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SENSATIONAL SIBLINGS



SABALLY SISTERS LEAD DEBUTANTES GERMANY TO DREAM WIN

WNBA dynamic duo Nyara and Satou Sabally got Germany off to a smashing start at their Olympic debut on yesterday, scoring a combined 33 points to help beat world champion Belgium 83-69 in the second Group C match at the Pierre Mauroy stadium. Satou who plays for the Dallas Wings, was ecstatic to share the dream win with her younger sister. "It feels great, I love playing with her and I'm happy she's such a great player," the forward said. Daughters of a Gambian father and German mother, the pair were born in the United States before moving to Berlin, where Satou was scouted by a coach because of her height.

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GULF TIMES

SPORT



QATAR ROUND-UP

Qatar’s Cherif, Ahmed shock World No. 1 pair to enter last 16

Tokyo Games bronze medallists comeback from a set down to beat Sweden’s Ahman and Hellvig



Qatar’s Cherif Younousse spikes the ball as Sweden’s Jonatan Hellvig attempts a block during the pool A beach volleyball match at the Paris Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar’s beach volleyball pair Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan became the first team to reach the last 16 of the Paris Olympics after a stunning win over World No 1 David Ahman and Jonatan Hellvig of Sweden yesterday.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medalists mounted a stunning comeback from a set down to push the match deep into the overtime of a tie-breaker set and eventually close the game at 2-1 (15-21, 21-19, 20-18) with a serving ace for the match winner. The 13th seed Cherif and Ahmed outplayed their opponents mostly in spiking and serving, but also took advantage of the unforced errors the Swedes made at key moments of the match.

Cherif was the best scorer of the match with an impressive 36-point contribution to the victory. His tally included five aces and four kill blocks. Meanwhile, Hellvig raised as many as eight kill blocks to finish with 29 points, but his team suffered their first defeat of the tournament.

“It was a really tough game. They have been playing really well and haven’t lost a single game over the last couple of tournaments, so it was a very challenging game,” Cherif said.

“We were ready for a long fight, because every single point was going to be very tough. We played very well in the second and the third sets. Even after having a bad start, we never gave up and tried to enjoy every single point and every single action with this amazing crowd. But our job is not finished and we have to go back to work after tomorrow. We’ll try to finish the pool strong and then get back to the big fight, because the knockout rounds are going to be very intense.”

“I am feeling really good. I am feeling happy and at the same time I am really tired, because to win against this team you have to get tired,” Ahmed added. “It was not an easy game and took a lot of energy. But we are going to rest tomorrow and be ready for the next game.”



Qatar’s Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan celebrate after winning a point.



Qatar’s shooter Saeed Abusharib in action during the trap qualification.

In the other Pool A match, 12th-seeded Samuele Cottafava and Paolo Nicolai of Italy achieved their first win, a 2-0 (21-19, 21-18) shutout of bottom-seeded Australians Mark Nicolaidis and Izac Carracher.

Cherif and Ahmed are top of the current

pool standings on a 2-0 win-loss record. They will conclude their group stage meeting against Australia’s Izac Carracher and Mark Nicolaidis on Thursday.

Ahman and Hellvig and Cottafava and Nicolai are second and third on 1-1 each and will engage in direct battle with each other for the second spot among the top two teams in the final Pool A table on Thursday.

ABUSHARIB AT 22ND SPOT AFTER THREE ROUNDS

At the Chateauroux Shooting Centre, Qatari shooter Saeed Abusharib was placed in the 22nd position in the men’s trap qualification after three rounds. With two more rounds to be held today, Abusharib shot 24, 22 and 24 for a total score of 70. The top six shooters will advance to the medal round which will take place today evening.

Abusharib, who qualified for Olympics by winning the silver medal at the Asian Shooting Championships in Changwon, South Korea, is one of the two Qatari shooters in Paris.

His compatriot, Rashid Saleh al-Athba, who booked his ticket to Paris by winning bronze at the World Championships in 2022, will compete in the qualifying round in skeet shooting on August 2.

SWIMMING

O’Callaghan stuns Titmus for 200m freestyle gold

AFP
Paris

Rising star Mollie O’Callaghan upstaged fellow Australian Ariarne Titmus to clinch the Olympic 200m freestyle gold yesterday as Canadian prodigy Summer McIntosh blitzed the field to be crowned 400m medley champion.

On a bumper night of medal action at La Defense Arena, Romanian teenager David Popovici won a frantic men’s 200m freestyle and Italy’s Thomas Ceccon the 100m backstroke. South Africa’s Tatjana Smith rounded out a golden evening with a thrilling victory in the women’s 100m breaststroke. O’Callaghan is known for her dynamic finishing power and that came to the fore once again. Hong Kong’s Siobhan Haughey led through 150 metres with Titmus on her heels before O’Callaghan turned on the afterburners to bring it home in an Olympic record 1:53.27.

Defending champion and world record holder Titmus, who won the 400m title on Saturday, was second in 1:53.81 and Haughey third. “It’s such an honour to be with everyone, and compete against Arnie. She races like an absolute beast,” said O’Callaghan, who shares the same coach as Titmus. “It’s an honour to train alongside her and have such a great team around us.”

It was the 20-year-old’s fourth Olympic gold medal, but her first in an individual event after making her mark as a relay swimmer in Tokyo. Since then she has blossomed, winning the 100m and 200m at the 2023 world championships and smash-



Mollie O’Callaghan of Australia reacts after winning the women’s 200m freestyle final at the Paris Olympic Games at the Paris La Defense Arena in Nanterre, France. (Reuters)

ing Italian great Federica Pellegrini’s 14-year-old 200m world record before Titmus took it away in June.

McIntosh also burnished her already glowing reputation with a dominant 400m medley. The 17-year-old world record holder powered to the wall in 4:27.71 – the fourth-fastest time ever – to outpace American pair Katie Grimes (4:33.40) and Emma Weyant (4:34.93). It was the Toronto swimmer’s second Paris medal after taking silver be-

hind Titmus in the 400m free. She is also favourite in the 200 medley and a serious contender in the 200m butterfly as she hovers on the edge of superstardom.

McIntosh, who made her Olympic debut in Tokyo as a 14-year-old, lowered her own world record in May when she clocked 4:24.38 and was always in charge. “Very happy to get the job done, to stand on top of the podium and get the gold medal,” she said. “I’m really just trying to soak up every single moment. “I mean, it’s always just

about having fun, and pushing my body to its limits,” she added.

Popovici made no mistake in the 200m freestyle, winning by a fingertip from Britain’s Matthew Richards. He had to work hard with Germany’s Lukas Maertens, the 400m champion, surging through the opening 150 metres in front. But the Romanian came home hard to touch in 1:44.72, just 0.02 ahead of Richards with American Luke Hobson third and Maertens fading to fifth.

“It’s beautiful, and it’s a dream come true,” said Popovici, who burst on the scene by winning the 100/200m freestyle double at the 2022 world championship. “I don’t think words can describe it. It’s so simple yet so beautiful.”

Smith went one better than her Tokyo silver in winning the women’s 100m breaststroke final, finishing strongly to pip China’s Tang Qianting and Ireland’s Mona McSharry. American world record holder Lilly King was fifth.

Italian world record holder Thomas Ceccon proved too strong in the men’s 100m backstroke, reeling in China’s Xu Jiayu to hit the wall first in 52.00. Xu was second and American Ryan Murphy, the Rio gold medallist, third. In semi-final action, Regan Smith seized a narrow edge over Kaylee McKeown in their fierce battle for the Olympic backstroke gold medals.

The pair have a storied rivalry that has ebbed and flowed, with world records changing hands between them. American world record holder Smith progressed to the 100m final in 57.97 with Australian defending champion McKeown just 0.02 behind. Fellow American Katharine Berkoff was third fastest ahead of Australia’s Iona Anderson.

MEDALS TALLY				
TEAMS	G	S	B	T
Japan	6	2	4	12
France	5	8	3	16
China	5	5	2	12
Australia	5	4	0	9
South Korea	5	3	1	9
United States	3	8	9	20
Britain	2	5	3	10
Italy	2	3	3	8
Canada	2	1	2	5
Hong Kong	2	0	1	3
Germany	2	0	0	2
South Africa	1	0	2	3
Kazakhstan	1	0	2	3
Belgium	1	0	1	2
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	1
Uzbekistan	1	0	0	1
Romania	1	0	0	1
Brazil	0	1	2	3
Sweden	0	1	2	3
Fiji	0	1	0	1
Kosovo	0	1	0	1
Mongolia	0	1	0	1
Poland	0	1	0	1
Tunisia	0	1	0	1
Moldova	0	0	2	2
Croatia	0	0	1	1
Egypt	0	0	1	1
Spain	0	0	1	1
Hungary	0	0	1	1
India	0	0	1	1
Ireland	0	0	1	1
Mexico	0	0	1	1
Slovakia	0	0	1	1
Switzerland	0	0	1	1
Turkey	0	0	1	1
Ukraine	0	0	1	1
G- Gold, S- Silver, B- Bronze, T- Total				

SPOTLIGHT

Pidcock shines to retain mountain bike gold medal

French fans boo the winner as Britain pick up another top finish



Britain's Thomas Pidcock lifts his bicycle as he celebrates his gold medal victory after winning the men's cross-country mountain biking event during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Elancourt Hill venue in Elancourt, yesterday. (AFP)

Reuters
Elancourt, France

Britain's Tom Pidcock roared back after suffering a puncture to retain his Olympic men's mountain bike title following a thrilling battle with France's Victor Koretzky yesterday.

The 24-year-old world champion needed all his renowned bike handling skills to first claw back a 40-second deficit and then hold off Koretzky in a barnstorming last-lap battle through the trees and rocks of the 4.4km Elancourt Hill circuit.

As they went wheel-to-wheel down a narrow descent, Pidcock chose a more aggressive line through the trees and the two riders almost came together with Koretzky losing momentum.

That proved pivotal as Pidcock powered to victory in an epic race by nine seconds, although boos rang out from the partisan French crowd as he crossed the line ahead of the Frenchman.



Alan Hatherly took the bronze in what was South Africa's first Olympic cycling medal since the country's re-admission.

"It's a shame (about the boos) because that's not really the spirit of the Olympics, but I do also understand, they're a passionate French crowd," an exhausted Pidcock said after a race run in sweltering heat.

"But you know, they didn't boo the rock that gave me a puncture did they," he said, referring to the misfortune he suffered on lap four. Asked about the last-lap manoeuvre that almost certainly won him the race, Pidcock said. "I did nothing wrong. He could have also gone left (around the tree) and I would have had to go right. In this position you don't hesitate.

"The gap was there, so I was going."

Sunday's women's race was won in processional fashion by a dominant Pauline Ferrand-Prevot, sparking long and loud celebrations from the home crowd.

Around 15,000 fans clambered all across a sun-baked circuit in the hills near Versailles again yesterday, hoping to witness more French gold. But Pidcock broke their hearts.

"When he came back I knew I could beat him because he made a big effort to close the gap. Unfortunately, I was a little careless in the descent," Koretzky said. "He was very strong, he really is a great champion, but I think I could have beaten him today."

Road professional Pidcock, who abandoned this year's Tour de France because of Covid, looked menacing as he attacked on lap three and only Koretzky could hold his wheel.

But calamity struck the Yorkshireman when his front tyre was punctured and he needed a pit stop to change a wheel - Pidcock casually sipping from his water bottle as the mechanics frantically went about their work.

Once back in the race, Pidcock was well down but never panicked and relentlessly sliced into the deficit, before hitting the front on lap seven with Koretzky apparently tiring.

But the Frenchman was not done and he and Hatherly stayed with Pidcock as the bell signalled the final tumultuous lap. Huge roars erupted when Koretzky attacked first and gapped Pidcock but the Briton again responded before making his audacious move through the trees.

EQUESTRIAN

Germany's Jung wins eventing as Australian underdog steals show



Australia's silver medallist Christopher Burton, Germany's gold winner Michael Jung and Britain's rider Laura Collett with bronze celebrate on the podium during the victory ceremony of the equestrian individual jumping at the Chateau de Versailles yesterday. (AFP)

Reuters
Versailles, France

German eventing rider Michael Jung won his fourth Olympic gold medal yesterday after beating his main challengers Christopher Burton from Australia and Briton Laura Collett in the final showjumping contest.

Jung, riding on his bay Hanover gelding Chipmunk, won the three-day competition combining dressage, cross-country and showjumping with a final score of 21.8 penalty points, ahead of Burton with 22.4 and Collett with 23.1.

All three had perfect rides incurring no additional penalties during the last jumpoff.

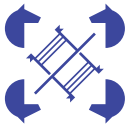
Securing his third individual Olympics win after London 2012 and Rio 2016, Jung managed to follow up on an outstanding dressage score on Saturday with a perfectly timed cross-country ride and two flawless jumping performances the following days.

The Versailles medal was the first Jung has won with Chipmunk, a horse the Bavarian took over in 2019 from fellow German Olympian Julia Krajewski, who finished 11th, with the help of his financial backers.

"I know him, he knows me; we mastered it together," Jung, who is often described as the discipline's greatest by his eventing peers, told journalists, the gold medal dangle around his neck.

Jung earlier said he would "coddle and pamper" his partner ahead of the jumping final with a good portion of carrots.

While the German was seen as the main favourite for the title, Australian underdog Burton, ranked 151 internationally, shocked



the crowd by beating most of the sport's heavyweights on Shadow Man, a horse with no notable international track record.

"I spotted him years ago. I always knew he was that good, I tried twice to buy him," Burton, who ended up leasing the chestnut gelding from a colleague, told journalists, adding:

"Isn't he a machine, isn't he a delight... I honestly can't believe it."

The silver was his first individual Olympic medal, after he won team bronze in Rio 2016.

Briton Laura Collett on Saturday had set a new Olympic eventing dressage record with London 52 who she said was the horse of her lifetime, but she was unable to defend the top spot throughout the competition.

Collett's fellow British riders Ros Canter and Tom McEwen - who were also seen as top tickets for individual medals - also failed to reach the podium although they together won the nations' competition.



Germany's Michael Jung with Chipmunk FRH competes in the equestrian individual jumping in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

ATHLETICS

Lyles is struggling for quiet time in village due to SPRINT popularity

Reuters
Paris

While six-times world champion Noah Lyles' brash, showman side was on display in the popular Netflix docuseries *SPRINT*, there is a softer, more vulnerable aspect to the 27-year-old American who needs to have his own space.

The show's popularity, however, has made life in the Olympic Village miserable for Lyles, one of the Paris Games' most visible athletes.

"Apparently the world loves *SPRINT* and athletes do too, and I've become kind of popular in the village," Lyles said at the US athletics team's press conference yesterday. "Unfortunately that has come with its own set of challenges. I'm not even the most popular person in the village, so I know I'm not the only one who's had to deal with this.

"Even though some might be superstars in your eyes, we still are human beings, and we do want to be able to have our space and our time," he added.

"I'm trying to prepare and dive deep into my mental state. I was talking with my therapist, trying to figure out ways to better seclude myself. I've been eating at very random times in the back of the cafeteria, to have my space with me and my girlfriend (Jamaica sprinter Junelle Bromfield)."

Strategically released ahead of the Olympics on July 2, *SPRINT*



FROM LEFT: American athletes Katie Moon, Ryan Crouser, Tara Davis-Woodhall, Noah Lyles and Grant Holloway attend a press conference during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

follows several of the world's best sprinters for a year, and was the sixth most watched show on Netflix worldwide in its first week with 2.4 million views.

Its climax was the 2023 World Championships where Lyles blazed to three gold medals. The world will be watching again as the American tries to match that feat in Paris.

Lyles, who revealed he has three therapists - everyday, sports and grief - was considered the man to beat in the 200 metres at the 2020 Tokyo Games, but wound up third.

He said his psychological approach to the pandemic-affected Games - which meant no crowds to cheer Lyles on - was all wrong. Struggling with depression, he tried to bury his emotions and treat the Olympics as just another meet.

"That mindset of 'it's just another competition' was definitely ringing in my mind, trying to get through this depression. I was just like, 'You do this every day, you got this!'" said Lyles.

"(But) I'm an emotional person. And when I got to the finals and we walked into that empty stadium, I remember we're all standing behind our blocks, that's usually the moment when in my head I'm like, 'it's showtime!' and I just remember thinking 'This is not it. This is not fun. This is not cool. This is not what I wanted!'"

"That was literally the last few thoughts I had as I got into the blocks, and it sucked."

Lyles' approach to Paris has been about soaking it all in and living in the moment. Wearing a US team hat, he flipped up the brim to reveal the words: "You made it."

CANADA'S DEGUCHI AND HEYDAROV OF AZERBAIJAN WIN JUDO GOLD

PARIS: Christa Deguchi won the women's under 57kg gold to hand Canada its first ever Olympic judo title yesterday before Hidayat Heydarov of Azerbaijan disappointed a partisan crowd by triumphing in the men's under 73kg final at the Paris Games.

Reigning world champion Heydarov edged French underdog Joan-Benjamin Gaba with a golden score ippoun in a marathon final that lasted nine minutes and 24 seconds at Champ-de-Mars Arena.

Heydarov, who earned Azerbaijan its first gold medal of the Games, tried multiple times to catch his breath as the bout wore on and planted a kiss on his opponent's forehead after celebrating victory. "He did everything to win, I just wanted to show him my respect," said the Kazakhstan-born 27-year-old.

Heydarov, who has now won the Olympic, world and European titles in the space of four months, also announced that he would defend his title in Los Angeles in 2028.

Gaba, ranked 35th in the world and competing in his first Olympics, surprised everyone by fighting his way into the final after defeating London 2012 under-66kg gold medallist Lasha Shavdatuashvili in the round of 32.

After he was finally bowled over by Heydarov, Gaba shared a moment with his family, hugging his brother for a while.

"I have a lot of respect for my opponent in the final, he is very strong and I congratulate him for his victory but I am going back to work in order to win gold in Los Angeles," said Gaba.

France is still waiting for a first gold medal in the Paris judo competition.

Sarah-Leonie Cysique added a bronze medal to the host nation's haul of five medals at Champ-de-Mars Arena after losing to Deguchi in the semi-final.

In the final, Deguchi took out Huh Mi-mi after the South Korean was penalised for a third time.

Deguchi, the 2019 world champion, failed to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics after losing in the semi-finals at the 2021 World Championships.

"Missing Tokyo, these three years felt so long... I am very happy to bring back the medal and to be honest, to begin with, any colour was fine but winning



Azerbaijan's Hidayat Heydarov reacts after beating France's Joan-Benjamin Gaba in the judo men's -73kg gold medal bout of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Champ-de-Mars Arena, in Paris yesterday. (AFP)



the gold is very special," said the 28-year-old. Huh and Canadian Deguchi were both born in Japan. Deguchi, whose mother is Japanese, competed for Japan until 2014, while Huh made the decision to compete for South Korea following the wish of her late grandmother, who was part of Japan's large Korean community.

"She has always been important to me, so I personally believed in her and I really looked up to her and that's why I chose to be a Korean national," Huh later told a press conference.

Japan was well represented on the podium as Haruka Funakubo claimed the bronze medal in the class, the 100th medal won by the country in Olympic judo.

Her compatriot Soichi Hashimoto later won another bronze for Japan in the men's under 73kg class. Osmanov Adil of Moldova won the other bronze medal final.

HORSE RACING

Qatar Goodwood Festival gets underway today

DOHA TRIPLE CROWN WINNER AL GHADEER CARRIES AL SHAQAB RACING’S HOPES

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Qatar Goodwood Festival 2024 gets underway at the Goodwood Racecourse for a tenth straight year in Chichester, UK, today. One of the midsummer highlights of the British horse racing calendar, patronised by Qatar and represented by Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC) will attract audiences till August 3.

Affectionately known as ‘Glorious Goodwood’, the world-famous festival brings plenty of festivities alongside top quality flat racing, with highlights including Goodwood Cup Day, Sussex Stakes Day and Ladies’ Day during the next five days. 37 races take place over the five-day festival, with the undoubted highlights including the Sussex Stakes and both the Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup and the Nassau Stakes.

All arrangements related to the festival have been completed through continuous co-ordination between the QREC management, led by Issa bin Mohamed al-Mohannadi, and the Goodwood management, who pay great attention to the festival – one renewal after another, given the level it has reached and the large numbers of racegoers both from the UK and the neighbouring countries, who are keen to be part of the festival. In addition, the sponsors, “partners in success,” with QREC play a prominent role by contributing to the success of this event every year.

The Festival kicks off today with eight races, featuring the Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup (British Champions Series). The Gr1 for three-year-olds and older over 3200m is considered as one of the



Qatar Goodwood Festival will be held at the Goodwood Racecourse for a tenth straight year in Chichester, UK.

best races in the world for stayers. Tomorrow the focus will be on the Qatar International Stakes, a Gr1 for four-year-old and older purebred Arabians over 1600m. Qatari owners look forward to continuing to excel in this race. The day will also see the Gr1 Qatar Sussex Stakes (British Champions Series) over 1600m.

On Thursday, there will be eight races as well, featuring the Gr1 Qatar Nassau Stakes (British Champions Series), a Gr1 over 2000m. Friday features the Mar- kel Magnolia Cup over 1100m and the King George Qatar Stakes, a Gr2 sprint over 1000m. On Saturday, the fifth and final day of the festival, there will be eight races and the feature will be the Qatar Lillie Langtry Stakes, a Gr2 for fillies and mares over 2800m.

ENHANCING ARABIAN RACING

The Qatari sponsorship of the festival has contributed to enhancing the status and standard of Qatar’s equestrian sport in the UK and worldwide. This sponsorship has also contributed to making the festival reach new horizons, as it has become a meeting place for the best horse racing stars in the world, and has also turned into a global celebration of this sport due to the diversity of categories of the large numbers of spectators who are keen to attend the festival. Among the most important gains that the QREC has obtained through sponsoring the Qatar Goodwood Festival is the staging of a group one race for purebred Arabians, which is not common at Europe’s top racecourses. Therefore, it was a wonderful

addition to stage the Gr1 Qatar International Stakes for purebred Arabians on the second day of the festival every year. This is in line with Qatar’s goal of promoting Arabian horses and racing being a major part of Qatar’s heritage and equestrian sport. It represents a milestone in the history of horse racing at Goodwood Racecourse and the UK and is also the first round of the Doha Triple Crown, which was launched by Qatar 10 years ago in conjunction with the first edition of the Qatar Goodwood Festival with the aim of enhancing the value of Arabian racing in Europe.

PARTICIPATION OF SPONSORS AND EVENTS

Besides, Qatar’s sponsorship of the festival has contributed to

promoting Qatar as a destination for global sports and to marketing Qatar’s public and private companies in the country, such as the national carrier Qatar Airways, which is one of the participating sponsors of the festival.

In the previous renewals, several national companies benefited from the festival in marketing their products, such as QatarEnergy, Aspire Katara Hospitality, Qatar Tourism, Visit Qatar, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Education Above All, and other Qatari companies with the aim of promoting them during the festival.

Several diverse events are scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the festival through QREC and the participating sponsors, whom QREC considers partners

in success in this major sporting event. Among the events, Qatar Airways is participating through Qverse – a novel virtual reality (VR) experience for visitors to the airline’s website – a captivating virtual tour of the products and services of the best airline in the world ever, guided by “Sama”, the first hospitality crew from Meta-Human. There will also be a live cooking station by Chef Nouf al-Marri, showcasing the excellence of Qatari cooking.

START OF DOHA TRIPLE CROWN ROUNDS

The Qatar International Stakes (Gr1 PA) for four-year-old and older pure Arabians over a distance of 1600m is expected to be very thrilling with top horses in the fray.

It is the first round of the Triple Crown for Arabian horses while the second, the Gr1 Qatar Arabian World Cup, will be on the Qatar Prix de l’Arc de Triomphe day at ParisLongchamp in the first week-end of October and the third and final, the Gr1 HH The Amir Sword, will be at Al Rayyan in Doha on the final day of the HH The Amir Sword Festival in February.

Nine horses have been declared to run including: the big favourite and title holder Al Ghadeer, who is owned by Al Shaqab Racing, as are Al Wakrah and Afjan; Fareedhat El Izz for Al Nujaifi Racing Ltd; Ska de l’Aigle, the representative of Abdullah bin Fahad AH al-Attiah; Al Zeer owned by Mohamed bin Fahad AH al-Attiah ridden by Maxime Guyon; Winds of Fortune and Upstart Crown presented by James Owen and Abiyah Athbah for Dilmun Racing.

Ebraz was the first ever to land the Doha Triple Crown in 2020 and Al Ghadeer achieved the same legendary feat earlier this year.

HOCKEY

Harmanpreet strikes again to save India, Dutch women win

Paris
Reuters

India skipper Harmanpreet Singh scored a late goal for the second game in a row to force a 1-1 draw with Argentina in Pool B of the men’s hockey at the Paris Olympics yesterday, while the Dutch women came from behind to top Germany 2-1 in Pool A.

A determined German team put the top ranked Dutch squad on their heels with a third quarter strike after dominating time of possession, but a set piece goal by Dutch forward Yibbi Jansen quickly followed, with Marijn Veen netting the winner just four minutes later.

“We were 1-0 down, so we really had to score. I think we got loose with the nerves, and we just put pressure higher on the field,” said

Yibbi, the current top women’s goal scorer with five goals from penalty corners. “Germany definitely challenged us today, and we will have challenges in the upcoming games as well. Nobody said it was going to be an easy ride. Every game is a challenge.”

In the men’s games, Indian dragflick specialist Harmanpreet struck in the penultimate minute of India’s second game to level the score against Argentina, matching his heroics from Saturday when he netted a late winner against New Zealand with a penalty stroke.

“I think we create so many chances, we are going into the circle and getting some good pieces but the finishing was not there today,” Harmanpreet said.

Belgium, defending Olympic champions, and Australia top the men’s Pool B after the Kookaburras’ earlier 2-1 win over Ireland.

India are in third place with four points, Argentina are fourth with a single point. The top four from each group go through to the quarter-finals.

The Dutch women, gold medalists in Tokyo, top Pool A with Belgium after The Red Panthers beat hosts France 5-0 in the other evening game, while China also ran up the score against Japan with a 5-0 win for a third place tie with Germany.

Argentina’s women’s squad came back twice from a goal down to beat South Africa 4-2 in a Pool B win that was put away in the 53rd minute with a strong shot by Julietta Janukas, and Australia thrashed Britain 4-0.

The United States also secured a hard fought 1-1 draw with Spain in the other Pool B game to secure their first point of the Games, with a tough challenge against Australia set for tomorrow.



India’s defender Harmanpreet Singh (centre) celebrates scoring a goal against Argentina in the men’s pool B field hockey match during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium in Colombes yesterday. (AFP)

Sabre gold for France’s Apithy-Brunet



Gold medalist Manon Apithy-Brunet (right) of France celebrates with compatriot silver medalist Sara Balzer after women’s Sabre Individual final in Paris yesterday. (Reuters)

BADMINTON

China’s Paris winning streak ended by Malaysians, Danes

Paris
Reuters

China suffered their first badminton defeats of the Paris Olympics yesterday when mixed doubles favourites Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping were upset by a Malaysian pair and one of the country’s men’s doubles teams were trounced by Denmark.

China have long dominated Olympic badminton, winning 47 medals which is more than double the combined tally of Indonesia and South Korea the second- and third-most successful teams.

In 18 group stage matches in three days in Paris so far they have now been defeated twice, while in Tokyo China’s players lasted four days before losing a match.

Feng and Huang lost 17-21 21-15 21-16 to Malaysia’s Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei in the opening session of group play.

“I am happy we overcame them and gave them a good fight,” Toh said. “They played a very good game and they really pushed us to the maximum.”

Huang, the reigning Olympic mixed doubles champion who played in Tokyo with former partner Wang Yiliu, said she was not too upset because they were still at the group stage.

China’s second mixed doubles team Zheng Si Wei and Huang Won Ho avenged their compatriots’ defeat shortly after, making quick work of South Korea’s Kim Won-ho and Jeong Na-eun 21-13 21-14.

However, in the second session, men’s doubles world number two pairing Anders Ras-

mussen and Kim Astrup beat China’s Liu Yuchen and Ou Xuanyi, ranked number nine, 21-15 21-13.

The day should have started with India’s men’s doubles darlings Chirag Shetty and Satwik-sairaj Rankireddy, ranked third, playing Germany’s Mark Lamsfuss and Marvin Seidel.

However, that match was cancelled when Lamsfuss withdrew from the Games with a knee injury.

A match between Indonesia’s Jonatan Christie, ranked third in men’s singles, and surprise Tokyo semi-finalist Kevin Cordon of Guatemala was also cancelled because Cordon injured his arm.

Soren Opti of Suriname also pulled out of his match against Italy’s Giovanni Toti after hurting his knee.

TENNIS

Djokovic sinks Nadal as Alcaraz moves on

Women's world No 1 Swiatek crushes France's Parry to book her third round spot

AFP
Paris

Novak Djokovic crushed Rafael Nadal 6-1, 6-4 in their blockbuster Olympics clash yesterday as the two titans met for the 60th and possibly final time.

The showdown between the two most successful men's tennis players in history appeared to be fizzling out before a late fightback from Nadal enabled him to avoid his heaviest-ever defeat by Djokovic. "I'm very relieved," said Djokovic. "Everything was going my way, I was 6-1, 4-0 up but I played a sloppy service game and gave him chances.

It was 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic's 31st win in a rivalry that began on the same Roland Garros clay courts in 2006. "You could feel the tension coming into the match, but also incredible hype, incredible atmosphere on the court," said Djokovic. "I never thought back in 2006 that we'd still be playing each other almost 20 years later."

Nadal admitted Djokovic was the "clear favourite" ahead of their first clash in more than two years, with the Spaniard a shadow of the player who reigned for the best part of two decades at Roland Garros.

While 14 of Nadal's 22 Grand Slams have come in Paris, the 38-year-old has been plagued by injuries in recent years and he has slumped to 161st in the world. His participation in the singles in Paris had been in doubt until the last minute.

Djokovic has not had a good season by his high standards but the 37-year-old Serbian rose to the occasion in his pursuit of an elusive Olympic gold. The top seed raced into a 5-0 lead before Nadal finally got on the board but Djokovic closed out the set and surged 4-0 ahead in the second before Nadal offered some belated resistance.

Nadal clawed his way back to 4-4 only for Djokovic to break once more, this time making no mistake as he put away his old foe and perhaps brought down the curtain on one of the greatest rivalries in the history of the sport. "When this tournament is over, I will take the necessary decisions based on my feelings and desire," Nadal said



Serbia's Novak Djokovic (left) and Spain's Rafael Nadal embrace after second round match at the Paris Olympic Games yesterday. (AFP)

regarding his future in tennis.

Djokovic, a bronze medallist on his Olympic debut in 2008, goes on to face Dominik Koepfer of Germany for a spot in the quarter-finals. Nadal will turn his focus to the doubles where he is in a dream-team pairing with compatriot Carlos Alcaraz.

Alcaraz, the reigning men's French Open and Wimbledon champion, saw off Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor 6-1, 7-6 (7/3) after saving a set point and receiving treatment for an apparent upper leg injury. Roman Safiullin will be his next opponent.

Women's world number one Iga Swiatek stepped up her quest for gold by powering

into the third round. The four-time French Open champion underlined her status at the heavy favourite in Paris, swatting home hope Diane Parry aside 6-1, 6-1 and will meet China's Wang Xiyu for a place in the quarter-finals.

The Pole has won her past 23 matches at Roland Garros, with three clay titles already under her belt this season. Swiatek, tested in her opening match under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier, enjoyed a far more straightforward outing in bright sunshine.

US second seed Coco Gauff dispatched Argentina's Maria Lourdes Carle 6-1, 6-1. Next up for her is Wimbledon semi-finalist

Donna Vekic, who put out former US Open champion Bianca Andreescu.

Italy's Jasmine Paolini, this year's French Open runner-up to Swiatek, eased into the third round with a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Magda Linette. Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejickova coasted past China's Wang Xinyu while Maria Sakkari of Greece also advanced.

Zheng Qinwen, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Casper Ruud were among other second-round winners. Scorching heat posed a considerable problem for players at the Tokyo Olympics, and the issue could resurface this week with highs of 35 degrees Celsius expected today.

Nadal to decide on future 'after Olympics'

Paris: Rafael Nadal said he will make a decision on his future in tennis "after the Olympics" in the aftermath of a shattering straight-sets defeat to old rival Novak Djokovic at the Paris Games yesterday.

"When this tournament is over, I will take the necessary decisions based on my feelings and desire," said Nadal, after losing 6-1, 6-4 in his 60th career meeting with Djokovic. Nadal, playing in just his seventh tournament of the year after another campaign disrupted by injuries, admitted that at 38 he did not "have the legs of 20 years ago".

The Spaniard, a gold medallist at the Olympics in singles in 2008 and doubles at Rio eight years later, won the last of his 22 Grand Slam titles when he captured a 14th French Open in Paris in 2022. His ranking, which once stood proudly at number one, has slumped to 161 in the world.

In May, he suffered his first ever opening-round loss at the French Open and then skipped Wimbledon to focus on the Olympics. "For many people it makes little sense, I have been suffering for two years," added Nadal who described yesterday's loss as "tough".

"If I feel that I am not competitive I will make the decision to stop. I just try my best every single day, trying to enjoy a thing that I have been enjoying for so much time. I have been suffering a lot of injuries the last two years. So if I feel that I am not competitive enough to keep going or physically I'm not ready to keep going I will stop and let you know."

Nadal still has hopes of a gold medal in the men's doubles where he is playing alongside Carlos Alcaraz. Yesterday's win was 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic's 31st in a rivalry which began on the same Roland Garros clay courts in 2006. Nadal was outclassed in the much anticipated encounter, only coming briefly to life when he won four games in a row in the second set. Nadal conceded that Djokovic was the better player. "Playing against Novak, without creating damage to him and without having the legs of, 20 years ago is, is almost impossible now."

SPOTLIGHT

Japan edge out China for gymnastics gold

Reuters
Paris

Daiiki Hashimoto turned heartache into unimaginable joy as he overcame a fall from the pommel horse to power Japan to the gold medal, edging China in a pulsating gymnastics men's team final at the Paris Olympics yesterday.

With Japan left languishing in fifth place at the halfway point of the competition, Hashimoto displayed nerves of steel during his final performance on the horizontal bar as the Asian powerhouse completed an incredible comeback to seal an eighth men's team title at the Games. The United States were also left celebrating their first Olympic team medal since 2008 as they grabbed bronze.

The expected battle between China and Japan looked like it would not materialise after Hashimoto's uncharacteristic fall off the pommel horse during the second rotation. Just when it looked like China had the title in the bag as they led Japan by more than three points going into the final high bar apparatus, Xiao Ruoteng completely botched his dismount by landing on both knees to earn his lowest score of the day of 13.433.

Incredibly, his team mate Su Weide then lost his grip twice while attempting release and catch manoeuvres during his routine. As he came crashing down on the mat, so too did China's gold medal hopes. The look on his team mates said it all as they just could not believe that they had thrown away the title that had been within their grasp with impressive performances during the first five rotations. When Su's score of 11.600 flashed up, Hashimoto knew all he needed to do was to stay on the bar and the title would be Japan's.

The Tokyo 2020 all-around champion, who had scored just 13.100 on the pommel horse,



Japan gymnasts are ecstatic after winning the team gold medal at the Bercy Arena in Paris. (AFP)



effectively won Japan the gold with a score of 14.566 on the bar. Even though China still had one more competitor to go on the bar, Zhang Boheng must have known that his chances of scoring 15.265 points to tie with Japan were slim and so it proved to be.

As his score of 14.733 came up, the Japanese gymnasts were left in floods of tears, with some of them collapsing to the ground in pure disbelief at what they had pulled off. Japan emerged victorious with a total of 259.594 points, less than a point ahead of China.

The US men put on a superb performance and locked up the bronze after nailing most of their landings in the competition. Britain finished fourth and Ukraine fifth. Russia, who won the team gold at the Tokyo Games three years ago, are barred from competing in Paris due to the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Chinese squad grabbed the lead at the midway point with stellar performance on still rings and looked unbeatable after Zou Jingyuan secured 16.000 on parallel bars.

But the drama that then unfolded left every one on the edge of their seats.

FOCUS

South Korea beat France to win gold in men's team archery

Reuters
Paris

South Korea won the gold medal in men's team archery at the Paris Olympics yesterday, beating the host nation 5-1.

The win reinforces South Korea as the country to beat in archery, as South Korean men have now claimed seven of 10 gold medals since the Olympic event was introduced in 1988 in Seoul. On Sunday, the South Korean women's team won their 10th consecutive gold after an intense shoot-off against China. France is left with the silver medal and Turkey claimed bronze.

Archer Kim Woojin now has three gold medals, more than any other athlete in the men's team event. He said he will now work to shake off any nerves as he looks for his first individual

medal in Paris. "The higher the goals, you usually have a lot of mistakes. I will try to relieve my head of those goals and just focus on my heart," he said.

The French team, cheered on by a boisterous crowd at Esplanade des Invalides, put up a strong fight in the first set with an even score against South Korea, giving each team one set point. But South Korea's dominance in the sport proved too much. In the third set, the South Korean men hit the bullseye with all but one of their arrows.

The match-up between the host nation and defending gold medallists brought wildly enthusiastic support for both sides, with spectators appearing to wave the France and South Korea flags in equal measure. It also took place on the hottest day since the Games began, though the South Korean athletes said they weren't bothered by the weather.



South Korea's archers Kim Je-deok, Kim Woo-jin, Kim Woo-jin celebrate after winning the men's team final against France at the Esplanade des Invalides in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

Daley takes fifth diving medal but China grab gold

Paris: Britain's Tom Daley was dethroned as Olympic champion yesterday but took an emotional silver medal with partner Noah Williams in the men's synchronised 10m platform behind China's Lian Junjie and Yang Hao.

It was a fifth medal in five Olympics for 30-year-old Daley, who won gold with Matty Lee in the same event at the pandemic-postponed Tokyo Games three years ago. Lian and Yang, who have won at the last three world championships, established their dominance with their first dive and



never looked like giving up the lead.

They finished with a score of 490.35, ahead of Daley and Williams on 463.44, and Canada's Rylan Wiens and Nathan Zsombor-Murray on 422.13. Daley and Williams were locked in a battle for second with the Canadian pair but pulled away over the second half of the competition.

It was an emotional medal for both of the Britons, but especially for Williams who was choked by tears as he recalled his former coach Dave Jenkins, who died in 2021 after the last Olympics in Tokyo. Daley, whose

father Rob died of cancer in 2011, said: "I've never seen Noah cry in my whole life, I know how much today means to him. It's very sad Dave is not here, but I know Dave and my dad would both be so proud to see us here today."

Daley made his Olympic debut as a 14-year-old at the 2008 Beijing Games and won his first Olympic medal with a bronze at the 2012 London Games.

He took another bronze in Rio, then another at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics before finally winning gold in the men's synchronised 10m platform event at those Games.