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Marchand smashes Phelps' record



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Jamaica defy France but Sweden win WC opener



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GULF TIMES
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CYCLING

Denmark rider Vingegaard wins second successive Tour de France

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MOTORSPORT

Verstappen wins in Hungary for Red Bull's 12th in a row

Verstappen tops by a 33-second margin, Norris second and Perez finishes third

AFP
Budapest

Max Verstappen cruised to another majestic victory yesterday, reeling off a record 12th straight win for Red Bull as he dominated the Hungarian Grand Prix with a textbook drive from lights to flag.

The defending double world champion grabbed the lead from pole-sitter Lewis Hamilton at the start and remained in control for his seventh successive victory, his ninth in 11 races this year and the 44th of his career.

More significantly, it was Red Bull's 12th consecutive win, breaking a 35-year-old record they had shared with McLaren, who won 11 straight races in 1988 with Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna as their driver pair. Verstappen came home a massive 33.7 seconds ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris with his Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez in third.

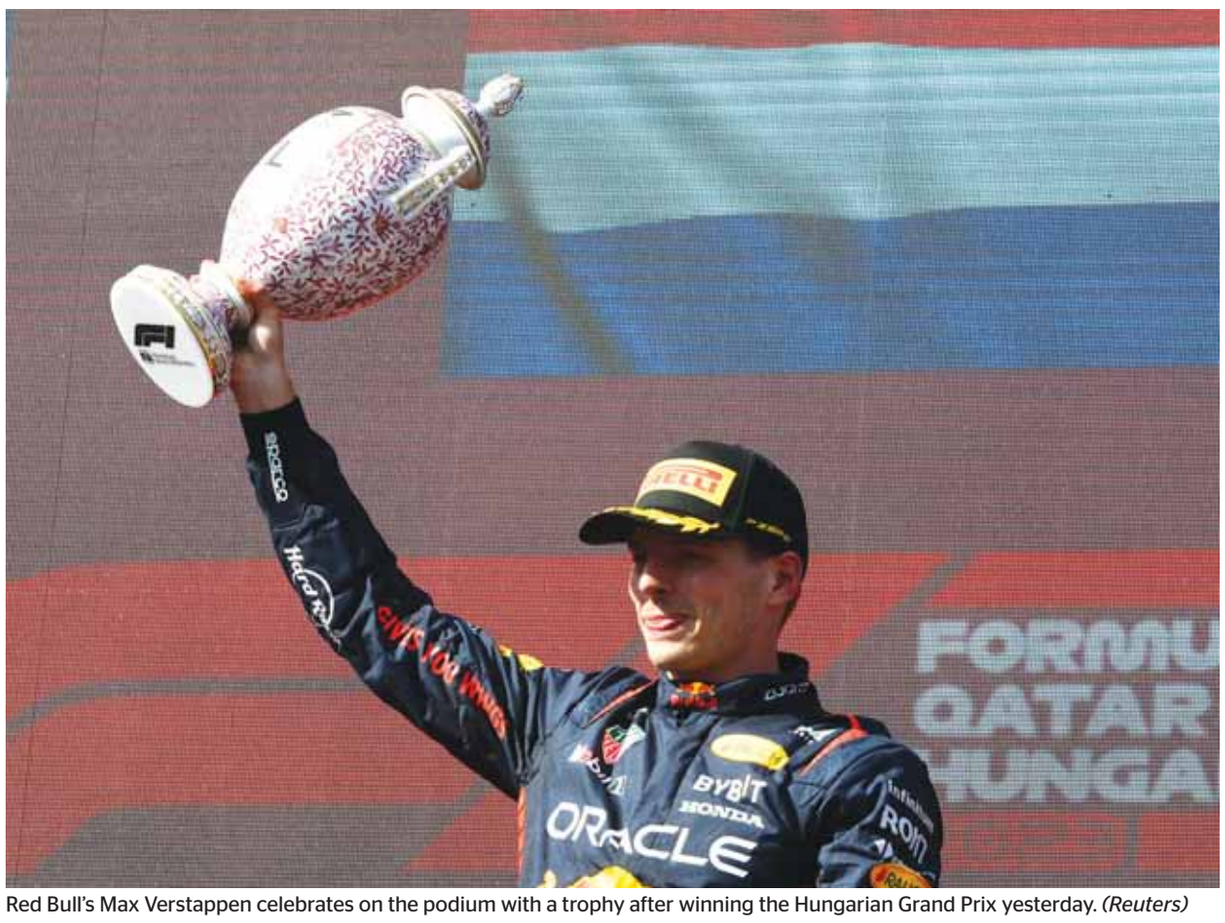
"For the team 12 wins in a row is incredible. Hopefully we can keep this momentum going for a long time," said Verstappen.

Verstappen's seventh straight win stretched the double world champion's lead over Perez to 110 points in the championship. Seven-time world champion Hamilton, who started the race from a record 104th pole position, was outpaced at the start and finished fourth for Mercedes ahead of Oscar Piastri in the second McLaren and the Ferrari of Charles Leclerc.

Leclerc, however, took a five-second penalty, and was 'passed' by George Russell in the second Mercedes with Carlos Sainz finishing eighth in the second Ferrari ahead of the Aston Martin paid two-time champion Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll. "What an unbelievable race," said Verstappen on his cool-down lap.

"It was good to drive, so enjoyable. It was unbelievable and thank-you everyone."

He added: "I had a good start and had good 'bite'. I had the inside, so I knew the corner was mine and it all worked out well. Then, it was my race and the car was fantastic."



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium with a trophy after winning the Hungarian Grand Prix yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Norris said: "It was a tough race and it wasn't easy to hold off Checo at the end when he was catching up. But it's another podium for me and for the team. We're making great progress."

The race began in hot conditions with an air temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and the track at 54, factors sure to affect tyre performance. Verstappen wore an ice-packed vest on the grid under a parasol.

Hamilton made a strong initial start, but was swamped at Turn One, Verstappen squeezing through on the inside and both McLarens taking advantage to push him down to fourth. Gifted the lead, Verstappen took control as Hamilton, so delighted by his record 104th pole position, apologised. "It's a long race," Mercedes reminded him.

On a busy opening lap Russell, from 18th on the grid, moved up to 13th as the two Alpines collided and retired, Zhou Guanyu having pushed the returning Daniel Ricciardo into Esteban Ocon who hit his teammate Pierre Gasly.

The Chinese driver was given a five-second penalty. Red Bull pitted Verstappen for hard tyres on lap 23 without him losing his lead.

Perez, in the mood, passed Piastri forcefully at Turn Two on lap 48 as Leclerc was penalized for speeding in the pit-lane before Hamilton made a second stop for mediums.

He re-joined fifth, close to a minute behind Verstappen who led imperiously ahead of Norris, Perez and Piastri with 20 laps remaining, the Dutchman afforded a luxurious 2.6 seconds stop on lap 51 before clocking the fastest lap as he surged to the flag.



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen is greeted by the checkered flag as he wins the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at the Hungaroring race track in Mogyorod near Budapest yesterday. *(AFP)*

ATHLETICS

Harrison triumphs, Barshim finishes 2nd in London DL



Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim in action during the high jump event in London Diamond League yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Reuters
London

Qatar's Olympic and world high jump champion Mutaz Barshim settled for second place at the London Diamond League meet, with his best attempt of 2.33m, behind winner JuVaughn Harrison's 2.35m at the London Stadium yesterday.

The sterling high jump star has had a dazzling connection with his earlier London athletic meetings having won his first Olympic medal at the 2012 London Olympics and later the 2017 World Championships.

Barshim has also delivered a series of impressive competition performances in the UK including a silver at the World Indoor Championships in Birmingham (2018) and clearing 2.40m – one of his all-time top ten jumps – for victory in the 2017 Diamond League meeting at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium.

The three-time Diamond League champion Barshim, however, termed his yesterday's performance, in the final Diamond League meeting before the August championships in Budapest, as satisfactory.

In preparation mode for Budapest where he will be aiming to win his fourth Worlds title, Barshim said, "I think I had a good performance today, solid jumping and I'm happy about it. I didn't get that 2.35 today but in general I'm really happy.

"The Worlds are around the corner so I've got to go and fix what needs to be fixed and come back. I'm used to not having long between competing so being in Monaco a few days ago is nothing new to me, sometimes the body isn't as fresh as you want it to be but I plan on focusing on recovery and training between now and Budapest," he said.

Harrison was the only one to successfully get over 2.35m, giving him a welcome confidence boost ahead of the World Championships.

Meanwhile Marie-Josee Ta Lou showed that she will be a force to be reckoned with at the age of 34 at next month's world championships as she claimed another Diamond League 100m win in a scorching 10.75 seconds.

Noah Lyles (200m), Femke Bol (400m hurdles) and Jackline Chepkoech (3,000m steeplechase) also produced stellar performances. They were roared on by the biggest Diamond League crowd anywhere for five years as around 50,000 fans created a fabulous atmosphere as the event returned to London's Olympic Stadium for the first time since 2019.

Flying past her was Ivory Coast's Ta Lou to claim her third Diamond League win of the season, with slow-starting Jamaican Shericka Jackson third in 10.94. American champion Sha'Carri Richardson withdrew from the race after feeling a tight hamstring in her warm-up.

World champion Lyles also surged through late to win a stacked 200m as the American's 19.47-second run improved his own fastest time in the world this year by two tenths.

Letsile Tebogo was second in an African record 19.50 while Zharnel Hughes, who took the 30-year old British 100m record last month, completed a notable double by also erasing John Regis's long-standing 200m mark with 19.73 in third.

Bol also showed that she is in the hottest form when she blasted to a European record of 51.45ss in the 400m hurdles Only American world record holder (50.68) Sydney McLaughlin has ever gone faster and Bol, second behind McLaughlin in last year's world championship and third behind her at the Tokyo Olympics, will be hoping to finally bag global gold in Budapest. Sifan Hassan looked short of race sharpness as Ethiopian world champion Gudaf Tsegay swept past her old rival on the home straight to win the 5,000m in a personal best 14:12.29s. In the 3,000m steeplechase Jackline Chepkoech also produced a brilliant personal best of 8:57.35s.

Telles leaves Man United for Ronaldo reunion at Al Nassr

Alex Telles left Manchester United for a reunion with former teammate Cristiano Ronaldo at Saudi Arabian side Al Nassr yesterday. Telles is the latest star from a major European club to move to the Gulf state, having swapped the Premier League for the lure of the lucrative Saudi Pro League.

The Brazilian left-back spent last season on loan at Sevilla and made 50 appearances for United in three years at Old Trafford. Telles, 30, will be reunited with Portugal striker Ronaldo at Al Nassr after the Portugal forward's acrimonious departure from United last year.

"Alex Telles has completed a permanent move from Manchester United to Al Nassr," a United statement said. *(AFP)*

SPORT

SWIMMING

Marchand smashes Phelps' record in Japan

AFP
Fukuoka, Japan

France's Leon Marchand smashed Michael Phelps's last remaining world record yesterday while Australia's Ariarne Titmus blew her 400m freestyle rivals out of the water at swimming's world championships.

Marchand clocked 4 minutes, 02.50 seconds to win the 400m individual medley, taking more than a second off Phelps's record. Phelps' benchmark of 4:03.84 had stood since the 2008 Beijing Olympics and was the longest-held world record in swimming.

Marchand is set to be one of the faces of next year's Paris Olympics and he warned that "the best is yet to come".

"It was insane," Marchand said. "That was one of the most painful things I did. That was amazing to do it here. The time is crazy."

Phelps' world record was one of three to fall on a dramatic opening night in the southern Japanese city of Fukuoka.

Titmus reclaimed her world record in the women's 400m freestyle, while Australia's women's 4x100m freestyle team also improved the mark they set two years ago.

Phelps, the most decorated Olympian of all time with a record 28 medals, was on hand to present Marchand with his gold.

Marchand said the American great was "impressed by the time" and told him he can continue to improve.

"He was commentating the race so it was pretty cool to see that," said Marchand, who is coached by Phelps's former mentor Bob Bowman.

American Carson Palmer finished second behind Marchand in a time of 4:06.56, followed by Japan's Daiya Seto in 4:09.41.

"Being the closest person to history was pretty cool, getting a front-row seat to that," said Palmer.

Titmus earlier dominated in one of the most hotly anticipated races of the championships, the women's 400m freestyle.



Gold medallist France's Leon Marchand celebrates with former US swimmer Michael Phelps during the medals ceremony for men's 400m medley event during the World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka yesterday. *(AFP)*

It pitted Olympic champion Titmus against Canada's world record-holder Summer McIntosh and American defending world champion Katie Ledecky.

Titmus made short work of her rivals, coming home in 3 minutes, 55.38 seconds to win the title and take back the world record that McIntosh had wrested from her in March.

Ledecky finished the race second in 3:58.73 but 16-year-old McIntosh could only place fourth, with New Zealand's Erika Fairweather taking third in 3:59.59.

Titmus said she "honestly did not think about getting the world record back". "I just wanted to come here and swim the way that I felt I was capable of swimming," she said.

It was the first time that Titmus, Ledecky and McIntosh had gone head-to-head since Titmus won at the Tokyo Olympics two years ago.

Ledecky was aiming to add to her 19 world titles, already a record for a woman.

"I can't really complain," the 26-year-old Ledecky said. "I thought Ariarne and Summer would be fast so I just wanted to kind of stay in contact."

She added: "You could just see the world record coming".

On a successful night for Australia, Sam Short won the men's 400m freestyle, pipping Tunisia's Olympic champion Ahmed Hafnaoui.

The 19-year-old was on pace to break the world record at the 300m mark but came home in 3:40.68, missing the record by 0.61 sec.

"With 100 to go, I was just going for the win because Ahmed is the Olympic champion so this was going to go down to the wire," Short said.

"I just put my head down at the end and I don't know how I beat his long arms to the wall but I did it."

Hafnaoui finished second on 3:40.70, while Germany's Lukas Martens was third on 3:42.20.

Defending champion Elijah Winnington of Australia finished seventh.

Qatar swimming team set for World Aquatics Championships


President of the Qatar Swimming Association Khalil al-Jaber (second right) is seen with Qatari swimmers featuring at the ongoing World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka, Japan.

QNA
Tokyo

Qatar swimming team is participating in the ongoing World Aquatics Championships - Fukuoka 2023 - Japan, which will continue until July 30.
The team is represented by Abdulaziz al-Obaidli, Tamim Mohamed and Nada Mohamed Wafa.
The Qatari team seeks to present good levels in competitions in which the best male and female swimmers in the world are taking part.
Meanwhile, Khalil al-Jaber, President of the Qatar Swimming Association (QSA) and Director of the World Aquatics Championships to be held in Doha from February 2-18 next year, accompanied by Kuwaiti Dr Hussein al-Musallam, President of the International Aquatics Federation, inspected the progress of work in the facilities of the Fukuoka 2023 as part of preparations for Doha to host the next edition of the championship.
Al-Jaber will also participate in the international federation General Assembly scheduled to be held tomorrow, in the presence of representatives of more than 200 countries on the sidelines of the World Championship held in Fukuoka, the QSA announced yesterday.

In the women's 4x100m freestyle relay, the Australians came home in a world record time of 3:27.96 to take gold ahead of the United States and China.

The Australian team of Mollie O'Callaghan, Shayna Jack, Meg Harris and Emma McKeon beat the record of 3:29.69, also set by Australia at the Tokyo Olympics two years ago.

"I'm very pleased and I'm proud of these girls," said O'Callaghan.

Australia's men's 4x100m freestyle team also claimed gold, with Italy taking silver and the United States bronze.

CRICKET

Australia retain Ashes after rain washout

'We have got one game left and we want to go out with a win and draw the series, like in 2019'

AFP
Manchester, United Kingdom

Australia have retained the Ashes after the fourth Test against England ended in a rain-affected draw, with bad weather at Old Trafford washing out yesterday's final day.

The result ensured Australia, as the holders, kept the Ashes at 2-1 up with one match left in the series - regardless of the result of next week's fifth Test at The Oval.

Heavy overnight rain left the outfield sodden and meant play was unable to start as scheduled at 11:00am (1000 GMT) in Manchester.

No sooner had it been announced that play would resume at 1200 GMT, provided there was no further rain, the ground was subjected to a fresh downpour lasting several hours.

The match was officially abandoned by the umpires as a draw at 1624 GMT.

Despite this draw, Australia will still have to avoid defeat at The Oval if they are to secure their first Ashes series win in England since 2001.

"The group should be pretty proud. Our preference is to come over here and win the Ashes but it's nice to retain it, albeit not in the best of circumstances," Australia captain Pat Cummins said.

England skipper Ben Stokes was understandably downbeat, saying: "It is a tough one to take, playing the cricket we did over the first three days, but it is all part of the journey.

"We knew what we needed to do and that played into our hands. It was another do-or-die game for us and I don't think we could have done much more - bowling them out and then scoring 590.

"We have got one game left and we want to go out with a win and draw the series, like in 2019."

Australia finished on 214-5 in their second innings, 61 runs behind England's first-innings 592, after rain meant only 30 overs' play was possible on Saturday's fourth day.

England managed to take just one wicket in that time when part-time off-spinner Joe Root had Marnus Labuschagne caught behind, but not before the Australian had held up the hosts' victory charge with 111.



Australia retain the Ashes after the fourth Test is drawn as a scoreboard screen displays a message that the match has been abandoned at Old Trafford, Manchester, Britain, yesterday. *(Reuters)*


Australia's Pat Cummins speaks to a member of the groundstaff as rain delays the start of play on day five of the fourth Ashes at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday. *(AFP)*

Known for weather-delays

Old Trafford is notorious for weather delays - the ground has now had 25 complete days rained off in Test cricket, plus an additional two entire Tests abandoned.

England restricted world Test champions Australia to 317 in their first innings before racing to 592 all out, thanks largely to opener Zak Crawley's breathtaking 189 and an unbeaten 99 from Jonny Bairstow.

Fast bowler Mark Wood ripped through Australia's top order on Friday with three wickets. But Australia kept England at bay on Saturday during a stand of 103 between Labuschagne and Mitchell Marsh (31 not out).

Crawley, the player of the match, added: "We are quite flat. We were in a good position to win this game but the weather cost us."

Yesterday's result ended England's brave bid to become just the second side in Ashes history to win a series from 2-0 down.

The Australia team of 1936/37, inspired by batting great Sir Don Bradman, overturned that deficit to win 3-2.

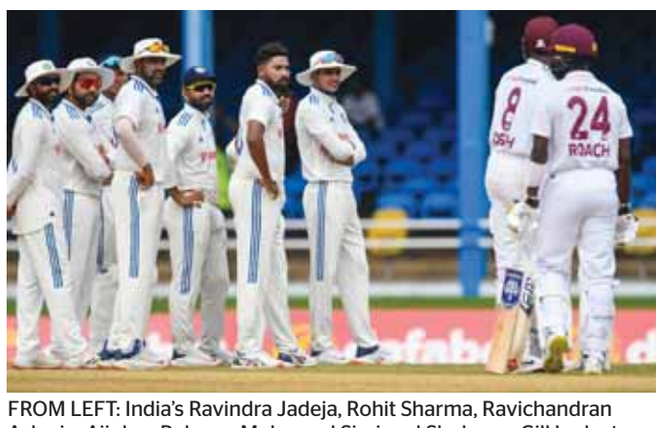
Australia won the first Test of the current series with a thrilling two-wicket victory at Edgbaston where Stokes controversially declared at 398-8 on the opening day, even though star batsman Root was 118 not out.

The tourists went 2-0 up with a 43-run win at Lord's, a match where England collapsed from 188-1 to 325 all out in their first innings before Stokes gave his side hope of achieving an improbable run-chase with a stunning 155.

England bounced back to take the third Test at Headingley by three wickets, but the Manchester rain ensured that wasn't enough to spark an Ashes-winning fightback.

SECOND TEST

Five-wicket Siraj slices through WI batting order


FROM LEFT: India's Ravindra Jadeja, Rohit Sharma, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ajinkya Rahane, Mohamed Siraj and Shubman Gill look at Alzarri Joseph (8) of West Indies while waiting for the third umpire's review during the fourth day of the second Test at Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, yesterday. *(AFP)*

AFP
Port of Spain

Mohamed Siraj scythed through the West Indies lower order, completing a five-wicket haul as the home side were bundled out for 255 in their first innings on the fourth morning of the second and final Test against India at Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad yesterday.

Mindful of the potential threat of inclement weather, the visitors sped to 98 for one off 12 overs in their second innings before the first rain interruption of the day forced an early lunch with their overall lead already at a healthy 281 runs.

While Siraj claimed the bowling honours with figures of five for 60, it was debutant seam bowling partner Mukesh Kumar who triggered the slide which saw the West Indies losing their last five wickets for 26 runs.

He trapped Alick Athanaze leg-before with the fourth ball of the day and that opened the door for Siraj at the other end, the pacer bowling a full length and making full use of movement through the air and off the seam in humid conditions to dispose of Jason Holder, Alzarri Joseph, Kemar Roach and Shannon Gabriel.

Those last two wickets came off successive balls which leaves Siraj poised to complete a hat-trick if he strikes with his first delivery of the second innings.

Rohit Sharma then benefited from two simple dropped chances to belt 57 off 44 balls with five fours and three sixes before Joseph held a catch at fine-leg off Gabriel. Yashasvi Jaiswal (37 not out) and Shubman Gill will continue the push for runs after lunch, weather permitting.

BRIEF SCORES
India 438 (V. Kohli 121, R. Sharma 80, R. Jadeja 61, R. Ashwin 56) and 98-1 (R. Sharma 57) v **West Indies 255** (K. Brathwaite 75; M. Siraj 5-60)

Antonsen breaks title drought with KO win

Seoul: Denmark's Anders Antonsen clinched his first title in more than two years after defeating Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in a thrilling final at the Korea Open 2023 badminton yesterday.
The Dane, who has struggled with a groin strain, stayed composed despite falling behind early in the match at Jinnam stadium in Yeosu, South Korea.
Antonsen finally gained an edge when Loh smashed a shot into the net with the court open, going on to take the match 11-21, 21-11, 21-19.
The 26-year-old said he was "emotional" after clinching his first title since the European Championships in May 2021.
"It means absolutely everything to me," Antonsen said. "It's been such a long time and I've been through so many tough times and injuries. It feels amazing."

CYCLING

Ice beats fire again as Vingegaard wins 2023 Tour de France

The Dane completes Tour double as Meeus pips Philipsen on the final day

Reuters
Paris

Jonas Vingegaard was always in control as he won his second Tour de France title with an awe-inspiring display after mastering a swashbuckling Tadej Pogacar in what had threatened to be one of the greatest editions of the world's biggest cycling race.

The defending champion and the Slovenian all-rounder, who was repeatedly on the attack in the opening stages, went toe to toe for two weeks, entering the third block of racing separated by only 10 seconds, with the pair in a league of their own having relegated their challengers to the role of extras.

In Tuesday's time trial, Vingegaard produced the performance of a lifetime to crush Pogacar and in a sport that has been marred by doping scandals, talk about a vintage duel gave way to scepticism, with the yellow jersey holder having to face repeated doping-related questions.

Vingegaard denied taking any performance-enhancing drugs and anti-doping authorities said the Danish rider had been tested 18 times – as of Thursday – on the Tour, eight times in June and at each of his three training camps at altitude.

On Wednesday, the win was effectively wrapped up for Vingegaard as Pogacar, whose preparation had been hampered after a wrist fracture in April, cracked in the last Alpine stage on the Col de la Loze, France's toughest climb.

Pogacar bounced back to win the last mountain stage in the Vosges, but it was too late for the Slovenian, who has now finished second behind Vingegaard two years running.

"Last year, I had a lot of injuries and sickness in the spring and this year I didn't have anything, which made a big difference. I'm just developing, getting better and better. But it's not like I'm gaining 20% every year, I'm just getting slightly better," Vingegaard said.

"We all have to make a lot of sacrifices. In a year I'm away from my family for more than 150 days to win races. But when you follow training plans, nutrition and training camps, it gives you confidence because you know you'll be at your top level."

The Tour is merciless and hopes can be dashed in a matter of seconds and this year's edition offered a stern reminder of its cruelty. Several top riders – Romain Bardet, Enric Mas, Richard Carapaz, all top-five contenders – crashed out in a race that was marred by incidents.

On the Col de Joux-Plane, Pogacar came close to colliding with a race motorbike that was blocked by fans as he was gearing up for a sprint while Vingegaard was forced to put his foot on the ground while behind a TV motorbike and an organisers' car on the Col de la Loze.

The battle for the general classification was effectively over that day as Pogacar, his jersey zipped wide open and his face drained of colour, suffered way back down the road, with his rival having disappeared into the distance.

Once that fight was over, the race lacked intriguing subplots, especially after a teary-eyed Mark Cavendish, chasing a record-breaking 35th stage win, crashed out in the eighth stage.

Belgian Jasper Philipsen dominated the bunch sprints, taking a total of four.

Emotions ran high on 'Pinot day' on Saturday, as France's local hero produced his last mountain effort in the race, and when three riders from Bahrain Victorious claimed stage wins, dedicated to the memory of their former teammate Gino Mader, who died following a crash in the Tour de Suisse last month.

Vingegaard will now 'relax' and head for the Vuelta a Espana with team mate Primoz Roglic as Jumbo-Visma look to cement their domination on the grand tours as Ineos-Grenadiers (formerly known as Team Sky) once did.

This year, the British outfit – winners of all but one Tours between 2012-2019 – failed to make it on to the podium for the second time in the last four editions.

With Vingegaard, arguably the current best grand tour rider, in Spain, Pogacar might take part in the world championships. He will hope to add to his collection of one-day race titles and strengthen his status as the best all-round bike rider in the world – at least until Belgian prodigy Remco Evenepoel makes his Tour debut and turns what has been a classic dual into a captivating three-way battle.



Jumbo-Visma's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, celebrates with teammates as he crosses the finish line during the 21st and final stage of the 110th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, covering a distance of 115kms between Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines and the Champs-Elysees in Paris, yesterday. *(AFP)*

Pogacar pays price for disrupted Tour preparation

Paris: Tadej Pogacar, beaten by Jonas Vingegaard to the Tour de France title for the second year in a row, paid a heavy price for a truncated preparation as a sudden dip in form in the third week cost him a third yellow jersey on the Champs Elysees.

The Slovenian, who suffered a wrist fracture in April, came into the Tour unsure of his form.

After two weeks of going toe to toe with his Danish rival, he was crushed by the defending champion in Tuesday's time trial before cracking in brutal fashion in Wednesday's final Alpine stage on the lung-busting Col de la Loze.

Vingegaard said his Jumbo-Visma team had a plan to make Pogacar crack, but the 2020 and 2021 champion saw it differently.

"The only moment they tried to crack me was on Marie Blanque (in the Pyrenees in the opening block of racing). He was so much better and the next day they tried to crack me completely but I won the stage (in Cauterets Cambasque)," Pogacar, who finished second overall, a massive 7:29 off the pace, told a news conference.

"After that I just cracked myself alone. Nobody cracked me it was all on me, nobody did anything to me. It was me and my bad feeling. I cracked myself." Pogacar could not train as he wanted in May and only resumed competitive racing in late June at his national championship while Vingegaard's preparations went smoothly with an altitude training camp and the Criterium du Dauphine. "Overall this Tour was great for the team. We came for overall victory but people close to me said after Joux-Plane and the Grand Colombier (at the end of the second week) that I didn't look very good," Pogacar, who won the Paris-Nice stage race and the Tour of Flanders Monument classic in the spring, explained. "I didn't notice, I was going day by day and I didn't see that I was feeling worse and worse. Then for the Col de la Loze I don't have an explanation really but I think everybody has these moments in their careers."



On Saturday, however, Pogacar had recovered and rediscovered his killer instinct to win the last mountain stage.

"I was all white all week but now I've the colours back on my face," he said with a smile.

Pogacar, who has drawn comparisons with the great Eddy Merckx for his ability to win on all terrains and in stage races as well as one-day classics, will soon have to find a way to crack Vingegaard on the Tour.

Vingegaard's season is solely focused on the Tour while this year Pogacar sought victories in Milan-Sanremo (4th), the Tour of Flanders (1st) and Paris-Nice (1st). He won the Fleche Wallonne but a crash on the Liege-Bastogne-Liege meant he could not prepare correctly for the Tour.

List of Tour de France champions since 2010

2023 Jonas Vingegaard (Denmark)
2022 Jonas Vingegaard
2021 Tadej Pogacar (Slovenia)
2020 Tadej Pogacar
2019 Egan Bernal (Colombia)
2018 Geraint Thomas (Britain)
2017 Chris Froome (Britain)
2016 Chris Froome
2015 Chris Froome
2014 Vincenzo Nibali (Italy)
2013 Chris Froome
2012 Bradley Wiggins (Britain)
2011 Cadel Evans (Australia)
2010 Andy Schleck (Luxembourg)

Tour de France - stage 21 results

1. Jordi Meeus (BEL) BORA - hansgrohe 2:56:13
2. Jasper Philipsen (BEL) Alpecin - Deceuninck
3. Dylan Groenewegen (NED) Team Jayco - AlUla
4. Mads Pedersen (DEN) Lidl - Trek
5. Cees Bol (NED) Astana - Qazaqstan Team
6. Biniam Girmay (ERI) Intermarché - Circus - Wanty
7. Bryan Coquard (FRA) Cofidis
8. Søren Wærenskjold (NOR) Uno-X Pro Cycling Team
9. Corbin Strong (NZL) Israel - Premier Tech
10. Luca Mozzato (ITA) Team Arkéa - Samsic

GOLF

Brave Harman corners British Open glory in rain

AFP
Hoylake, United Kingdom

American Brian Harman won the British Open by six shots yesterday, finishing 13 under par to claim his first major title at a rainswept Hoylake.

Masters champion Jon Rahm tied for second alongside Austria's Sepp Straka, Australian Jason Day and South Korean Tom Kim on seven under.

Harman held a five-shot lead overnight and recovered from a shaky start to cruise to victory with a one-under final round of 70.

Not since Frenchman Jean van de Velde's infamous collapse at the last hole of the 1999 British Open has any player squandered a five-shot advantage going into the final round of a major. But the temperament of the world number 26 was tested early on the soaking Royal Liverpool course.

Harman bogeyed the second after a wayward approach failed to find the green and was then punished for a wild tee-shot at the par-five fifth with another dropped shot.

His lead was briefly cut to three shots, but back-to-back birdies at the sixth and seventh settled his nerves and stretched his lead as the chasing pack failed to make a move.

Harman's sublime putting was the key to his success all week and he nailed a huge 40-foot birdie putt at 14 before another birdie with a four at the par-five 15th set the seal on a remarkably composed performance.

Straka's two-under-par final round was enough to secure his best-ever finish at a major and boost his hopes of representing Europe at the Ryder Cup later this year.

Kim's share of second was also a career-best at a major, while Day, the 2015 PGA Championship winner, continued his return to form after years of struggle with a back injury.



Brian Harman of the US celebrates with the Claret Jug after winning the 151st Open Championship at Royal Liverpool, Hoylake, Britain, yesterday. *(Reuters)*

Rahm shot a course-record 63 on Saturday to get back in the hunt for his third major. The Spaniard needed similar heroics to up the pressure on the leader, but could only manage a one-under round of 70.

Rory McIlroy finished in a tie for sixth on six under par alongside Argentine Emiliano Grillo. McIlroy's wait to win a fifth major will now extend into at least a 10th year.

Not for the first time this week, the Northern Irishman made a blistering start with three birdies in his opening five holes to move into a share of second at the time. But four pars to the turn slowed his momentum before a bogey at the 10th ended his hopes of a miraculous victory at the scene of his only British Open triumph in 2014.

McIlroy has now finished in the top 10 at seven of the past eight majors.

"If it weren't for one guy I'd be right there," said McIlroy.

"Still another really solid performance and still a lot of golf to play this year," McIlroy told reporters.

England's wait for a first British Open winner since Nick Faldo in 1992 goes on as home favourites Tommy Fleetwood and Matthew Jordan, who is a member at Hoylake, tied for 10th on four under.

TENNIS

Russia's Rublev sweeps past Ruud to win Bastad title

AFP
Bastad, Sweden

Russian Andrey Rublev yesterday won his second title of the season at Bastad with a straight sets win over top seed Casper Ruud.

The second seed won through 7-6 (7/3), 6-0 against the Norwegian world number four for his 14th career title and second this season after the Monte Carlo Masters in April.

After a tight first set Rublev, 25, took control of the tie, winning 80 percent of his first-serve points to seal victory after one hour 33 minutes.

Despite being a clay-court specialist with nine of his 10 titles, including Bastad in 2021, on the surface, Ruud was unable to find a solution to the power of Rublev's game.

"It is always great to win a title," Rublev said. "At the end of the day, we have to lose almost every week, so this is one of two titles this year. It is a special feeling and the final was played in tough conditions, but I was lucky to have them.

"Casper hits with spin a lot, to play high and with this weather the ball did not really jump high and I think it helped me a bit. On top of that I played really well today.," he added.

Earlier this year Rublev clinched the biggest trophy of his career when he triumphed at the ATP Masters 1000 event in Monte-Carlo. He has now won 14 tour-level crowns.


Russia's Andrey Rublev celebrates with the trophy after winning the final at the Swedish Open in Bastad, Sweden, yesterday. *(AFP)*

Croatia down Switzerland to clinch Hopman Cup title

Croatia's Borna Coric battled past Switzerland's Leandro Riedi 6-1 6-4 yesterday to seal a 2-0 victory in the Hopman Cup final that earned his country only their second title in the mixed-gender team competition.

Coric's victory followed Donna Vekic's comfortable 6-3 6-4 win over Celine Naef and means Croatia become the first team to lift the trophy following the tournament's return to the tennis calendar after a four-year absence.

Switzerland are among the most successful countries in the event – which began in 1989 and was named after Australian great Harry Hopman – having won four titles including the 2019 crown on the back of the now-retired Roger Federer's heroics.

Without the seasoned Belinda Bencic due to withdrawal, the young Swiss team scored victories over Denmark and France to top Group A this year but ran out of steam against Croatia in the title clash on the claycourts of Nice.

World number 15 Coric raced through the opening set in 31 minutes and recovered from an early loss of serve in the next to close out the win and break Swiss hearts.

Earlier yesterday, Vekic exchanged breaks with Naef early in the first set of the opening match of the tie, before the more experienced world number 22 pounced on her Swiss opponent's serve in the eighth game en route to wrapping up the set.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Jamaica defy France, but Sweden, Netherlands win

'I WOULD SAY IT'S THE NUMBER ONE RESULT WE HAVE HAD SO FAR, MEN OR WOMEN - I WOULD PUT IT THERE'

AFP
Sydney

Perennial underachievers France were held 0-0 by Jamaica to make a frustrating start to their Women's World Cup campaign yesterday, but Sweden and the Netherlands both won by slender margins.

France have never lifted the World Cup despite the strength of their women's domestic league and were defied by a battling Jamaica in the Sydney rain in front of nearly 40,000.

Herve Renard's France, one of the pre-World Cup favourites along with holders the United States and England, hit the woodwork late on and had more possession and chances, but Jamaica refused to fold.

The Jamaicans only made their Women's World Cup debut in the previous edition in 2019 and lost all three games, so this point was a precious first in the competition for them.

"I would say it's the number one result we have had so far, men or women - I would put it there," coach Lorne Donaldson declared.

The only sour note was the dismissal in injury time of

star striker Khadija Shaw for a second yellow card. She will miss their second game of the tournament against Panama as a result.

The Jamaicans, ranked 43 in the world to France's five, celebrated wildly at the final whistle and defender Deneisha Blackwood was paraded in the air.

"You're playing a team like France who are just fantastic. I mean, just looking at the rankings, you would say that result on this stage has to be number one," Donaldson said.

Brazil play Panama in the same group today.

In the first match of day four of the tournament in Australia and New Zealand, Sweden were given a scare by South Africa before winning 2-1.

The third-ranked Swedes fought back from a goal down and conjured up the winner in the 90th minute through Arsenal defender Amanda Ilestedt, much to the relief of their fans in miserably wet conditions in Wellington.

A goal early in the second half by Hildah Magaia - in which she suffered a match-ending injury - had given South Africa hope of an upset in front of 18,317 spectators.

But that was soon cancelled out by Barcelona star Fridolina Rolfo before Ilestedt's late intervention, heading home from close range for a hard-fought victory.

Italy face Argentina today, also in Group G.

Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson said "nerves and tension" were behind a shaky start to their World Cup campaign.

"It's OK to be nervous but you need to have the courage to still make that pass," Gerhardsson said.

The Dutch, losers 2-0 to the United States in the final four years ago, had less trouble against debutants Portugal in the New Zealand city of Dunedin.

Defender Stefanie van der Gragt scored with a powerful header on 13 minutes with what turned out to be the winner.

The Netherlands now face the United States on Thursday in a rematch of their final, with Group E supremacy at stake.

Sunday's match in Dunedin, played in front of a crowd of nearly 12,000, saw the Dutch have more of the ball but Portugal threatening on the break.

Portugal's first shot of the game finally arrived in the last 10 minutes but the Dutch were ultimately fairly comfortable winners. Two-times former champions Germany enter the fray on Monday when they face World Cup debutants Morocco.

Germany are another of the favourites to win the tournament but their coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg warned that women's football has never been more competitive.

"All the games are tight, women's football teams have come ever closer," the former international player said on the eve of her team's opening match.

"All the countries coming here are not only proud to be at the World Cup but they absolutely have the quality to play here and to pose problems."

Co-hosts New Zealand return to action tomorrow to begin the second round of group matches.

The New Zealand team had to be evacuated on Saturday after a fire at their hotel in Auckland.

Defender CJ Bott called it "not ideal" and "not a situation anyone wants to be in".

"We went down the fire exits," she said.

"One was a bit smoky but the majority of us got down the other exit."


Jamaica players celebrates at the end of the Women's World Cup Group F match against France at Sydney Football Stadium in Sydney yesterday. *(AFP)*

Morocco keen to prove they belong at the World Cup

Morocco captain Ghizlane Chebbak says they are not at the Women's World Cup to make up the numbers and are ready to shoulder the responsibility of being the first Arab country to take part as they prepare to make their debut today.

Morocco, who will kick off their campaign against Germany, are one of eight sides making their debut in the expanded 32-team women's global showcase, but Chebbak says their aspirations stretch beyond being happy to be here.

"We are not here just to make up the numbers, but to compete," Chebbak said at a press conference yesterday.

The Atlas Lionesses secured their spot by finishing runners-up at the 2022 Women's Africa Cup of Nations. Chebbak was named Player of the Tournament and was the joint top goalscorer.

"We are honoured to be the first Arab country to take part," she said.

"We feel that we have to shoulder a big responsibility to show a good image, and to show the achievements that the Moroccan football team has made in terms of progress by qualifying. This is a great milestone for us and we hope that our match with Germany tomorrow will pave the way for other matches."

Morocco could not have a much tougher opponent than second-ranked Germany, who were the first team to win back-to-back World Cups in 2003 and 2007. Die Nationalelf have lost only one of their 24 group-stage matches at the tournament.

Morocco coach Reynald Pedros said his squad - ranked a whopping 70 places below Germany - are looking forward to the challenge.

"They all know they're here at the World Cup," Pedros said via an interpreter. "They all know it's going to be their first game... But the message for them is that it is something that is extremely positive; it's going to give us so much experience."

Nouhaila Benzina will also become the first player to wear a hijab at a senior women's tournament. The wearing of head covers for religious purposes was first authorised by FIFA in 2014.

While Germany will be on a mission to make up for losing to England in last year's European Championship final, coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg warned that it will not be easy; the women's game has never been more competitive.

"All the games are tight, women's football teams have come ever closer," she said.

"All the countries coming here are not only proud to be at the World Cup, but they absolutely have the quality to play here and to pose problems."


Morocco's players take part in a training session at the Lakeside Stadium in Melbourne yesterday, on the eve of their Women's World Cup match against Germany. *(AFP)*

FOCUS

Haaland in much better shape than last season: Guardiola


Manchester City's Erling Haaland (right) celebrates with Joao Cancelo after scoring a goal during the J-League World Challenge 2023 match against Yokohama F-Marinos in Tokyo yesterday. *(AFP)*

AFP
Tokyo

Pep Guardiola fired a warning to Manchester City's rivals after the club's first match of a pre-season tour of Japan yesterday, declaring star striker Erling Haaland was in "much better" shape than last season.

Haaland claimed a brace after coming on at half-time to help City roar back from two goals down and beat J-League champions Yokohama F-Marinos 5-3 in Tokyo. The Norwegian struck 52 times in his debut season at City, including a single-season Premier League record of 36 goals.

"Comparing last season in that period he's fitter, much better than last season when he arrived," Guardiola told reporters after the Tokyo match. "Of course (he) looks good but (he) is still a way from the best condition, like everyone."

As impressive as Haaland was in driving City towards their historic treble of Premier League, FA Cup, and Champions League, however, the goals dried up for him at the end of the campaign. The striker, who turned 23 on Friday, failed to find the net for City in his last five appearances - the longest scoreless streak since he joined the club.

With that in mind, Guardiola noted that it was "important for him to score the two goals in the first game" in Japan.

"We know him. In a few weeks he will be in even better condition than now," said Guardiola.

John Stones, Julian Alvarez and Rodri were also on target for Guardiola's side in their first outing since defeating Inter Milan 1-0 in the Champions League final last month.

Only four of the players who started that game were in the initial City XI against Marinos in Tokyo, with captain Ilkay Gundogan having left the club for Barcelona.

Haaland, Rodri, Ruben Dias, and Bernardo Silva all made appearances in the second half though, and Guardiola also had a positive update concerning influential midfielder Kevin De Bruyne.

The Belgian was forced off injured in the Champions League final, but Guardiola revealed that the he was feeling "much, much, much better".

"I don't know about Bayern Munich or the next game, Atletico Madrid, because of course he has to train. But he is so close. He's coming back soon," said Guardiola.

SPOLTIGHT

Man United beat Arsenal 2-0 in friendly

AFP
New York

Bruno Fernandes and Jadon Sancho were on target as Manchester United beat Arsenal 2-0 in a friendly front of 82,262 fans at MetLife Stadium on Saturday.

The New York and New Jersey fans of the two Premier League clubs saw a lively first half with both goals, but the game lost its way in the second half with mass substitutions from both teams.

United's new Cameroonian goalkeeper Andre Onana, signed from Inter Milan on Thursday in a £44 million deal, did not feature despite flying out to join the team's tour in the United States.

Back-up Tom Heaton started in goal with Fernandes wearing the captain's armband after replacing defender Harry Maguire in that role.

Brazilian winger Antony had the first chance for United when he was found in space in the middle of the box but he scuffed his shot which rolled harmlessly wide.

Arsenal began their tour of the USA with a 5-0 win over the MLS All Stars on Wednesday and went close to an opener through Gabriel Martinelli, but Heaton produced a fine double save to deny the Brazilian.

United took the lead on the half hour mark, with Fernandes cutting in from the right and unleashing a low left-foot drive which deceived Arsenal keeper Aaron Ramsdale.

Seven minutes later, Sancho doubled the lead when Arsenal defender Gabriel mis-kicked on the half-way line and the England forward burst away before blasting confidently home.

With United still searching for a central striker in the transfer market, Sancho played in a central role, rather than his usual position on the wing, and handled the switch well.

With both Erik Ten Hag and Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta making full use of their squads after the break there was an inevitable loss of intensity and United's lead was never in danger.

There was an encouraging display from 18-year-old Kobbie Mainoo in the centre of United's midfield and Fernandes was full of praise for the academy product.

"Honestly, Kobbie is a great player, he shows great resilience. Everyone can see it. He's good on the ball, strong, he can defend and attack. He's still pretty young but we see a bright future for him. Hopefully he will get more minutes," said the Portuguese.

There was an unusual situation at the end of the game with both teams having agreed to take part in a penalty shoot-out regardless of the result.

Although there was nothing at stake in the shoot-out, which United won 5-3, both managers had agreed to take the chance to test their players' mettle from the spot as a useful experience.

On Wednesday, United are in action again against Real Madrid in Houston while the Gunners are scheduled to face Barcelona in Los Angeles.

However Barca's friendly against Juventus, due to be played later on Saturday, was cancelled after an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis among the Spanish team.

"A significant part of the blaugrana squad has a viral gastroenteritis," Barcelona said in a statement.

Spanish media reported that at least a dozen players had fallen ill.

PSG CAPTAIN MARQUINHOS HOPES FOR SOLUTION TO MBAPPE DISPUTE

Paris Saint-Germain captain Marquinhos said yesterday he hoped the club would solve its dispute with Kylian Mbappe and welcome the France superstar back into the squad for the upcoming season.

Mbappe was left out of a squad of 29 players for the French champions' pre-season tour of Japan and South Korea amid an ongoing contract dispute.

"He is an exceptional player but it is a decision that was taken over our heads, by the management," Marquinhos told reporters in the Japanese city of Osaka.

He admitted it was a "delicate" subject.

"Even in Japan you are here with your questions," he complained, although new coach Luis Enrique, sitting alongside the Brazilian, escaped without being asked about Mbappe. "We always want to have top players with us and I hope a decision will be taken to allow him to be with us and help us this season," Marquinhos added.


PSG coach Luis Enrique (left), players Marquinhos (centre) and Lucas Hernandez attend a press conference in Osaka yesterday. *(AFP)*

The 24-year-old Mbappe has said he will not extend his existing deal with the Qatar-owned club, which expires next year, and PSG therefore decided not to take him on the trip east.

He has said he wants to remain in Paris for one more year, but PSG say they would prefer to sell him in this transfer window rather than seeing him depart as a free agent in 2024. The move can therefore be interpreted as PSG putting pressure on the club's all-time top scorer to either sign a new deal or agree a transfer elsewhere.

Luis Enrique therefore faces the prospect of having to do without PSG's leading scorer from last season at least until the transfer window shuts at the start of September.