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Kuldeep, Pandya lead India to 50-run rout of Bangladesh at T20 World Cup

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**EURO 2024**

# Portugal breeze past Turkiye and into knockout stage

PORTUGAL'S RONALDO BECOMES THE PLAYER WITH JOINT-MOST ASSISTS IN EUROS HISTORY



Portugal's players celebrate an own-goal from Turkiye's defender Samet Akaydin during the UEFA Euro 2024 Group F match at the BVB Stadion in Dortmund yesterday. (AFP)

**AFP**  
Dortmund, Germany

Portugal swept into the last 16 of Euro 2024 yesterday after comfortably seeing off Turkiye 3-0 and guaranteeing first place in Group F.

Bernardo Silva's fine finish in the 21st minute, a comical Samet Akaydin own goal shortly afterwards and Bruno Fernandes's second-half tap-in gave Portugal a straightforward win in front of swathes of passionate Turkish fans in Dortmund.

Portugal looked every inch a team aiming to win their second European Championship after triumphing in 2016, their star-studded line-up easily dealing with Vincenzo Montella's enthusiastic but limited Turkiye team.

Cristiano Ronaldo will have at least two more tries to become

the oldest goalscorer at a European Championship as Martinez said on Friday that the 39-year-old is in the right shape to play every four days.

It was Ronaldo who unselfishly set up Fernandes for a simple goal in the 56th minute after springing through Turkiye's offside trap, and he then had time to pose for a selfie with a child fan who invaded the pitch midway through the second half before he was accosted by five more people who slipped past security.

"To have Cristiano who is a goalscorer, out and out goalscorer that he lives for the goals, and then he gets in front of the keeper and he looks for the assist for Bruno Fernandes," Martinez told reporters.

"That is an example that should be shown in every academy."

It was Ronaldo's first assist in this edition of the tournament, taking his tally to the joint-

highest in the tournament's history, with Karel Poborsky. The 39-year-old, is already the highest goalscorer in the Euros with 14 goals.

Martinez's side, on a perfect six points, will face one of the four best third-place finishers in the next round and go into their final group game against Georgia without any pressure for a result.

The same cannot be said for Turkiye who need a draw against the Czech Republic on Wednesday to ensure second place.

Turkiye's massive support again flocked to the Westfalenstadion in huge numbers, with long tailbacks on the roads leading to the ground several hours before the 6:00pm (1600 GMT) kick-off.

Some fans sat on the top of cars leading chants among the thousands of supporters who crawled towards their destination.

Once inside what was effec-

## Portugal coach bemoans risk to player safety as pitch invaders chase Ronaldo selfies

Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said it was lucky that none of the multiple fans who invaded the pitch during his team's Euro 2024 game against Turkiye yesterday had ill intentions after several supporters ran on looking for a selfie with Cristiano Ronaldo. The Group F match in Dortmund, which Portugal won 3-0, was interrupted on several occasions in the second half as pitch invaders got away from security in an attempt to take a photograph with the 39-year-old superstar.

The first fan, a young boy wearing a red tracksuit top, emerged from the stand behind the benches midway through the second half and made his way towards the Portugal skipper.

Ronaldo posed smiling for a photo before the pitch invader ran off trying to escape stewards. They eventually caught up with him and escorted him away to applause from the stands. At least five other fans managed to get onto the pitch attempting to pull off the same stunt, either during the match or after the final whistle, but Ronaldo grew increasingly exasperated with the unwanted attention.

"It is a concern because today we were lucky that the intentions of the fans were good," Martinez told reporters following the match, after Portugal secured qualification for the last 16.

"I think that we all love a fan who recognises the big stars who are icons in their lands.

"I think we all agree with that, but you can understand that it is a very difficult moment if those intentions are wrong.

"Then the players are exposed and we need to be careful with that. Probably there is a lot of security and protection and I don't think it should happen." Martinez, the Spanish former Belgium boss, added: "Probably we should give a message to the fans that it is not the right way.

"You are not going to get anything out of it and what you do is that probably the measures get worse for the future and it is not good to get the players so exposed when you get people running on the pitch." However, Ronaldo is one of the most recognisable celebrities on the planet and his teammate Bernardo



A pitch invader takes his selfie with Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo during the Euro 2024 match against Turkiye at the BVB Stadion in Dortmund yesterday. (AFP)

Silva - who scored the first goal in the game - admitted all the attention was the price to pay for such levels of fame. "I am not really concerned. It is just a bit annoying in terms of always having to stop the game because a fan enters the pitch," Manchester City player Silva said.

"Apart from that I think that is the price you pay for being so recognised in the world of football. But in terms of feeling in danger I don't think so, not me personally at least." (AFP)

tively a home crowd let out a deafening chorus of whistles and jeers when Portugal jogged out for their pre-match warm-up.

However, once the match got underway there was a clear gap in class between the two sides and Portugal went deservedly ahead through Silva as the Manchester City midfielder confidently

smashed in Nuno Mendes's deflected low cross.

Soon after, Akaydin gifted Portugal a two-goal lead with his sloppy backpass which turned into an own goal as Zeki Celik and goalkeeper Altay Bayindir tried in vain to prevent the ball crossing the line.

Those two goals and the domi-

nance of the Portuguese players quietened down the partisan crowd and the result was sealed when Fernandes stroked home his former Manchester United teammate Ronaldo's present of a pass.

The Portugal fans then turned up the volume to celebrate their country reaching the last 16.

**FOCUS**

# Belgium beat Romania to breathe new life into Euro challenge

**AFP**  
Cologne, Germany

Youri Tielemans breathed new life into Belgium's Euro 2024 campaign as the Aston Villa midfielder's goal after just 73 seconds inspired a vital 2-0 win against Romania yesterday.

Domenico Tedesco's side would have been on the brink of elimination if they had suffered a second successive Group E defeat.

But Tielemans' second-minute strike in Cologne eased fears of yet another major tournament flop from star-studded Belgium.

Kevin De Bruyne wrapped up the points in the closing stages to leave all four teams in the group level on three points.

The stage is set for a dramatic final round of fixtures in the battle to reach the last 16.

Belgium face Ukraine and Romania play Slovakia on June 26.

With 45 rungs separating the two nations in FIFA's rankings,

third-placed Belgium's 1-0 loss to Slovakia on Monday was the biggest upset in European Championship history. Romania, ranked in 47th place, competed gamely as they chased their own shock, but this time Belgium's superior class proved decisive.

Having bowed out at the group stage of the 2022 World Cup and lost in the quarter-finals of the last two Euros, Belgium's golden generation have given themselves fresh hope of finally delivering on their vast potential.

Romania had powered to a 3-0 win against Ukraine on Monday - their first victory in a major tournament since beating England at Euro 2000.

Despite this loss, Edward Iordanesescu's team are still in contention to make the Euro knockout stage for the first time in 24 years.

Belgium had failed to score in over 300 minutes at major tournaments since netting against Canada at the last World Cup.

They needed less than two minutes to end that drought.

A sweeping move climaxed when Jeremy Doku's pass found Romelu Lukaku in the Romania penalty area and he laid the ball back to Tielemans, who smashed a powerful low strike past Florin Nita from the edge of the area.

Romania's Tottenham defender Radu Dragusin went close to equalising moments later with a towering header that Koen Casteels tipped over at full stretch.

After an injury-plagued season with Manchester City, in which he failed to reach his usual sky-high standards, De Bruyne had looked below his best against Slovakia.

The Belgium captain was far more influential this time, with a lung-bursting surge that ended with a pass to Dodi Lukebakio, whose strike was pushed away by Nita.

Doku was denied by another good stop from Nita after wriggling through the over-worked Romania defence.

Valentin Mihailla wasted a golden opportunity to equalise soon after half-time, pouncing on

Amadou Onana's wayward pass and sprinting clear, only to blaze high into the stands.

De Bruyne was moving through the gears ominously, curling just past the far post from 20 yards, then drawing a smart save from Nita with a shot on the turn.

Lukaku had two goals, including a late equaliser, disallowed by VAR against Slovakia.

The striker was denied by VAR again in the 63rd minute when he converted De Bruyne's pass before being ruled narrowly offside.

Romania nearly profited from that escape as Dennis Man raced clear, but couldn't find the accuracy to beat Casteels. De Bruyne finally delivered the knockout blow in the 80th minute, running onto Casteels' long punt and firing past Nita.

Belgium's Kevin De Bruyne celebrates scoring his second goal during Euro 2024 Group E match against Romania in Cologne yesterday. (Reuters)



## FOCUS

# Kuldeep, Pandya lead India to 50-run rout of Bangladesh

'In T20 you don't need fifties and hundreds, what matters is the pressure you put on the bowlers'

AFP  
North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda

Leg-spinner Kuldeep Yadav took three key wickets while Hardik Pandya blasted an undefeated half-century as India moved to the brink of the T20 World Cup semi-finals with a 50-run rout of Bangladesh yesterday.

Chasing 197 for victory, Bangladesh lost three of their top five batsmen to Kuldeep who removed Tanzid Hasan (29), Towhid Hridoy (four) and Shakib Al Hasan (11).

Kuldeep finished with an impressive 3-19 from his four overs.

India now have two wins from two Super Eight games and will be guaranteed a semi-final spot if Australia defeat Afghanistan later Saturday and also make the last four from Group 1.

Pandya, who had made 50 when India batted, started the slide when he took the first Bangladesh wicket, tempting opener Liton Das (13) to sky a chance.

Once skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto fell to Jasprit Bumrah for a 32-ball 40, Bangladesh's hopes went with him.

Bumrah also ended Rishad Hossain's brief 24-run cameo as the veteran seamer enjoyed figures of 2-13 in four overs before the Tigers finished their 20 overs on 146-8.

"Our top score was 50, and we



India's Hardik Pandya plays a shot during the ICC Twenty20 World Cup 2024 Super Eight match against Bangladesh at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda, yesterday. (AFP)

still got 196," said India captain Rohit Sharma.

"In T20 you don't need fifties and hundreds, what matters is the

pressure you put on the bowlers. That's how we want to play."

He added: "Hardik batting well, the way he did today, puts us in a

very good place. We all know what he can do, and today was the perfect example of that. He's a very important player for us, with bat

and ball."

Put in to bat, 2007 champions India saw five of their top six batsmen reach double-figures. All-

rounder Pandya top-scored with an undefeated 50 off just 27 balls with four boundaries and three sixes.

India had raced to 71-1 in seven overs with Sharma making a rapid 23 and Virat Kohli hitting his tournament best 37 off 28 balls with one four and three sixes.

The only blip was Suryakumar Yadav, who had made back-to-back fifties in his last two innings, scoring just six.

Those runs came off the first ball he faced before falling to Tanzim Hasan Sakib who had dismissed Kohli in the same over.

Rishabh Pant cracked 36 off 24 balls with Shivam Dube making 34 - 18 of those runs coming from three sixes.

"I think we had a lot of batting options today, but we didn't show the intent we needed," admitted Shanto. India beat Afghanistan by 47 runs in their Super Eight opener in Bridgetown while Bangladesh lost to Australia by 28 runs in a rain-hit clash in Antigua.

India have now won all five T20 World Cup clashes against Bangladesh and taken their overall head-to-head record to 13-1.

## BRIEF SCORES

**India 196 for 5** (Hardik Pandya 50\*, Tanzim 2-32) **beat Bangladesh 146 for 8** (N. Shanto 40, Kuldeep Yadav 3-19, Jasprit Bumrah 2-13) **by 50 runs.**

## SPOTLIGHT

## Hope blasts West Indies to crucial win over USA

Reuters  
Bridgetown, Barbados

Shai Hope hit a six-studded 82 not out from 39 deliveries as West Indies revived their Super Eight campaign with a thumping nine-wicket win over co-hosts the United States at the Twenty20 World Cup on Friday.

Needing a win and a big bump in their net run rate after a loss to England in their opening Super Eight clash, West Indies achieved both at Kensington Oval to move into second place in Group 2 behind unbeaten South Africa, their next opponents. After a brief spell of rain delayed the toss but not the start at a packed stadium, Barbadian off-spinner Roston Chase took 3-19 and pace bowler Andre Russell grabbed 3-31 as the Americans were bowled out for 128.

West Indies overhauled the meagre total in 10.5 overs after Hope smashed eight sixes and four boundaries, ably assisted by Nicholas Pooran who stroked 27 from 12 balls.

"Credit has to be given to the boys, we set out to achieve a goal and we did," said West Indies skipper Rovman Powell, who was already looking forward to the possibility of returning to Bridgetown for the final. "Kensington brings special memory for us... Hopefully we can be here back on the 29th in a special place to play cricket."

Andries Gous helped get the Americans off to a lively start with pace bowlers Obed McCoy and Alzarri Joseph conceding 12 and 15 respectively off their opening overs. Gous survived a dropped chance off Joseph but was caught by Hope off the same bowler for 29, with three fours and a six.

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein exerted more control at the other end with the new ball, conceding



West Indies' Shai Hope hits a six as USA's Andries Gous (left) looks on during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2024 Super Eight match at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados. (AFP)

only 13 from his first three overs.

Chase struck an important blow for his team by bowling the dangerous US skipper Aaron Jones for 11, and at the halfway stage, the Americans were struggling at 69-4.

Hope went instantly on to the attack for West Indies, stroking the ball to all parts of the field to reach his half-century in 28 balls with four sixes and four boundaries as the US fielders chased the ball in vain across the ground.

The Barbadian crowd gave him a rapturous reception as the teams

left the field and Hope was understandably delighted.

"To do it at home is a great feeling, with my parents and my friends watching," he said.

"This is my favourite place to play cricket. It's our destiny and our goal to win the World Cup."

The Americans felt they were 50 runs short in their innings after being put into bat, but Jones was not prepared to concede that their fairytale run at the tournament was over.

"Tough night to be honest with the boys," Jones said.

"We weren't the best tonight, that's how it goes sometimes. We'll go back to the drawing board and come hard against England on Sunday."

The United States stay in Barbados for their final Super Eight contest, while West Indies head to Antigua for their clash against the Proteas today.

## BRIEF SCORES

**West Indies 130 for 1 (82\*) beat United States of America 128** (Gous 29, Chase 3-19, Russell 3-31) **by nine wickets.**

## COMMENT

## Captain Jones ready for England challenge as USA eye a positive end

Aaron Jones shared his determination to win the game against England, confident that his men will give their best to ensure USA's T20 World Cup campaign concludes on a positive note.

With a nine-wicket loss to the West Indies on June 21, USA stand on the brink of exit from the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, albeit having displayed some exceptional performances throughout the tournament, making their way into the Super Eights comfortably, by defeating Pakistan and Canada.

In Group 2 of the Super Eights, South Africa sit at the top of the table with wins against England and USA, having registered four points, whereas England and West Indies occupy the second and third spots respectively, with two points each. USA are currently at the bottom with no points to their name as of yet.

The co-hosts will be taking on England in their final Super Eights fixture today, at the Kensington Oval Stadium in Barbados, determined to conclude their season on a positive note.

Captain Aaron Jones considers the match against England important, and shared his desire to win every game when he dons the USA kit, irrespective of who the opponent is.

Summing up their T20 World Cup campaign and highlighting its importance in the rise of associate cricket in the USA, Jones shared, "I think the game against England is important. For me personally, every time I put

on a US jersey, I want to win the game, regardless of who we're playing against.

"I think over the last couple of weeks, starting from winning the series against Bangladesh, it really and truly opened the eyes of everybody in the world, not only for US cricket, but associate cricket in general."

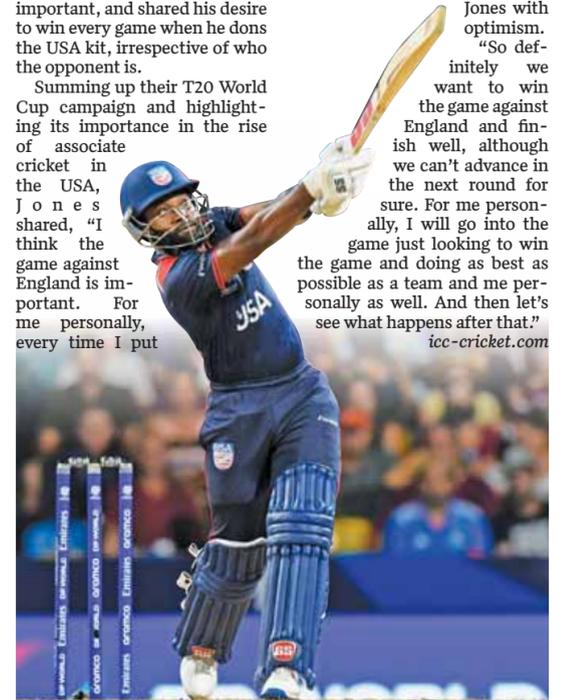
"And then obviously moving on to beating Pakistan in the World Cup, and then having a close game against India and then a close game against South Africa. People know that associate cricket is on the rise I would say."

USA will go all out against England to ensure a positive end to their fairytale campaign, but Jones doesn't feel any pressure taking on the defending champions to achieve that.

"I don't think (there) is any pressure. I think when I first started the World Cup a lot of people didn't think that we would be here right now. Obviously, we always believed, even before the World Cup started, that we could beat any team in the world. And as I say, every time you put on your jersey and you go and play for your country, you want to win," stated Jones with optimism.

"So definitely we want to win the game against England and finish well, although we can't advance in the next round for sure. For me personally, I will go into the game just looking to win the game and doing as best as possible as a team and me personally as well. And then let's see what happens after that."

icc-cricket.com



## BUTTLER POSITIVE ON ENGLAND'S CHANCES DESPITE PROTEAS LOSS

The 78-run partnership between Harry Brook and Liam Livingstone may prove to be crucial for England's semi-final hopes even though it fell just short of getting them a victory over South Africa in the T20 World Cup on Friday, captain Jos Buttler said.

Brook and Livingstone's fifth-wicket stand helped the defending

champions get within seven runs of the target, creating a clearer path to semis despite hosts West Indies pulling ahead in the group with a dominant nine-wicket win over the United States. "I think Brook and Livingstone had a fantastic partnership on a slow wicket where other guys struggled," Buttler told reporters in Gros Islet. "The big picture is

obviously net run rate." West Indies, tied with England on two points, rose to second place in Group Two thanks to a superior net run rate of 1.814. Third-placed England have a net run rate of 0.412, close to leaders South Africa (0.625) who have four points. This makes it easier for England to overtake South Africa's net run rate with a win over the US

today, if the leaders lose to West Indies. If South Africa win, England would ensure second place outright with four points. South Africa, who have won all six matches in the tournament, now face a potential do-or-die scenario where a loss to West Indies may leave them out of the top two and a place in the semis.

FORMULA 1

# Norris nabs Spanish Grand Prix pole after 'best ever lap'

'Today was the perfect lap. I knew I had to do something perfect, it was probably my best lap ever'

AFP  
Barcelona

McLaren's Lando Norris brushed aside the drama of his McLaren team's hospitality unit catching fire to produce "the best lap of my life" and deprive Max Verstappen of pole for the Spanish Grand Prix in qualifying yesterday.

Lewis Hamilton will start on the second row alongside his Mercedes teammate George Russell.

Verstappen looked sure to set off for today's 10th round of the season from the front of the grid.

But in the last throw of the top-10 shoot-out Norris denied the Red Bull ace by a mere two hundredths of a second.

"Today was the perfect lap," said Norris after only his second career pole.

"My best lap by a long way, I knew I had to do something perfect, it was probably my best lap ever."

Norris produced his one minute 11.383 seconds of magic after a "stressful" day when the McLaren hospitality unit caught fire before third practice.

McLaren team boss Zak Brown told Sky Sports one staff member had to go to hospital but had been discharged, adding: "Happy to report everyone is fine."

"I lost my shoes. It's all been a bit messy," said Norris.

"I like to listen to my music loud beforehand, but didn't have that this time. But it's not the end of the world. I'm not going to



McLaren's driver Lando Norris (also inset) celebrates getting the pole position after the qualification session at the Circuit de Catalunya in Montmeló, on the outskirts of Barcelona, during the Spanish One Grand Prix yesterday. (AFP)

complain about it." Turning back to a vintage qualifying session, Norris, whose only other pole came in Russia in 2021, reflected: "It's been a while since Sochi!"

"Max seemed a bit stronger today, but we made some changes," added the Briton who won his maiden Grand Prix in May in Miami. "I'm super happy to be on pole, it's going to be tough but we're here to win!"

Verstappen, targeting a fourth straight world title, leads the championship by 56 points from Ferrari's

Charles Leclerc, who starts Sunday's race in fifth, with Norris seven points back in third.

"I think the whole of qualifying was better than practice for me," said Verstappen, who won his maiden Grand Prix in Barcelona in 2016 and is on a hat-trick after wins in Catalonia in 2022 and 2023.

"It all clicked much better. The other teams are catching up, we need to bring more performance to the car."

Ferrari-bound Hamilton was happy to be towards the front of the grid as he out-qualified his team-

mate Russell for only the second time this year.

"It's good to be back up here, great to see we are progressing," he said.

"We are slowly climbing closer to the guys in front, it's really on a knife edge. I'm really happy to be in P3 with that long straight to turn one."

Joining Leclerc on the third row will be his Ferrari teammate and home favourite Carlos Sainz.

Next came the Alpine of Pierre Gasly, the second Red Bull of Sergio Perez, who has a three-place grid penalty from Canada, Esteban Ocon

GRID POSITION

<b>Front row</b> Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren), Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull)	*Sergio Perez (MEX/Red Bull) Valtteri Bottas (FIN/Sauber)
<b>2nd row</b> Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Mercedes), George Russell (GBR/Mercedes)	<b>7th row</b> Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Haas), Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin)
<b>3rd row</b> Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari), Carlos Sainz (ESP/Ferrari)	<b>8th row</b> Zhou Guanyu (CHN/Sauber), Kevin Magnussen (DEN/Haas)
<b>4th row</b> Pierre Gasly (FRA/Alpine), Esteban Ocon (FRA/Alpine)	<b>9th row</b> Yuki Tsunoda (JPN/RB), Daniel Ricciardo (AUS/RB)
<b>5th row</b> Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren), Fernando Alonso (ESP/Aston Martin)	<b>10th row</b> Alex Albon (THA/Williams), Logan Sargeant (USA/Williams)
<b>6th row</b>	* Sergio Perez qualified eighth but has a three-place penalty carried over from Canadian GP)

in the other Alpine and Oscar Piastri in the second McLaren.

After only a tenth of a second had covered the top four in final practice earlier the stage was set for an intriguing pole battle.

Complicating matters was a sizeable drop in temperature, with morning sunshine giving way to heavy cloud cover with the wind picking up.

The action on track though was anything but cool, as drivers scrambled to eke out every last ounce of performance for a Grand Prix won from pole in 24 of 33 races run at the circuit.

After clipping the McLaren of Norris at the end of final practice Leclerc tuned up for qualifying with a trip to the FIA's headmaster's study as the race stewards investigated the incident.

Leclerc was arguably fortunate to escape with only a reprimand rather than a grid penalty, announced just before qualifying got under way.

Hamilton grabbed the honours in the first qualifying run, jumping from 14th to first, with Verstappen leading the Mercedes duo after the second session.

Verstappen came alive when it counted most - after a quietish time in the three practice sessions he led Q3 after the first flurry of laps.

All the drivers pitted to prepare for one last attempt at depriving the Red Bull ace from Sunday's pole, with Norris nailing it to end a trying day on a high.

This is the 10th round of the 24-race season and the first of a triple header with Austria and Silverstone coming up over the next two weekends.

TENNIS

# World No.1 Sinner reaches first grass final in Halle

AFP  
Halle Westfalen, Germany

World number one Jannik Sinner reached his first career grass-court final when he beat Zhang Zhizhen 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) at Halle yesterday.

"It means a lot. I had four very tough matches to go to the final," Sinner said in his post-semi-final interview. "It was a good match today."

In the final the Italian, will face Pole Hubert Hurkacz who beat Alexander Zverev 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 in the pre-Wimbledon warm-up tournament. Sinner and Zhang both dominated on serve and only allowed one break point each.

Sinner converted his only break point and that was enough to take the first set. Zhang's lone break point gave him set point at 5-6 in the second. Sinner responded by ripping a brave forehand winner and then made a fast start on his way to winning the tie-break.

"In important moments (I was) trying to serve well," the Italian said. "He returned actually really well in some moments so I had to be very careful. I had to save a set point in the second set. If not I had to go again in three sets. But this is a grass court, anything can happen."

Earlier, Hurkacz beat the second-seeded German in one-hour, 33-minutes. The fifth-seeded Pole, winner in Halle two years ago, will bid to collect his second



Italy's Jannik Sinner in action against Zhang Zhizhen during the Halle Open semi-final in Halle yesterday. (AFP)

title of the season after winning on clay at Estoril in April.

"I'm really confident on my serve," said Hurkacz who fired 17 aces including 13 in the first set and saved all four break points he faced. "It needed to be really good," said Hurkacz after his first win over Zverev in four meetings, most recently a three-set defeat in the United Cup final, a mixed team event before the Australian Open in Sydney. "That match that was a little bit sitting in the back in my mind," said Hurkacz.

"I was like, okay, not today."

"He is such a good competitor and is playing good tennis, reaching the final at the French (Open) and playing at a really high level."

The 27-year-old Hurkacz will aim to clinch his ninth ATP Tour title. "I really love grass," said Hurkacz, the 2021 Wimbledon semi-finalist. "The surface suits my game and the atmosphere here, having the full crowd is incredible."

**Paul ousts Korda to face Musetti in Queen's final**  
Tommy Paul won an all-American

clash with Sebastian Korda yesterday to set up a final showdown with Italy's Lorenzo Musetti at the Queen's ATP tournament in London.

Paul, the fifth seed, triumphed 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) and will overtake Taylor Fritz as the new American number one if he wins his third tour-level trophy on Sunday.

Musetti, 22, survived a fightback from Australia's Jordan Thompson to win 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in two hours and 18 minutes to advance to his third final and first on grass.

"I am happy and I feel every time I step on grass I learn something and play a little better," said Paul, 27, who is preparing for his third final of the season.

"I felt like I did a pretty good job today."

Paul recovered from letting slip a 5-2 lead in the second set to seal his win in a tie-break, avenging his quarter-final defeat to Korda in 's-Hertogenbosch last week.

Korda also lost in the semi-finals at Queen's last year

Musetti holds a 7-1 record on grass this year, having advanced to the semi-finals in Stuttgart last week.

The Italian struck 14 winners and hit just four unforced errors in the decider, sealing victory on his first match point.

"That was definitely one of the toughest matches of this week. Jordan was playing at an amazing level, especially in the second and third set," said 30th-ranked Musetti.

SWIMMING

# Dressel books 50m free Olympic title defence

AFP  
Los Angeles

Caeleb Dressel shook off his doubts and booked a chance to defend his 50m freestyle Olympic title in Paris with a victory on Friday at the US Olympic swimming trials.

Dressel, whose five gold medals at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 included the 50m and 100m free and 100m fly, booked his first individual swim in Paris after missing out with a third-place finish in the 100m free.

The victory capped a long, often rocky road back to the top for the seven-time Olympic gold medallist, who stepped away from the sport abruptly in 2022.

Dressel looked in vintage form at Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the NFL's Indianapolis Colts, exploding off the blocks to win the 50 free in 21.41sec. The time makes him the fourth-fastest in the world this year, a list led by Australian Cameron McEvoy.

"I knew it was one of my toughest nights," said Dressel, who would return to top the times in the 100m butterfly semi-finals in 50.79sec.

"(I was) not feeling great or anything special, so I just had to gut it out tonight."

With his wife, Meghan, celebrating in the stands with their four-month-old son, August, in her arms, Dressel checked the 50m free scoreboard and gave a mighty fist pump before acknowledging the crowd.

Chris Guiliano, winner of the 100m free and runner-up in the 200m free this week, was second in 21.69 - with Matt King

shut out of the Olympic berths by an agonizing one-hundredth of a second as he finished third in 21.70. Dressel, 27, said his relaxed demeanour on deck in Indianapolis has belied some tense moments behind the scenes.

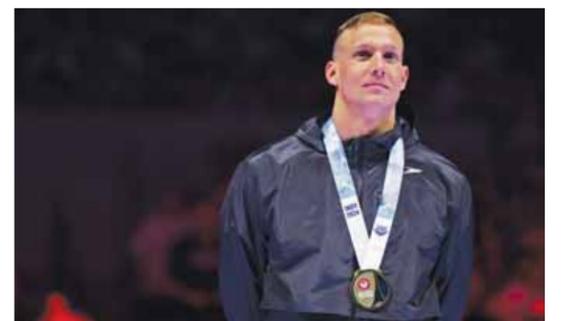
"There's parts of this meet, I've had some very low lows," he said. "There's parts in my hotel room that aren't on camera, talking with my wife, talking with my therapist - it has not been smooth sailing this whole meet." But, he added, he's trying to relish the good times after his extended break that refreshed his relationship to the sport.

That includes the warmth he's felt from the crowd, which has topped 20,000 at the finals sessions. "It's just been fun," Dressel said. "I'm not going best times, I haven't done a single best time, but just when I'm walking out, not even performing, feeling the love from everyone, it's really special."

After coming a long way in the past year in terms of performance, Dressel said, he's expecting more improvement in Paris in five weeks. "We're going to get faster, too," he said. "Looking forward to that."

Regan Smith capped a stellar week that started with a world record in the 100m backstroke final with a wire-to-wire win in the 200m back in 2min 05.16sec.

Phoebe Bacon powered past reigning world champion Claire Curzan in the closing meters to take second in 2:06.27 and punch her ticket to Paris. Carson Foster, Paris-bound as winner of the 400m individual medley, powered home on the closing freestyle leg to win the 200m individual medley in 1:55.65.



Caeleb Dressel of the United States looks on during the medal ceremony for the men's 50m freestyle on Day Seven of the 2024 US Olympic Team Swimming Trials at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana. (AFP)

## KALINSKAYA REACHES BERLIN FINAL AS INJURY LIST GROWS

Anna Kalinskaya beat Victoria Azarenka 6-1, 6-7 (3/7), 6-1 in a see-saw semi-final yesterday in the Berlin WTA tournament.

Kalinskaya raced through the first set in 26 minutes. After Azarenka went 4-1 up in the second set, Kalinskaya fought back to force a tiebreak which she lost.

Kalinskaya again galloped through the third set, and was only slowed at 5-1 when Azarenka saved three match points from 40-0, but two unreturned serves sealed the victory.

The day had started with three quarter-finals delayed by rain from the day before, two were cut short as Aryna Sabalenka and Ons Jabeur joined the procession of injured stars limping off the grass in the Wimbledon warm-up event.

Kalinskaya was one of the beneficiaries as

second-seeded Belarusian Sabalenka retired trailing 5-1 in the first set.

Eighth-seeded Jabeur had gone toe-to-toe with top seed Coco Gauff before losing a one-hour 14 minute first set in a tiebreak 11/9 before packing her rackets in her bag and walking off.

"It doesn't feel like a win," said Gauff on court. "Especially as we had such a great first set."

"It's not the way you want to finish a match, especially with someone who is so nice on and off the court."

Gauff said the Tunisian had indicated she was not seriously injured. "I know she's going to feel better tomorrow and should be fine for Wimbledon."

Trailing 4-1, Sabalenka called a medical timeout to have her shoulder and neck treated. She played on for one game before stopping. It was

the first time the Belarusian had retired injured in a WTA tournament, said the women's tennis body.

On Thursday, reigning Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova retired with a right hip injury from her second-round match, also against Kalinskaya.

On Friday, former Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina pulled out while trailing Victoria Azarenka in the quarter-finals.

In the second semi-final, Gauff will face compatriot Jessica Pegula who finished off Czech Katerina Siniakova 7-6 (7/2), 3-6, 6-3 yesterday. The fourth-seeded American had led 4-2 in the third set when rain halted play on Friday.

Gauff said her training regime prepared her to play twice in one day. "I'll be ready for later today," said Gauff.

**FOCUS**

# Doha Falcons fly high with thrilling GCL win in Paris

**Agencies**  
Paris

Converting their pole position to a win, Doha Falcons of Julien Anquetin, Jerome Guery and Michael Pender stormed to victory in the Global Champions League (GCL) of Paris. The Paris leg of the GCL saw fierce competition and spellbinding performances, but it Doha Falcons that led from start to finish with Jerome's horses Careca LS Elite and Great Britain V, Julien onboard Z Ice Cube Z and big gun Pender's HHS Calais being pulled in for round two.

Championship leaders Stockholm Hearts powered by H&M We Love Horses duo of Nicola and Olivier took home second place on board Katanga v/h Dingshof and H&M Legend of Love in round 2.

But hot on their heels Cannes Stars powered by Iron Dames once again stood on the podium in third with Sophie Hinners on Special Life and Katrin Eckermann delivering a double clear with Cala Mandia NRW. In the team's first win since GCL Samorin in 2021, the Doha Falcons took their well-earned spot at



the top of the podium.

Speaking with GCTV, Mikey Pender said: "There really are amazing crowds here in Paris, it was brilliant. The team has been a bit unlucky all year, but we have a good team and have been going well in general... just knocking on the door. We have a brilliant team bond, all the shows we have such brilliant riders, and I think that helps a lot - hopefully we can keep it going."

Tactics were certainly in play heading in to round two, with Doha Falcons seen discussing the

approach for round two amongst themselves, as well as enlisting the help of the team manager. With the right decision clearly made, Guery spoke of how round

two was a lot bigger put potentially less technical, whereas round one posed a lot of technical questions.

He said: "We saw with round one how it was a lot more delicate, particularly with the plank which is the fence I had down, other than that we went pretty well in round 1 with Julien having a clear round."

Jumping two horses each across round one and round two, Nicola and Olivier Philippaerts secured the third consecutive podium for the Stockholm Hearts powered by H&M We Love Horses, ultimately furthering their championship lead ahead of the home stage in Stockholm next week.

Nicola said: "All the horses jumped fantastic today, really we were very lucky to be on the podium, we survived another leg and we are looking forward to going into Stockholm as leaders next week."

He went on to add: "We are only half way now, we have a lot of stages to come so it is very important that we plan carefully to get the strongest team everywhere that is possible."

A look ahead to the ninth stage of the championship race, next week in Stockholm, Olivier shed some light on what the team have in store.

He said: "Next week we take Nicola, myself and Jessica Springsteen, but we have all planned to take the best horses we

have and hopefully we keep the lead next week."

**CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS AFTER STAGE 8**

- 1st Place:** Stockholm Hearts powered by H&M We Love Horses - 162 points
- 2nd Place:** Cannes Stars powered by Iron Dames - 157 points
- 3rd Place:** Doha Falcons - 140 points
- 4th Place:** Riesenbeck International powered by Kingsland - 136 points.

**EURO 2024**

# Schick rescues Czechs in 1-1 draw with Georgia

'WE HAVE A POINT AND WILL PLAY FOR EVERYTHING IN THE LAST GAME'

**AFP**  
Hamburg

Patrik Schick chested home to earn the Czech Republic a 1-1 draw against debutants Georgia yesterday in an entertaining match, but it leaves both teams in a tricky spot in Euro 2024 Group F.

They have a point each ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal facing Turkey later on, as the top two clash having already beaten the Czechs and Georgia respectively.

Georgia coach Willy Sagnol said his players' disappointment at their opening defeat showed how far his team has come, and they gave everything in Hamburg to earn their first Euros point.

Goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili made a string of superb saves to keep his team in the game and they took the lead just before the break through Georges Mikautadze's penalty.

However Schick reprised his Euro 2020 goalscoring heroics with an improvised finish to leave honours even at the end of a pulsating clash.

"Of course one-all is not enough for us - we were better throughout the game, we had more chances, unfortunately the goalkeeper stopped everything in the first half, and then came the unfortunate penalty," Schick told Czech television.

"It didn't go our way, we were able to equalise, we pushed them but were not able to score a second...we have a point and will play for everything in the last game."



Czech Republic's forward Patrik Schick (left) celebrates with defender Robin Hranac (centre) and midfielder Ondrej Lingr after scoring a goal during the UEFA Euro 2024 Group F match against Georgia at the Volksparkstadion in Hamburg yesterday. (AFP)

Georgia's key attacking duo Mikautadze and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia both needed medical treatment in the warm-up but were able to start the match. They pressed with fury from the off but it was Ivan Hasek's Czech side who carved out the first clear chances and peppered the Georgia goal.

Valencia stopper Mamardashvili made fine early saves to deny Adam Hlozek and then Schick on a busy afternoon.

Georgia wanted a penalty when

Zuriko Davitashvili fell under pressure from Ladislav Krejci, but their appeals were waved away.

After both sides were beaten in their opening matches, they were under pressure to take three points at the Volksparkstadion in Hamburg, leading to a thoroughly entertaining end-to-end game.

In their thrilling opening defeat by Turkiye Georgia's fans were outnumbered, but here they were in the majority and every time Napoli winger Kvaratskhelia got the ball

in opposition territory they began to roar. Hlozek put the ball into the back of the Georgian net after 23 minutes but the goal was disallowed after a VAR review for handball.

The striker's first effort was saved by Mamardashvili, with the rebound hitting Hlozek in the face and then his arm before crossing the line.

In first half stoppage time Czech goalkeeper Jindrich Stanek saved brilliantly from Georgia captain Guram Kashaia but VAR spotted a

handball in the build-up by defender Robin Hranac and the referee awarded a penalty.

Mikautadze dispatched it confidently to give his side the lead at the interval, but not before Mamardashvili brilliantly saved low from Schick.

The Czechs were back level when Euro 2020 joint top scorer Schick chested home from close range after substitute Ondrej Lingr's header from a corner bounced back off the post.

Schick's strike took him ahead of Milan Baros as their top ever Euros scorer with six goals but the Bayer Leverkusen forward limped off with an apparent calf injury midway through the second half.

Georgia had a glorious chance right at the end of the match to win the game but at the end of a three-on-one break, substitute Saba Lobjanidze blazed over with just the goalkeeper to beat.

It might have been a historic moment for the Atlanta United forward but he leant back and watched the ball sail into the agonising Georgia fans behind the goal.

Georgia players collapsed to the turf at full-time, devastated at the chance to win the game slipping through their fingers.

"Our first point is a historic moment, of course we could have won right at the last, I am disappointed about that but this is football and anything can happen," said Mamardashvili.

"Of course it's an important moment but he needs to keep on going. He should be proud, we earned our first point."

**Hungary coach confident Szoboszlai will be fit for Scotland clash**

Hungary coach Marco Rossi played down fears over the fitness of captain Dominik Szoboszlai for today's must-win game against Scotland at Euro 2024 after the Liverpool midfielder sat out training.

Rossi said Szoboszlai's workload was being managed following back-to-back losses to Switzerland and Germany in Group A, but the Italian did reveal he would make some changes to his line-up.

"We will wait until the 11th hour and assess how everyone is, but there's no real concern over Szoboszlai at this stage of the competition," Rossi told a press conference yesterday.

"At this stage of the season, it was a very long campaign for him in particular, what matters most now is rest and recovery."

"There will be a couple of change but that doesn't come down to bad performances by any means," added Rossi.

"It's simply because we believe we can have a bit more freshness in the side."

Hungary arrived at the Euros with increased expectations after a 14-match unbeaten run between November 2022 and March of this year. They also beat England home and away in the last UEFA Nations League.

But a 3-1 defeat by Switzerland in their opening game in Germany set the tone for a difficult campaign, with a subsequent 2-0 loss to the tournament hosts leaving them bottom of the pile and without a point.

"I think that this unbeaten streak raised the expectations. I can say we were no exception. We also started off expecting more points at this stage of the tournament," said defender Endre Botka.

"Now we see that in the last two games we didn't do as we expected. At times like that we have to go back to the basics and the things that were working in the past."

The game in Stuttgart will be the first competitive meeting between Hungary and Scotland, who have one point from two games after bouncing back from a 5-1 drubbing by Germany to draw 1-1 with Switzerland.

"There's no alternative for us but to win if we want to continue our progress," said Rossi.

"We know this is a decisive game both for us and them. The pressure is equally on for both us and Scotland."

However, the Hungarians know they also have to win and hope three points is enough to carry them through.

"When the draw was made you were probably targeting the last two games," said Scotland midfielder Callum McGregor.

"When you get a bad result, perspective goes out the window a little bit. It was probably the manner of the defeat the other night which made everyone feel a bit sore and not great."

"As footballers, you have to deal with that. You have to try to put it right. We made the first step of putting it right and we arrive into the game on Sunday now with belief that if we play equally as well, if not better, we give ourselves a right good chance."

(AFP)

**FOOTBALL**

# Germany to 'play to win' despite possible Spain clash



Germany's coach Julian Nagelsmann laughs during a training session in Herzogenaurach yesterday, on the eve of their Euro 2024 Group A match against Switzerland. (AFP)

**AFP**  
Frankfurt, Germany

Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said his team will play to win against Switzerland today, despite the risk of meeting in-form Spain in the quarter-finals.

Germany have already qualified for the knockout stages and will be first in the group with a win or a draw against the Swiss in Frankfurt today. That will however put them on track for a match-up with Spain, who are also on course to top their group and have been among the best teams at the tournament so far.

"I think it's normal to discuss these topics," said Nagelsmann. "At the end of the day it's difficult to talk to your team and tell them to lose tomorrow."

"That doesn't make sense for competitive people. Normally you play a football game to win and tomorrow's a game to win."

The 36-year-old coach also said

Germany or any other team could be caught out by thinking too far in the future.

"We cannot predict who will be the opponent exactly in the knockout stage, but at the end it's just about getting more confidence and more rhythm, by winning games in a row.

"Tomorrow's the next game we want to win it, it doesn't matter who will be the next opponent. We'll know our next opponent Tuesday at 11pm and will have time to prepare it."

Switzerland sit second in the group on four points and will guarantee second place with a draw.

Nagelsmann called opposing coach Murat Yakin "a great manager who I hold in high esteem", while singling out Switzerland as "the strongest opponents in the group".

"It'll be an interesting match - and we want to win."

Centre-back Jonathan Tah, who won the double this year with Xabi Alonso's Bayer Leverkusen, agreed with his coach.

"That's our mindset. We go into every game to win every game," Tah said.

Leverkusen became the first team in Bundesliga history to go a domestic season unbeaten and only lost one of 53 games this year - the Europa League final clash with Atalanta.

"We want to be group winners because we want to see our name at the top. That's our goal."

Since shaking up the Germany squad with 11 changes in March, Nagelsmann has played the same starting XI whenever players were available and has played an unchanged side so far at Euro 2024.

The coach said Saturday "there aren't any changes as of now," despite four players coming into Sunday's game on a yellow card.

"I think at national level it's important the starting team is maintained," Nagelsmann said. "We don't have that much time to train or to play together."

**'Not under pressure'**  
Switzerland coach Yakin said his

side wanted to enjoy Sunday's match, adding the pressure was on hosts Germany rather than his own side.

"We have four points now and we won't suffer being under huge pressure to win - but we will definitely try to win."

"We want to bother our opponents, we want to cause them problems and play a good match."

Switzerland's best result at a Euros was in 2021, when the Swiss eliminated France on their way to the quarter-finals.

Like Nagelsmann, Yakin said he was not thinking ahead to possible knockout-round opponents.

"There are no weak teams, we've realised this."

"If you look at all the matches, they're top-level games."

"We're not qualified for sure yet, but we've got good chances, it's true."

"Tomorrow if we qualify we'll celebrate. But for the time being we're focused on the match."