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SPORT

FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

FOOTBALL

Hosts Qatar set for opening clash against Italy as FIFA U-17 World Cup kicks off

This will be the first edition of the tournament where a record 48 teams will aim for title glory

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Hosts Qatar will take on Italy today as the biggest edition of the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2025 kicks off in Doha.

This will be the first edition of the FIFA U-17 World Cup where a record 48 teams will aim for title glory in the November 3-27 tournament.

Doha will host the entire tournament at two venues - the Aspire Zone football pitches and the iconic Khalifa International Stadium where the title clash will take place on November 27.

Germany, coached by Marc-Patrick Meister, will be looking to defend the title they won two years ago in Indonesia where they beat France in a penalty shoot-out.

Defending champions Germany open their account against Colombia tomorrow.

The same day football powerhouse Brazil face Honduras. Brazil are favourites to win the title for a record-equalling fifth time. Nigeria are five-time winners of the event but they did not qualify for this year's edition.

A total of eight matches have been scheduled today when Argentina take on Belgium, Senegal play Croatia, South Africa battle Bolivia, Japan face Morocco, Portugal lock horns with New Caledonia and Tunisia face Fiji.

Qatar, coached by Alvaro Mejia, will play against Bolivia and South Africa in Group A. Bolivia will take on South Africa on pitch 3 today.

"We're just excited. This U-17 World Cup is a massive challenge," Mejia said in the build-up to the tournament.

"We are aware of Qatar's position, how strong the opposition will be, and what a huge challenge this is. We're going into it full of excitement, and our target is to get as far as we possibly can, bearing in mind that we'll be up against Italy, one of the best teams in the last European Championship.

"It's lovely to feel excited about doing the right thing and giving players this kind of experience. These types of matches at such



One of the nine football pitches spruced up for the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025. The 48-team tournament starts today.

a young age will help them grow. We're putting in the hard work to make sure we're as motivated and prepared as possible," he added.

"Our aim is to feel comfortable on the ball. We know our opponents will try to put us in different situations, so we need to be prepared and try to get used to them. We want to be able to deal with whatever each match throws at us and adapt our style of play to the tournament itself," Mejia said.

Qatar's key player will be Zaid Faisal who is a talented all-round centre-forward. Faisal's intelligent movement occupies de-

fenders and allows team-mates to move fluidly and exploit the spaces around him. A cool and composed finisher, he also possesses impressive leadership qualities and has captained the team.

Italy's key player is Samuele Inacio who was the top scorer at the U-17 EURO with five goals in four matches. Inacio is one Italian football's most promising young players. With excellent technical skills and the ability to move between the lines and evade opponents, the No 10 plays his club football in Germany for Borussia Dortmund.

The UAE team is set to begin their journey in the U-17 World Cup tomorrow afternoon when they face Costa Rica in Group C clash. The match will take place at the Aspire Zone Stadium in Doha and kicks off at 5:30pm.

Majid Salem al-Zaabi, the UAE coach, said yesterday: "Our participation in the U-17 World Cup finals represents a historic moment for every player in the national team, and an opportunity to prove their abilities to the world. We have worked during the past period to build a clear identity for the team, based on discipline,

fighting spirit and teamwork, and we strive to be up to the task."

Al-Zaabi added: "The Costa Rican national team is one of the teams that is characterised by physical strength and defensive organisation, and we know their strengths and weaknesses very well."

The coach added: "The players realise the importance of a strong start in our opening match in the World Cup, and we will play the match with confidence and determination to achieve a positive result that will give us a great morale boost for the rest of the tournament."



Qatar coach Alvaro Mejia.



Qatar striker Zaid Faisal.

KEY POINTS AHEAD OF QATAR'S FIRST MATCH

- * Hosts of this year's edition of the tournament, Qatar will be making their first U-17 World Cup appearance since 2005.
- The Qataris have participated in seven instalments of the competition, with five of those campaigns having come in the first six editions.
- Qatar's best performance at this tournament came back in 1991, when they finished fourth. After suffering a shoot-out heartbreak at the hands of eventual champions Ghana in the semi-finals, they were defeated on spot kicks by Argentina in the match for third place.



Italy players during a training session in Doha on the eve of their opening match of the FIFA U-17 World Cup against hosts Qatar. (www.figc.it)

THE TOURNAMENT IN DETAILS

Group stage: November 3-11
Round of 32: November 14 and 15
Round of 16: November 18
Quarter-finals: November 21
Semi-finals: November 24
Third-place playoff: November 27
Final: November 27

- The 12 groups:**
- Group A:** Qatar, Italy, South Africa, Bolivia
 - Group B:** Japan, Morocco, New Caledonia, Portugal
 - Group C:** Senegal, Croatia, Costa Rica, United Arab Emirates
 - Group D:** Argentina, Belgium, Tunisia, Fiji
 - Group E:** England, Venezuela, Haiti, Egypt
 - Group F:** Mexico, South Korea, Ivory Coast, Switzerland
 - Group G:** Germany, Colombia, North Korea, El Salvador
 - Group H:** Brazil, Honduras, Indonesia, Zambia
 - Group I:** US, Burkina Faso, Tajikistan, Czechia
 - Group J:** Paraguay, Uzbekistan, Panama, Republic of Ireland
 - Group K:** France, Chile, Canada, Uganda
 - Group L:** Mali, New Zealand, Austria, Saudi Arabia

** The Local Organising Committee (LOC) for the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025 and FIFA unveiled Boma (pictured above) the desert owl as the official tournament mascot.



ICC WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

India become world champs for first time

Reuters
Navi Mumbai

India won their maiden Women's World Cup title with a 52-run victory over South Africa at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai yesterday.

Put into bat, the hosts rode half-centuries from Shafali Verma (87) and Deepti Sharma (58) to post 298-7 even though 350 looked well within their reach at one stage.

Laura Wolvaardt led South Africa's reply with a captain's knock of 101 but they were all out for 246 in 45.3 overs.

Sharma claimed 5-39 in a fine all-round display on a memorable night for the hosts.

The women's 50-overs cricket was guaranteed a new champion after South Africa hammered England and India chased down a record target to eliminate defending champions Australia in the semi-finals.

With this win, India joined Australia, England and New Zealand as the only countries to have won the showpiece tournament. Put into

bat after a delayed start following intermittent drizzle, India began strongly with their left-right combination of Smriti Mandhana (45) and Verma forging an opening stand of 104 before being separated in the 18th over.

Drafted into the side ahead of the knockout stage as a late replacement for the injured Pratika Rawal, Verma raced to a 49-ball fifty.

MANDHANA FELL SHORT OF A HALF-CENTURY

Mandhana, India's leading scorer in the tournament, fell short of a half-century after being caught behind to Chloe Tryon's left-arm spin.

Verma, dropped on 58, looked on course for a hundred but Ayabonga Khaka (3-58) ended her 78-ball knock that included seven fours and two sixes.

Khaka struck another telling blow in her next over when she removed Jemimah Rodrigues (24), whose sensational hundred sank Australia on Thursday.

India were cruising at 200-3 in 35 overs but South Africa managed to apply the brakes with the ball to

drag themselves back into the contest. Sharma could not be denied her fifty though and Richa Ghosh (34) chipped in with a cameo but India still fell short of the 300-mark.

Wolvaardt decided to lead by example when South Africa began their chase.

Wolvaardt featured in half-century partnerships with Tazmin Brits and Sune Luus but part-timer Verma produced a two-wicket burst to rock South Africa's tough chase.

Wolvaardt took 96 balls to bring up her second hundred in a row but her exit in the 42nd over effectively sealed the match in India's favour.

The batter holed out against Sharma and Amanjot Kaur took the catch in her third attempt before being mobbed by her ecstatic teammates.

BRIEF SCORES
India 298 for 7 (Shafali 87, Deepti 58, Mandhana 45, Ghosh 34, Khaka 3-58) **beat South Africa 246** (Wolvaardt 101, Dercksen 35, Deepti 5-39, Shafali 2-36) **by 52 runs**



India players celebrate with the trophy after winning the ICC Women's World Cup following their win over South Africa in Navi Mumbai, India, yesterday. (Reuters)

SPOTLIGHT

Sundar shines as India level T20 series in Hobart

Left-arm seamer Arshdeep makes impact with spell of 3 for 35

Reuters
Hobart

Washington Sundar smashed an unbeaten 49 from 23 balls to drive India to a five-wicket victory over Australia in the third Twenty20 in Hobart yesterday, tying up the five-match series at 1-1 with two games to play.

Tim David earlier bludgeoned a spectacular 38-ball 74 and Marcus Stoinis chipped in with a 64 as Australia posted 186-6 in their 20 overs and it was always going to require a disciplined bowling effort to deny India's batsmen.

Nathan Ellis bowled well for his three for 36 but Josh Hazlewood was sorely missed after he left the squad to prepare for the Ashes in the wake of his Man of the Match performance in the Melbourne victory on Friday.

Hometown seamer Ellis removed Abhishek Sharma (25) and Axar Patel (17) with bouncers and also trapped the other opener, Shubman Gill, in front for 15 but India never really looked under any pressure in the chase.

Sundar hit the first of his four sixes from the second ball he faced and enjoyed a stand of 35 with Tilak Varma (29) for the fifth wicket before Jitesh Sharma (22 not out) helped him to get India across the line in a partnership of 34.

India, who had the rare experience of winning the toss and chose to bowl first, made three changes to their team from their loss in Melbourne on Friday with returns for Sundar, Jitesh and Arshdeep Singh.

"I think it was really important to win the toss, I think it was



India's Washington Sundar (centre) and Jitesh Sharma celebrate victory in the third Twenty20 international against Australia at Bellerive Oval in Hobart yesterday. (AFP)

19 or 20 tosses in a row, so good to break that streak," said India skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

"I think it was a great performance from all the three guys (called in).

"There was a good contribution from everybody, with the ball, with the bat, and I'm very happy to be on the winning side."

Left-arm seamer Arshdeep made an immediate impact by dismissing Travis Head with the fourth ball of the match and Josh Inglis in his second over to put Australia firmly on the back foot.

David, relishing his return to the ground where he plays his domestic T20 cricket, quickly put the hosts back in the ascendant

with an astonishing barrage of boundaries to bring up his ninth half-century off 23 balls.

Spinner Varun Chakravarthy hit back for India by removing Mitch Marsh and Mitchell Owen from the other end with consecutive deliveries but David continued to play his shots as Stoinis joined the party.

David had pummelled eight fours and five sixes when his luck finally ran out and a brilliant catch on the boundary from Tilak off the bowling of Shivam Dube ended his innings and reduced Australia to 118-5.

Stoinis did not quite match the muscular power of David but put on 64 for the sixth wicket with

Matthew Short (26 not out) before holing out at long on in the final over to give Arshdeep (3-35) his third wicket.

"We probably thought we were 20 (runs) short when we came off but to India's credit, they bowled really well," said Australia captain Marsh.

"We had a good crack but they were too good tonight," Marsh added.

The fourth T20 takes place on Thursday on the Gold Coast.

BRIEF SCORES
India 188 for 5 (Washington 49*, Ellis 3-36) **beat Australia 186 for 6** (David 74, Stoinis 64, Arshdeep 3-35) **by five wickets**

COMMENT

McCullum doesn't expect Ashes hangover from ODI series loss



Reuters
Auckland

Coach **Brendon McCullum** believes England's batting struggles in the 3-0 one-day international series loss to New Zealand were format-specific and will have little bearing on the Ashes.

One century from Harry Brook aside, England's top order failed to produce sufficient runs in New Zealand to give their bowlers the opportunity to put pressure on the Black Caps.

McCullum, while obviously disappointed at being whitewashed in his homeland, did not think there would be any carry over into the test series against Australia when it begins in Perth on November 21.

"I don't envisage it," McCullum told reporters in Wellington after the third ODI on Saturday.

"Obviously it's a different form of the game, and it's a completely different kind of challenge which we'll be confronted with as well.

"In T20 cricket, we're going really well. I think in Test cricket, we've got a pretty good template of where we're at, and I think we've performed reasonably well, albeit we've got a huge challenge in front of us.

"I think one-day cricket is clearly the area we need to improve."

McCullum said England had not yet figured out their batting tempo in one-day cricket, an issue further complicated by the sometimes challenging conditions in New Zealand.

Again, the New Zealander thought that would not be an issue in Australia.

"I think when we do come across the trickier conditions in Australia and Test cricket, I feel like we've got a pretty good understanding of how we're going to go about," McCullum said.

"It doesn't guarantee us anything, but it gives us a level of confidence going into that series."

One major plus from the tour to New Zealand was the return to England colours of fast bowler Jofra Archer, who looked in good shape when he played in the final two matches of the ODI series.

"Obviously he had a little bit of time off and was a little bit late to this tour, but he was training the house down in Barbados," said McCullum.

"He'd done a lot of skill work as well as fitness work, and for him to get through two matches with his full quota of overs and build towards what's coming in the next couple of weeks is a big bonus."

McCullum was in charge when England drew the last Ashes series in 2023 and said he could not wait to get across the Tasman Sea for his first taste of the rivalry on Australian soil.

"I'm excited, like proper excited," he said.

"We're incredibly respectful of the challenge that Australia is going to present us.

"We know how hard that tour is going to be. It's going to require a team to stay together right throughout, to be as strong as we can at trying to block out any of the outside noise."

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Zealand's veteran batsman Williamson quits Twenty20 internationals

Reuters
Auckland

Former New Zealand captain Kane Williamson announced his retirement from Twenty20 internationals yesterday but he will play for the Black Caps in the Test series against West Indies.

The 35-year-old batsman has played 93 T20s for his country since making his debut against Zimbabwe in 2011, captaining the side on 75 occasions and leading them to the World Cup final in 2021 and semi-finals in 2016 and 2022.

"It's something that I've loved being a part of for a long period of time and I'm so grateful for the memories and experiences," he said.

"It's the right time for myself and the team. It gives the team clarity for the series moving forward and ahead of their next major focus which is the T20 World Cup. There's so much T20 talent there and the next period will be important to get cricket into these guys and get them ready for the World Cup."

He scored 2,575 runs in T20 internationals with 18 half centuries, including his 85 in a losing cause in the T20 World Cup final against Australia in 2021.

New Zealand cricket said Williamson, who no longer has a central contract, was open-minded about his future in one-day internationals and would definitely play in the three-Test series against West Indies in December.

"Kane's performances as a player and his

service as captain of the T20 side have been nothing short of immense," said NZ Cricket chief executive Scott Weenink.

"His runs in all conditions around the world reflect the world class batsman that he is and are equally matched by the influence of his leadership on and off the field.

"With Kane committed to play the West Indies Test series in December, I'd encourage all Kiwis to take the opportunity to get out and witness one of our greatest ever cricketers play."

New Zealand's Kane Williamson in action during the ICC Champions Trophy semi-final against South Africa in Lahore, Pakistan, on March 5, 2025. (Reuters)



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ELITE

Al Duhail has tough outing against Shabab Al Ahli

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Duhail are set to be thoroughly tested when they host Shabab Al Ahli in the AFC Champions League Elite 2025-26 at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium today.

While Qatar's Al Duhail only have a point show from three matches, UAE's Shabab Al Ahli are third in the standings after two wins and a draw.

Al Duhail have endured a difficult campaign, with their last match ending in a 3-1 defeat to another UAE side - Al Wahda FC.

It was their second successive defeat against a team from the UAE, having previously gone unbeaten in nine matches against sides from their West Asian neighbours.

While goals have not been a problem - having scored in all three of their matches so far - Al Duhail's leaky defence has let them down and they will have to display resilience if they are to stop Shabab Al Ahli, who have found the back of the net six times already this season.

Victory will be a tremendous boost to Shabab Al Ahli's hopes of progressing to the Round of 16 and they will take to the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium pitch with confidence following their good start.

While it will be their first meeting with Al Duhail, Shabab Al Ahli will be seeking a

third consecutive win in the AFC Champions League Elite for the first time.

Guilherme Bala has been in fine form for Shabab Al Ahli, with the winger having created five big chances, the joint most by any player alongside Al Wahda's Dusan Tadic.

Al Gharafa vs Al Hilal

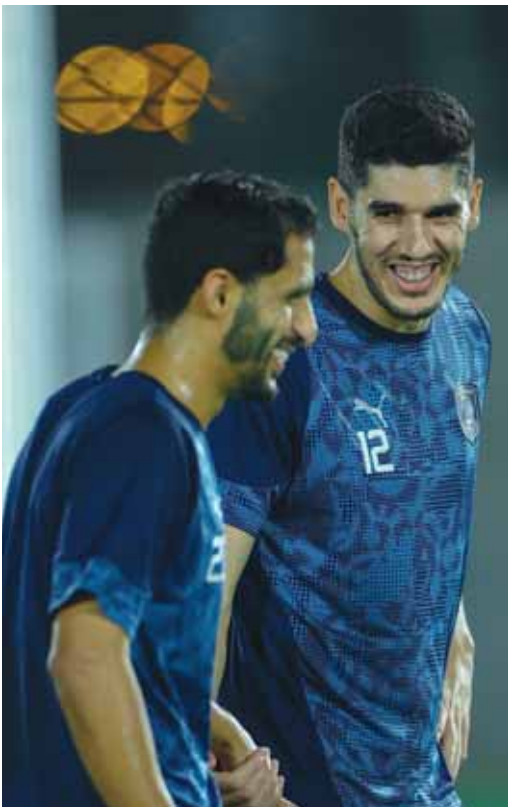
Al Gharafa couldn't have asked for tougher opponents in their bid to stay in the race for a spot in the Round of 16 of the AFC Champions League Elite 2025-26 at the Thani Bin Jassim Stadium today.

The Qatari side host Al Hilal, with the four-time Asian champions the only team with a perfect record across both zones. Al Gharafa failed to sustain the high of defeating Iraq's Al Shorta on Matchday Two as they succumbed to a 4-0 defeat against defending champions Al Ahli Saudi FC two weeks ago.

While they will hope home ground advantage helps them, their track record against Al Hilal is very much in favour of the Saudi Pro League side, who have won five of their seven previous meetings - including the last two.

An admirable trait that Al Hilal have shown this season is their ability to grind out results as they attempt to overcome last season's disappointment of exiting at the semi-final stage.

They have responded to every challenge with calm focus but will have to be tighter at the back, having not been able to keep a clean sheet in all three earlier matches.



Al Duhail's Karim Boudiaf and coach Djamel Belmadi (right) during a practice session yesterday.



TENNIS

Sinner returns to World No. 1 with Paris Masters win

THE ITALIAN WINS THE TITLE WITHOUT DROPPING A SET

AFP
Paris

Jannik Sinner won the Paris Masters for the first time by defeating Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) yesterday as the four-time Grand Slam champion reclaimed his position atop the world rankings.

The 24-year-old's maiden crown in Paris, coupled with incumbent world number one Carlos Alcaraz of Spain crashing out early in the tournament, will see Sinner return to the pinnacle of men's tennis when the ATP rankings are updated today.

The Italian first claimed the number one ranking in June last year and held it for 65 weeks until he lost the US Open title-match to Alcaraz in September. Reclaiming top spot from his rival in Paris will taste even sweeter for Sinner after he went down in a remarkable five-set final to Alcaraz at Roland Garros earlier in the season.

"Today is a very, very special day," Sinner said on-court before thanking his team for their work over the season.

"Felix, amazing week, I know you had a lot of pressure... If you keep playing like this I'm sure you're going to win (big titles)."

Despite missing three months at the start of 2025 after twice testing positive for traces of clostebol in March last year, Sinner has now won five titles this season -- including the Australian Open and Wimbledon. Yesterday's victory was, however, his first 1000-level title since Shanghai last October. For Canadian ninth seed Auger-Aliassime, defeat at the last hurdle in the French capital prevented him from sewing up his spot at the ATP Finals later this month.

Auger-Aliassime is, however, favourite to claim the eighth and



Italy's Jannik Sinner poses with the trophy after winning the Paris Masters yesterday. (AFP)

final berth for the season-ending tournament as his run to the title-match leapfrogged him ahead of Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in the race to Turin.

"It's never easy to lose a final but there's an opponent that I have to congratulate... You push me and all other players to improve," Auger-Aliassime told Sinner. Despite being unable to add a fourth title to his list of achievements so far this season, the 25-year-old has enjoyed a renaissance in 2025 and cemented his place back amongst the world's top 10.

"It's been a beautiful year and I'm sure our (his and his team) moment will come," he added.

In menacing form after dropping only one game in his semi-final win against third seed Alexander Zverev on Saturday, Sinner

picked up immediately where he left off as he broke Auger-Aliassime in the opening game to seize the advantage.

The Canadian did not allow himself to be cowed by the second seed's power hitting from the baseline and dug in to force Sinner to serve out the opening set, which he did in typically efficient fashion. The break point converted by Sinner at the start of the match was the sole one either player managed to fashion in a first set characterised by impeccable serving. Sinner then forced a couple of break opportunities at the very start of the second frame but Auger-Aliassime rallied to save himself on each occasion with a huge first serve.

Both men were striking the ball cleanly as the number of winners

continued to climb. Auger-Aliassime displayed grit to save three break points in the seventh game as Sinner looked to have finally worn the Montreal-native down with the relentless pace and accuracy of his groundstrokes.

Leading 5-4, Auger-Aliassime made a sudden charge on Sinner's serve, taking the game to deuce before an overcooked forehand and a net-cord, which landed on the wrong side of the court for the Canadian, saw the opportunity to force a decider pass him by as the set rumbled towards a tie-break.

In the breaker, Sinner got ahead at 3-2 and never looked back as he raced to the trophy and the top of the world rankings, sealing both with a blistering backhand down the line on his first championship point.

WTA FINALS

Sabalenka blasts past Paolini in opener

AFP
Riyadh

Aryna Sabalenka kicked off her quest for a maiden WTA Finals title by blasting 11 aces on her way to a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Jasmine Paolini in Riyadh yesterday.

The world number one was at her serving best, landing a remarkable 81 per cent of her first serves in during the 70-minute contest to shoot to the summit of the Stefanie Graf Group.

It was Sabalenka's 60th win of the season. She trails only Iga Swiatek on the WTA leaderboard for matches won in 2025.

The 27-year-old Belarusian was handed the year-end world number one trophy in a special ceremony in Riyadh on Saturday.

"That felt super special, of course I'm super happy and super proud of the work that has been done and that things are working and I'm getting better and better every day," said the four-time Grand Slam champion.

"I just hope we'll keep doing what we're doing and hopefully we can stay there."

Sabalenka jumped to 3-0 lead and, despite briefly losing her break advantage, scooped the opening set in just 36 minutes.

She swatted away a pair of break points to hold on to her early lead in the second frame and cruised to the finish line, as Paolini, who is playing singles and doubles this week in Riyadh, ran out of steam.

"She's a tough opponent, we played a lot and every time it's

a tough battle, doesn't matter what the score is, I always have to stay focused," said Sabalenka of the eighth-seeded Italian.

"I think I'm mostly happy with my focus today. I was calm and it felt like everything was in control."

Meanwhile, Mirra Andreeva, who lost her doubles opener alongside Diana Shnaider, said her mysterious absence from the Tokyo was a misjudgement. If she had played she could have secured the eighth and final singles spot in Riyadh this week.

Andreeva was leapfrogged by Elena Rybakina at the last hurdle in the Race to Riyadh. She missed out despite winning a pair of 1000-level tournaments and reaching two Grand Slam quarter-finals this campaign.

Rybakina came from behind in the standings late in the season, winning Ningbo and reaching the Tokyo semi-finals to punch her ticket to Riyadh.

"We just had a talk with our team and we decided to skip the tournament," the 18-year-old Andreeva told AFP yesterday.

"In the end, it turned out to be a wrong decision."

"I guess with experience we're just learning. This is just my, not even a second full year on the WTA Tour, so I think we're just going to learn from this, we're going to get more experience from this and next time I think we're not going to make that mistake again."

Stefanie Graf Group action continues at King Saud University Indoor Arena with defending champion Coco Gauff taking on fellow American Jessica Pegula in the second singles match of the day.



Aryna Sabalenka in action during her round of 16 WTA Finals match against Jasmine Paolini in Riyadh yesterday. (Reuters)

KIPRUTO, OBIRI SEAL KENYAN DOUBLE AT NEW YORK MARATHON

Kenya's Benson Kipruto held off a thrilling late charge from Alexander Mutiso to win the closest New York Marathon finish in history yesterday while compatriot Hellen Obiri smashed the course record to win the women's race.

Kipruto took the tape in two hours, eight minutes and nine seconds to add the New York title to his previous major marathon wins in Boston, Chicago and Tokyo. Mutiso, the 2024 London Marathon winner, finished just 0.16secs behind his compatriot after a gripping duel over the final mile.

Kipruto looked to have done just enough to lead by several metres as the finish line loomed into view in Central Park.

But Mutiso kicked for home in a sprint finish and was just fractionally behind Kipruto as he took the tape.

"The last part was so hard, but I was giving myself morale, saying 'Come on you, you can win it, come on'," Kipruto said after his victory. "I was pushing so hard to make sure I win."

Kenya's Albert Korir, the 2021 New York winner, was third in 2:08:57. Kenyan great Eliud Kipchoge, in

what is expected to be his last major marathon appearance, finished 17th in 2:14:36.

In the women's race, meanwhile, Kenya's Obiri produced a devastating late kick to power to victory home in a new course record time. Obiri, the 2023 New York winner, pulled away from compatriot Sharon Lokedi with just under a mile to go to cross in 2:19:51.

Obiri's time obliterated the 22-year-old course record of 2:22:31 set by Kenya's Margaret Okayo in 2003.

Lokedi, the New York winner in 2022, finished second in 2:20:07

while last year's winner Sheila Chepkirui was third in 2:20:24.

The top three finishers were all under Okayo's old course record. "Amazing, it was a very good run for me," Obiri said afterwards. "We had a very strong field and I said to myself 'let me try to do my best.'"

"In my mind I said to myself to be patient. I knew Sharon was there and she has won the New York Marathon before. I said 'Can I be the first one to win here?'".

Dutch star Sifan Hassan, the reigning Olympic marathon champion, was sixth in 2:24:43.



Kenya's Benson Kipruto and Hellen Obiri celebrate after winning the men's and women's elite races at the New York City Marathon yesterday. (Reuters)

FOOTBALL

Haaland fires City up to second in Premier League

NUNO CELEBRATES FIRST WIN AS WEST HAM BOSS

AFP
Manchester

Erling Haaland scored twice to propel Manchester City up to second in the Premier League with a 3-1 win over Bournemouth yesterday.

The Cherries started the day in second thanks to the longest unbeaten run in the English top flight. But Andoni Iraola's side were undone by the scintillating form of the Norwegian striker, who took his tally to 13 Premier League goals in 10 games.

Haaland's relentless streak is maintaining City's title challenge as they reduced the gap to leaders Arsenal back to six points and edged one point ahead of Liverpool, who they face next weekend. Despite a first defeat in 10 games away to Aston Villa last weekend, Pep Guardiola remained confident his side can pose a threat to Arsenal come May.

There were more encouraging signs for Guardiola as Rayan Cherki and Phil Foden shone in creative roles, while Nico O'Riley became the first City player other than Haaland to score in the Premier League for over a month.

Buoyed by their unbeaten streak since losing at Liverpool on the opening night of the season, Bournemouth started brightly.

However, their brave high line was exposed on 17 minutes when Cherki's header allowed Haaland to gallop clear from inside his own half to slam past Djordje Petrovic. The visitors levelled eight minutes later when Gianluigi Donnarumma claimed he was impeded as the Italian tried



Manchester City's Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring the goal against Bournemouth in Manchester yesterday. (AFP)

to collect a corner and Tyler Adams thrashed home the loose ball.

But Haaland restored City's advantage before half-time by racing onto another Cherki pass in behind the Bournemouth defence to round Petrovic and slot home his 26th goal for club and country this season.

The 25-year-old also became only the third player to ever score multiple goals in four consecutive Premier League home games after Luis Suarez and Robbie Fowler. Guardiola has called for greater contributions from his other attacking players to lessen

the goalscoring burden on his prolific number nine. Still no City player other than Haaland has scored more than once in the league this season, but O'Riley chipped in from full-back to seal the three points.

Foden was the creator this time as O'Riley strode forward before arrowing a low shot into the far corner. Haaland was denied the chance of a hat-trick as he was replaced by Omar Marmoush eight minutes from time with one eye on facing his former club Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Wednesday.

A double was enough to keep City still within range despite Arsenal's rampant run of nine consecutive wins and seven straight clean sheets in all competitions.

Earlier in the day, Nuno Espirito Santo celebrated his first win as West Ham manager as his spirited team battled from behind to beat Newcastle 3-1 at the London Stadium. The Hammers remain in the relegation zone after just their second Premier League win of the season but are now just three points behind 17th-placed Burnley, whom they play next week.

Eddie Howe's Newcastle took the lead courtesy of a fine early strike from Jacob Murphy but Lucas Paqueta levelled and an own goal from the unfortunate Sven Botman gave the home team the advantage at half-time.

The visitors made wholesale changes in the second half but were blunt in attack and Tomas Soucek made sure of all three points for West Ham in the closing moments.

Nuno was appointed West Ham boss in late September, just over two weeks after he was sacked by Nottingham Forest, who are also in the drop zone.

The Portuguese, who has had to be patient in waiting for his first win, said it was "terrific to hear the noise at the London Stadium".

"The players are realising that winning in the Premier League, we have to work very hard," he told the BBC.

"We will do it again. The win makes it easier, there are smiles and the legs feel easier.

"We see slight improvements on the pitch. We have to create a platform on the pitch!"

Inter snapping at Napoli's heels, Roma poised to pounce

ROME: Inter Milan were handed a 2-1 win at Verona by a late own goal yesterday to move to within a point of stuttering Serie A leaders Napoli. Defending champions Napoli slugged out a 0-0 deadlock with rising force Como on Saturday. Inter, last season's Champions League finalists, took to the pitch knowing a win would leave them breathing down Napoli's neck. Winless so far this season, Verona fell behind in the 16th minute when Inter's Piotr Zielinski produced a moment of magic. The Polish midfielder arrived on the edge of the box to

fire home a thunderous volley from a poorly cleared corner. Giovane levelled for Verona on 40 minutes and the sides went back to the dressing rooms level at 1-1.

In a second half under relentless rain, it appeared the game would peter out, until a late cross from Nicolo Barella was turned agonisingly into his own goal by Verona defender Martin Frese three minutes into added time. "It was one of those matches that's easier to lose than win but we did okay, we showed character," said Inter coach Cristian Chivu.

Goal hero Zielinski praised Chivu's leadership. "His message is sinking in, you get moments like this in a season, when it's hard to win," he said. With Napoli on 22 points and Inter on 21, Roma could climb clear on 24 if they can navigate an away win at AC Milan later. Struggling Fiorentina lost 1-0 at home to Lecce and remain winless from 10 Serie A games, while Torino and Pisa drew 2-2. On Saturday, Luciano Spalletti made a winning start in charge of Juventus as his new team beat Jamie Vardy's Cremonese 2-1.

Longines Hathab - Qatar Equestrian Tour: Haidan clinches Diamond Tour title



Mohammed Saeed Haidan clinched the Diamond Tour title as the sixth round of the Longines Hathab - Qatar Equestrian Tour concluded on Saturday night at the Qatar Equestrian Federation's outdoor arena. Haidan topped the 150cm competition with an impressive time of 59.91 seconds aboard Quick Nick. Saudi rider Khaled al-Eid claimed both second and third places, clocking 60.37 seconds on Raker DMC and 63.05 seconds on Q Layen, respectively.

In the 120cm Bronze Round, young riders delivered outstanding performances. Khalid al-Hadi secured first place with a time of 53.23 seconds riding Doremi du Flot Z. Jaber Rashid al-Amri finished second in 53.74 seconds on Apollon du Banney, while Abdulaziz Fahd al-Eid took third in 55.48 seconds on Kayenne Of de Rocky Mounten. In the team event of the same round, Team The Dome captured the top spot with a combined time of 111.95 seconds. Team Ajwad followed in second with 125.73 seconds, while Team Marwan Al Shaqab finished third in 127.24 seconds. Meanwhile, in the Young Riders Tour (90cm), Khalifa bin Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani emerged victorious with a swift round of 29.06 seconds aboard Zion II Vdk. Shereed Nasser al-Kaabi came second in 29.18 seconds on Khowr Al Udayd, and Sultan Jassim al-Suwaidi rounded off the podium in 29.94 seconds riding Violet Van Het Koetshuis.



MATCH SCHEDULE FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025™

FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025		Group Stage																Round of 32		Round of 16		Quarter-Finals		Semi-Finals		3 rd Place & Final	
		MONDAY 3 November	TUESDAY 4 November	WEDNESDAY 5 November	THURSDAY 6 November	FRIDAY 7 November	SATURDAY 8 November	SUNDAY 9 November	MONDAY 10 November	TUESDAY 11 November	WEDNESDAY 12 November	THURSDAY 13 November	FRIDAY 14 November	SATURDAY 15 November	SUNDAY 16 November	MONDAY 17 November	TUESDAY 18 November	WEDNESDAY 19 November	THURSDAY 20 November	FRIDAY 21 November	SATURDAY 22 November	SUNDAY 23 November	MONDAY 24 November	TUESDAY 25 November	WEDNESDAY 26 November	THURSDAY 27 November	
Aspire Zone	Pitch 1 Mohammed Ghanim	5 16:00 SEN v CRO	11 16:00 MEX v KOR	19 16:00 PAR v UZB	27 16:00 JPN v NCL	37 16:00 GER v PRK	47 16:00 MLI v AUT	52 16:30 MAR v NCL	62 16:30 COL v PRK	68 16:30 UZB v PAN	REST DAYS		16:00	16:00	REST DAYS		16:00	REST DAYS		16:00	REST DAYS		16:00	REST DAYS		16:00	
	Pitch 2 Ibrahim Khalfan	7 17:45 ARG v BEL	13 17:45 GER v COL	23 17:45 MLI v NZL	32 17:45 FIJ v BEL	35 17:45 MEX v CIV	41 17:45 USA v TJK	53 17:45 UAE v SEN	64 17:45 HON v IDN	66 17:45 BFA v TJK	REST DAYS		17:45	17:45	REST DAYS		17:45	REST DAYS		17:45	REST DAYS		17:45	REST DAYS		17:45	
	Pitch 3 Bader Bilal	2 15:30 RSA v BOL	15 15:30 BRA v HON	20 15:30 PAN v IRL	26 15:30 BOL v ITA	33 15:30 ENG v HAI	42 15:30 CZE v BFA	55 15:30 FIJ v ARG	59 15:30 SUI v MEX	69 15:30 UGA v FRA	REST DAYS		15:30	15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	
	Pitch 4 Khaled Salman	4 18:15 NCL v POR	9 18:15 ENG v VEN	17 18:15 USA v BFA	30 18:15 UAE v CRO	36 18:15 SUI v KOR	43 18:15 PAR v PAN	54 17:45 CRO v CRC	63 17:45 ZAM v BRA	65 17:45 CZE v USA	REST DAYS		18:15	18:15	REST DAYS		18:15	REST DAYS		18:15	REST DAYS		18:15	REST DAYS		18:15	
	Pitch 5 Khaled Ballan	3 16:30 JPN v MAR	10 16:30 HAI v EGY	24 16:30 AUT v KSA	31 16:30 ARG v TUN	34 16:30 EGY v VEN	45 16:30 FRA v CAN	51 16:30 POR v JPN	61 16:30 SLV v GER	67 16:30 IRL v PAR	REST DAYS		16:30	16:30	REST DAYS		16:30	REST DAYS		16:30	REST DAYS		16:30	REST DAYS		16:30	
	Pitch 7 Mansour Muftah	1 18:45 QAT v ITA	16 18:45 IDN v ZAM	21 18:45 FRA v CHI	25 18:45 QAT v RSA	39 18:45 BRA v IDN	48 18:45 KSA v NZL	49 18:45 BOL v QAT	57 18:45 EGY v ENG	71 18:45 KSA v MLI	REST DAYS		18:45	18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	
	Pitch 8 Mahmoud Soufi	6 15:30 CRC v UAE	12 15:30 CIV v SUI	18 15:30 TJK v CZE	28 15:30 POR v MAR	38 15:30 SLV v COL	46 15:30 UGA v CHI	56 15:30 BEL v TUN	60 15:30 KOR v CIV	70 15:30 CHI v CAN	REST DAYS		15:30	15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	REST DAYS		15:30	
	Pitch 9 Adel Malalla	8 18:45 TUN v FIJ	14 18:45 PRK v SLV	22 18:45 CAN v UGA	29 18:45 SEN v CRC	40 18:45 ZAM v HON	44 18:45 IRL v UZB	50 18:45 ITA v RSA	58 18:45 VEN v HAI	72 18:45 NZL v AUT	REST DAYS		18:45	18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	REST DAYS		18:45	
	Khalifa International Stadium											REST DAYS				REST DAYS			REST DAYS			REST DAYS			REST DAYS		104 19:00 FINAL
Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	Group F	Group G	Group H	Group I	Group J	Group K	Group L																
Qatar (QAT) Italy (ITA) South Africa (RSA) Bolivia (BOL)	Japan (JPN) Morocco (MAR) New Caledonia (NCL) Portugal (POR)	Senegal (SEN) Croatia (CRO) Costa Rica (CRC) United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Argentina (ARG) Belgium (BEL) Tunisia (TUN) Fiji (FIJ)	England (ENG) Venezuela (VEN) Haiti (HAI) Egypt (EGY)	Mexico (MEX) Korea Republic (KOR) Côte d'Ivoire (CIV) Switzerland (SUI)	Germany (GER) Colombia (COL) Korea DPR (PRK) El Salvador (SLV)	Brazil (BRA) Honduras (HON) Indonesia (IDN) Zambia (ZAM)	USA (USA) Burkina Faso (BFA) Tajikistan (TJK) Czechia (CZE)	Paraguay (PAR) Uzbekistan (UZB) Panama (PAN) Rep. of Ireland (IRL)	France (FRA) Chile (CHI) Canada (CAN) Uganda (UGA)	Mali (MLI) New Zealand (NZL) Austria (AUT) Saudi Arabia (KSA)																