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Russell wins in Canada after McLarens collide, Norris out

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CLUB WORLD CUP

PSG start with a 4-0 thumping of Atletico

MERCILESS BAYERN MUNICH HIT 10 AGAINST AMATEURS AUCKLAND CITY

AFP
Pasadena, United States

Newly crowned European Champions Paris Saint-Germain launched their bid for Club World Cup glory with a convincing 4-0 victory over Atletico Madrid yesterday.

In searing heat at the Pasadena Rose Bowl east of Los Angeles, PSG proved too hot to handle for their Spanish opponents in an impressive opening Group B win.

Goals from Fabian Ruiz, Vitinha, Senny Mayulu and Lee Kang-In sealed the three points for PSG, who delighted a crowd of 80,619 with their adventurous attacking play. The French giants picked up where they had left off in their 5-0 Champions League final mauling of Inter Milan a fortnight earlier, quickly settling into their smooth passing game to control the early exchanges.

Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak was soon pressed into action, blocking a Goncalo Ramos shot from just outside the box on 17 minutes as PSG's pressure mounted. Oblak denied PSG again moments later, diving to stop a Khvicha Kvaratskhelia shot that was destined for the bottom left-hand corner.

Those early warning shots proved to be a precursor for the game's opening goal in the 19th minute. A lovely passing move down the right saw the ball swiftly transferred to Georgian winger Kvaratskhelia who deftly laid off into the path of Ruiz to sweep in a low finish for 1-0.

With Atletico struggling to gain any kind of a foothold in the contest, the Spanish side's frustration began to show. Clement Lenglet was booked for a rash challenge on Moroccan international Achraf Hakimi in the 21st minute, and Robin Le Normand picked up Atletico's second yellow soon afterwards for bringing down Ruiz.



Paris Saint-Germain's midfielder Kang-in Lee (left) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal during the Club World Cup 2025 Group B match against Atletico Madrid in Los Angeles yesterday. *(AFP)*

Ruiz himself was booked on 28 minutes for a shove on Giuliano Simeone before the Argentine midfielder collected Atletico's third yellow soon afterwards.

With the Parisians in complete control, Atletico had to wait until the stroke of half-time before their first shot on goal, France's Antoine Griezmann drawing a smart save from Italy international Gianluigi Donnarumma with a low shot. From the ensuing counter-attack, however, Atletico found themselves 2-0 down.

The electric Kvaratskhelia again found space down the left and fed inside to Vitinha, who ghosted into the box before steering a crisp shot beyond Oblak for 2-0. Atletico appeared to have hauled themselves back into the game early in the second half when Julian Alvarez rifled home a low finish to make it 2-1.

But the goal was chalked off after VAR spotted a bodycheck by Argentine midfielder Rodrigo De Paul on Desire Doue in the build-up. That effort appeared to buoy Atletico for the remainder of the half, but despite playing with greater intensity they were unable to create a single shot on goal.

Lenglet was dismissed after picking up a second yellow card on 78 minutes.

A disappointing Atleti display was summed up by a glaring miss four minutes later, substitute Alexander Sorloth somehow scooping over an open goal from a few yards out after Marcos Llorente's cross. PSG swiftly made Atleti pay for that miss, substitute Senny Mayulu pouncing on a loose ball to make it 3-0 in the 87th minute. The rout was completed in injury time when Lee stepped up to convert a penalty after a handball by Le Normand.

PSG will face Brazil's Botafogo in their next group match in Pasadena on Thursday, before completing the first round against Major League Soccer's Seattle Sounders on June 23.

Earleir in the day, Bayern Munich showed no mercy to amateurs Auckland City, beating the minnows from New Zealand 10-0 in their opening game as Jamal Musiala came off the bench to score a second-half hat-trick. Kingsley Coman, Michael Olise and Thomas Mueller all netted twice, while Sacha Boey was also on target for the German champions in the game in Group C, which also features Boca Juniors and Benfica.

Harry Kane started but didn't find the target before being replaced just after the hour mark by Musiala, who netted his three goals in the space of 18 minutes towards the end. It was a stroll in the park in the midday sun in Cincinnati for Vincent Kompany's side, with France winger Coman scoring twice in the opening 21 minutes either side of goals by compatriots Boey and Olise.

Coman's sixth-minute breakthrough goal was the first of the tournament following the 0-0 draw between Inter Miami and Al Ahly in Saturday's opening game.

Mueller got the fifth and Olise's second of the afternoon made it 6-0 in first-half stoppage time for the Bundesliga heavyweights.

Auckland City managed to stem the tide for much of the second half before Musiala came on and took centre stage, his three goals including one from the penalty spot.Mueller made it 10-0 in the 89th minute for a Bayern side who won the Club World Cup twice in its former seven-team guise, in 2013 and 2020.

They have recorded bigger victories in the past in the German Cup, but the 10-goal winning margin equals their best ever win in the Bundesliga, when they beat Borussia Dortmund 11-1 in 1971.

Bayern, who gave new signing Jonathan Tah a debut in central defence following his recent arrival from Bayer Leverkusen, play Boca in their next match in Miami on Friday. Auckland City take on Benfica earlier the same day in Orlando.

Duplantis soars to new pole vault world record with 6.28m jump

STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Armand Duplantis soared 6.28 metres to break the world pole vault record at the Diamond League event in Stockholm yesterday, the 12th time he has set a new world-best mark.

The American-born double Olympic champion improved on his previous record, set in February, by one centimetre on his first attempt, making the most of the perfect conditions to delight the home crowd.

Having promised fans ahead of the competition that he would try to break the record, Duplantis encouraged the crowd to get behind him from the moment his name was announced at the Swedish capital's Olympic stadium and they responded by wildly clapping and cheering his every attempt as he cruised through the competition.

Kurtis Marschall did his best to put it up to the hometown favourite, but the Australian could only manage a best effort of 5.90 before making three unsuccessful attempts to clear the six-metre mark.

That left the field clear for Duplantis as the bar was raised to 6.28 for his world record attempt, and once again, the 25-year-old made it look easy. He powered through his run-up before planting his pole and soaring to another world record as the stadium, built for the 1912 Olympics, exploded in jubilation.

Duplantis sprinted from the landing mat, tearing off his singlet to celebrate his first world record set on Swedish soil with his partner and family.

"This was one of my biggest goals and dreams, to set a world record here at Stadion. It's like the Olympics and Stadion, they're the same level for me. I really wanted to do it, I had my whole family here, from both sides, it's magic, it's magic," he said.

HORSE RACING

Al Shaqab Racing's Hajmah lands Qatar Derby at Chantilly

Agencies
Chantilly, France

Al Shaqab Racing's homebred filly Hajmah (Al Mourtajez) produced a standout performance to clinch the Gr1 PA Qatar Derby des Pur-Sang Arabes de 4 Ans, run over 2000m at Chantilly, France, yesterday.

The trophies were presented by Khalifa bin Mohammed al-Attiyah, Board Member of the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC), which sponsored the prestigious event. Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Mansour, Chief Operating Officer of Al Shaqab Racing, received the trophy on behalf of the team.

The four-year-old Hajmah facing a competitive field of 10 runners, delivered a strong performance to claim her first Gr.1 (PA) victory.

She arrived at Chantilly following a fair seasonal return last month in the Gr.2 (PA) Qatar Prix de l'Élevage at Toulouse, a run that served as a solid stepping stone toward this target.

Already a Gr.3 (PA) winner at three, having landed the Prix Nevada II over 1600m, Hajmah had shown clear potential.



QREC Board Member Khalifa bin Mohammed al-Attiyah presented the trophies to the winners of the Qatar Derby des Pur-Sang Arabes (Gr1 PA) at Chantilly, France, yesterday.

This time, stepped up in distance and grade, she confirmed that promise.

Not the quickest out of the stalls, Hajmah improved her position to race in midfield, just behind Bianca De Ghazal (Al Mourtajez) while Mureb (Gazwan) set the pace up front. Entering the final straight, Soumillon switched her to the left and she moved up smoothly, keeping Bianca De Ghazal boxed in.

Inside the final 300m, Hajmah was asked to go forward. Though briefly niggled along, she responded well, took the lead and battled gamely to the line. She held off the late challenge of Lippo De Carrere (Al Mourtajez), who finished fast to get within half a length at the post. Ridden by Mickael Barzalona and trained by Alban de Mieulle for Wathnan Racing, Lippo De Carrere secured second place.



Al Shaqab Racing's Hajmah won the Qatar Derby des Pur-Sang Arabes (Gr1 PA) at Chantilly, France, yesterday.

The favourite, Moneer (Al Mourtajez), also owned by Wathnan Racing, trained by Damien Watrigant and partnered by James Doyle, came in third a further one and a quarter lengths behind.

Notably, the top three placings were all secured by Qatari-owned runners, who are all sired by Al Mourtajez.

Bred by Al Shaqab Racing, Hajmah is out of Easter de Faust (Mahabb), a Gr.1 (PA) winner over 2000m in the Qatar Arabian Trophy des Pouliches at three, and a Gr.3 (PA) winner over 1600m the same year.

Easter de Faust is a half-sister to Battash De Faust (AfAlbahar), a multiple winner over 1400m and third in a Gr.1 (PA) over 1600m at Doha at three.

SPORT

MOTORSPORT

Kubica and Ferrari win 24 Hours of Le Mans



FROM LEFT: AF Corse's Italian team principal Amato Ferrari, Chinese driver Yifei Ye, Polish driver Robert Kubica, British driver Philip Hanson and Global Head of Ferrari Endurance and Corse Clienti Antonello Coletta celebrate with the trophies on the podium after their victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans 2025, at the Le Mans circuit yesterday. *(AFP)*

AFP
Le Mans, France

Former Formula One driver Robert Kubica took the chequered flag in his bright yellow "privateer" Ferrari to give the Italian marque a third consecutive win in the 24 Hours of Le Mans yesterday.

In a thrilling 93rd edition of the race, which saw the top four separated by just over 20 seconds going into the final 15 minutes, Kubica and his co-drivers Philip Hanson and Ye Yifei (#83) finished just 14.084sec ahead of a Porsche (#6) driven by Kevin Estre, Matt Campbell and Laurens Vanthoor.

All three drivers of #83 are first-time winners with Kubica, whose F1 career was effectively terminated by a harrowing rally crash in Andora in 2011, becoming the first Polish winner and Ye the first from China.

"It's been a long 24 hours but an enjoyable one. Grazie mille, grazie a tutti," said the 40-year-old Kubica over the team radio.

The two factory Ferraris driven by driven by Antonio Giovinazzi (#51) and Antonio Fuoco (#50), who were tipped to win the race, crossed the line for third and fourth, thwarted in their bid for a clean sweep of the podium, something they had achieved twice before in 1961 and 1965.

"Winning Le Mans is special," Kubica told *TNT Sports*.

"It's been a demanding week. We made everything possible. We kept our heads down when we had to push, and when not we took care of the tyres.

"I'm happy for myself, my teammates, AF Corse and Ferrari winning three times in row. A better scenario, we could not have."

It was certainly a good day for Ferrari but there will undoubtedly be some at headquarters in Maranello who might take issue with Kubica. As the winning car was not entered directly by the manufacturer, but by the AF Corse team, Ferrari will not take the points for victory in the World Endurance Championship.

Cadillac locked out the front row of the grid but #12 of Will Stephens, who had taken pole, had to settle for fifth with the second car (#38), featuring former Formula One world champion Jensen Button, coming home in eighth.

Kubica's #83 started back in 13th place but immediately made inroads through the field as Estre marched his #6 Porsche brilliantly up to join the front runners from 21st on the grid.

The two factory Ferraris then asserted themselves and the 2023 winners in #51 appeared to be in control until Alessandro Pier Guidi spun the race-leading car while entering the pit lane inside the final quarter of the race.

That cost them valuable time and their hopes of winning were ended when they had a power loss in the final hour.

Fuoco also lost time after #50's final pit stop to leave the two factory Ferraris scrapping for third.

FORMULA ONE

Russell wins in Canada after McLarens collide

Oscar Piastri stretches his lead to 22 points after the late collision

Reuters
Montreal

George Russell took Mercedes' first win of the Formula One season in Canada yesterday while McLaren's Oscar Piastri went 22 points clear in the championship after teammate Lando Norris smashed into him and retired.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who had hoped to win for a record fourth year in a row at Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, took second.

Russell's 18-year-old Italian rookie teammate Kimi Antonelli finished third for his first F1 podium.

Piastri was fourth with the safety car leading the final lap before peeling off to clear the way for Russell to take the chequered flag.

An uneventful afternoon erupted in headline drama when Norris hit the rear of Piastri's car three laps from the end - a clash long predicted in the title battle - while trying to overtake.

The Briton, who ended at a standstill by the side of the track with no front wing and a broken car, was quick to blame himself.

"I'm sorry. All my bad. All my fault. Stupid from me," Norris said over the team radio.

Piastri pitted as the safety car was deployed and rejoined with a tyre advantage over Antonelli that he could not use as the racing never resumed.

"Glad I didn't ruin his race. In the end apologies to the team," Norris told *Sky Sports* television.

"This wasn't even like a 'that's racing', it was just silly from my part."

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton finished fifth and sixth with Fernando Alonso seventh for Aston Martin and Nico Hulkenberg bringing in more solid points for Sauber in eighth place.

Esteban Ocon was ninth for Haas in their 200th race with Carlos Sainz 10th for Williams.

"Well done team. That made up for last year," said Russell, who also started on pole last year but finished third. His last win before Sunday was in Las Vegas last November. "It's amazing to be back on the top step. I felt last year was a victory lost and probably got the victory today due to the incredible pole lap yesterday."

Third place made Antonelli the third youngest driver ever to stand on the F1 podium.

"I had a good start, managed to jump into P3 and just stayed up there at the front," he said of passing Piastri for third on the opening lap. "The last stint I pushed a bit too hard behind Max and I killed a bit the front-left (tyre), and struggled a bit at the end, but really happy to bring the podium home."



Race winner George Russell of Great Britain and Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team celebrates on the podium during the Grand Prix of Canada at Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve yesterday. *(AFP)*

Russell led away cleanly from pole, with Verstappen slotting in behind.

Behind them, Williams' Alex Albon tracked across the grass after starting ninth with Alpine's Franco Colapinto moving briefly up from 10th before losing out to Hulkenberg and then falling down the order.

Norris, who started on the hard tyres to go longer in the opening stint, was leading by lap 16 after others who started on mediums came in for pitstops. He then pitted on lap 29 and came out fifth, behind Piastri in fourth.

Leclerc also came in that lap but then questioned why Ferrari had made the call, with his hard tyres still in reasonable shape.

Hamilton was behind his teammate, with reported damage to his car, and wondering out loud where the performance had gone.

"I'm nowhere in the race, mate, I don't know what's happened," the seven-times world champion told his engineer over the team radio.

SPOTLIGHT

Lewis sparkles as West Indies beat Ireland to win T20 series

AFP
London

Evin Lewis smashed 91 from just 44 balls as the West Indies beat Ireland by 62 runs to clinch a T20 series victory in Bready yesterday.

Lewis and West Indies captain Shai Hope put Ireland to the sword with a swashbuckling 122-run partnership for the first wicket in only 10.3 overs.

The tourists powered to 256 for five from their 20 overs, a daunting total which ranked as their second highest in T20 internationals.

Lewis, 33, was the mainstay of the innings with eight sixes and seven fours, while Hope made 51 from 27 balls.

Keacy Carty maintained his fine recent form with an unbeaten 49 from 22 balls.

Matthew Humphreys was the sole bright spot for Ireland with two for 16 as the West Indies blasted 20 sixes.

After losing Paul Stirling in the second over, Ross Adair and Harry Tector produced a partnership of 101 in 58 balls to give Ireland hope.

Tector made 35 from 28 deliveries before being pinned lbw by Roston Chase and Adair soon departed for 48.

Ireland never recovered from losing three wickets for two runs and ended on 194 for seven, with Mark Adair unbeaten on 31.

Akeal Hosein took three for 27 and Jason Holder picked up two wickets.

The West Indies' win was enough to seal the series after the first two games were abandoned without a ball being bowled on Thursday and Saturday.

BRIEF SCORES
West Indies 256-5, 20 overs (Lewis 91, Hope 51, Carty 49 not out; Humphreys 2-16)
Ireland 194-7, 20 overs (R. Adair 48; Hosein 3-27, Holder 2-49)
Result: West Indies won by 62 runs
Series: West Indies won three-match series 1-0

ANNOUNCEMENT

De Silva to lead SL Test side against Bangladesh

AFP
Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket board yesterday named an 18-member squad led by Dhananjaya de Silva for the two-match home Test series against Bangladesh.

Former skipper Angelo Mathews, who is set to retire after the first Test which starts tomorrow was included in the squad.

Both games will be at the Galle International stadium.

Bangladesh last visited Sri Lanka for a Test series in April 2021 when they played two matches, losing one and drawing the other.

They will also play three one-day internationals and three T20 matches.



Bangladesh's captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (left) speaks with spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed during a practice session ahead of their first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle yesterday. *(AFP)*

Test squad: Dhananjaya de Silva (captain), Pathum Nissanka, Oshada Fernando, Lahiru Udara, Dinesh Chandimal, Angelo Mathews, Kusal Mendis, Kamindu Mendis, Pasindu Sooriyabandara, Sonal Dinusha, Pavan Rathnayake, Prabath Jayasuriya, Tharindu Ratnayake, Akila Dananjaya, Milan Rathnayake, Asitha Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, Isitha Wijesundara

FOCUS

Australia coach McDonald backs stuttering Labuschagne after Lord's defeat

Reuters
London

Batter **Marnus Labuschagne** is still a key part of Australia's future in test cricket despite failing to impress in their five-wicket defeat to South Africa in the World Test Championship final, coach Andrew McDonald said.

Labuschagne opened alongside Khawaja, scoring 17 runs off 56 balls in the first innings and 22 off 64 in the second, with South Africa completing a remarkable turnaround on Saturday after successfully chasing down an imposing 282-run target.

The 30-year-old has scored one hundred in his last 28 Tests and has come away with single-digit tallies in four of his last 11 matches.

"He's a big part of the future of the team. Anyone that averages 45, 46 in Test cricket at that age is important. We've got older players there that are closer to the end than the start," McDonald told reporters.

"We've got some younger players that are coming in. If he can get his game in good order for the next four or five years, he can underpin that batting order. But at the moment, he'd be disappointed with the returns. He's missed out on big scores.

"But we're confident that he could return to his best and hence why we keep picking him. And at what point do we stop picking him? I think most players across their journey get dropped at some point in time..."

Khawaja also struggled against South Africa, departing for a duck in the first innings and scoring just six runs in his second, but McDonald said the 38-year-old veteran's presence in the team was invaluable.



"He's on contract, he's an important player. He gives us stability at his best at the top. And we like to look at our players at their best," McDonald said.

"No doubt, a couple of failures here and people then start to talk about maybe it's the end. I don't see an end date with the way he's training, the way he's preparing, the way he's moving."

Australia next travel to the Caribbean for a three-Test series against West Indies beginning on June 25.

Steve Smith in doubt for Australia's West Indies tour

Steve Smith will miss Australia's first Test against the West Indies in Barbados later this month and could sit out the entire three-Test series with a finger injury, captain Pat Cummins said.

Smith, one of the mainstays of the Australian team, suffered a compound dislocation of his right little finger fielding on the third day of the World Test Championship final against South Africa at Lord's on Friday, missing the rest of the match. He was taken to hospital for x-rays but no surgery was required.

However, he faces some time on the sidelines.

"I'd say first Test maybe unlikely, and then go from there, but it's a bit early to tell," Cummins said after Australia's surprise defeat against a South Africa team that wrapped up their five-wicket victory on Saturday.

The 36-year-old Smith was standing far closer to the stumps than normal when he dropped South Africa captain Temba Bavuma, who had scored two runs but went on to hit 66 in a significant contribution to his team's success.

Australia begin their three-Test series in the Caribbean in Bridgetown over June 25-29 and play the other two Tests in Grenada and Jamaica.

TENNIS

Qualifier Maria completes fairytale run to Queen's title

The mother of two arrived at Queen's on a nine-match losing streak but ended up richer by £120,000

AFP
London

Tatjana Maria completed her fairytale run at Queen's Club as the German qualifier beat American Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 6-4 in yesterday's final to become the oldest winner of a WTA 500 event.

The 37-year-old's victory secured the fourth singles title of her career, and her first since 2023 on the clay in Bogota.

World number 86 Maria is the first German to win a WTA 500 title since Angelique Kerber in 2018 in Sydney.

In the first women's tournament at Queen's since 1973, Maria is the event's first female champion since Russia's Olga Morozova 52 years ago.

When Morozova won in west London, the prize money was just £1,000 ($1,353).

Maria banked a cheque for £120,000 and more importantly earned a huge confidence boost ahead of Wimbledon, which starts on June 30.

The mother of two arrived at Queen's on a nine-match losing streak and had to survive two rounds of qualifying matches to reach the main draw.

Deploying her slice-heavy style to devastating effect, she stunned sixth seed Karolina Muchova, fourth seed Elena Rybakina and reigning Australian Open champion Madison Keys en route to the final.

Maria, who has taken two maternity breaks from the WTA Tour, has never been past the second round of any Grand Slam except Wimbledon, where she reached the semi-finals in 2022.

But once again she proved a formidable force on grass, brushing aside Anisimova to secure her second title on the surface as her husband and young daughters Charlotte and Cecilia watched from courtside.

'Everything is possible'

"A dream come true. I came here I was never thinking I could hold the trophy at the end," Maria said.

"When we arrived my little girl said: 'Wow that's a nice trophy, so big' and I said: 'OK let's go for it, I will try to win it.' And in the end I've won it, it's incredible.

"Everything is possible if you believe in it. You go your way, doesn't matter which it is but you have to keep going. I want to show this to my kids and hopefully they are proud. It's amazing." Asked if she planned to celebrate with her family, Maria said: "For sure. This doesn't happen every week so we have to celebrate with something.

"I think the kids will probably want some crepes with Nutella!"

Anisimova has struggled to live up to her early success after reaching the French Open semi-finals aged 17 in 2019.

She took an eight-month break from tennis and dropped out of the top 400 after suffering with depression bought on by the scrutiny and expectations that came with being a teen prodigy.

The 23-year-old returned last year and won the Qatar Open this February, reaching a career-high 15th in the rankings before underlining her renaissance by defeating Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen to reach her first grass-court final.

However, Maria was too savvy on grass for Anisimova, who said: "It's incredible to see Tatjana playing at this level. To have her family here, it's super special.

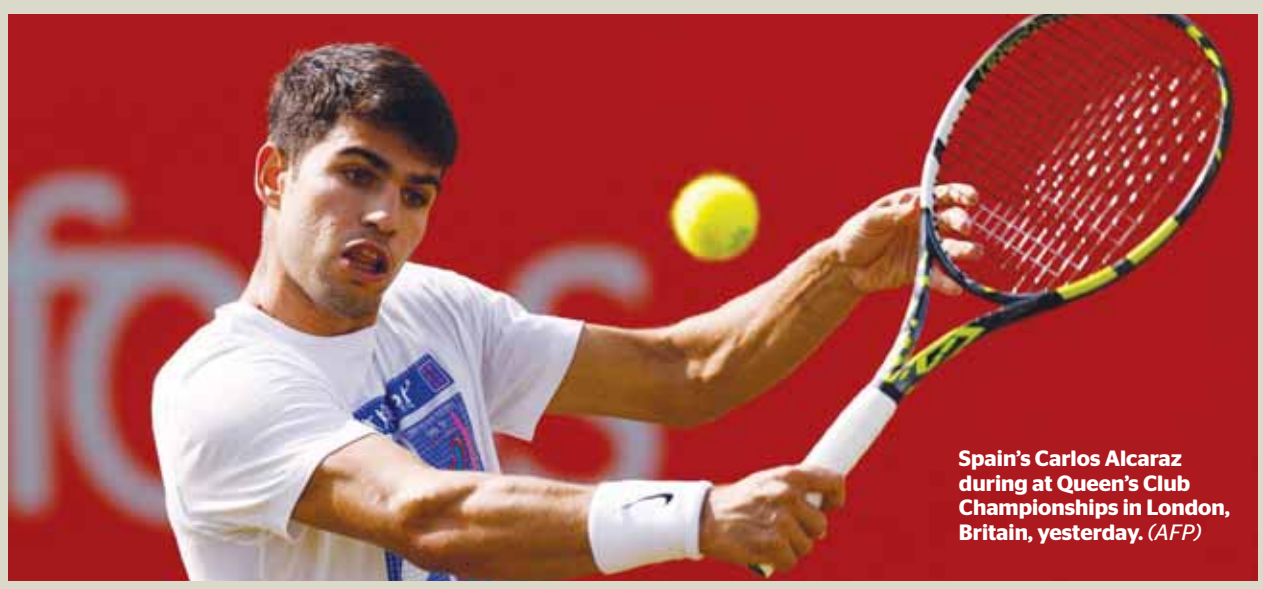
"I wouldn't be surprised if we see her in the Wimbledon final. She really had me running out there today."



Germany's Tatjana Maria poses with the trophy after winning against US player Amanda Anisimova in the final of the Queen's Club Championships in London yesterday. *(AFP)*

French Open champion Alcaraz ready for Queen's after Ibiza party

London: Carlos Alcaraz will return to action at Queen's Club next week after the world number two celebrated his epic French Open triumph by partying in Ibiza.
Alcaraz saved three match points and rallied from two sets down to beat Jannik Sinner in a fifth set tie-break in the sensational Roland Garros final on June 8.
Having triumphed in one of the greatest finals in tennis history, the 22-year-old jetted off to Ibiza to soak up his second successive French Open crown.
As well as partying with friends, Alcaraz used the break as a welcome opportunity to recharge his batteries after a gruelling clay-court campaign that also included titles in Monte Carlo and Rome.
"It was fun, but honestly, I was there more mentally than physically. I had fun, just three nights, three days, and I think that was more than enough," he told reporters at Queen's yesterday.
"The craziest thing was probably staying out really late. I danced a bit, but nothing more than what a normal person would do. I'm getting older, my body doesn't keep up anymore!"
Refreshed by his break, Alcaraz practised at Queen's Club on Saturday evening as he stepped up his preparations to defend the Wimbledon title. The Spaniard is confident his Ibiza holiday won't leave him rusty in west London.
"It's kind of the middle of the season. After the clay season, which is very intense, I think it's the perfect time to get away," he said. "My friends go every year, so I go too. It doesn't matter where. The point is to switch off mentally, recharge physically and come back ready for the grass season.
"After such a great but intense few weeks, having time to disconnect and have fun is really important for me."



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz during at Queen's Club Championships in London, Britain, yesterday. *(AFP)*

'Can't believe it'

Alcaraz, who has won Wimbledon for the last two years, is the third-youngest man to claim five Grand Slam titles, trailing only Rafael Nadal and Bjorn Borg.
He is also only the third man in the Open era to save at least one championship point before winning a Grand Slam final.
Alcaraz said his memorable achievements in Paris were still sinking in as he prepares to open his grass-court campaign against compatriot Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in the Queen's first round.
The 22-year-old, who won Queen's in 2023, said: "I still look at the phone and the media. I have seen a lot of videos from that match, that moment from match point down.
"I still watch it sometimes and can't believe I came back from that moment. Sometimes it's difficult to realise that I am in this position, that I won Roland Garros. I still watch the videos and am still in shock sometimes." Alcaraz cannot pick a favourite between his maiden French Open victory last year and the victory against Sinner, adding: "The first one is always there. It's going to be always in your heart.
"And this one, the second one, a lot of people told me that it was the best final they have ever seen."

Sinner had 'sleepless nights' after dramatic French Open final loss

Italian Jannik Sinner said yesterday he had experienced "a few sleepless nights" since his historic French Open final loss to Carlos Alcaraz.
Sinner, 23, tasted defeat after five hours and 29 minutes in Roland Garros' longest ever final last weekend and wasted three match points, having been two sets up.
"I had already a few sleepless nights, but I think every day it gets better," Sinner told reporters before starting his grass season in Halle, Germany next week.
"Tennis is important in my life but nevertheless family and friends more important.
"Nonetheless I think often about the match," the world number one added.
Sinner failed to add to his Australian and US Open titles in the already legendary decider with Spaniard Alcaraz in Paris.
He returned home to Trentino-South Tyrol after the gruelling encounter on clay.
"I was very relaxed with my family. We grilled a bit, played table tennis with my friends," Sinner said.
"Really normal things, nothing special. I like going home, when a lot is going on.
"I feel safe at home and with my friends," he added.
Sinner returned from a three-month doping suspension in mid-May and now turns his mind to defending the title in Munich in Germany.
"The ball can bounce a bit funny because of the grass, and you have to serve intelligently," Sinner said.
"But in general, it is a surface on which I took a step forward last year and we will see how it goes this year," he added.

CYCLING

Pogacar wraps up Dauphine battle with win ahead of Tour de France title defence

AFP
Val Cenis, France

Reigning Tour de France champion Tadej Pogacar wrapped up the Criterium du Dauphine yesterday with a podium finish in the eighth and final stage, which was won by France's Lenny Martinez.

A winner of three stages in total, the Slovenian dominated the 77th edition of the Dauphine to top the overall classification by 59sec ahead of Dane Jonas Vingegaard – three weeks before the start of the Tour de France.

"It's been a really amazing week," Pogacar said. "Once again today, the team did a great job. We managed to defend the (yellow) jersey and we can go home happy and prepare for the Tour."

German Florian Lipowitz completed the podium, 2min 38sec behind Pogacar, while Belgium's Remco Evenepoel came fourth at 4min 21sec.

Yesterday's final stage was a 133.3km mountainous trek from Val-d'Arc to Val-Cenis, with an uphill finish at the Plateau du Mont-Cenis.

The 21-year-old Martinez caught Spaniard Enric Mas with 8km to go to give France its first victory in this Dauphine, finishing 34sec ahead of Vingegaard and Pogacar.

Vingegaard tried to catch Martinez but was unable to shake off Pogacar. The Dane and the Slovenian then stopped attacking and rolled in together.



Team Visma - Lease a Bike's Danish rider Jonas Vingegaard (left) and UAE Team Emirates XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey cycle to the finish line of the 8th and final stage of the 77th edition of the Criterium du Dauphine cycling race, 133.3km between Val-d'Arc and Val-Cenis – Plateau du Mont Cenis, yesterday. *(AFP)*

Pogacar now has 99 victories to his name – a record for an active rider at just 26 years of age.

"There's a lot of positives from this week and we turned all the negatives into positives, so it's all good," said Pogacar, who bounced back from a poor time-trial performance in stage four to lay down the gauntlet to his principal Tour rivals.

"There's not much to do ahead of the Tour. I rest a bit, maybe some extra work for the time-trial, and then I'm ready," the three-time Tour winner added.

The 2025 Tour de France runs from July 5-27, with Pogacar the firm favourite following his first Dauphine crown.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Train like a champion with PSG Academy Qatar



Following Paris Saint-Germain's historic Champions League victory, PSG Academy Qatar is proud to launch its official summer programmes from June 29 to August 28, 2025. This is a unique opportunity for boys and girls aged 5 to 17 to train the PSG way – the same methodology used by the champions of Europe.

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MOTORSPORT

Qatar to host WEC prologue and season opener

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) announced the 2026 World Endurance Championship (WEC) calendar in Le Mans on June 13, confirming Qatar's continued role in launching the new season with both the Prologue testing sessions and the opening championship round on March 22-28, making it one of the 8 circuits around to world to host WEC in 2026.

For the third time, Lusail International Circuit (LIC) will welcome the premier endurance racing series with the Prologue sessions scheduled from March 22-23, allowing teams and drivers to fine-tune their Hypercars and LMGT3 machines ahead of the competitive season.

The official championship action will commence shortly afterwards with the Qatar 1812 KM race being held from March 26-28. Named in honour of Qatar's National Day, this endurance contest will once again test competitors as they race from daylight into darkness, a maximum of ten hours across the 5.38km, 16-turn circuit.

The circuit's characteristics – featuring a flat, high-speed layout with minimal elevation changes and maximum grip – continue to provide an ideal proving ground for the sport's most advanced prototypes and production-based GT cars. The 16 turns combined with the kilometre-long main straight demand peak performance from both machinery and drivers.

Following success in 2024 and 2025, the Qatar rounds have established themselves as unmissable fixtures on the WEC calendar, attracting the world's leading automotive manufacturers including Porsche, Ferrari, Toyota, Cadillac, Aston Martin, Peugeot, Alpine, and BMW in the premier Hypercar category.

The LMGT3 class will feature equally fierce competition among marques such as Corvette, Lexus, Ferrari, BMW, and Mercedes-AMG. Stay tuned for further ticketing information.



FOOTBALL

Messi denied late winner in Club World Cup opener

Al Ahly's Ashour to miss remainder of tournament with broken collarbone

AFP
Miami Gardens, United States

Lionel Messi and Inter Miami were held to a 0-0 draw by Egyptian side Al Ahly on Saturday as FIFA's new 32-team tournament got off to a smooth start in front of 60,927 fans in Florida.

Messi was denied a storybook stoppage-time winner when he saw his curling shot from 20 yards out tipped on to the bar by Mohamed El Shenawy as Miami piled on the pressure in the final minutes of the game.

Al Ahly, who were cheered on by over 10,000 of their supporters, were left to rue a first-half penalty from Egypt international Trezeguet which was saved by Miami's Argentine keeper Oscar Ustari.

But the Egyptians also had El Shenawy to thank for another fine save in the dying seconds to keep out a header from Maxi Falcon as Miami pushed for three points in the Group A clash.

For organisers FIFA, who have faced heavy scepticism over the necessity for the tournament, the absence of a goal was the only disappointment on a night that delivered everything else that their president Gianni Infantino had hoped for from the opening night. Fears of a low crowd for the opener eased as the seats in the 64,000 venue began to fill up with the stadium almost full at kick-off time.

Thousands of fans of Al Ahly, record 12 times African Champions League winner and 45-time league champions of Egypt, arrived at Hard Rock Stadium well ahead of kick-off and made their presence felt with singing and chanting. While there were no goals to celebrate, the game was far from boring with Al Ahly enjoying the better of the first half before Miami improved significantly after the break.

Al Ahly opened up Miami's defence with ease in the opening minutes of the game and Emam Ashour was denied by Ustari after being put through by Trezeguet. Palestine international striker Wessam Abou Ali had an effort ruled out for offside in the 31st minute and then the Denmark-born forward had a fierce strike tipped over by Ustari.

The penalty came when Telasco Segovia bundled over Zizo but Trezeguet's spot kick was weak and parried out with the former Aston Villa forward unable to react fast enough to the rebound.

Miami were stronger after the break with Messi going close in the 64th minute with a free-kick which grazed the post before hitting the side-netting, tricking part of the crowd into thinking he had scored.

He nearly did in stoppage time, after a well-worked short-corner but the outstretched finger tip of El Shenawy was to deny him. Miami face Porto in Atlanta on Thursday before returning home to face Brazil's Palmeiras on Monday and while those should be tougher tests, their Argentina coach Javier Mascherano was upbeat.

"The truth is we leave with the feeling that we could have won it in the second half. Going forward we have to do what we did in the second half, not have any fear, shed whatever baggage we had because when we play like that, we can play even with any team," he said.

Al Ahly's Spanish coach Jose Riveiro, who only took charge of the team for this tournament, said his team should have finished the game off in the first half.

"It's a game of mistakes. We had a decent amount of chances in the first half to put the game in a different space," he said before praising the team's fans.

"It was like we were playing in Cairo and that was a surprise for me in my first official match with Al Ahly. To be here in the States and have it like you were playing at home is something that can probably only happen in this club," he said.

Meanwhile, Al Ahly midfielder Emam Ashour will miss the remainder of the tournament after scans confirmed he had suffered a broken collarbone, the Egyptian club announced yesterday.

Ashour left the opening match of the revamped competition against Inter Miami in tears after injuring his shoulder.

"Medical examinations on Emam Ashour in a Miami hospital showed he sustained a broken collarbone, and he will miss the remaining matches in the Club World Cup," Al Ahly doctor Ahmed Gaballah said via the club's account on X.



Lionel Messi of Inter Miami CF dribbles the ball as Marawan Attia of Al Ahly FC challenges during the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 Group A match at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, on Saturday. *(AFP)*

FOCUS

Holders Mexico edges Dominican Republic in Gold Cup opener

AFP
Inglewood, United States

Mexico launched their bid for a 10th CONCACAF Gold Cup crown with a nervy 3-2 win over the Dominican Republic in Los Angeles on Saturday.

Defending champions Mexico looked to be cruising to a comfortable win after Edson Alvarez and Raul Jimenez scored moments either side of half-time to put the defending champions 2-0 up at SoFi Stadium.

Alvarez put "El Tri" into the lead with a thumping header from a corner on 44 minutes to make it 1-0 at half-time.

Veteran striker Jimenez doubled the advantage 30 seconds after the break, finishing deftly after a clever through ball from Santiago Gimenez.

However a superb individual goal from the Dominicans' Peter Gonzalez on 51 minutes – the country's first ever Gold Cup goal – reduced the deficit to 2-1 to spark jitters amongst the Mexico-dominated crowd of 54,309.

The concern was short-lived though as Cesar Montes restored Mexico's two-goal cushion two minutes later to make it 3-1.

But Edison Azcona's deflected shot on 67 minute made it 3-2 to set up a nervous finish before Mexico hung on to claim all three points in the Group A clash.

Mexico are the most successful nation in Gold Cup history, winning the regional championship for Central America, North America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF) a record-extending ninth time in 2023.

US coach Pochettino says players cannot dictate plan after Pulisic skips Gold Cup

Players cannot pick and choose which games they will be available for, United States coach Mauricio Pochettino said after forward Christian Pulisic skipped the CONCACAF Gold Cup but offered to play in a pair of friendlies.

Pulisic, who played 50 games for AC Milan in the recently concluded season, said he would miss the Gold Cup to rest and recover, with former US stalwarts Landon Donovan and Alexi Lalas among those who criticised the decision.

In an interview with the CBS Sports podcast on Thursday, Pulisic said he had asked to play in friendlies against Turkiye and Switzerland, but was not involved in those matches because Pochettino wanted a consistent squad heading into the Gold Cup. The AC Milan winger said he did not understand the head coach's decision, while adding that those questioning his commitment to the national team were "way out of line".

Asked about Pulisic's comments, Pochettino told reporters on Saturday: "Players (do) not need to understand or not understand. Players need to listen and to stick with our plan. They cannot dictate the plan.

"Because if not, OK, we invert – we swap the position (coach and player), no? That is obvious. The most important thing is that we explain why we decided not to include (him) in the two friendly games. And then if you have some problems, no, that is not my problem to understand... I am the head coach. I am not a mannequin."



Mexico forward Raul Jimenez celebrates after scoring a goal against the Dominican Republic during their Gold Cup match at Inglewood in California yesterday. *(Reuters)*

SPOTLIGHT

Italy appoint Gattuso as manager to succeed Spalletti



Reuters
Rome

Former AC Milan and Napoli manager **Gennaro Gattuso** has been appointed Italy national team coach, the Italian football federation (FIGC) said yesterday.

Gattuso replaces Luciano Spalletti, who was sacked last week following a heavy defeat by Norway in a World Cup qualifier. The former midfielder will be formally introduced as coach on Thursday at Rome's Parco dei Principi Hotel.

"Gattuso is a symbol of Italian football – the blue jersey is like a second skin for him. His motivations, his professionalism and his experience will be fundamental to best face the upcoming commitments of the National Team," FIGC President Gabriele Gravina said in a statement.

"Aware of the importance of the objective we want to achieve, I thank him for the availability and total dedication with which he has received this challenge, sharing the FIGC project for the overall development of our football, in which the blue jersey plays a strategic central role."

Spalletti departed after a stint of under two years, overseeing his final match, a 2-0 victory against Moldova, just a day after revealing he had been dismissed following Italy's 3-0 defeat by Norway in their opening World Cup qualifier.

Gattuso, who guided Napoli a Coppa Italia title in 2020, is tasked with getting Italy to next year's World Cup, after they missed out on the last two editions of the tournament.

A FIGC source told Reuters the 47-year-old has been given a one-year contract, including the World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Gattuso made 73 appearances for Italy and was a member of the 2006 World Cup-winning squad. He recently left Croatian club Hajduk Split by mutual consent, after a third-placed finish in the country's top flight.

FIGC member Gianluigi Buffon had discussed Gattuso's appointment on Saturday. Veteran Italian coach Claudio Ranieri was the FIGC's top candidate for the role, but the 73-year-old declined the offer, choosing instead to concentrate on his position as senior advisor at AS Roma.

Italy, third in World Cup qualifying Group I, will host Estonia in Bergamo on September 5 before taking on Israel in Hungary three days later.

Gattuso began his coaching career as player-coach at Swiss club Sion in 2013 where he finished his playing days after 13 seasons with Milan but was fired after winning two of his 10 league games in charge.

Over a 12-year coaching journey, Gattuso has led nine clubs, including Milan, Spanish side Valencia, and a brief stint at Ligue 1's Olympique de Marseille.