



ATHLETICS | Page 3

Charleston stuns Coleman for 100m title, Richardson wins



FOOTBALL | Page 4

David de Gea leaves Man United after 12 years



Sunday, July 9, 2023
Dhul-Hijjah 21, 1444 AH

GULF TIMES
SPORT



CRICKET

Woakes strikes before England openers hold firm in third Ashes Test

Page 2

FOCUS

Dr Thani al-Kuwari re-elected as OCA Vice President for West Asia

By Sports Reporter
Bangkok



The Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) Second Vice-President, His Excellency Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari, has been re-elected as the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Vice President for West Asia during the 42nd OCA General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand.

HE Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari will now serve the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) of Asia for a further four-year term. The meeting has seen Sheikh Talal al-Fahad al-Sabah elected as the OCA President, Timothy Fok as the OCA Vice President for East Asia, Dato Seri Chaiyapak Siriwat, as the OCA Vice President for South East Asia, Timur Kulibayev as the OCA Vice President for Central Asia and Lt Gen Syed Arif Hasan as the OCA Vice President for South Asia.

Following his re-election, HE Dr Thani bin Abdulrahman al-Kuwari stated: "I am deeply humbled to have been re-elected as the OCA Vice President for West Asia. It is truly an honour to have the opportunity to continue serving the OCA President, the OCA and the Asian NOCs for another four years in this esteemed position. I would like to personally thank HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, President of the Qatar Olympic Committee, for his trust and backing during my campaign. The QOC has always played an active role within the OCA and is fully invested in developing its mission to serve the Asian Olympic Family to the highest standards.

"I have full confidence that Asia, as a united and strong continent, is poised to remain at the forefront of the Olympic Movement for years to come. Together, we exemplify the values of peace and solidarity, setting a remarkable example for the world. I am excited to contribute towards our shared vision of advancing sport and the Olympic Movement across all of Asia," he said.

ARAB GAMES: QATAR'S DANA CLAIMS BRONZE MEDAL



Team Qatar's boxer Dana Ali (right) in action during her women's 63kg category bout at the 15th Arab Games - Algeria 2023 in Algiers yesterday. Dana clinched the bronze medal in the event. Meanwhile, Qatar's men handball team registered their first victory at the Games beating Jordan 36-21 in a dominant fashion. Team Qatar has so far won a total of nine medals including four gold, two silver and three bronze medals.

TENNIS / WIMBLEDON

Alcaraz goes through the gears to subdue Jarry

Medvedev defeats friend Fucsovics, Kvitova stays on track for third title by beating Serbian qualifier Stevanovic

Reuters
London



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz reacts during his match against Chile's Nicolas Jarry on the sixth day of the Wimbledon Championships at The All England Tennis Club in Wimbledon, London, yesterday. *(AFP)*

For all the waspish energy and venomous hitting, it was Carlos Alcaraz's ability to turn up the dial under pressure that saw him come through a testing encounter with Nicolas Jarry and move safely into the Wimbledon fourth round yesterday.

The world number one was frequently on the ropes against the imposing Chilean but always managed to find another gear as he wrapped up a 6-3 6-7(6) 6-3 7-5 victory on Centre Court to set up a tantalising encounter with either Alexander Zverev or Matteo Berrettini.

The U.S. Open winner ultimately had too much in his locker to be sent packing by Jarry, but he still showed some vulnerability at times that better opponents than the 28th-ranked Jarry will seize on.

The Chilean, who looks even bigger than his stated 6-foot six-inch frame, played the role of David to Alcaraz's more diminutive tennis Goliath. His slingshot was a massive and relentlessly consistent serve and a pummelling forehand that at times did real damage to the Spaniard.

"I stayed focused, all the time," he said on court after securing the win. "I knew I was going to have my chances. It was really close, he has great shots, very solid."

The Centre Court crowd had seemed uncertain where to place their loyalties at times during the contest.

In need of a new darling, in the absence of their beloved Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal and with Andy Murray having been knocked out, Alcaraz has been tipped as the man to steal their hearts.

Yet they struggled to completely embrace the Spaniard when a compelling underdog story was brewing.

The Spaniard's sublime shotmaking drew some gasps, but Jarry's dogged resistance ensured the crowd did not wholeheartedly rally behind Alcaraz when he was under the cosh.

Not that he cared. "I am really happy to play here - it is something I dreamed since I very young," he said.

"This court is the most beautiful court I have played on"

What had looked like being a routine outing for Alcaraz when he claimed the first set after a solitary break, quickly turned into something more troublesome as Jarry raced into a 4-1 lead in the second.

While Alcaraz clawed back parity, the Chilean served like his life depended on it to level the match in the tiebreak.

Alcaraz got his nose in front once more but if he hoped to have dealt a decisive blow by winning the third set, Jarry had other ideas, racing into a 3-0 lead at the start of the fourth.

That, however, brought out the best in the Spaniard who finished off the contest with two further breaks, wrapping up the match with two massive serves that were just too hot for Jarry to handle.

Men's third seed Daniil Medvedev lost the first set against close friend Marton Fucsovics but recovered to win 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. Greek fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, who beat Andy Murray in a five-set thriller over two days in the second round, eased past Serbia's Laslo Djere in straight sets.

In the women's draw, two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova stayed on track for a third title by beating Serbian qualifier Natalija Stevanovic 6-3, 7-5.

The Czech former world number two has pedigree on grass but has only made it past the third round once since she claimed her second title at the All England Club in 2014.

"I love playing on grass, for sure," said the ninth seed. "When my serve is working I love it even more.

"I don't think it was the case today but somehow I found a way, which I'm very happy with."

Australian Open champion and second seed Aryna Sabalenka beat Russia's Anna Blinkova 6-2, 6-3.



Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova celebrates after beating Serbian qualifier Natalija Stevanovic during their third round match yesterday. *(AFP)*

SPORT

CRICKET

Woakes strikes before England openers hold firm

ENGLAND CHASING 251 FOR VICTORY AFTER RAIN-SHORTENED DAY

AFP
Leeds, United Kingdom

Chris Woakes led the way with the ball before England openers Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett held firm to give England the upper hand in a must-win third Ashes Test for the hosts against Australia at Headingley yesterday.

Seam-bowling all-rounder Woakes, playing his first Test since March last year, took 3-68 as Australia were dismissed for 224 in their second innings on a rain-marred third day.

That left England, who trail 2-0 in the best-of-five series, needing 251 to win, with more than two days to get the runs on a ground where there have only been five previous successful chases in excess of 250 to win a Test.

At stumps they were 27-0 off just five overs, with Crawley (nine not out) and Duckett (18 not out) having struck four fours between them. Ashes holders Australia were earlier indebted to Travis Head's 77.

After a lengthy rain delay, the match resumed at 1545 GMT with Australia 116-4. Grey skies above made for difficult batting conditions, although England were a bowler down, with Ollie Robinson not used following his first-innings back spasm.

Nevertheless, Mitchell Marsh - who had marked his first Test since 2019 with a run-a-ball 118 in Australia's first innings - drove a Stuart Broad inswinger down the ground before square-cutting Woakes for another four.

Woakes, however, had his revenge with a burst of two wickets for seven runs in 13 balls. He first dismissed Marsh (28) when the all-rounder tried to withdraw his bat to an outswinger only to edge to wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow.

New batsman Alex Carey walked out to a chorus of boos from a crowd still upset by his role in the controversial stumping of local hero Bairstow during Australia's 43-run win in the second Test at Lord's last week, when the Yorkshireman believed the ball was dead. But the jeers turned to raucous cheers when Carey fell for five as he also tried to leave a rising delivery from Woakes only to glove the ball onto his stumps to leave the Aussies 139-6.

Mark Wood's outright speed had helped the injury-prone Durham fast bowler mark his return to Test cricket with 5-34 in Australia's first innings. And he struck again when Mitchell Starc skyed the ball for Harry Brook to take a fine diving catch. Wood then had Australia captain Pat Cummins caught behind for just one after he fended outside off stump. But new batsman Todd Murphy, in his first game of the series after fellow spinner Nathan Lyon's tour-ending calf injury at Lord's, stylishly cover-drove Wood for a first-ball four. Head then pulled and carved Woakes for boundaries before smashing Wood through midwicket to complete a valuable fifty with his sixth four in 94 balls. The left-hander, whose stand of 155 with Marsh had been the cornerstone of Australia's first-innings total, continued his assault by pulling Woakes for six. Head also hooked two successive Wood deliveries for six before he was last man out, when he holed out off Broad.



England's Chris Woakes celebrates taking the wicket of Australia's Mitchell Marsh (left) on day three of the third Ashes Test at Headingley cricket ground in Leeds yesterday. *(AFP)*

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA *1st Innings* 263
ENGLAND *1st Innings* 237
AUSTRALIA *2nd Innings (overnight: 116-4)*

U. Khawaja *c Bairstow b Woakes*	43
D. Warner *c Crawley b Broad*	1
M. Labuschagne *c Brook b Ali*	33
S. Smith *c Duckett b Ali*	2
T. Head *c Duckett b Broad*	77
M. Marsh *c Bairstow b Woakes*	28
A. Carey *b Woakes*	5
M. Starc *c Brook b Wood*	16
P. Cummins *c Bairstow b Wood*	1
T. Murphy *lbw b Broad*	11
S. Boland *not out*	0
Extras *(b5 lb2)*	7
Total *(all out, 67.1 overs, 328 mins)*	224

Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Warner), 2-68 (Labuschagne), 3-72 (Smith), 4-90 (Khawaja), 5-131 (Marsh), 6-139 (Carey), 7-168 (Starc), 8-170 (Cummins), 9-211 (Murphy), 10-224 (Head)
Bowling: Broad 14.1-3-45-3; Woakes 18-0-68-3; Wood 17-2-66-2; Root 1-0-4-0; Ali 17-3-34-2

ENGLAND *2nd Innings (target: 251)*

Z. Crawley *not out*	9
B. Duckett *not out*	18
Extras	0
Total *(0 wkts, 5 overs, 25m)*	27

Bowling: Cummins 2-0-17-0; Starc 2-0-8-0; Boland 1-0-2-0.

West Indies call up uncapped Athanaze, McKenzie for first Test vs India

West Indies have included uncapped left-handed batsmen Kirk McKenzie and Alick Athanaze in their squad for the first match of their two-Test series against India later this month. Rahkeem Cornwall, who played his last Test in November 2021, and left-arm spinner Jomel Warrican, who missed the tour of South Africa in February, are also on the list. West Indies have turned their attention to the Test series as the twice champions missed out on this year's Cricket World Cup for the first time after elimination in the qualifiers.

"Going into the series, we know it will be a challenge as we start the new cycle of the ICC Test Match Championship. We want to build and improve and strive to move up the ladder," said lead selector Desmond Haynes in a statement. "We were very impressed with the batting approach of McKenzie and Athanaze on the recent 'A' team tour of Bangladesh. These are two young players who scored well and played with great maturity and we believe they deserve a chance."

SQUAD: Kraigg Brathwaite (capt), Jermaine Blackwood, Alick Athanaze, Tagenarine Chanderpaul, Rahkeem Cornwall, Joshua Da Silva, Shannon Gabriel, Jason Holder, Alzarri Joseph, Kirk McKenzie, Raymon Reifer, Kemar Roach, Jomel Warrican.

ODI

Opener Gurbaz powers Afghanistan to 142-run win over Bangladesh

AFP
Chittagong, Bangladesh

Openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran both scored hundreds as Afghanistan crushed Bangladesh by 142 runs yesterday to seal their three-match one-day international series.

Bangladesh were attempting to put a strange week behind them after captain Tamim Iqbal shocked his teammates by announcing his immediate retirement on Thursday only to change his mind a day later.

Afghanistan's openers laid the foundation for a mammoth total of 331-9 in Chittagong with their 256-run stand, a record partnership for the tourists, before their bowlers did the rest. Fazalhaq Farooqi claimed 3-22 and Mujeeb Ur Rahman took 3-40 as Afghanistan bowled out Bangladesh for 189 in the 44th over.

The victory makes Afghanistan just the second team to win an ODI series in Bangladesh in the past seven years after world champions England.

Mushfiqur Rahim top-scored for the hosts with 69 in a lonesome battle for the hosts after they were reduced to 72-6, with some support from Mehidy Hasan in a 87-run partnership for the seventh wicket.

Mujeeb Ur Rahman dismissed Mehidy for 25, leaving Mushfiqur too much to do.

Mushfiqur holed out to Mujeeb at deep square leg off Farooqi, ending the contest with last man Ebadot Hossain unable to bat.

Bangladesh, who lost the first match by 17 runs on Wednesday, had opted to bowl first after stand-in skipper Litton Das won the toss.

The hosts struggled to make breakthroughs on a green surface and by the time Shakib Al Hasan had Gurbaz leg-before, Afghanistan were already closing in on their previous best score against Bangladesh of 306-4.

Gurbaz, who scored his fourth ODI ton, smashed 145 from 125 balls, hitting 13 fours and eight sixes. A few other quick wickets followed as Ebadot dismissed Rahmat Shah (two), while Mehidy removed Hashmatullah Shahidi (two) and Najibullah Zadran (10).

Shakib, Mehidy, Mustafizur and Hasan Mahmud each claimed two wickets for Bangladesh. Ibrahima fell to Mustafizur for an even 100 from 119 deliveries.

Tamim announced his retirement in an emotional press conference on Thursday, the day after Bangladesh's narrow loss in the series opener.

But he withdrew his retirement after meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday, saying that he had been ordered to change his mind. He will instead take a six-week sabbatical and be back for the Asia Cup. The third and final match of the series will be held at the same ground on July 11.

BRIEF SCORES
Afghanistan 331-9, 50 overs (Rahmanullah Gurbaz 145, Ibrahim Zadran 100; Shakib Al Hasan 2-50) **bt Bangladesh 189 all out** (Mushfiqur Rahim 69; Fazalhaq Farooqi 3-22, Mujeeb Ur Rahman 3-40) **by by 142 runs.**
Series: Afghanistan win three-match series 2-0.



Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran (right) and teammate Rahmanullah Gurbaz run between the wickets during the second ODI against Bangladesh in Chittagong yesterday. *(AFP)*

CYCLING / TOUR DE FRANCE

Peloton shocked as Cavendish crashes out

AFP
Limoges, France

Mark Cavendish crashed out of the Tour de France yesterday ending his quest to overtake the all-time record for stage wins as Denmark's Mads Pedersen won a sprint for stage eight in Limoges.

A dejected Cavendish was taken away in an ambulance long before former world champion Pedersen won a bunched sprint ahead of Belgian duo Jasper Philipsen and Wout van Aert in central France.

Pedersen was swift to hail Cavendish who was racing in what is likely to be his final Tour de France in an effort to break the record of 34 stage wins he shares with Belgian great Eddy Merckx.

"It's sad a legend like him ends his Tour like that," said the 27-year-old Trek-Segafredo rider.

"I hoped so bad he'd get his 35th win on the Tour. It's painful not only for him but also for so many other people in cycling, riders and fans, everyone."

Sprint specialist Cavendish, 38, was forced to exit after suffering a suspected broken collarbone in a fall about 60km from the finish line.


Astana Qazaqstan Team's British rider Mark Cavendish receives medical attention after suffering a crash during the 8th stage of the 110th edition of the Tour de France in Limoges, France, yesterday. *(AFP)*

The Astana rider remained on the road for a couple of minutes rolling in agony every time he reached towards his right shoulder. Cavendish was ashen-faced as doctors closed the ambulance door with organisers later confirming his withdrawal.

Italian rider Gianni Moscon was behind Cavendish when he fell.

"There was a crash in front of us and Cav had to break because someone changed line," he said.

"He just hit the rear wheel of the guy in front of him and went down." A second crash occurred 5km from the finish line when an elderly spectator stepped slightly into the road sending Mikel Landa and Simon Yates crashing to the tarmac.



Lidl-Trek's Danish rider Mads Pedersen celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win 8th stage of the 110th edition of the Tour de France cycling race in Limoges, France, yesterday. *(AFP)*

In the overall standings Jonas Vingegaard kept the leader's yellow jersey 25 seconds ahead of Tadej Pogacar a day ahead of an expected duel between the duo on the slopes of the Puy de Dome volcano.

"It was really sad indeed to hear that news," said defending champion Vingegaard of Cavendish. Pogacar was philosophical on how dangerous cycling is, but said the whole peloton was upset to see Cavendish crash out in this manner.

"Everyone wanted him to win another stage," said the Slovenian.

"He was on good form too If you saw him yesterday he was so close. It's awful," said Pogacar, who described Cavendish as one of the idols of his youth. Today, the race goes back to the slopes where the duel between two-time winner Pogacar and defending champion Vingegaard will be given a fitting setting as the peloton climbs the dormant Puy de Dome.

The venue has been flagged as the Tour's top stage as much for its storied past as for its fearsome 13km slope topping out with 4km at 12 percent gradient.

ATHLETICS

Charleston springs surprise, Richardson triumphs

I'M READY MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY, AND I'M HERE TO STAY. I'M NOT BACK. I'M BETTER'

AFP
Eugene, United States



Cravont Charleston celebrates after winning the men's 100m final during the 2023 USATF Outdoor Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon. *(AFP)*


Sha'Carri Richardson breaks the tape to win the women's 100m final yesterday. *(AFP)*

Cravont Charleston surged past 2019 world champion Christian Coleman to win the men's 100m at the US athletics championships on Friday as Sha'Carri Richardson won the women's 100m to book her long anticipated World Championships berth.

The 25-year-old Charleston, who had never made it to the 100m final at a US championships before, clocked 9.95sec to edge Coleman by one one-hundredth of a second with reigning 200m world champion Noah Lyles third in 10.00sec.

"Just keep running," Charleston said of his mindset as he trailed early in the race. "That's what I tried to do."

The trio will join reigning world champion Fred Kerley in the event at the World Championships in Budapest in August, trying to repeat the US sweep at last year's worlds in Eugene.

The two other members of the 2022 podium won't be there. Marvin Bracy-Williams's hopes of improving on his world silver evaporated when he was injured in the heats and failed to advance while bronze medallist Trayvon Bromell, racing through a painful bone spur on his right heel, finished sixth in the final and said he would soon be seeking surgery.

Richardson, meanwhile, will spearhead the US women's 100m challenge after booking her first world championships berth with an emotional victory in 10.82.

She'd set a personal best of 10.71 in Thursday's heats - which stood as the top time in the world this year for a day until Shericka Jackson's 10.65 to win at the Jamaican championships on Friday.

Richardson, who had posted a 10.75 in the semi-finals, was the picture of determination on the start line, tossing away her bright red wig to reveal long braids before settling into the starting blocks.

A slow start left her some work to do, but she pulled away late to leave Brittany Brown second on 10.90sec with Tamari Davis third in 10.99.

"I'm ready mentally, physically and emotionally, and I'm here to stay," Richardson told broadcaster NBC after she had climbed into the stands to embrace a number of people.

The win was a vindication of sorts for Richardson, who was infamously barred from the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021 after testing positive for marijuana. She then saw her hopes of competing for a medal at last year's World Championships vanish when she bombed out of the US trials.

"I'm not back," Richardson said. "I'm better."

In other events, Anna Hall grabbed a dominant victory in the heptathlon with a score of 6,677 points -- more than 300 points clear of runner-up Taliyah Brooks's 6,319.

Hall said she was satisfied with the score given that she didn't break training for the meet, and she's still hoping she can achieve her season aim of breaking 7,000 points in Budapest and improve on the world bronze she won last year.

Donald Scott won the men's triple jump with a leap of 17.22m, with Will Claye second at 16.98m.

Harrison Williams won the decathlon with a total of 8,630 points and Vashti Cunningham won the women's high jump with a clearance of 1.91m.

Former world record-holder Keni Harrison smoothly led the way into the 100m hurdles semi-finals with a time of 12.50sec. Nia Ali, the 2019 world champion, was second-quickest in 12.53.

Rai Benjamin, silver medallist at the Tokyo Olympics as well as the 2019 and 2022 World Championships, set the pace in the men's 400m hurdles heats with a time of 49.05. With reigning world champion and world record-holder Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone focusing on the 400m flat, former 400m hurdles world record-holder Dalilah Mohamed - an Olympic gold medallist in 2016 and world champion in 2019 - topped the first-round times in 54.56.

McLaughlin-Levrone led the way into the 400m final with a time of 49.60 in the semis.

SPOTLIGHT

Cheruiyot vows to recapture world title

AFP
Nairobi



Kenya's Timothy Cheruiyot (centre), Reynold Cheruiyot (right) and Abel Kipsang celebrate their qualification for the World Athletics Championships after finishing the men's 1,500m final at the national trials for World Athletics Championships in Nairobi yesterday. *(AFP)*

Kenya's former world 1,500m champion Timothy Cheruiyot produced a dominant display to win the national trials yesterday and vowed to recapture his world title in Budapest.

The 2019 world champion and Tokyo Olympic silver medallist is relishing being back to full fitness after two years of injury that left him finishing only sixth at the last world championships in Eugene, Oregon. He ran a world leading time of 3mins 31.41sec in Los Angeles in May and followed that up with another tactical show at the Kenyan trials to clock 3:34.1, beating the world indoor champion Abel Kipsang (3:34.30) at the finish.

"Today was about winning smart and not about looking at the time. Experience carried the day and I am happy I have come back strong," said Cheruiyot.

"I look forward to reclaiming my title in Budapest," he added.

But in Hungary the Kenyan will face tough opposition from Norway's Olympic champion Jacob Ingebrigsten. The world under-20 champion Reynold Cheruiyot was third at 3:34.34.

Nelly Chepchirchir took advantage of the absence of two-time world champion Faith Kipyegon, who has a wild card for the Budapest worlds, to win the women's race in 3:59.77.

The women's 3,000m steeplechase world record holder Beatrice Chepkoech also celebrated her comeback from injury with an emphatic victory in her speciality. "I am excited that I am back to form again after a long injury.I am going to Budapest to win back my world title" said Chepkoech, who won in Doha in 2019 but failed to compete in the 2022 world championships in Oregon due to injury.

Newcomer Simon Koech celebrated his maiden win in the men's 3,000m steeplechase as the younger crop of Kenyans enter the former Kenyan dominant event. Two-time world and Olympic champion Conseslus Kipruto dropped out halfway through the race, leaving Koech as the winner in a time of 8:18.43.

PGA Tour commissioner Monahan will return on July 17

PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan, sidelined nearly a month by an unspecified medical issue, will return to work on July 17, the tour announced. Monahan's return will come six days after he misses a hearing by US lawmakers into the PGA-LIV deal. Monahan, who left his duties on June 13, was ripped by many players as a hypocrite after negotiating a merger deal with the Saudi backers of rival LIV Golf following a year of urging players to reject record financial offers to stay with the PGA Tour. Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) governor Yasir al-Rumayyan, who made the deal with Monahan, will not appear at the hearing and neither will LIV chief executive Greg Norman, citing schedule conflicts.

In Monahan's place will be Ron Price, the tour's chief operating officer, and Jimmy Dunne, a PGA Tour board member who was a negotiator of the deal. Monahan revealed his return in a memo to the PGA board, tour members and staff.

"Thank you for your support and leadership these last few weeks," Monahan wrote. "With the support of my family and thanks to world class medical care, my health has improved dramatically. "I'm eager to engage with each of you - as well as our players, partners, fans and our PGA Tour family - to address any questions and protect the game we treasure."

Monahan said his focus will be on "securing a stable path forward" for the tour in the wake of the merger deal framework with the PIF and DP World Tour. "We can rest assured that the PGA Tour will continue to lead and shape the game for the future," he wrote.

FOCUS

Outsider Tardy grabs two-stroke lead at US Women's Open

AFP
San Francisco


Bailey Tardy putts on the fifth green during the second round of US Women's Open in Pebble Beach, California. *(AFP)*

American qualifier Bailey Tardy, ranked 455th in the world, found herself with a two-shot lead at the US Women's Open after shooting 68 in Friday's second round at Pebble Beach.

Tardy, who eagled the par-5 sixth on her way to a four-under par round, stands at seven-under for the tournament and has a two-stroke advantage over compatriot Allisen Corpuz and South Korea's Kim Hyo-joo. The 26-year-old, who finally earned her card for the LPGA this year after competing on the developmental Epson Tour, has struggled in her rookie year, missing five cuts and only once making the top 25.

After she followed up her first round 69 with another strong showing on the challenging California course, she admitted that she almost "forgot" to apply for the qualification event in Minnesota, a gruelling 36 holes in a single day.

"I don't think anybody likes playing in the US Open qualifiers. I haven't played in one for a while because I don't like them," she said.

"So I think it was just a little bit of procrastination. I knew there was going to be a site that I could sign up. I didn't know which one to pick. You have a ton. My mom could tell me, 'You need to sign up, you need to sign up' and then I just never did. That's just kind of how it happened. Big ol' procrastination."

Still, being familiar with Pebble Beach, having played a number of events on the famous course over the years, Tardy said that while others might be surprised at her position on the leaderboard, she certainly believed.

"Other people maybe not, but I've always believed in myself to win any tournament that I enter. I'm good enough to be here, and I've been on the LPGA, so I feel like I definitely have the game to hang with the best in the world," she said.

"It feels great. I haven't performed great in the previous majors this year, so just to finally be able to throw some good rounds in and finally have everything come together, I feel like I've had really good ball-striking days and then terrible putting days, and then I'll have a great putting day but terrible ball-striking day.

GOLF

Young seizes John Deere Classic lead

AFP
Washington


Cameron Young plays his shot from the 17th tee during the second round of the John Deere Classic in Silvis, Illinois. *(AFP)*

Cameron Young, last year's British Open runner-up, fired a seven-under par 64 to grab a two-stroke lead after Friday's second round of the PGA John Deere Classic.

The 26-year-old American, chasing his first PGA Tour title after six second-place showings in two years, stood on 13-under 129 after 36 holes at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois.

"Nice to have two really good days to start the tournament," Young said.

Young, a runner-up most recently in March's WGC Match Play, has as many runner-up showings without a victory as any player in the past 40 years.

"It's really just a 'one foot in front of the other' kind of thing, executing the plan we've made for the week," Young said of chasing his first triumph.

"If I can control my mind and stay in some control of my golf ball, hopefully I'll give myself a chance in a couple of days."

South Africa's Garrick Higgo and Americans Adam Schenk and Brendon Todd shared second on 131. Sweden's Ludvig Aberg was on 132 with Americans Denny McCarthy, William Mouw and Kevin Roy.

World number 19 Young credited work on his putting with his successful start.

"Made a few mechanical changes, just really the tempo, and I think it's helping me control my speed a lot better, which is leading to some better green reading," Young said.

"I'm seeing good signs. Even the ones that don't go in, I feel like my speed has been really good and I've been rolling it how I mean to - I've been able to take a little more confidence."

Young opened with a four-foot birdie putt at the 10th, chipped in from 29 feet at 11 and sank a birdie putt from just inside 10 feet at the par-3 12th. He added birdie putts from about eight feet at the 15th and par-5 17th. He blasted out of a greenside bunker within inches of the hole at the par-5 second and tapped in for birdie.

After finding a fairway bunker and making his lone bogey at the fifth, Young sank a 20-foot birdie putt at the par-3 seventh and closed with a five-foot birdie putt at the ninth.

Back-nine starter Higgo, who shot 66, opened with an eagle and closed with a bogey to fall two adrift.

"I'll just keep doing what I'm doing. I'm not going to change much," Higgo said. "It's good momentum going into the next couple weeks."

FOOTBALL

David de Gea leaves Manchester United after 12 years

Goalkeeper's contract had expired at the end of June

AFP
Manchester

David de Gea announced his exit from Manchester United yesterday after 12 years as the club's number one goalkeeper.

The Spaniard last season overtook Peter Schmeichel to record the most clean sheets in the club's history and was crowned players' and fans' player of the year four times.

But a string of high-profile errors towards the end of the campaign drew criticism and the 32-year-old struggled to adapt to manager Erik ten Hag's preferred style of playing out from the back.

In a message on social media, De Gea thanked United fans for their support, but said: "Now, it's the right time to undertake a new challenge, to push myself again in new surroundings.

"Manchester will always be in my heart, Manchester has shaped me and will never leave me."

De Gea's deal expired at the end of June, with reports the player had agreed a contract extension only for the club to withdraw that offer and come back with reduced terms.

The Red Devils are now set to move for Inter Milan keeper Andre Onana, who previously played under Ten Hag at Ajax.

De Gea made 545 appearances and kept 190 clean sheets after being signed by Alex Ferguson in 2011.

His departure means there are no players left at Old Trafford who have won the Premier League - the last title success was in Ferguson's final season in charge, in 2012/13.

De Gea also won the FA Cup in 2016, two League Cups and the Europa League.

The Spaniard often shone despite United's long slump in the post-Ferguson years.

His personal trophy haul could have been much greater but for the late collapse of a move to Real Madrid in 2015 due to paperwork not being completed before the transfer deadline.

"I would like to express my unwavering gratitude and appreciation for the love from the last 12 years," he said in his message.

"We've achieved a lot since my dear Sir Alex Ferguson brought me to this club.

"I took incredible pride every time I pulled on this shirt, to lead the team, to represent this institution, the biggest club in the world was an honour only bestowed upon a few lucky footballers."

Ten Hag thanked De Gea for his service and performances during his first season at the club after he picked up the Golden Glove for most Premier League clean sheets.

"It takes great quality and character to reach the level of even playing one game for Manchester United," he said.

"To do it 545 times over 12 years is a special achievement, particularly in the goalkeeping position where every game puts you in the spotlight.

"To have won player of the year awards from both the fans and his team-mates, each on four occasions, shows the level of his performance and he will always be remembered as one of the very best goalkeepers in the history of the club."

But despite an impressive season overall, De Gea's campaign ended on a low note.

He was judged to be at fault for the decisive goal in United's 2-1 FA Cup final defeat to Manchester City and in a Europa League quarter-final exit to Sevilla.



Manchester United's Spanish goalkeeper David de Gea reacts after his team second goal scored by Bruno Fernandes during the English Premier League match against Brighton at Old Trafford in Manchester on February 15, 2022. *(AFP)*

Russian, Belarusian athletes allowed at Asian Games

Up to 500 Russian and Belarusian athletes will be allowed to compete as neutrals at the Asian Games in China later this year, organisers said yesterday.
Both countries have been excluded from many sports events since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, though individual athletes have since been allowed to compete under certain restrictions.
The International Olympic Committee (IOC) earlier this year said that a pathway for their athletes' participation in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games should be explored.
At a meeting in Bangkok Saturday, the General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia voted to allow a maximum of 500 competitors from the pariah countries to compete, so that they may try and qualify for Paris.
"We propose to allow Russian and Belarusian independent athletes - again, independent athletes; 500 the quota - to compete in neutral flag as independent athletes," said OCA director general Husain al-Musallam, before the assembly passed the motion. He added that no politicians from Russia or Belarus would be invited to the Games - which kick off in Hangzhou in late September - and no symbols of either nation would be allowed.
The athletes also would not be in medal contention. One of the world's biggest multi-sport events, the Asian Games typically attracts more than 10,000 athletes from across the continent.
The Hangzhou edition was due to take place in September 2022, but was postponed by a year because of China's strict Covid-19 rules.
Russian and Belarusian involvement at major events has met opposition in Europe, most vocally from Ukraine. The IOC has made clear that such neutral participation will only apply to individuals, not team sports.

CAF scrap Confederation Cup play-offs

Play-offs in the CAF Confederation Cup - the African equivalent of the Europa League - will be ditched from the 2023-2024 season, it was confirmed yesterday. The decision to scrap the third and final round of qualifying for the group phase was made at a CAF executive committee meeting in Rabat. Play-offs pitted winners of Confederation Cup last-32 ties against losers of CAF Champions League last-32 ties, and have been part of the competition since its 2004 debut.
Winners of Confederation Cup last-32 ties will now go directly into the group phase. A CAF statement gave no reasons for the decision, but the cost of competing in the Confederation Cup was likely to have been a factor. Clubs receive prize money only from the group phase, meaning they must fund all costs for playing in the preliminary round, round of 32 and play-offs. Cape Town City FC chairman John Comitis has said that it cost his club three million rand ($160,000/EUR145,000) in expenses to compete for three rounds in Africa last season. Travelling is a challenge for clubs in Africa with limited flight options and high costs, and teams from southern nations often fly to northern countries via Doha or Dubai to cut costs.

FORMULA 1

Verstappen nudges out Norris in 'crazy' British GP qualifying

AFP
Silverstone, United Kingdom

Max Verstappen showed his relief at surviving tricky and changeable conditions yesterday when he outpaced friend and rival Lando Norris to take pole position for the British Grand Prix.

The defending double world champion and runaway series leader outpaced McLaren's Norris with a late final lap to secure pole in one minute and 26.720, beating Norris by two-tenths. "It's been a crazy qualifying," said the 25-year-old Dutchman, who is seeking his first British Grand Prix win at the eighth attempt.

"Really quite hectic and also quite slippery in some places, but we did our laps and in Q3 I was surprised to see those two (McLaren) there.

"I mean, it's great for McLaren to be here and from our side I am very happy to be on pole."

McLaren claimed their first front row start at their home British Grand Prix since 2008 through Norris with his team-mate Australian rookie Oscar Piastri taking third behind him ahead of both Ferraris.

Verstappen added that the changing conditions had been a challenge "especially in Q1 and Q2 and there were a few little damp spots so we had to be a bit careful in Q3.

"Of course, you push close to the limit, but obviously we have a quick car so we didn't need to go to 100 per cent."

"It wasn't a very big gap today, but for us it has been a great day and I am looking forward to the race already."

Verstappen's pole was his fifth in succession, his seventh of the season and the 27th of his career as he leads Red Bull's bid for a record-equalling 11th consecutive race victory, drawing level with McLaren's 1988 achievement. Piastri was third fastest ahead of the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz and the Mercedes of George Russell and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

As Verstappen celebrated, his Red Bull team-mate Sergio Perez and nearest championship rival, who trails him by 81 points in the drivers' title race, suffered a fifth early exit this season, this time from Q1.

Norris who briefly held provisional pole position claimed his third front row start. "I was close," he said. "I was P1 in Q1, pretty sure I was P1 in Q2 and just a couple of tenths off being P1 in Q3. Pretty insane! My last lap was a good lap.

"I could hear Zak (team boss, Zak Brown) on the radio on the last lap. For us to be second and third is great for the team, but it's always Max - and he always ruins everything for everyone!"

THE GRID

Front row
Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull)
Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren-Mercedes)
2nd row
Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren-Mercedes)
Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari)
3rd row
Carlos Sainz (ESP/Ferrari)
George Russell (GBR/Mercedes)
4th row
Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Mercedes)
Alex Albon (THA/Williams-Mercedes)
5th row
Fernando Alonso (ESP/Aston Martin-Mercedes)
Pierre Gasly (FRA/Alpine-Renault)
6th row
Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Haas-Ferrari)
Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin-Mercedes)
7th row
Esteban Ocon (FRA/Alpine-Renault)
Logan Sargeant (USA/Williams-Mercedes)
8th row
Valtteri Bottas (FIN/Alfa Romeo-Ferrari)
Sergio Perez (MEX/Red Bull)
9th row
Yuki Tsunoda (JPN/Alpha-Tauri-Red Bull)
Zhou Guanyu (CHN/Alfa Romeo-Ferrari)
10th row
Nyck de Vries (NED/Alpha-Tauri-Red Bull)
Kevin Magnussen (DEN/Haas-Ferrari)


Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates with Argentina's football player Paulo Dybala after qualifying in pole position for the Formula One British Grand Prix at the Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone yesterday. *(Reuters)*

FOCUS

Pochettino ready to risk reputation at Chelsea, but Kane bid off the agenda

AFP
London

Mauricio Pochettino is ready to "risk" his reputation at troubled Chelsea, but the new Blues boss won't be bolstered by a reunion with Harry Kane.

Kane has been linked with a move away from Pochettino's former club Tottenham and a switch to Stamford Bridge could have suited both parties.

Pochettino needs a top-class striker to improve on the club's dismal goal-scoring record last season and England captain Kane fits the bill perfectly.

Tottenham's record goalscorer, who rose to prominence under Pochettino, is keen to leave the north Londoners after failing in his bid to engineer a transfer to Manchester City two years ago. Linked with Bayern Munich and Manchester United, Kane's Tottenham contract expires next year, increasing the urgency to resolve his future.

However, Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy might see the prospect of selling Kane to a London club, and one managed by the man he sacked in 2019, as a bridge too far.

Speaking at his first Chelsea press conference on Friday, Pochettino reacted with mock horror before breaking into a grin when he was asked if he would try to sign Kane.

"Oh my God! No, I don't like to talk about players in another club, but you are talking about one of the greatest, one of the best strikers in the world," he said.

"It's not fair to talk. Fans are not stupid, they are so clever and they know my relationship with him was always amazing. I saw him when he was young, grow up and achieve all he was achieving and of course we have a great relationship.

"At the moment we are thinking in different ways. We are not thinking about that (Kane)."

If a blockbuster move for Kane is off the agenda, Pochettino has to look elsewhere to solve Chelsea's striker crisis. The Blues, who have sold German forward Kai Havertz to Arsenal, mustered just 38 goals in 38 Premier League games as they finished in 12th place.

"We have to time to work. I think for sure we are going to add players that can score," Pochettino said.

Pochettino was linked with a return to Tottenham before accepting Chelsea's offer. The 51-year-old spent five years at Tottenham, leading the club to their first Champions League final appearance just months before his surprise dismissal. Asked if Tottenham had made an approach before appointing Celtic's Ange Postecoglou as their manager, the Argentine said: "We have a very good relationship with Daniel and with all the Tottenham people.

"I don't want to say anything. We need to look forwards. What am I going to say - yes, no or maybe. And what is it going to change? Nothing.

"I feel very proud about the past. You never know in football what can happen in the future."

Pochettino remains widely admired among his peers, regardless of the rocky end to his spell at Tottenham and subsequent sacking by Paris Saint-Germain last year. He was axed by PSG despite winning the French title, with a disappointing Champions League campaign proving his downfall. He could have picked an easier landing spot than a Chelsea side reeling from their worst season since 1996.

Faced with a bloated squad, demanding owners who sacked Thomas Tuchel and Graham Potter last term, and the potential for fan unrest given his association with Tottenham, Pochettino insists he made the right move. "I love the risk, the expectations. For me it's a challenge," he said.

"I want to feel the adrenaline again, to be there and fighting for big things. This football club, because of the history, is about winning big trophies. I want to prove myself, that I can deal with that."

With his reputation on the line, Pochettino means business and his players should take note. "I don't want to make excuses to the players to say first of all we need time to rebuild," he said.

"No excuses. The competition doesn't wait for anyone."



Chelsea's Argentinian head coach Mauricio Pochettino poses with a Chelsea scarf beside the pitch at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday, as he is introduced to the media as the new Chelsea Head Coach. *(AFP)*