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Verstappen wins Spanish Grand Prix, extends championship lead



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'Calm' Kane rounds on England's Euro 2024 critics

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# GULF TIMES SPORT



**CRICKET**

Reigning champions England thrash USA to reach T20 World Cup semi-finals

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**HORSE RACING**

## Wathnan Racing's Haatem claims Jersey Stakes

Agencies  
Ascot, UK

**W**athnan Racing recorded their fourth victory at Royal Ascot as Haatem claimed the Gr 3 Jersey Stakes in a thrilling finish on Saturday.

On the final day of the Royal Ascot, Carrying the colours of Wathnan Racing for the first time, Haatem struck the front in the hands of James Doyle and looked set to go on to a comfortable victory.

However, Harry Charlton's Kikkuli had other ideas and the half-brother to Frankel ensured backers of trainer Richard Hannon's would have a nervy wait on their hands after flashing home to force a photo finish.

A short pause would follow before the judge confirmed Haatem had clung on to land the spoils by a diminishing short-head Johnny Murtagh-trained Chicago Critic came third.

Winner of the Craven Stakes in April, the high-class Haatem



The connections of Haatem celebrate after the Wathnan Racing's colt won the Gr 3 Jersey Stakes at Royal Ascot on Saturday.

returned to Newmarket to finish third in the 2000 Guineas before finding only his esteemed stablemate Rosallion too strong in Gr 1

Tattersalls Irish 2000 Guineas at the Curragh three weeks later.

On Saturday, the colt enjoyed his day in the sun and gave

Wathnan Racing a record fourth victory at Royal Ascot.

"He carried a penalty, he got there very easily, and he deserved



Jockey James Doyle guides Haatem to the Jersey Stakes victory.

his day in the sun. Hopefully, he'll have plenty more. It was a very deep race, there were 20 runners, and it was not your normal Jersey," said Hannon.

"It's great for Wathnan, they bought a lot of horses, and it was so important they had success and they've earned it."

Jockey Doyle was all praise for Haatem. "He's an absolute warrior," said Doyle.

"It wasn't his ideal set-up today, but we've come up with a plan and it worked. If he had got beat, he would have been robbed because he responded well. What a horse," he said.

**EURO 2024**

## Last-gasp Fullkrug goal rescues top spot for Germany

'I THINK THE EQUALISER WAS DESERVED, AS WAS THE GROUP WIN'

AFP  
Frankfurt, Germany

**A** stoppage-time header from Niclas Fullkrug has rescued a 1-1 draw for Germany against Switzerland yesterday in Frankfurt, ensuring the Euro hosts finish top of Group A.

The Swiss hit the lead early, Dan Ndoye booting in from close range after 28 minutes to stun the home side.

Germany took a series of risks late in the hope of an equaliser and veteran striker Fullkrug delivered, heading home in the second minute of stoppage time.

"I think the equaliser was deserved, as was the group win. We threw a lot forward at the end," said Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann.

The result means Switzerland, rather than Germany, face a tougher last 16 assignment, setting up a potential meeting with holders Italy or 2018 World Cup finalists Croatia.

The Germans look set to face second place in England's Group C, which is currently Denmark. Heading into the match the hosts were optimistic they had turned the corner after almost a decade of disappointment at major tournaments, with two World Cup group stage exits bookending a Euros last 16 elimination.

Led by an experienced midfield featuring captain Ilkay Gundogan and Toni Kroos, Germany beat both Scotland and Hungary in their first two Euros matches to give the hosts hope of a deep run in the tournament.

The hosts were however caught off guard by Switzerland's energy and failed to carve out many clear-cut chances against a dogged Swiss defence. Despite Fullkrug's late rescue effort, Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann will have plenty to ponder after the stodgy performance.

Despite having already qualified for the last 16, Nagelsmann decided to play the same starting XI for the third straight game.

It was a decision he may regret when defender Jonathan Tah saw yellow, his second in the group stage, meaning he will miss Germany's first knockout game. Pushed on by an optimistic and partisan home ground, Germany started brightly, carving out some half-chances after launching long balls over Switzerland's midfield press. Robert Andrich looked to have given



Niclas Fullkrug celebrates after heading home Germany's late equaliser against Switzerland. (Reuters)

Germany the lead after 16 minutes when Yann Sommer made a meal of his long-range strike, which bounced past the goalkeeper and into the net. The goal was however overturned with VAR finding Jamal Musiala had committed a foul in the lead-up.

The Swiss had been on the back foot early but took the lead on the 28-minute mark, taking advantage of some sloppy play from Musiala and Joshua Kimmich.

Musiala lost the ball in his own half, sending Switzerland on the break. Kimmich won but then let go of possession, allowing Remo Freuler to find Ndoye who stuck out a leg and booted the ball into the net. It was the first time

the hosts have trailed this tournament and the goal seemed to rattle Germany, who were increasingly hesitant in closing out the first half. Germany went on the attack in the second half as Nagelsmann made several offensive changes but the hosts had few clear chances against a Swiss side doggedly protecting their lead.

Man City defender Manuel Akanji stretched out to block Kimmich at point-black range with 20 minutes remaining.

Nagelsmann brought Fullkrug from the bench with 14 minutes remaining and the Borussia Dortmund striker stepped up to the plate, heading in a cross from David Raum to send Germany back to the top of the group.

**FOCUS**

## Hungary score injury time winner to end Scotland's hopes

AFP  
Stuttgart, Germany

**K**evin Csoboth scored in the 10th minute of added time as Hungary snatched a 1-0 win over Scotland to stay in the hunt for a place in the last 16 of Euro 2024.

A sickening collision led to Hungary striker Barnabas Varga being stretchered off in front of his visibly shocked team-mates in the second half, but Csoboth's late winner kept them alive in the tournament.

It was a bitter end to Scotland's bid to reach the knockout phase of a major tournament for the first time as they were caught out pressing for a goal of their own right at the death.

Germany finished top of Group A after a 1-1 draw with Switzerland, who will go through as runners-up. Hungary must rely on other results if they are to advance as one of the best third-placed sides. Scotland came last with just a point as their wait for a first European Championship win since 1996 goes on. Coach Steve Clarke made one enforced change for Scotland as Scott McKenna replaced Kieran Tierney, who was stretchered off with a hamstring injury in the 1-1 draw with Switzerland.

English-born Callum Styles got the nod in Hungary's midfield, coming in after shaking off an injury, with Endre Botka also making his first appearance of the tournament on the right side of a back three.

John McGinn revealed the team skipped their pre-match nap as thousands of Scotland supporters gathered outside the hotel, belting out songs in anticipation of what they hoped was a historic night.

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 twice in the last UEFA Nations League, as well as Germany away.

But back-to-back defeats had punctured confidence and left Marco Rossi's side needing to beat Scotland to keep alive their hopes of reaching the knockout

rounds. Scotland goalkeeper Angus Gunn shovelled away a dipping drive from Bendeguz Bolla that bounced awkwardly in front of him, with Styles and then Willi Orban booked for cleaning out McGinn in a first half full of endeavour but limited in genuine chances.

That was until Che Adams' dangerous clearance led to a Hungary free-kick 25 yards out, which Dominik Szoboszlai clipped towards the far post with Orban's header skimming the top of the crossbar.

Szoboszlai, who shrugged off injury concerns after missing Hungary's final team training session, hammered over a strike from distance, and it wasn't until the 53rd minute that Scotland registered a shot.

Scotland defended doggedly as Jack Hendry blocked Roland Sallai's attempt shifting in from the left before Marton Dardai headed over from a cross.

A horrifying incident left Varga prone on his back in the Scotland area as he tried to head a free-kick goalwards while Gunn came flying out, with Anthony Ralston also crashing to the ground. It resulted in a long stoppage as medics set Varga in the recovery position before a sheet was draped around him as he was carried off on a stretcher. The fourth official indicated 10 minutes of stoppage time, which sparked a desperate quest from both teams to find the winning goal.

Gunn saved well from Andras Schafer and Szoboszlai, before Csoboth hit the post. Scotland defender Grant Hanley had a chance parried away by Peter Gulacsi, with Hungary racing up the other end and Csoboth steering home a cutback to break Scottish hearts.



Hungary's Kevin Csoboth celebrates scoring a goal against Scotland in Stuttgart yesterday. (Reuters)

## MATCH REPORT

# Afghanistan stun Australia, keep WC semis hopes alive

Half centuries from Gurbaz, Zadran helped Afghans rack up 148-6 before bowlers dismissed Aussies for 127

**AFP**  
Arnos Vale, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

**R**ahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran shared an opening stand of 118 before Gulbadin Naib took over to drive Afghanistan to a 21-run win over Australia in St Vincent yesterday and keep alive their hopes of reaching the Twenty20 World Cup semi-finals.

A win for Australia would have sent the 2021 champions and India into the last four, but even a second hat-trick in as many matches from Pat Cummins was not enough to keep their unbeaten record at the tournament intact.

Half centuries from Gurbaz and Zadran helped the Afghans rack up 148-6 in their 20 overs, before their bowlers dismissed the Australians for 127 on a tricky Kings-town track.

Naib claimed 4-20 and Naveen-ul-Haq bagged 3-20, but it was the third century partnership of the tournament from Gurbaz and Zadran that laid the foundation for a win that also kept Bangladesh alive.

"We've waited for a long time (for this)," said man-of-the-match Naib.

"It's a big moment for our nation and our people. I have no words, but thanks to the fans who supported us in our career and cricket journey ... thank God we finally beat Australia. It's a great achievement for Afghanistan."

"We have achieved many things in the last 10 years, but this is big."

India top Group 1 on four points, ahead of Australia and Afghanistan on two, with Bangladesh alone in last place, with none.



Afghanistan's Gulbadin Naib celebrates after the dismissal of Australia's Pat Cummins during the ICC Twenty20 World Cup Super Eight match at Arnos Vale Stadium in Arnos Vale, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines yesterday. **Right:** Afghanistan's Nangyal Kharoti (left), Naveen-ul-Haq (centre) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz celebrate after the dismissal of Ashton Agar. (AFP)



India and Australia face off in St Lucia today, while the Afghans stay in St Vincent to play Bangladesh in the final Super Eight match later that day.

Australia skipper Mitchell Marsh won the toss and sprang a couple of surprises by sending the Afghans in to bat and naming a team with left-arm spinner Ashton Agar in the bowling line-up in place of Mitchell Starc.

In the early overs it looked like the Australian bowlers would suffocate the Afghans, but the lack of a breakthrough wicket allowed Gurbaz and Zadran to settle in and accelerate through the middle overs.

Crisp batting and hard running from the Afghans put the pressure back on the Australians, who made uncharacteristic fielding errors under the Arnos Vale Ground lights.

The pair reached their half-centuries before Marcus Stoinis finally separated them in the 16th over, when Gurbaz mistimed a shot to David Warner at deep square leg to depart for 60.

Spinner Adam Zampa removed Azmatullah Omarzai (2) and Zadran (51) in the following over and paceman Cummins sent back skipper Rashid Khan cheaply with the final ball of the 18th over.

Karim Janat and Naib followed

with the first two deliveries of the 20th over as Cummins became the first bowler to take two hat-tricks at a T20 World Cup.

He would have taken four wickets in a row had Warner held onto a reasonably straightforward catch running in from deep point to dismiss Nangeyala Kharote.

"They got 20 runs too many," admitted Marsh.

"To be honest, they played a really good game of cricket. We were outplayed tonight ... It was an off-night in the field and we own that," he said.

Afghanistan made the best possible start with ball in hand with Naveen bowling Travis Head for a

duck in the opening over and having Marsh caught in the deep for 12 in the third.

Warner followed for three off Mohamed Nabi's first delivery to leave the Australians struggling on 32-3 in the final over of the power play, before the Afghans heaped more pressure on their opponents by removing Stoinis and Tim David.

The explosive Glenn Maxwell gave Australia some hope with a battling 59 off 41 balls, but his dismissal by Naib, thanks to an acrobatic catch by Noor Ahmad, all but sealed the fate of the former champions.

"I learnt from the batting in-

nings on how to bowl," added Naib, who also took a low diving catch to dismiss Ashton Agar.

"Thanks to Rashid for trusting me, it's a team effort, Rahmanullah, Zadran and also Naveen for the momentum."

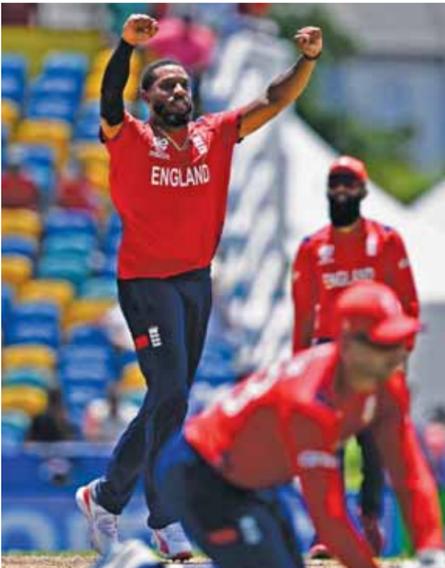
#### BRIEF SCORES

**Afghanistan 148-6 off 20 overs** (Rahmanullah Gurbaz 60, Ibrahim Zadran 51; Pat Cummins 3-28, Adam Zampa 2-28) **vs Australia 127 all out off 19.2 overs** (Glenn Maxwell 59; Gulbadin Naib 4-20, Naveen ul Haq 3-20)

**Toss:** Australia  
**Result:** Afghanistan won by 21 runs

## SPOTLIGHT

## England thrash USA to reach semi-finals in style



England's Chris Jordan celebrates the dismissal of USA's Nosthush Kenjige during the ICC Twenty20 World Cup 2024 Super Eight match at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados, yesterday. **Right:** England's captain and wicketkeeper Jos Buttler hits a four against the USA yesterday. England won by 10 wickets. (AFP)



**AFP**  
Bridgetown, Barbados

**C**hris Jordan took four wickets in five balls, including the third hat-trick of the T20 World Cup, as defending champions England qualified for the semi-finals with a 10-wicket thrashing of the United States in his native Barbados yesterday.

The 35-year-old all-rounder, born and educated on the Caribbean island, justified his recall for this match in spectacular fashion with the remarkable figures of 4-10 in 2.5 overs as the United States were dismissed for 115.

England captain Jos Buttler then led from the front in a blistering chase with an unbeaten 83, featuring five sixes in an over from Harmeet Singh, as his side raced to their target in a mere 9.4 overs.

By winning so quickly, England secured a place in the last four, regardless of the outcome of the final Group Two Super Eights match between co-hosts the West Indies and South Africa in Antigua and any associated net run-rate calculations.

Buttler faced just 38 balls, including six fours and seven sixes, but the day belonged to

Jordan, whose hat-trick was the third of this tournament, with Australia's Pat Cummins achieving the feat against both Bangladesh and Afghanistan, and the first by an England bowler in any men's T20 international.

"Unbelievable feeling, more importantly to restrict USA and to do it in a special place like this is always nice," said Jordan. "Been on a hat-trick a few times, nice to get it on target this time." Buttler added: "I wanted to bring CJ back in to add a little bit of depth to the batting and we know what he is capable of with the ball. He executed it fantastically well, and a World Cup hat-trick is a great effort."

As for his own form, Buttler said: "Personally it's really important I continue this into the semi-finals. I have been feeling good all year, I feel I am hitting the ball well and it is nice to get that confidence."

The United States, one of the surprise packages of the event after defeating Pakistan on their way to the second round, were 115-6 when Jordan came onto bowl the 19th over.

His first ball of the over saw Corey Anderson hit a fast and low full toss to Harry Brook at long-on as the former New Zealand all-rounder fell for 29. Two balls later, paceman Jordan clean bowled Ali Khan for a duck, the

off-stump knocked out of the ground.

Next ball Nosthush Kenjige was plumb lbw and Jordan then completed his hat-trick - and ended the innings - by bowling Saurabh Ne-travalkar between bat and pad to remove the last man's middle stump.

The United States were relatively well-placed at 48-2 at the end of the six-over powerplay. But leg-spinner Adil Rashid then bowled two excellent googlies to dismiss Aaron Jones and Nitish Kumar, whose 30 was the highest score of the innings, in a miserly haul of 2-13. England started their reply knowing victory in 17.4 overs would see them advance to the semi-finals regardless of events elsewhere. Buttler signalled his intentions early on with an extraordinary 104-metre six before Mumbai-born left-arm spinner Singh then felt the full force of his bat.

#### BRIEF SCORES

**United States 115 all out, 18.5 overs** (Nitish Kumar 30, Corey Anderson 29, Harmeet Singh 21; Chris Jordan 4-10, Adil Rashid 2-13, Sam Curran 2-23) **v England 117-0, 9.4 overs** (Jos Buttler 83 not out, Phil Salt 25 not out)

**Toss:** England  
**Result:** England won by 10 wickets

### AFGHANS HAIL 'MASSIVE WIN' OVER AUSTRALIA



Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz hits past Australia's Matthew Wade (left) at Arnos Vale Stadium in Arnos Vale, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines yesterday. (AFP)

**Arnos Vale, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:** Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan described his side's 21-run victory over Australia in the T20 World Cup Super Eight match yesterday as a "massive win for us as a team and as a nation."

The Afghans took advantage of a poor performance in the field from the Australians to post 148-6 in their innings before bowling the 2021 champions out for 127, a result that keeps alive their hopes of qualifying for the semi-finals.

"It's not just like a bilateral game," said Rashid.

"It's a World Cup game, and definitely in a World Cup, you're beating one of the best sides. It's a great achievement."

It was Afghanistan's first ever win over Australia and came a year after Glenn Maxwell had rescued the eventual world champions from defeat in the ODI World Cup in India.

"It means a lot. Beating teams like Australia... it gives the people back home so much hope.

Especially the young generation getting involved in the cricket.

"Cricket is the only source of happiness back home, you all know that. And I feel like we are so lucky to be here giving this happiness to the people back home. As a team we can make them more proud and give them more happiness."

Politics has added some needle to their encounters with Cricket Australia withdrawing from bilateral series because of the "deterioration in human rights" for women and girls in Afghanistan.

"Cricket is the only source of happiness back home," said Rashid.

"That's the only source left in Afghanistan where people could celebrate. And if we keep that source away from us as well, I don't know where Afghanistan will remain."

"Once you take this source and happiness from us as well, I think it's going to be hard for us."

"I don't think cricket is the solution of politics and things like that."

"So, yeah, if we play in World Cup, why don't we play in bilateral series?"

#### Australia 'outplayed'

Australian captain Mitchell Marsh admitted Afghanistan "outplayed us" on a night when his side dropped five catches.

"They're a very good cricket team who play against the best all the time and they have improved a hell of a lot over the last few years," said Marsh.

"We know certainly in these conditions that they are a big danger team. Like I said before, they outplayed us tonight and credit to them."

With one match to play in the Super Eights, Afghanistan and Australia have two points each while India top the group with four.

Afghanistan will face winless Bangladesh in their final game in the Super Eights in Kingstown, St Vincent while Australia, who currently occupy second spot in the group on the basis of run rate, will likely need to beat India in St Lucia to secure a place in the semi-finals.

SPOTLIGHT

# QOC celebrates International Olympic Day

The Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) in co-operation with the Qatar Winter Sports Committee (QWSC) celebrated yesterday the International Olympic Day 2024, which falls on June 23 of each year, the date when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was founded in 1894.

On this occasion, the QOC and QWSC organised the most popular winter sport events for men and women of all ages including figure skating, free skate, ice hockey, short speed skating and curling at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena.

Also, talented ice skaters and amateurs of these winter sports showcased their high technical performance during the event to impress all attendees and guests.

The International Olympic Day event was a big turnout from so-



ciety individuals who enjoyed memorable moments, knew more about values, history of Olympic Movement and the growing role of sport in promoting messages of peace, love and in bringing nations together.

Guests from Palestine attended the International Olympic Day event, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Social Development and Family. They were impressed by the event, its objectives and sportsmanship prevailed between



all. On the sidelines of the event, the QWSC Secretary-General Hassan Hassam al-Hababi honoured the late Qatar ice hockey star, Thawab al-Subaie, with a memorial shield that was received by his mother and brother. The Qatar Olympic Committee through

organising this event aims to encourage different segments of society to adopt ideal healthy lifestyles, to shed light on the importance of the values and principles of the Olympic Movement, and to raise awareness of the importance of sport in Qatar and the world as a

whole. This year's Olympic Day is a very special one, taking place just ahead of Paris 2024. The athletes, the fans and the entire Olympic community around the world are all looking forward to Olympic Games that are younger, more inclusive, more urban, and more sustainable.

TENNIS

# Paul warms up for Wimbledon with Queen's title

The world number 13 to become the new American number one

AFP  
London

Tommy Paul added his name to a list of American tennis greats in winning the Queen's Club tennis title after defeating Lorenzo Musetti 6-1, 7-6 (10/8) in yesterday's final.

Victory gave the fifth-seeded American his third ATP tour title - and biggest success of his career - after he won in straight sets after 88 minutes on court in London.

Paul became the first United States player to win the prestigious Wimbledon warm-up tournament since Sam Querrey in 2010 as he joined a group of former American champions at Queen's, including John McEnroe, Jimmy Connors and Pete Sampras - who all won Wimbledon as well.

"It means everything," said Paul, who knocked out Britain's Jack Draper in the quarter-finals.

"Going through the hallways here in the locker room and the names on the wall, it's unbelievable. It was my goal always to put my name next to them."

The world number 13 will also overtake compatriot Taylor Fritz to become the new American number one, with Wimbledon starting on July 1.

Paul raced through the first set before Italian opponent Musetti worked his way back into the match.

The 27-year-old Paul failed to serve out the match at 5-4 up in the second set before coming back from 1-4 down in the tie-break and saving a set-point at 6-7. Musetti saved two match points behind his own serve before Paul took the third to secure the title.

"This was definitely one of the nicest weeks of my career so far," said Musetti.

"Congratulations to Tommy, he deserved to win. I was struggling to get to his level. I saved face a bit at the end with the break. I was fighting really hard to get to the third set."

The 22-year-old, who became a father to his first child in March, added: "I want to dedicate this week to my little boy Ludovico. I just want to go back and hug him."

## SINNER EDGES HURKACZ TO WIN FIRST GRASS-COURT TITLE IN HALLE

World number one Jannik Sinner won his first ever grass court tournament yesterday beating former champion Hubert Hurkacz 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (7/2) in the Wimbledon warm-up



Tommy Paul of the US celebrates with the trophy after winning the final against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti at Queen's Club Championships in London, yesterday. (Reuters)



Winner Italy's Jannik Sinner (right) and Poland's Hubert Hurkacz pose with their trophies after the singles final of the Halle Open, western Germany, yesterday. (AFP)

ATP Halle tournament. The 22-year-old Italian went to the top of the ATP rankings thanks to his semi-final run at the French Open this month. "It means a lot. It was a tough match against Hubi," said Sinner after playing his doubles partner.

"I knew I had to serve really well and you play only a couple of really important points throughout the whole set.

"So I was happy and I tried to produce in the best possible way in the important moments.

"I'm very happy about this tournament because (winning for) the first time on a grass court, it's a good feeling."

The triumph means Sinner is the first player since Andy Murray in 2016 to win his first tournament after becoming world No 1.

The fifth-seeded Pole Hurkacz, 27, won Halle two years ago and was chasing a second title of the season after winning on clay at Estoril in April.

## PEGULA POWERS TO FIRST GRASS-COURT TITLE IN BERLIN

Jessica Pegula saved five match points against Anna Kalinskaya to win her first title on grass in the Wimbledon warm-up WTA tournament in Berlin yesterday.

Fourth seed Pegula pulled through 6-7 (0/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) after earlier ousting top seed Coco Gauff in the semi-final which had been suspended overnight.

Pegula had been leading fellow American Gauff 7-5, 6-6 (3/1) when semi-final action was halted on Saturday night. She returned to court yesterday morning to win four of five points to oust doubles partner Gauff 7-5, 7-6 (7/2) and reach her first grass-court final.

F1

# Verstappen beats Norris to complete Spanish hat-trick, Hamilton gets first podium of 2024



Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium after winning the Spanish Grand Prix at the Circuit de Catalunya in Montmelo, on the outskirts of Barcelona, yesterday. (AFP)

Reuters  
Melbourne

Max Verstappen won the Spanish Formula One Grand Prix for the third year in a row on yesterday while McLaren's pole-sitter Lando Norris rued a poor start that he said had cost him victory.

The hurt was evident after the Briton finished a mere 2.2 seconds behind Red Bull's triple world champion after 66 laps around Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya on a hot and sunny afternoon.

"I should have won," said the disappointed driver, now Verstappen's closest challenger in a title 'battle' that still looks one-sided despite rivals catching up.

"Not could have. Should have won. I got a bad start. Simple as that. The car was incredible. We were the quickest and I lost it at the beginning. A lot of positives this weekend. One negative and that kind of ruined everything."

Well behind the top two, seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton finished third for his first podium appearance of the season while Mercedes teammate George Russell was overtaken and ended up fourth.

Verstappen extended his championship lead to a hefty 69 points over Norris, who also banked a bonus point for the fastest lap.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was fifth, after taking the chequered flag just 0.3 behind Russell and following a wheel-banging tussle on lap four with team mate Carlos Sainz, who finished sixth in front of his home crowd.

Leclerc said the clash damaged his front wing at a time when he was trying to manage the tyres and he would be having words with the Spaniard, who is making way for Hamilton at the end of the season.

"He is motivated to do something spectacular but I was probably not the right person to do that with," said the Monegasque.

Sainz also took issue with Hamilton after being forced wide by the Briton, but stewards saw no need for action.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri was seventh, Red Bull's Sergio Perez eighth on a three-stop strategy, with Pierre Gasly and Esteban Ocon taking the final points for Renault's under-performing Alpine team.

Norris had beaten Verstappen by 0.020 of a second on Saturday to secure only the second pole of his F1 career but any advantage

slipped through the 24-year-old's fingers as soon as the lights went out.

As Verstappen and Norris battled into the first corner, with the Red Bull squeezed onto the grass in what team boss Christian Horner called "fairly robust racing", Russell rocketed past around the outside from fourth.

Verstappen knew he needed to get past Russell as soon as possible and did so by lap three, allowing him to ease clear and build a buffer.

"I think what made the race was the beginning," he said. "I took the lead ... and made that first stint where I could eke out a gap a little bit."

"After that we had to drive kind of a defensive race. Lando and McLaren were very quick today... I think we did everything well, we drove quite an aggressive strategy but luckily it played out to the end."

Norris did a longer first stint, looking to strategy to help close the gap although a slow first pit-stop cost him precious time, and began to close on Verstappen who was told to push to the end because the McLaren was not saving its tyres.

The win was Verstappen's seventh in 10 races so far this season, and 61st of his career.

He now has 219 points to Norris's haul of 150 and Leclerc's 148 while Red Bull have 330 to Ferrari's 270 with McLaren third on 237.

"Max demonstrated why he is the world champion," said Horner, whose team now look forward to a home race in Austria next weekend. "At the key moments, he delivers."



Third placed Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates on the podium after the Spanish Grand Prix yesterday. (AFP)

## Richardson credits growth in Olympic qualifying

Eugene, Oregon: Sha'Carri Richardson banished painful memories of years past to punch her ticket to the Paris Games on Saturday in the 100 metres, saying she grew both on and off the track to reach the next level of her sport. Richardson won the 100 metres three years ago at the US Olympic trials but was not allowed to compete at the Tokyo Games after testing positive for cannabis, sparking intense debate and outcry among her legions of loyal US fans. Richardson appeared to have put the matter behind her on Saturday in Eugene, Oregon, when she won the US trials in a world-leading 10.71 seconds, sending a message to her rivals around the globe.



"In the past three years I've grown just (a) better understanding of myself, a deeper respect and appreciation for my gift that I have in the sport, and as well as my responsibility to the people that believe and support me," she told reporters. "I feel like all of those components have helped me grow."

The 100 metres world champion got off to wobbly starts in the opening round and in her semi-final race but kept her nerve straight through to the final, where she had wrested the lead midway through the race. She became emotional after crossing the finish and ran to the stands at Hayward Field to hug her grandmother, telling reporters later that she had put in work to "grow into the mature young lady that I am today." Richardson said she did not have a time goal for Paris and would instead focus on running a "well-executed race." "I don't put a time on myself, I just know that if I execute and run the race that I've trained (and) prepared for that the time comes with it," she said.

## SPOTLIGHT

# 'Calm' Kane rounds on England's critics

AFP  
Blankenhain, Germany

England captain Harry Kane said there was no need to panic over the Three Lions' slow start to Euro 2024 as he rounded on critics back home over their performances in Germany.

Gareth Southgate's men have taken four points from their opening two games, but have not lived up to their billing as pre-tournament favourites.

Kane scored in Thursday's disappointing 1-1 draw against Denmark after an edgy 1-0 win over Serbia.

"We are calm. We have been here before. We've got a lot of experience, so it's not a time to panic," Kane told reporters yesterday.

"I think always in these tournaments, especially these early stages, is almost like a boxer in the first couple of rounds trying to see where everyone is at, or a golfer in the first round of a major - don't

play yourself out of tournament. That's kind of where we're at."

Victory against Slovenia tomorrow will ensure that England top Group C and avoid a potential last 16 clash with Germany.

"If, before the tournament you'd have said we are where we are now, nearly qualified, we would have taken it for sure," added Kane.

"But we can be honest with ourselves that we haven't played the way we want to play

"Tuesday is important for the feeling of the group, we want to finish top and take the momentum into the knockout stages and just all round have a better feeling coming off the pitch to take that into the rest of the tournament."

Kane was on the end of a barrage of personal criticism from former England strikers Gary Lineker and Alan Shearer as England's performance against Denmark was lambasted in the media.

England have not won a major men's tournament since the 1966 World Cup and produced their

best ever performance at the Euros three years ago when they lost the final on penalties to Italy.

Kane said he understood pundits have to give their opinions but called for some perspective from former players.

"The bottom line is we're trying to achieve something that as an England team we've never achieved in our history, so it's very tough," added the Bayern Munich striker.

"What ex-players who are pundits now have got to realise is that it's very hard not to listen to it now, especially for some players who are not used to it or some players who are new to the environment.

"The bottom line is we haven't won anything as a nation for a long, long time and a lot of these players were part of that as well, and they know how tough it is.

"It is not digging anyone out, it is just the reality that they know it's tough to play in these major tournaments and tough to play for England."



England's forward Harry Kane plays darts at their base camp in Blankenhain, Germany, yesterday. (AFP)

## COPA AMERICA

# Super subs provide Venezuela win over 10-man Ecuador

Mexico edge Jamaica to make winning start to their campaign

AFP  
Santa Clara, United States

Goals from substitutes Jhonder Cadiz and Eduard Bello gave Venezuela a 2-1 win over 10-man Ecuador in their Copa America Group B match on Saturday.

In the group's other game, Mexico made a winning start to their campaign with a 1-0 victory over Jamaica in Houston but lost their captain Edson Alvarez to injury.

Ecuador were forced to play with 10 men from the 22nd minute of the game at Levi Stadium when striker Enner Valencia was sent off for dangerous play. The 34-year-old forward struck the chest of Venezuela defender Jose Martinez with his boot while challenging for a high, bouncing ball in the box and was initially awarded a yellow card but after a VAR review he was shown a straight red.

Ecuador, which had been in control of the game before the dismissal, responded well and went ahead in the 40th minute when Venezuela failed to clear a free-kick into the box and Jeremy Sarmiento pounced on the loose ball to drill home. Venezuela head coach Fernando Batista made two changes at the break, bringing on Cadiz and Bello and both were to make a decisive impact.

"Vinotinto" striker Salomon Rondon laid the ball off to Cadiz, whose low side-footed shot from the edge of the box took a slight deflection as it flashed past Ecuador keeper Alexander Dominguez.

Then, in the 74th minute, Alexander Gonzalez whipped in a cross from the right, met with a diving header from Rondon which was parried by Dominguez but Bello reacted to fire home the loose ball.



Jhonder Cadiz of Venezuela celebrates after scoring the team's second goal during the CONMEBOL Copa America 2024 Group B match against Ecuador at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California. (AFP)

"To be able to score a goal, which helped in the victory, and to have contributed to the first goal, is a joy. These three points are very important for what's to come," said a delighted Bello.

Ecuador's Spanish coach Felix Sanchez said the red card for Valencia had forced him to change the team's approach. "We had to change the plan, wait a bit behind the opposition. It's clear that when you play with 10 men you are at the mercy of the opposition for many minutes, even if you don't want to play that way," he said.

"Obviously it's not the dream start, but there are two more games left and we have the team to compete. The most important thing is that the team recovers its spirit for what is to come."

**ARTEAGA GOAL LIFTS MEXICO**  
Mexico laboured for long stretches against Jamaica before a superbly struck 69th minute goal from

Gerardo Arteaga earned them the three points.

Jaime Lozano's team suffered a major blow when their skipper, West Ham midfielder Alvarez had to go off in the 29th minute after going down without contact.

"El Tri" struggled to create opportunities in the opening half with their best effort, a curling shot just wide from Luis Romo, just before the break.

Jamaica thought they had the lead in the 50th minute but Michail Antonio's diving header was ruled out for offside after a VAR review. That let-off woke up the Mexicans who pushed forward with greater purpose. Luis Chavez forced a good save out of Jamaica keeper Jahmali Waite and Julian Quinones fired over the bar after cutting in from the left.

Waite was alert again to keep out a Santiago Gimenez near post blast as the pressure built and finally Mexico got the breakthrough

when the ball fell to Arteaga on the edge of the box and he blasted a perfectly struck half-volley into the far corner.

Jamaica had one last opportunity to salvage a point but Dexter Lembikisa's low shot was turned round the post by Mexico keeper Julio Gonzalez.

Arteaga said the disallowed goal had given Mexico the impetus to go on and win the game.

"A goal, whether for or against, changes your mood a lot. And seeing that it had been disallowed, that also lifted us a little bit more to keep insisting and looking for the goal ourselves," the left-back told TUDN. Mexico face Venezuela on Wednesday in Los Angeles with Jamaica up against Ecuador on the same day in Las Vegas.

"We know there's not going to be an easy opponent. Thank God we won against Jamaica and now we want to go for another win," said Arteaga.

## EURO 2024

# 'Italy do not fear Croatia ahead of crunch match'

AFP  
Leipzig, Germany

Italy will have no fear when they face Croatia today as they attempt to keep their European Championship title defence alive, said defender Alessandro Bastoni.

Luciano Spalletti's side need to avoid defeat against the 2022 World Cup semi-finalists to secure a top-two finish in Group B and reach the last 16.

Croatia probably need a win in Leipzig if they are to progress to the knockout phase.

"You don't feel fear in football, you feel fear when you're diagnosed with an illness, not in football," Bastoni told a pre-match press conference yesterday.

"We don't have fear for Croatia, we have respect for them."

Italy could be eliminated from the tournament in the group stage for the first time since 2004 today if they lose and Albania beat Spain in the other closing group match.

Even if Spain avoid a shock defeat, a loss would leave Italy facing a nervous wait to find out if they go through as one of the best third-placed teams.

The Azzurri were surprisingly flat in a 1-0 loss to Spain last time out, mustering only one shot on target in a one-sided

match. Spalletti said he would make changes to the starting XI which struggled earlier this week.

"After a game like that there is the notion and there's an idea to change the team a little bit," said the former Napoli boss, whose side are on three points after starting their campaign with a 2-1 win over Albania.

"I probably made mistakes in not mixing things up quicker in terms of the performance we produced but I thought it would've been a gamble to tweak anything.

"Now that we've noticed that there's a bit of fatigue, there's a bit of rust, we certainly will change certain things."

Italy have a more inexperienced squad than when they won Euro 2020, with only six of the 17 players who featured in the final triumph over England three years ago in the squad for the tournament in Germany.

"Despite the fact that many of them are young players and they're involved in an extreme match like this for the first time, I think I've seen the right conduct in terms of going out there to put things right and to show we've learnt a lesson as well," insisted Spalletti.

"We said certain things we weren't able to exhibit against Spain, so we need to walk the walk and leave talk to one side."

## FOCUS

# Albania's Daku gets 2-game ban for offensive chants

Agencies  
Berlin

European soccer's governing body UEFA suspended Albania forward Mirlind Daku for two games yesterday after he led Albanian fans in a round of offensive chants about Serbia and North Macedonia at Euro 2024.

Rows are proliferating at the tournament over insults relating to longstanding political and ethnic tensions in the Balkans region. Daku has apologised for joining in the chanting of slogans against the two countries with a megaphone after his side's 2-2 draw with Croatia on Wednesday in Hamburg.

UEFA said his actions violated the rules of decent conduct and brought football into disrepute.

Kosovo-born Daku, who represented his homeland before switching to Albania in 2023, will miss Albania's final Group B game against Spain today in Duesseldorf, with a spot in the last 16 still within reach.

Albania are in third in the group on one point.

Albania's football federation in a statement issued an "appeal

to all Albanian fans to be more responsible and avoid the creation of these totally avoidable incidents and riots."

UEFA fined Albania €47,500 on three different charges, including transmitting provocative messages not fit for a sports event. Croatia are facing a €28,000 fine for the lighting and throwing of fireworks by their fans. UEFA said it was still investigating potential racist and/or discriminatory conduct by fans at the match.

Serbia had threatened to withdraw from the tournament over the chanting by Croatia and Albania fans at their match.

Part of the controversy centres on Albanian-majority Kosovo, whose independence Serbia does not accept, while the Western Balkans is also riven by a web of historical grievances and trauma after wars following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

Last week UEFA cancelled the media credentials of Kosovar journalist Arlind Sadiku after complaints about a Albanian nationalist gesture he made towards Serbia fans during their game against England on Sunday in Gelsenkirchen.

## Euro 2024 security bulked after pitch invaders aim for Ronaldo selfies

UEFA will increase security during the rest of Euro 2024 after several pitch invaders attempted to take selfies with Portugal's star striker Cristiano Ronaldo. The 39-year-old forward posed for a photo with a young boy during the 3-0 win over Turkiye in Group F on Saturday in Dortmund, but grew exasperated as at least five more fans attempted to do the same. "Safety and security in the stadium, on the pitch and at team facilities are the ultimate priority for UEFA," the European football governing body told AFP yesterday. "To this end, additional safety measures will be deployed in the stadiums to further meet the requirements of the tournament, and to prevent such incidents."

One security guard crashed into Paris Saint-Germain striker Goncalo Ramos while trying to stop a pitch invader reaching Ronaldo. Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said it was lucky that the supporters who ran on to the pitch were only trying to take photographs. "It is a concern because today we were lucky that the intentions of the fans were good," said Martinez.

"It is a very difficult moment if those intentions are wrong... probably we should give a message to the fans that it is not the right way." UEFA said any spectators entering the field of play will be thrown out of the stadium, be banned for further matches and face "the filing of a formal criminal complaint for trespass". Portugal qualified for the last 16 with their comfortable win over Turkiye as Group F winners.

## GETTING READY



France's forward Kylian Mbappe kicks the ball during a training session at the Home Deluxe Arena Stadium in Paderborn, western Germany, yesterday. France will take on Poland in their Euro 2024 group match tomorrow. (AFP)