league title and any mistake can deprive us of the title,"Almoez Ali added.

Ready for Al Sadd, our goal is to win and make our fans happy: Al Arabi coach Younes

Al Arabi coach Younes Ali spoke to the media ahead of their 2022-2023 season QNB Stars League Week 22 match against Al Sadd.

"A big match awaits us against Al Sadd at the end of the league, as this confrontation enjoys a lot of excitement and challenge, not because it is crucial for the league title, but because the two teams will meet again in the Amir Cup final," Ali said.

"Al Arabi and Al Sadd matches are always characterised by strength, excitement and competition, so it will not be an easy match, especially in such difficult circumstances for the two teams," Ali added. "We do not want to put the players under pressure," he added. "We will go into the Al Sadd match to win three points. Our fans have a great influence on the matches and their presence is important, especially with the end of the season. We can achieve a lot with their presence and support," Ali said.

Al Arabi player Abdullah Al Muraisi said yesterday: "Everyone understands the importance of our next match and we must be confident to achieve our goal in the match, especially as it will be a strong rehearsal for the Amir Cup final."





Al Arabi (left) and Al Duhail players seen during separate training sessions ahead of today's final round of QNB Stars League matches.

SPORT

CYCLING

Milan wins stage two of Giro in sprint finish

Reuters
Milan

Italy's Jonathan Milan of Bahrain Victorious claimed his first Grand Tour stage win at the Giro d'Italia yesterday after powering through to the finish line in the final sprint of stage two, a 202km ride from Teramo to San Salvo.

After Remco Evenepoel obliterated the competition in the opening time trial on Saturday, stage two was a chance for the sprinters while points were up for grabs for climbers as well.

The route's home straight was one km long and a bunch of riders set themselves up for the sprint with Alpecin-Deceuninck in the lead as Ramon Sinkeldam went on the final leadout to give his team mate Kaden Groves the upper hand.

Fernando Gaviria (Movistar) and Pascal Ackermann (UAE Team Emirates) were also in the mix but Milan put his head down, emerged from behind Groves and pedalled hard in the last 100 metres to take victory after nearly five hours of cycling.

"It's something incredible. Yesterday I tested my legs before today, I wanted to go for the sprint," Milan, 22, said.

"My team mates positioned me to perfection. This is my first win at the Giro, I'm lost for words. Yesterday I did a nice time trial, I was quite happy, I was pushing good but I could never imagine that today a victory was coming."

David Dekker of Arkea-Samsic was second while Groves had to settle for third place.

With less than four km to go, there was a crash in the bunch when the road narrowed with Mark Cavendish of Astana-Qazaqstan among the riders to fall, taking out a couple of fans lining the road in the process.

Evenepoel was at the heart of the bunch at the time but he escaped the crash to retain the leader's maglia rosa jersey with a 22-second lead over Ineos Grenadiers rider Filippo Ganna.

"Everything was pretty fine. We were in front so we were out of trouble but it was a nasty crash," the Belgian said. "I actually saw it happen. We know who we can blame for this crash, but that's racing, it's not a nice move but luckily we stayed out of trouble and arrived safe."

RESULTS FROM STAGE 2
1. Jonathan Milan (ITA) Bahrain Victorious 4:55:11
2. David Dekker (NED) Team Arkéa - Samsic
3. Kaden Groves (AUS) Alpecin - Deceuninck
4. Arne Marit (BEL) Intermarché - Circus -
5. Marius Mayrhofer (GER) Team DSM "
6. Pascal Ackermann (GER) UAE Team Emirates
7. Fernando Gaviria (COL) Movistar Team
8. Niccolò Bonifazio (ITA) Intermarché - Circus -
9. Jake Stewart (GBR) Groupama - FDJ
10. Michael Matthews (AUS) Team Jayco - AlUla

Overall leaders
1. Remco Evenepoel (BEL) Soudal - Quick-Step 5:16:29



Jonathan Milan celebrates on the podium wearing the maglia ciclamino jersey after winning stage 2 of Giro d'Italia from Teramo to San Salvo in Italy yesterday. *(Reuters)*

CRICKET

Gill and Saha help Gujarat win IPL battle of brothers

RUNS GALORE AT THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CRICKET STADIUM IN AHMEDABAD

AFP
Ahmedabad

Hardik Pandya got the better of his big brother Krunal yesterday as holders Gujarat Titans thrashed Lucknow Super Giants by 56 runs in the Indian Premier League.

In the first ever IPL match with two teams captained by brothers, Lucknow's Krunal won the toss and elected to field at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

The brothers joked and hugged at the start but things turned serious when a destructive opening stand of 142 between Wriddhiman Saha (81) and Shubman Gill (94 not out) powered Gujarat to their highest ever IPL total of 227-2.

Lucknow put up a spirited reply with Kyle Mayers (48) and Quinton de Kock (70) leading the charge but they ended on 171-7 to allow Gujarat to consolidate their top spot in the 10-team table.

Saha, a diminutive wicketkeeper-batsman, set up Gujarat's domination with sixes and fours to reach his fifty in just 20 balls before he fell to Avesh Khan.

Hardik, 29, and Gill extended the batting onslaught but the younger Pandya departed after Krunal, 32, took his catch. He made 25 off 15 balls.

The in-form Gill, who struck his fourth fifty of the season, put on another fiery stand with South Africa's David Miller, who smashed 21, as Gujarat finished on this year's fourth highest team total.

The left-handed Mayers began the chase strongly as he hit Hardik for a hat-trick of boundaries and then took on Mohammed Shami in a 19-run over.

India fast bowler Mohit Sharma sent back Mayers to break an 88-run opening stand and later took down dangerous Australian batsman Marcus Stoinis to dent the chase.

De Kock, a left-hand wicketkeeper-batsman, reached his fifty in his first IPL appearance this season but was bowled by Afghanistan spin wizard Rashid Khan as the Lucknow chase fell off track.

Krunal was out for a first-ball duck off Mohit, who returned figures of 4-29.

Pandya, the Titans captain, said: "Can't ask for anything better, especially after playing post a day's gap and in the afternoon. Rashid's catch changed the game, we started controlling the game. Both teams were driving at 100kph but that wicket caused a bump. I don't think there'll be bragging rights with Krunal. Our love is too strong, I hope he does well. I'd have been happier if things had gotten closer and he had some bragging rights too."

BRIEF SCORES
Gujarat Titans 227 for 2 (Gill 94*, Saha 81) **beat Lucknow Super Giants 171 for 7** (de Kock 70, Mayers 48, Mohit 4-29) **by 56 runs**


Gujarat Titans' Wriddhiman Saha watches the ball after playing a shot during the IPL match against Lucknow Super Giants in Ahmedabad yesterday. *(AFP)*

FOCUS

SRH's Samad hits last-ball 6 to win thriller against RR


Sunrisers Hyderabad's Glenn Phillips plays a shot during the IPL match against Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur yesterday. *(AFP)*

AFP
Jaipur

Abdul Samad smashed a last-ball six as Sunrisers Hyderabad chased down 215 to stun Rajasthan Royals by four wickets in a dramatic IPL match yesterday.

Needing 17 off the final over, Hyderabad pace bowler Sandeep Sharma witnessed Samad get dropped on the first ball and then got him caught on the sixth delivery which turned out to be a no ball which abruptly cut short Rajasthan's victory celebrations.

With another four needed to win on the final ball, and three to take the game into the super over, Hyderabad had the last laugh as Samad smashed a straight six in his seven-ball 17.

Hyderabad slipped to 174-5 when New Zealand's Glenn Phillips turned the game on its head with a seven-ball 25 that infused life into the chase.

Phillips had come into the Hyderabad team for the under-performing big England buy Harry Brook while England's Joe Root played his first game of the season for Rajasthan.

Phillips' cameo has won him the Player-of-the-Match award. He said after the match: "It was a situation where it can go only one of two ways. At the end of the day, we are trying to do a job. On another day I might not get that. At the end of the day, that ball that I got out to was the one I should have hit the most.

He added: "I was disappointed that I didn't hit the actual slot ball. Thankfully Samad finished it off, and we were also lucky with the no-ball."

Yesterday's sensational victory was set up by key knocks from Abhishek Sharma (55), Rahul Tripathi (47) and Heinrich Klaasen (26) in the team's highest ever chase in IPL.

Yuzvendra Chahal's bowling figures of 4-29 went in vain after he picked up key wickets including two in one over.

Rajasthan posted 214-2 after a destructive second-wicket stand of 138 between Jos Buttler, who smashed 95 off 59 deliveries, and skipper Sanju Samson, who hit a 38-ball 66.

Buttler started slowly with his first 20 coming at run-a-ball but soon changed gears to bring up his fifty.

Seam bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar denied Buttler his century to get him out lbw, but Samson finished off the innings in a 17-run over.

BRIEF SCORES
Sunrisers Hyderabad 217 for 6 (Abhishek 55, Tripathi 47, Chahal 4-29) **beat Rajasthan Royals 214 for 2** (Buttler 95, Samson 66) **by four wickets**

BOTTOMLINE

New Zealand get consolation win after Ahmed's blistering 94 in Karachi

AFP
Karachi

Henry Shipley and Rachin Ravindra shared six wickets as New Zealand beat Pakistan by 47 runs in the fifth and final one-day international in Karachi yesterday.

The victory meant New Zealand avoided being swept in the five game series, which Pakistan won 4-1.

New Zealand batted first and were bowled out for 299 in 49.3 overs with half centuries from Will Young and Tom Latham.

Fast bowler Shipley then took 3-34 and spinner Ravindra a career best 3-65 as New Zealand survived a brilliant 72-ball 94 not out by Iftikhar Ahmed to dismiss Pakistan for 252 in 46.1 overs.

The defeat means Pakistan's rise to number one in the ODI rankings lasted just 48 hours and they are now third behind Australia and India.

Ahmed led Pakistan's fightback from 66-4 as he added 97 for the fifth wicket with Agha Salman who scored run-a-ball 57 but New Zealand held their nerve to get last man Haris Rauf run out for one. Ahmed's fiery knock contained eight fours and two sixes.

A holiday crowd of around 20,000 had come in anticipation of Babar Azam making his 100th ODI memorable but they were left disappointed when Pakistan skipper was caught off a miscued shot off Shipley for a five-ball one.

Before that opener Shan Masood had fallen for seven. Fakhar Zaman managed a laborious 64-ball 33 and Mohamed Rizwan fell for nine, leaving Pakistan struggling on 66-4.

Usama Mir scored 20, Shadab Khan 14, Shaheen Shah Afridi nought and Mohammad Waseem six but could not offer enough to support Ahmed.

New Zealand's innings was built around Young's 91-ball 87 and a 58-ball 59 from Latham after the visitors won the toss and opted to bat at the National Stadium.

New Zealand lost Tom Blundell for 15 and then Henry Nicholls for 23 before Young steadied the innings in a 74-run third wicket stand with Latham. Young hit eight fours and two sixes and was looking set for a hundred but was smartly caught by wicketkeeper Rizwan off leg-spinner Shadab in the 30th over.

Mark Chapman upped the tempo with a breezy 33-ball 43 with two sixes and five fours, adding 56 for the fourth wicket with Latham. Chapman was unlucky to be caught behind off the glove as he tried to sweep Shadab to leg side. He took 22 off one over from spinner Agha Salman.

Pakistan won the first two matches by five and seven wickets in Rawalpindi before taking the next two in Karachi by 26 and 102 runs.

BRIEF SCORES
New Zealand 299 all out in 49.3 overs (W. Young 87, T. Latham 59, M. Chapman 43; Shaheen Shah Afridi 3-46, Usama Mir 2-53, Shadab Khan 2-67)
Pakistan 252 all out in 46.1 overs (Iftikhar Ahmed 94 not out, Agha Salman 57; H. Shipley 3-34, R. Rachindra 3-65)
Toss: New Zealand
Result: New Zealand won by 47 runs
Series: Pakistan 4, New Zealand 1


Pakistan's Iftikhar Ahmed plays a shot during the fifth and final ODI against New Zealand at the National Stadium in Karachi yesterday. *(AFP)*

TENNIS

Alcaraz beats Struff to win back-to-back Madrid Open titles

'Nerves come into play and it's difficult, but I think I enjoyed it more than I suffered today'

AFP
Madrid

World number two Carlos Alcaraz defended his Madrid Open title with a hard-fought 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 win over Jan-Lennard Struff yesterday.

The US Open champion earned his 10th career title and can reclaim the world top ranking from Novak Djokovic simply by playing a single match at the Rome Masters next week, before the French Open.

Alcaraz continued his Roland Garros build-up by adding the Madrid trophy to victories in Barcelona, Buenos Aires and Indian Wells this year, although he was below his vibrant best against lucky loser Struff, the world number 65.

The 20-year-old was given a tricky time by his German opponent but eventually became the youngest player since Rafael Nadal in 2006 to defend an ATP Masters 1000 title.

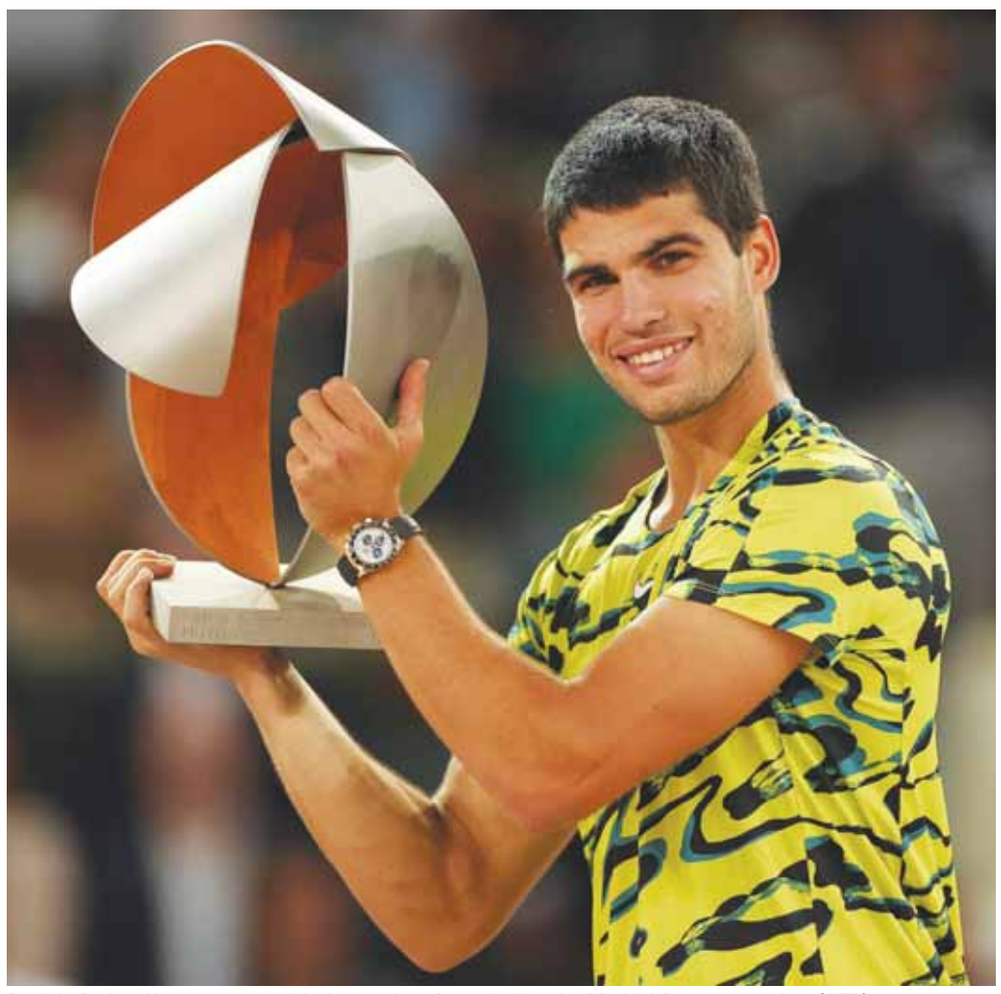
"Today I enjoyed it in parts, in other parts I suffered more than I enjoyed it, but it's what you have to live with," said Alcaraz.

"Nerves come into play and it's difficult, but I think I enjoyed it more than I suffered today."

Despite being 13 years Alcaraz's senior, Struff showed nerves in the first game and conceded a break when he double faulted and then sent a volley too long.

It was only his second tour-level final and he was aiming to be the first lucky loser ever to win a title at this level. Struff could also have become the oldest first-time Masters 1000 winner.

Alcaraz consolidated for a 2-0 lead under pressure, surviving a break point as Struff found his range.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz poses with the trophy after winning the Madrid Open yesterday. *(AFP)*

The German broke to love for 2-2 as he showed Alcaraz he would be no pushover, despite the strong home support and their disparity in ranking, and then won a third consecutive game.

However Alcaraz broke again for a 4-3 lead when Struff committed another double fault and he survived a triple break point to win the first set, pulling off a fine drop shot and lob combination.

Alcaraz's speed in defence helped him against Struff's power game, which created plenty of problems - his opponent hit 14 winners in the first set to the Spaniard's seven, with points split evenly at 35 each.

Honours were even after their two prior meetings, although Alcaraz needed five sets to beat Struff at Wimbledon last year and the veteran showed the same grit again in the Spanish capital to make the youngster sweat.

Dominant at the net, Struff roared into a 3-0 lead in the second set and produced a remarkable hold in the 15-minute fifth game for 4-1, saving five break points as Alcaraz's hitting deserted him.

Struff served it out as Alcaraz dropped only his second set of the tournament and first in a Masters 1000 final.

The top seed saved a break point at 1-1 and then broke for a 3-1 lead in the decisive third set when Struff hit a volley long.

Alcaraz forced another break point at 4-1 but Struff stayed resilient until the end and held, with the Spaniard eventually clinching victory when his opponent sent a backhand long.

On Saturday world number two Aryna Sabalenka beat top-ranked Iga Swiatek to win the women's title in the Spanish capital.

MURRAY WINS FIRST TITLE SINCE 2019

Former world number one Andy Murray won his first title since 2019 yesterday with victory at the Aix-en-Provence Challenger in France. Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray had gone without a title since he triumphed in Antwerp in October 2019.

Murray, now ranked 52, defeated top seed Tommy Paul, the world number 17 from the United States, 2-6, 6-1, 6-2 in the final of the clay court event.

The 35-year-old Briton, who is hoping to boost his ranking to ensure a seeded spot in the Wimbledon draw in July, last won on the second-tier Challenger tour at American events in Aptos and Binghamton in 2005.

"This last year, 18 months has been a bit of struggle with my game. But my team have been there supporting me and working with me to try and get better," said Murray at the trophy presentation.

"We keep going from here."

Both Murray and Paul were looking for crucial time on clay before the French Open starts in three weeks' time.

Murray will also return to the top 50 at 42 when the new rankings are released today.

SERIE A

Osimhen sinks Fiorentina at Napoli title party

AFP
Naples

Victor Osimhen shot Napoli to a 1-0 win over Fiorentina yesterday in the newly-crowned Serie A champions' first appearance in front of their home fans since being crowned kings of Italy for the first time in 33 years.

Nigeria striker Osimhen lashed home from the penalty spot in the 74th minute to take his league tally to 23 just a few days after netting the goal which sealed Napoli's third Scudetto with a record-equalling five matches to play.

A party mood has enveloped Naples since Thursday's draw in Udine, and on Sunday afternoon fans let off fireworks and flares in the jammed streets around the stadium named after their icon Diego Maradona on a gorgeously sunny day in southern Italy.

Packed bars and restaurants did a roaring trade with locals and tourists alike decked out in blue as a festive but relaxed mood dominated the city.

Before kick-off supporters put on a display of the Italian flag with the number three in honour of their title wins and hailed their heroes with loud chants of "we are the champions".

But once the match got underway a torpor slowly washed over the ground, not helped by two teams with nothing to play for going through the motions and Napoli creating next to nothing.

Osimhen couldn't even put away a penalty awarded a minute after half-time for Sofyan Amrabat's rugby tackle on Stanislav Lobotka.

However Serie A's leading scorer was given a chance to redeem himself when Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's weaving dribble towards goal was stopped illegally by Nicolas Gonzalez, and this time he made no mistake. Flares were lit all around the ground and blue smoke filled the air to hail a win which takes Napoli's massive lead at the top of the table to 17 points over detested rivals Juventus.

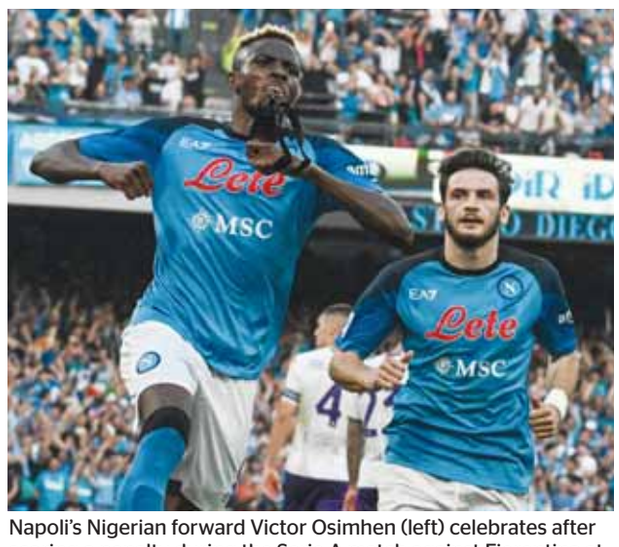
Juve are second after a 2-0 win at fellow Champions League chasers Atalanta, whose fans racially abused goalscorer Dusan Vlahovic.

Serbia forward Vlahovic finished the job deep in stoppage time and then goaded a section of the home supporters after having previously being insulted as a "gypsy", abuse which had led to the match being briefly stopped by referee Daniele Doveri.

The Italian word for gypsy is often used by sections of football supporters as a slur for players from the Balkans and eastern Europe, regardless of their ethnicity.

"Unfortunately these chants keep happening, they need to be fought against," said Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri to DAZN.

Juve, who host Sevilla in the Europa League semi-finals on Thursday, are two points ahead of Lazio who lost at AC Milan on Saturday and, as things stand, have a good chance of making the Champions League next season.



Napoli's Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen (left) celebrates after scoring a penalty during the Serie A match against Fiorentina at Diego Maradona Stadium in Naples. *(AFP)*

FOOTBALL

Celtic edge Hearts to retain Scottish Premiership title

AFP
Glasgow

Celtic clinched the Scottish Premiership title yesterday as Kyogo Furuhashi and Oh Hyeon-gyu netted in a 2-0 win at 10-man Hearts. The victory secured the title with four games to spare for Ange Postecoglou's men, who are on course for a domestic treble of trophies.

The Hoops have now won 11 titles in 12 years and could yet end the season by surpassing their record points tally of 106.

"I'm just really proud of this group of players and staff. They've maintained an absolutely ridiculous standard this year. They are relentless in their approach," said Postecoglou.

"Having success last year, you always worry as a manager – are they going to be as hungry?

"From the first day, they haven't let up and it's a credit to every single one of them."

Celtic were not at their sparkling best at Tynecastle, but Hearts were left with a mountain to climb when Alex Cochrane was sent off just before half-time. Cochrane clipped Daizen Maeda as the Japanese international bore down on goal, but it took a VAR review for referee Nick Walsh to show the red card for denying a clear goalscoring opportunity. The visitors took their time to make the man advantage count, but it was fitting that Kyogo should score the decisive goal in winning Celtic a 53rd Scottish title.



Celtic's Kyogo Furuhashi celebrates with teammates after winning the Scottish Premiership in Edinburgh yesterday. *(Reuters)*

The Japanese striker prodded home his 30th goal of the season and 50th for the club from Reo Hatate's cross 23 minutes from time. Kyogo injured himself in the act of scoring but his replacement Oh came on to make sure of the points.

The South Korean international cushioned Aaron Mooy's cross into the far corner for his fourth goal since arriving in January. Celtic could also surpass a club record of 116 goals in a league season after reaching 105 with four games to spare.

"I think we can get there," said Celtic captain Callum McGregor, who has now won 18 major honours. "We are certainly on the right track but we need to keep going. "You get over the line, you get more experience, you want to do it again and in more style. I feel like we've done that this season."

Hearts' hopes of finishing third behind the Old Firm were at least aided by Rangers' 1-0 win over Aberdeen. Todd Cantwell scored the only goal at Ibrox to cut Celtic's lead at the top to 13 points. Aberdeen remain five points ahead of Hearts after their first defeat in eight games.

BUNDESLIGA

Bellingham brace helps six-goal Dortmund keep pace with Bayern

AFP
Berlin

Two goals from England's Jude Bellingham helped Borussia Dortmund to a spectacular 6-0 win over Wolfsburg yesterday, keeping the Bundesliga title race on a knife edge with three games to go.

Bellingham struck twice in the second half as Dortmund ran Wolfsburg ragged in a statement victory to keep alive their hopes of a first title in 11 years.

The win keeps Edin Terzic's team within a point of league leaders Bayern Munich, who battled to a narrow 2-1 win over Werder Bremen on Saturday.

"It's not over yet. We need to win all our games and see what happens, but the belief is definitely still there," said Dortmund midfielder Emre Can, who also heaped praise on Bellingham and fellow goalscorer Karim Adeyemi.

"It makes it easier for me when they play like that. They both have the quality to score goals and they showed that today," he said.

England international Bellingham, who has been linked with a move to Real Madrid in recent days, now has 13 goals in all competitions this season.

Dortmund took the lead after just 14 minutes as both sides went for the throat in the opening exchanges.

Adeyemi was quicker than his marker to pick up Julian Ryerson's deflected cross and headed the ball expertly under the bar for the opener.

Wolfsburg should have equalised when Patrick Wimmer found himself through on goal, but the German striker fired the ball straight at Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel.

At the other end, Donyell Malen wasted a brilliant opportunity on the counter-attack when he decided to square the ball instead of shoot in a one-on-one with Wolfsburg keeper Koen Casteels.

Unfazed, Dortmund doubled the lead through a Sebastien Haller tap-in just before the half-hour mark.

After Mats Hummels won the ball back brilliantly in midfield, Adeyemi found space to charge on the left wing and picked out Haller in front of goal with a fizzing low cross.

SOUTH KOREA'S CHAN-MIN WINS MAEKYUNG OPEN

SEONGNAM, SOUTH KOREA: South Korea's Jung Chan-min triumphed on home soil at the Asian Tour's GS Caltex Maekyung Open yesterday, emerging as one of his country's stars of the future.

Jung shot a final round five-under-par 66 for a tournament total of 16 under par 197 and a commanding six-shot victory at Namseoul Country Club.

"I won a big tournament wire to wire, so I feel good," said the 23-year-old, who won $222,222 with yesterday's victory.

"I sensed the victory with an eagle on the fourth hole. After that, I felt at ease," he said, adding: "I used my driver on nine holes today, I used it often because I was confident."

Jung was trailed by compatriots Song Min-hyuk and Lee Jung-hwan, who were tied for second in an event that was reduced to 54 holes after Saturday's third round was cancelled over poor weather and a waterlogged course.

Song, an amateur, said he was satisfied with his play and happy about the results.

"Both my putting and shots were so good that I quickly forgot any disappointment after I made a mistake," he said.

"As an amateur I'm thrilled to finish in second place," Song added, saying that he plans to turn professional this year.

Lee said he was equally content, as the winner was just too good.

"I missed getting the trophy but Jung Chan-min played very good golf," he said.

The next event on the Asian Tour will also be staged in South Korea, with the Kolon Korea Open to be played at Woo Jeong Hills Country Club, from June 22 to 25.

(AFP)

FOCUS

Docuseries *'Nasser al Attiyah: Driven'* to be released today

Agencies
Doha





Five-time Dakar Rally champion and Olympic medallist Qatar's Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah poses with fans during special activation function of new docuseries *Nasser al Attiyah: Driven*. **PICTURES:** *Thajudheen*

TOD, the Mena region's streaming platform for sports and entertainment, is releasing a new docuseries focusing on the five times World Dakar Qatari champion and Olympian Nasser al-Attiyah.

Nasser al Attiyah: Driven is set to launch on May 8.

The four-part series showcases the 52-year-old's remarkable life and career, from winning a record 18 Middle East Rally Championships and competing in skeet shooting at six Olympic Games to his latest victory in the gruelling Dakar Rally 2023.

On 15 January 2011, al-Attiyah won the legendary Dakar race, making him the only Arab to ever win the difficult championship. His winning streak continues, and he recently won his fifth Dakar Rally driver's title and second in a row in January 2023, in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Spanning across 9,000Kms, over the course of 15 days, Dakar is one of the toughest rallies in the world, a competition loaded with challenges.

In Nasser's own words – "It's the real mission impossible, not the one you see in the movies. I do, however, think Arabs are best suited to competing in it. Not everyone can make their way around the desert. It's tricky, you have to respect the desert. Thankfully, this is what we learned from our forefathers."

Nasser has also represented Qatar and won bronze medal for shooting in the 2012 London Games.

"I'm still going strong in this sport and my future target is the 2024 Paris Games, hopefully I can prove myself there. I still dream of winning medals and aspire for gold," Nasser said.

Viewers will get a closer insight into the personal life of the Qatari and discover from where stems his relentless ambitions, his love for action and adventure, and his continuous passion for competition.

TOD customers will be able to stream the highly anticipated series, as well as gain access to more than 40,000 hours of premium sport and entertainment content – on demand. John Paul Mckerlie, VP Marketing and Sales at TOD, said: "We are passionate about highlighting Arab talent and stories. Our new docuseries featuring Nasser al-Attiyah perfectly showcases how Arab athletes are challenging status quo and dominating the world of sports.

"As the first Arab to ever win Dakar, he is a true role-model, and we hope that the docuseries serves as inspiration for young people across the region to follow their dreams."

To watch Driven exclusively on TOD visit – https://www.tod.tv/en/entertainment/movie/nasser-al-attiyah-driven-201156

PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal stay in the title hunt with 2-0 win over Newcastle

'WE HAVE TO KEEP GOING AND DIGGING IN AND FIGHT UNTIL THE END'

AFP
Newcastle

Arsenal kept the Premier League title race alive as Martin Odegaard's strike and Fabian Schar's own goal beat Newcastle 2-0 yesterday to close to within one point of leaders Manchester City.

City have a game in hand on top of their slender lead, but the Gunners are refusing to give up the fight in their hunt for a first league title in 19 years.

Newcastle's second home defeat of the season slows the Magpies' charge towards Champions League football next season as their lead over fifth-placed Liverpool remains three points.

Arsenal held an eight-point lead at the top of the table just a month ago but had won just one of their previous five league games to let the destiny of the title slip out of their hands. Mikel Arteta's men, though, showcased their improvement over the last 12 months since defeat at St. James' Park last season cost them a place in the top four.

"It is a big step for a young team like ours to come here and do the things we did. It shows we have come a long way," said Odegaard.

"Last year here was one of the toughest days of my career, to be honest. After dropping points against Man City, to win against Chelsea and then come here and win shows the mentality.

"We have to keep going and digging in and fight until the end. It is football, anything can happen and we need to be ready."



Arsenal's Martin Odegaard celebrates scoring against Newcastle United in their Premier League match yesterday. *(Reuters)*

The visitors wobbled early on as Jacob Murphy smashed the inside of the post after just three minutes before the home side thought they had a penalty when Bruno Guimaraes' effort hit the arm of Jakub Kiwior. However, the Polish defender was handed a reprieve by a VAR review as the ball appeared to come off his thigh first.

Having ridden their luck, Arsenal took full advantage to go in front with their first shot on goal as Odegaard took aim from long range and arrowed the ball low beyond Nick Pope's left hand on 14 minutes.

Pope then had to make a series of big saves just to keep Newcastle in a pulsating game before the break. Three times the England goalkeeper stood up tall to block one-on-ones with Bukayo Saka, Gabriel Martinelli and Odegaard.

The unrelenting pace did not let up after the break as both sides hit the woodwork inside the first six minutes of the restart.

Alexander Isak's header came off the post before Aaron Ramsdale produced a remarkable save from Fabian Schar to keep Arsenal in front.

At the other end, Martinelli finally had Pope beaten only for the ball to come back off the crossbar. Tempers started to flare on both sides of a feisty contest before another piece of brilliance from Martinelli produced the crucial second goal.

The Brazilian ran half the length of the field and then fired in a low cross that Schar could only turn into his own net.

While Arsenal still need favours from City in the run-in to achieve their goal, a top-four finish is still within Newcastle's reach.

Eddie Howe's men likely need just six points from their final four games to guarantee Champions League football for the first time in 20 years. However, they could slip to fourth later on Sunday if Manchester United win at West Ham.

"We have four games remaining and need three results," said Howe. "Liverpool and other teams are coming. They are top level. We can only do what we can do and I believe in the character of the team to get it over the line."

SPOTLIGHT

Afif, Olunga and Msakni shortlisted for QFA award

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Sadd midfilder Akram Afif, Al Duhail striker Michael Olunga and Al Arabi star Youssef Msakni are in running for the Qatar Football Association's (QFA) best player award, according to the final list of nominees announced by the Qatar Stars League yesterday.

Afif, who started the domestic football season after representing the national side at the FIFA World Cup, helped Al Sadd reach the Amir Cup final and his tally of 10 goals in the QNB Stars League steered the Wolves to third spot with one match remaining.

Olunga is also a strong contender for the award, helping Al Duhail to top of QSL standings besides triumphs in the Ooredoo Cup and Qatar Cup. The Kenyan star is currently the joint top scorer in the top flight with 18 goals.

Msakni has also enjoyed a fine season with Al Arabi, who remained among top four sides in the QSL in which the Tunisian has scored 13 goals.

The Board of Trustees of QFA Awards approved the final names nominated for the best awards for 2022-2023 football season after assessing voting and screening processes of nomination forms sent to the participants including top football officials, coaches and media representatives.

Al Duhail's Hernan Crespo, who is hoping to seal a treble today with QSL title along with Al Arabi's Younes Ali and Al Wakrah's Marquez Lopez have been shortlisted for best coach award. Osama al-Tairy of Al Rayyan, Jassim Jaber of Al Arabi and Khaled Mohamed Saleh of Al Duhail were declared frontrunners for the best under-23 player award.

The winners of the awards will be announced during the closing ceremony of the season which will be held at the Qatar National Convention Center in Education City on May 13.

NOMINATIONS LIST

Best Player
Akram Afif (Al Sadd)
Michael Olunga (Al Duhail)
Yousef Msakni (Al Arabi)
Best Coach
Bartolome Marquez Lopez (Al Wakrah)
Hernan Crespo (Al Duhail)
Younes Ali (Al Arabi)
Best Under-23 Player
Osama al-Tairy (Al Rayyan)
Jassim Jaber (Al Arabi)
Khaled Mohamed Saleh (Al Duhail)



Asia Rugby Division 2 Championship: Qatar emerge champions



Qatar clinched the Asia Rugby Men's Division 2 Championship 2023 in front of home fans after defeating Kazakhstan in the Championship decider at Aspire Warm-up pitch. Qatar XV beat Kazakhstan 35-10 in the last Pool match, a week after they defeated India 32-7 to top the table and earn promotion to Division 1.

AL-ATTIYAH LEADS JORDAN RALLY ENTRY

Amman: Twenty-five crews and competitors from seven nations grace the entry list for the Jordan Rally, round three of the 2023 FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), which takes place on May 18-20.

Multiple regional champion Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah heads the field in his Volkswagen Polo GTI R5. He faces competition from Oman's Abdullah al-Rawahi in a Skoda Fabia R5, 16 crews competing in a variety of Mitsubishis and Subarus in the MERC2 category and seven local teams running at the rear of the field.

Al-Attiyah again teams up with Andorra-based co-driver Mathieu Baumel, as the Qatari chases a record-breaking 16th win in the Hashemite Kingdom and his partner aims for personal win number eight.

Al-Rawahi and local co-driver Ata al-Hmoud will offer the closest realistic challenge on an event where 15-time Rally of Lebanon winner Roger Feghali heads the impressive line-up of MERC2 contenders in his Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X.

Main competition for the Lebanese is likely to come from regular MERC2 series front-runner and multiple champion Meshari al-Thefiri. A strong Jordanian line-up consists of entries from Shaker Jweihan, Issa Abu Jamous, Ameer Nassif, Shadi Shaban, Sheikh Bader al-Fayez, Fadi Darshan, Sami Fleifel, Ihab al-Shorafa and the talented young Mustafa al-Atari.

Also registered in the MERC2 section are Palestine's Hamada Odeh, Lebanese series regular Ahmad Khaled, Kuwait's Yousef and Salem al-Dhafeeri and Oman's Zakariya al-Aamri.

The Jordanian septet of Feisal al-Ghammaz, Nancy al-Majali, Ibrahim al-Ali, Asem Aref, Hashem Kalbouneh, Ghaith Qubti and Ziad Miqdad will run in a National Rally behind the FIA field.

Jordan Motorsport have again laid on 12 special stages and 205.22km competitive kilometres in a total route of 588.88km.



Nasser al-Attiyah in action in Oman this season.