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FIFA U17 WORLD CUP QATAR 2025

U-17 FIFA WORLD CUP

Brazil vs France showdown headlines round of 16 matches

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Round of 16 at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar promises another thrilling day, headlined by tournament heavyweights Brazil and France clashing at the Aspire Zone in Doha. Their meeting is one of the most eagerly awaited clashes of the competition, with Brazil arriving in confident mood after showing remarkable resilience — playing over 80 minutes with ten men against Paraguay before ultimately prevailing on penalties.

Last edition's runners-up France also had to work hard to overcome Colombia, and now hope to claim what would be their third victory over South American opposition at these finals.

Italy enter the next stage with growing confidence following a controlled win over Czech Republc, having conceded only once so far. They now face Uzbekistan, who recovered impressively after conceding a late equaliser to Croatia, ultimately booking their place through penalties.

Uganda's remarkable debut World Cup run also continues, as they prepare for a tough all-African contest against Burkina Faso. The Burkinabe arrive with high momentum after eliminating reigning champions Germany.



In another interesting match, Portugal face Mexico today.

Coach Oscar Barro said: "Uganda have made it to the Round of 16, which shows what a quality side they are, so we need to prepare accordingly. We played them in a friendly match, but every team has changed its style and appearance since then."

Mexico remain one of the most dramatic stories of the tournament, with goalkeeper Santiago Lopez scoring the decisive penalty against Argentina. They next face Portugal, whose attacking threat is led by the tournament's top scorer, Anisio Cabral.

Switzerland continue their impressive unbeaten streak at U-17 World Cups and face a confident Republic of Ireland side embracing their first-ever appearance.

Switzerland coach Luigi Pisino said: "They're a team we know well. They have an impressive system and outstanding individual talents. This is the kind of match that makes a World Cup special."

North Korea meet Japan in an all-Asian showdown featuring the creativity of Kim Yu-jin against Japan's strong defensive unit and standout goalkeeper Shuji Muramatsu.

Austria, one of the tournament's most efficient teams, challenge an England side growing stronger with each match. After England's win over South Korea, captain Seth Ridgeon said: "We're building momentum and improving with each round."

Morocco complete the lineup after a dramatic late comeback against the USA, setting up an all-African battle with Mali, who advanced by defeating Zambia.



ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY GAMES

Qatar's men's 3x3 basketball team defeats Ivory Coast

In the women's 3x3 basketball competition, Qatar lost its opening match 11-16 to Algeria

By Sports Reporter
Riyadh

Qatar's men's 3x3 basketball team opened its campaign at the Islamic Solidarity Games with a 21-13 victory over Ivory Coast in Riyadh yesterday. The team will continue its first-round matches today with encounters against Turkiye and Iran.

In the women's competition, Qatar lost its opening match 11-16 to Algeria. The team will look to bounce back today against Iran and Egypt in its final group-stage games. The top two teams from each group in both the men's and women's competitions will qualify for tomorrow's finals. The Qatari men's squad features Dejan Janic, Ahmed Mohammed, Nadim Muslic, and Miho Harasic. The women's roster includes Alaa Sulaiman, Mona Sulaiman, and Sama Jasser.



Qatar players in action against Ivory Coast in the men's 3x3 basketball during the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh yesterday.



Qatar's Noor Mohammed and Maram Fatnasi were eliminated in the taekwondo quarters.

QATAR HANDBALL TEAM WRAPS UP GROUP STAGE AGAINST MALDIVES

Qatar's handball team faces the Maldives today in its final Group A match. The match is largely a formality, with Qatar already assured of first place in the group and a semifinal berth following convincing wins over Iran (39-23) and the UAE (41-24).

Given the gulf in quality, Qatar is expected to claim a third straight victory, as the Maldives have suffered heavy defeats to the UAE (10-53) and Iran (14-57).

The UAE and Iran will meet to determine the second semi-finalist from Group A. In Group B, Bahrain face Iraq, while Saudi Arabia meet Kuwait, with both matches deciding the two semi-final qualifiers.

The semi-finals will take place tomorrow. Qatar won the gold medal at the previous edition in Konya, Turkiye, in 2022, defeating the hosts 26-23 in the final.

ASHRAF AND AHMED FINISH FIFTH AND SIXTH IN HAMMER THROW

Qatar's Ashraf al-Saifi and Ahmed al-Saifi concluded their participation in the men's hammer throw yesterday. Ashraf placed fifth with a throw of 71.59m, while Ahmed finished sixth with 66.87m. The event was held at Prince Faisal bin Fahd Sports City.

Qatar's athletics participation continues today. Ahmed Jibril will compete in the shot put final, while Ashraf Osman and Hussein Ibrahim run the first round of the 400m, and Abubaker Haidar races in the opening round of the 800m. In para athletics, Abdulrahman Abdulqader finished sixth in the F33/F34 discus throw with a mark of 27.55m.



In para athletics, Abdulrahman Abdulqader finished sixth in the F33/F34 discus throw.

QATARI FENCERS EXIT IN MEN'S EPEE COMPETITION

Qatar's fencers Mohammed Abdul Ali and Abdulrahman al-Jadra exited the men's epee competition held yesterday at Riyadh Boulevard. Abdul Ali was defeated 13-15 in the quarter-finals by Azerbaijan's Vahab Fatullayev, while al-Jadra was eliminated in the round of 16 after a narrow 14-15 loss to his compatriot Abdul Ali.

Abdul Ali's campaign featured victories over Iran's Amir Hossein (5-3), Oman's Ahmed Kaskas (4-2), and Libya's Ahmed al-Sahiri (15-1), alongside losses to Uzbekistan's Mirikhan Teymurov (3-5) and Turkiye's Doruk Erolsevik (1-4).

Al-Jadra registered wins against Indonesia's Andy Lukman (5-2), the UAE's Imran al-Balushi (5-4), Saudi Arabia's Khalifa al-Amiri (4-3), Iran's Mohammad Esmaeili (4-3), Cameroon's Mohamedou Faisal (5-1), and Pakistan's Ahmed Khan (15-1) before bowing out to his teammate. Qatar's fencing participation continues today with Adham al-Deeb and Khaled Aref Hussein in the men's individual foil, while Dhikra al-Abdullah and Sheikha Jassim compete in the women's individual épée.

NOOR AND MARAM ELIMINATED IN TAEKWONDO

Qatar's Noor Mohammed and Maram Fatnasi were both eliminated in the quarter-finals of the taekwondo competition. Noor fell to Iran's Malika Vakili in the over-70kg category, while Maram lost to Uzbekistan's Diyorkun Azizova in the under-63kg division.

CAMEL RACING AND WRESTLING STARTS TODAY

Camel racing events begin today at the Janadriyah racecourse as part of Riyadh 2025. The men's 2,000m heats start at 7:45am and 8am, serving as qualifiers ahead of Thursday's finals. The programme includes 2,000m and 8,000m races for both men and women.

Wrestling competitions also begin today, with 202 wrestlers from 33 countries taking part. Qatar is represented by Arif Mohammadi (67kg) and Shaheen Mohammed (77kg). The tournament features 18 weight classes. Matches run over three days at Riyadh City Boulevard and include preliminaries, repechage and finals, followed by medal ceremonies.

TURKIYE EXTENDS LEAD IN MEDALS TABLE

Turkiye has extended its lead in the overall medal standings, reaching 117 medals (59 gold, 34 silver, 24 bronze).

Uzbekistan are second with 61 medals (20 gold, 21 silver, 20 bronze), followed by Iran in third with 54 (17 gold, 15 silver, 22 bronze). Egypt sit fourth with 36 medals (12 gold, 10 silver, 14 bronze), while Kazakhstan are fifth with 40 (11 gold, 13 silver, 16 bronze).

CRICKET

PREVIEW

Fearless England ready to shake off weight of failure

England have not won an Ashes Test in Australia since 2011

Reuters
Melbourne

Recent history will weigh heavily on the shoulders of England's players when they take the field in Perth on Friday seeking to end a lamentable run of Ashes failure in Australia.

They have lost 13 of their previous 15 Test matches Down Under, drawing the other two, and you must go all the way back to 2011 for the last England victory.

Confident noises are coming out of England's camp, though, and whether or not Brendon McCullum's side can turn the tide, one thing is for sure, the touring side will not die wondering.

England have resembled lambs to the slaughter in their last three away Ashes series, losing the tactical and psychological battles and having technical frailties ruthlessly exposed.

This time, however, under inspirational captain Ben Stokes they look set to fight fire with fire.

Pace-bowling greats James Anderson and Stuart Broad may have left the stage but England boast six fast bowlers capable of denting the toughest Australian armour, top-order batsmen who can score at dizzying rates and a century-hungry Joe Root freed from the shackles of being captain.

"It's going to be hard. But if they get everything right, I look at this and go, actually, England can definitely win the series without a shadow of a doubt," said Alastair Cook, player of the series when England last won in Australia in 2010-11. "The way this England side plays, they've got a really good chance."



England's Ben Stokes with head coach Brendon McCullum during the practice session. *(Reuters)*

ENGLAND'S FEARLESS APPROACH

The fearless front-foot approach that coach McCullum and captain Stokes have ingrained in England has produced 25 wins, 14 defeats and only two draws in 41 Tests.

So-called Bazball produced fireworks and acrimony in equal measure two years ago in England when Australia retained the Ashes with a 2-2 draw having won the opening two matches.

At times, Australia were knocked off the rails by England's full-gas approach, but critics accused the hosts of being architects of their own downfall, especially a frenzied day one of the first Test when Stokes declared on 393-8 with Root unbeaten on 118 and Australia won the match by two wickets. With the weapons at his disposal, McCullum is unlikely to tone down his team's cavalier approach, but former England fast bowler Steven Finn reckons Bazball will be used selectively to stop the Australians dictating terms.

"I don't like the term Bazball," Finn, another member of the 2010-11 squad, told Reuters.

"But I think that the manner in which they play is part of the reason why I think they've got their best chance in 15 years of regaining the Ashes Down Under, because in 2010-11 when we went down there and won, we pushed back against Australia.

"When Australia are on top, you need to be able to push back rather than just fall like a pack of cards as happened in the last three series down there. There's this Australian media rhetoric about (Bazball) being arrogant. I actually think the Aussie public will respect it as a team playing positively to try and force results."

Stokes is seeking to become only the sixth post-war England captain to win an Ashes series in Australia, and the 34-year-old can be assured a lively reception from the locals in Perth.

"One thing Australia know is if they poke the bear a bit, they know what Stokes can do," Cook said. "I think if there's ever a player in England's history who Australia feared, Stokes is up there."

FOCUS

Lack of proper transition leaves Australia reliant on ageing team for the 2025 Ashes series

Reuters
Melbourne

Australia are favourites to retain the Ashes over the next two months but anything short of their usual dominance over England on home soil is sure to reignite the debate over the pace of transition to a younger generation.

Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Nathan Lyon, Steve Smith, Usman Khawaja and Travis Head are all in their mid to late 30s and form the core of the team bidding to keep hold of the urn for another 18 months.

It would be a surprise, however, if all seven were still around when Australia tour South Africa next September, let alone when the Ashes rivalry resumes in England in 2027.

That so many have reached such an advanced stage of their careers without obvious replacements is certainly a reflection of their quality, but will be a matter of concern in the case of more injuries during the series.

"No doubt, (the selectors) are conscious they have half a dozen or so guys coming pretty close to the end of their careers," former captain Greg Chappell said. "It's a matter of having the replacements available, that's the difficult part of it."

Another former captain, Steve Waugh, launched a shot at George Bailey in the run-up to the Ashes, accusing the head selector of failing to take tough decisions and allowing senior players to pick the side.

"You just want to make sure that three or four players don't go out at the same time. That leaves a big hole in the team," he said.

"So they've got to just make sure that it is a transition, but not all at once."

Australia's fast bowling stocks will definitely be tested in the series opener with skipper Cummins and Hazlewood - both members of the triumvirate that has kept Australia near the top of the test world rankings for a decade - absent injured.

Scott Boland, 36, will win his 15th cap bowling with 35-year-old Starc in Perth, while Brendan Doggett looks set to earn his first at the age of 31, the only quick to debut for Australia since 2021.

It was at the top of the batting order that Waugh's criticism was mainly aimed, however, with the suggestion the job of identifying a successor to David Warner, who retired from tests in January last year, had been botched.

Usman Khawaja, who will be 39 during the series, remains a lock-in as one opener despite diminishing returns from a career that started in the last Test England won on Australian soil in 2011.

Youngsters Sam Konstas and Nathan McSweeney have been tried and discarded for now, and it looks like the uncapped Jake Weatherald or 31-year-old Marnus Labuschagne will walk out with Khawaja in Perth.

Chappell, who is optimistic about the talent emerging in Australia, thinks players need to be given time to prove themselves at test level.

"There is nobody that's ever been a Test-ready player straight out of domestic cricket," he said.

"Domestic cricket is where you identify yourself as someone who's got a chance and then if you're selected, you get to find out whether you're good enough to make that next step and take those challenges."

BODYLINE AND BRADMAN TO BOTHAM AND STOKES: FIVE GREAT ASHES SERIES


Former cricketing greats Shane Warne (left) of Australia and Sir Ian Botham seen in 2015.

Perth, Australia: England and Australia begin the latest edition of the Ashes in Perth on Friday with the visitors looking to wrestle back the urn for the first time since 2015.
AFP Sport looks at five of the most memorable series between cricket's oldest enemies, a rivalry which stretches back to 1882:

2019: STOKES HEROICS, BRILLIANT SMITH

Australia retained the Ashes as holders despite the series being drawn for the first time since 1972, with Steve Smith grabbing headlines on his return from a ball-tampering ban by excelling in the face of taunting English crowds.
He batted on a different level to everybody else, scoring 774 runs in just seven innings at an average of more than 110, including back-to-back centuries in the opening Test at Edgbaston.
Had he not missed three innings after being hit by a Jofra Archer bouncer, he might have got near Donald Bradman's all-time record of 974 runs in a Test series, set in 1930.
But the highlight of the series was England's phenomenal Ben Stokes-inspired win in the third Test at Headingley.
With just one wicket remaining and 73 runs needed, Stokes protected tailender Jack Leach to steer his side to 362-9, their highest successful run chase in Tests. with a memorable unbeaten 135.

2005: ENGLAND WIN THRILLER

The 2005 Ashes was one of the greatest series in cricket history and saw England triumph over their fiercest rivals for the first time in nearly 19 years.
It appeared to be business as usual for long-suffering England fans when Australia won the first Test at Lord's by 239 runs.
But when Australia fast bowler Glenn McGrath was ruled out of the second Test at Edgbaston after treading on a ball during practice on the morning of the match, England took charge.
England's Andrew Flintoff starred with both bat and ball and when Australia were 175-8, chasing 282 for victory, a home win looked assured.
But Australia edged their way closer before last man Michael Kasprowicz was neatly caught behind off Steve Harmison to give England victory by a mere two runs.
The third Test was drawn and England survived a brilliant four-wicket burst from leg-spin great Shane Warne to win the fourth Test at Trent Bridge.
England, now 2-1 up and needing to avoid defeat in the fifth Test to regain the Ashes, were in danger of losing on the last day at the Oval until Kevin Pietersen's breathtaking 158 and a fine fifty from Ashley Giles rescued a draw.

1981: BOTHAM'S ASHES

Rarely has one man done as much to win an Ashes as Ian Botham in 1981.
He started the series as England captain, but after defeat in the first Test at Nottingham and the embarrassment of bagging a pair in a draw at Lord's, Botham resigned as skipper.
England were in dire straits after being made to follow-on in the third Test at Headingley, with former England wicketkeeper Godfrey Evans - who had become an odds-setter for a bookmakers - making them 500/1 outsiders to win the match.
Botham's astonishing counter-attack innings of 149 not out, however, meant Australia were set a target of 130 before fast bowler Bob Willis's inspired 8-43 saw England to an astounding 18-run win.
Botham's scarcely believable return of five for one in 28 balls at Edgbaston ensured England won the fourth Test by 29 runs.
There were more heroics in the fifth Test when Botham's blistering 118 set up a 103-run victory at Old Trafford to clinch the series 3-1.

1948: AUSTRALIA'S 'INVINCIBLES'

An Australia side captained by Don Bradman in his final Test series swept all before them in an undefeated tour during which they won the Ashes 4-0.
Underlining their superiority, Australia were set a seemingly impossible target of 404 on the last day to win the fourth Test at Headingley.
They got there for the loss of just three wickets, with Arthur Morris making 182 and Bradman an unbeaten 173.
But the series is best remembered for Bradman's final Test innings at the Oval when, needing four for an average of exactly a hundred, he was bowled for a duck by leg-spinner Eric Hollies and had to make do with a mark of 99.94.

1932/33: BODYLINE BARRAGE

The most controversial Ashes series of them all was brought about by a desire to curb Bradman's phenomenal run-scoring.
England captain Douglas Jardine's response was to deploy "leg theory" - bowling short to a packed leg-side field - with supremely accurate fast bowler Harold Larwood the spearhead of the attack.
It worked to the extent England won the series 4-1, with Bradman's average for the series reduced to 56.57
But the use of what became known as "Bodyline", which saw batsmen having to defend themselves rather than their stumps, was condemned as "unsporting" by Australian officials and almost provoked a breakdown in diplomatic relations.

SA coach lauds Bavuma as one of the best in the world

Kolkata: South Africa coach Shukri Conrad hailed captain **Temba Bavuma** as one of the best batters in the world over the past two years after his gutsy match-winning innings at Eden Gardens secured a 30-run win in the first Test against hosts India.
Bavuma remains unbeaten in his 11 Tests as skipper, winning 10 of them to go with a draw, and in that period has averaged 57.00 with the bat.
His unbeaten 55 on a treacherous wicket in the second innings on Sunday helped his side set a modest victory target of 124 for their hosts, who were bowled out for 93.
No other batter in the match got into the 40s.
"Having our best player (Bavuma) back brings a calmness. In the last 18-24 months he has been one of the best players in the world and he showed that again," Conrad told reporters.
"An innings where he was clear in how he wanted to do it and went against the grain of everyone else.
That was the difference between the two sides.
"He was comfortable that if he stuck to his gameplan, which was that he will get beaten by balls on the outside, but as long as he is not beaten by balls on the inside, he will bat through."
Conrad said he believed both teams were surprised by how the wicket behaved on the first day.
"We thought the wicket would (turn) on day one, but we did not bargain for as much turn and bounce, that threw both sides," he said, adding the victory, South Africa's first in India since 2010, will give the team a huge boost in confidence.
"We won the World Test Championship final earlier in the year but this is right up there for us," he said. "Playing at Eden Gardens and doing something we have not done for 15 years, you can only dream of coming here (and winning). The psyche now is that while we might not have the ability that a lot of teams have, or we have not tapped into that ability yet, what we lack in that we have certainly made up for in terms of playing as a unit.
"The resilience that we showed, we never give up and I am so proud in that group in terms of the belief that we have got."
The second and final Test will start in Guwahati on Saturday.

BOTTOMLINE

India confront batting blind spot after Kolkata pitch boomerangs

Reuters
Kolkata

India have long curated home tracks that accentuate turn, but the assumption their own batters would master such conditions no longer appears safe following their defeat in the opening test against South Africa.

On a treacherous Eden Gardens' pitch, the ball bounced irregularly and turned sharply and none of the teams posted 200. Touring captain Temba Bavuma's unbeaten 55 was the highest score by any batter.

India, a batter short as skipper Shubman Gill retired hurt in the first innings with a neck injury and did not bat in the second, were bundled out for 93 chasing 124 for victory.

South African spinners claimed 12 of the 18 Indian wickets in the match exposing the home batters' vulnerabilities against the turning ball.

South Africa off-spinner Simon Harmer finished with a match haul of eight wickets to bag the player-of-the-match award.

It was jarring to home fans used to watching nimble-footed and supple-wristed Indian batters dominate spin.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir mounted a spirited defence of the much-maligned pitch on Sunday, shifting the conversation from conditions to competence.

"The point is that you should be able to know how to play turn," Gambhir said in an assessment of their batting that led to the sobering defeat inside three days. "I felt that if you are willing to put your head down and if you have a solid defence, if you have the temperament, you can definitely score runs. Yes, it might not be a wicket which is going to (allow you to) be very, very flamboyant, where you can play those big shots. But if you are willing to put your head down, definitely it's a wicket where you can score."

Opener K L Rahul's 39 in the first innings was the highest score by an Indian batter in the match.

COMMENT

Sinner hails 'amazing' ATP Finals triumph

AFP
Turin, Italy



Jannik Sinner cut a delighted figure on Sunday after he finished a turbulent season in the best possible fashion, seeing off rival Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to retain his ATP Finals title.

Italian Sinner was roared to a 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 victory by supporters in Turin, who watched their idol cap a landmark season in which he became the first of his countrymen to win Wimbledon.

"It's (an) amazing season... This year making four Grand Slam finals, coming here, winning here, having this big streak in end of the year, it's amazing," Sinner told reporters.

"But mostly I feel to be a better player than last year, I think this is the most important. It's all part of the process. I always say and believe that if you keep working and trying to be a better player, the results, they're going to come. This year it was like this."

Sinner collapsed to the ground with a mixture of joy and relief after sealing his triumph at the season-ending tournament where he hasn't lost a match since being beaten in the 2023 final by Novak Djokovic.

The win brought to a close a year in which the 24-year-old had to bounce back from a three-month ban, which chopped out a large chunk of his season despite the World Anti-Doping Agency accepting that the Italian was accidentally contaminated with banned substance clostebol in March 2024.

"I was thinking about a lot and at the same time not a lot. There was a lot of tension because if I lost that point we go into a tie-break and then it becomes a different match," added Sinner.

"But in that moment I was probably more relieved about the end of the season. I had a similar feeling last year but it was different.

"This year it was a more powerful feeling for a variety of reasons. It was a really emotional moment."

Sinner's win was his second over Alcaraz this year and a big moment after he lost the year-end world number one spot to the Spaniard, who won eight tournaments this year and took his Grand Slam tally to six.

Alcaraz was left to rue missed opportunities at key moments of a typically tight match between the two best players in the world, with his backhand failing him when he had chances to strike.

"Right now I have some points and some shots on my mind. For example, the backhand volley that I missed. I missed a few of the backhand volleys... which I'm really disappointed in," said Alcaraz.

"I would say that was the key because it was a really important moment that I didn't finish the point with the backhand volley... I think that was a really important shot that I didn't do well today."

Gauff-led holders USA to face Spain, Argentina at United Cup

Top seeds and two-time champions the United States, spearheaded by Coco Gauff and Taylor Fritz, were drawn yesterday alongside Spain and Argentina for their defence of the mixed-teams United Cup in Australia.

Gauff and Fritz, ranked three and six in the world respectively, begin their 2026 season in Perth at the fourth edition of the tournament from January 2-11 ahead of the Australian Open at Melbourne Park later in the month.

Spain are led by Juame Munar and Jessica Bouzas Maneiro.

World number one Carlos Alcaraz has opted instead to play an exhibition match in South Korea against Jannik Sinner in preparation for the season-opening Grand Slam.

Four-time major winner Naomi Osaka will also start her campaign in Perth, lining up for Japan with 2019 junior Wimbledon champion Shintaro Mochizuki.

They were drawn in a tough group alongside Britain, headlined by Jack Draper and Emma Raducanu, and a Greek team featuring Stefanos Tsitsipas and Maria Sakkari.

Italy, France and Switzerland round out the Perth groupings.

World number two Iga Swiatek and Hubert Hurkacz lead Poland's quest for revenge after being beaten by Team USA in the final in 2025 and Germany a year earlier.

47TH WORLD MILITARY PARACHUTING CHAMPIONSHIPS QATAR 2025

Thrilling contests seen at parachuting show in Qatar

Qatar Air Sports Committee creates a buzz for participants, school students and fans on day three

By Sports Reporter
Al Khor





HE Brigadier General Mohammed bin Zayed al-Otaibi, Commander of the Joint Special Forces and Head of the Qatar Air Sports Committee, visits the 47th CISM World Parachuting Championships 2025 at Umm Al Shokhot Airport near Al Khor.



First Lt Mansoor Omer al-Karbi



First Lt Ahmad Ali Ahmad



First Lt Yousuf Abdullah al-Janahi



School students at the Qatar Air Sports Museum.

The competitions for the 47th World Military Parachuting Championships Qatar 2025, organised by the Qatar Air Sports Committee (QASC), yesterday witnessed thrilling contests among the participants at Umm Al Shokhot Airport near Al Khor.

The event, which runs from Nov 15-22, has attracted 320 male and female parachutists from 30 countries. The parachutists are engaged in strong and exciting competition for titles and medals of the three events designated in the men's and women's categories: Formation Skydiving, Style and Accuracy Landing.

In the Accuracy Landing competition, Qatar yesterday delivered a skillful performance, successfully sharing the lead with the Czech team. Separately, yesterday's action included the Formation Skydiving and Style competitions, which, as expected, were defined by excitement, strong rivalry, and enthusiasm from both the male and female participants.

First Lieutenant Mansoor Omer al-Karbi yesterday thanked the nation's leadership for their support, affirming that 'QASC is now a model of excellence in military sports'. He also acknowledged the high level of commitment and performance shown by Qatar's athletes.

First Lieutenant Yousuf Abdullah al-Janahi highlighted the smooth, safe operation of the championships and the 'record international participation'. He noted that delegations praised the high-quality services and facilities and singled out the Qatari target team for 'their excellent results'.

First Lieutenant Ahmad Ali Ahmad emphasised that 'Qatar's air sports teams are a source of pride', consistently demonstrating precision and excellence. He concluded by commending the efforts of the organising committees to deliver an event worthy of Qatar's status as a global air sports hub.

Students visit museum

Day three at the championship brought an exciting influx of visitors as a large group of school students arrived. The students thoroughly enjoyed watching the parachutists descend from the Doha skies, witnessing thrilling attempts across the different competitions, including Accuracy Landing, 4-Way Formation and Style. Following the live action, the students visited the Qatar Air Sports Museum. They explored its exhibits and received a detailed explanation from supervising officers about the museum's prized artifacts and the interactive technological screens designed to educate visitors about various air sports.

Arab participation in Qatar

Arab participation in the Military Parachuting World Championships Qatar 2025 is notable, featuring eight teams of male and female parachutists in addition to the host nation Qatar. Participating countries include: Algeria (men's and women's teams), Morocco (men's and women's teams), Bahrain, Oman, the UAE, Kuwait, and Tunisia. These Arab nations are recognised for their longstanding experience, having been among the first to join the International Military Sports Council (CISM). All teams harbour high hopes and the ambition to achieve excellent results and secure places on the winner's podiums.

International media coverage

The championship is currently benefiting from outstanding international and local media coverage. The QASC leveraged its strong relationships and consistent communication with various local and foreign media outlets, including print, visual and social platforms. This effort resulted in seamless yet superb media coverage of the competitions directly from Umm Al Shokhot Airport.

Air Sports Museum draws high-profile visitors

The Air Sports Museum has become a major highlight of the championships, attracting intensive interest and high turnout from VIPs, ambassadors, heads of missions, and participating athletes. Visitors are eager to tour the museum's treasured collection to learn about the committee's achievements, celebrate the records of its champions, and gain a deeper understanding of air sports, their history and their glorious heritage. The exhibits underscore that the demanding sport of parachuting requires a unique blend of resilience, mental focus, and high physical fitness.

JAKE PAUL SET TO FACE JOSHUA IN MIAMI IN DECEMBER

Miami: YouTuber-turned-boxer Jake Paul will fight former unified heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua in an eight-round professional heavyweight bout on December 19 at Miami's Kaseya Center, Most Valuable Promotions announced yesterday.

Paul, 28, will face arguably the most accomplished opponent of his career in 36-year-old Joshua, a two-time holder of the WBO, WBA and IBF belts. The event is set to be streamed globally on *Netflix* and marks Paul's second live appearance on the streaming platform following last year's win over Mike Tyson.

"This isn't an AI simulation. This is Judgment Day. A professional heavyweight fight against an elite world champion in his prime," Paul said in a statement, promising to put "Britain's Goliath" to sleep.

"When I beat Anthony Joshua, every doubt disappears and no one can deny me the opportunity to fight for a world title. To all my haters, this is what you wanted. To the people of the United Kingdom, I am sorry."

Joshua, a 2012 Olympic gold medallist and two-time unified world champion, has a 28-4 record with 25 knockouts. However, he lost twice to Oleksandr Usyk and was knocked out by Daniel Dubois in September last year in an IBF heavyweight title bout - his last professional fight.

Joshua said there would be "no mercy" when he enters the ring to face Paul. "I took some time out and I'm coming back with a mega show. It's a big opportunity for me," he said. "Whether you like it or not, I'm here to do massive numbers, have big fights and break every record whilst keeping cool, calm and collected. Mark my words, you'll see a lot more fighters take these opportunities in the future. I'm about to break the internet over Jake Paul's face."



Australia Paralympics gold medallist Paige Greco dies at 28

Melbourne: Australian Paralympic gold medallist Paige Greco died at the age of 28 on Sunday, after experiencing what authorities in South Australia state described as a "sudden medical episode" in her Adelaide home.

Paige, who was born with cerebral palsy, won Australia's first gold medal at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, setting the world record in the women's C1-3 3,000m individual pursuit along with bronze medals in the women's C1-3 road race and time trial. "Paige meant everything to us," Greco's mother Natalie said in a statement via AusCycling and Paralympics Australia. "Her kindness, her determination and her warmth touched our family every single day. She brought so much joy and pride into our lives, and the pain of her passing is something we will carry forever. "While we're devastated by her loss, we're incredibly proud of the person she was and the way she represented Australia." Greco also held multiple world championship titles and world cup medals. AusCycling and Paralympics Australia said they would continue to work with the Greco family and honour her legacy.

FRIENDLY

Qatar's experimental line-up slips to defeat against Zimbabwe

By Sports Reporter
Doha


Mohammed Khaled marked his first senior appearance for Qatar with an eighth-minute opener against Zimbabwe in a friendly match yesterday.


Qatar and Zimbabwe players in action during a friendly match at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium in Al Duhail yesterday.

Qatar slipped to a 2-1 defeat against Zimbabwe in an international friendly at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium yesterday, a match that formed an important part of Al Annabi's preparations for upcoming competitions, including the Arab Cup Qatar 2025 and their long-term build-up to the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Julen Lopetegui's side, which entered the match ranked 52nd in the world and facing a Zimbabwe team ranked 129th, made a bright start. Debutant Mohammed Khaled marked his first senior appearance with an eighth-minute opener, capping a confident beginning from a largely experimental line-up.

Zimbabwe responded well, however, and Munashe Peter Garananga levelled midway through the first half. The visitors then struck the decisive blow 25 minutes from time when Bill Leeroy Antonio fired home their second goal.

Despite the defeat, the match delivered valuable insight for Lopetegui, who used all 22 players available and handed opportunities to several newcomers — most notably Khaled, whose early goal was a highlight of the night.

The friendly also served as the latest test for a 26-man squad initially announced for the November camp, although Ahmed al-Janahi and Ahmed al-Rawi were later withdrawn due to injury and replaced by Al Wakrah striker Youssef Abdul-Razzaq.

A crowd of 2,136 spectators, including several hundred Zimbabwean supporters, created a lively atmosphere as the two sides met for only the second time in history — the first having come in 2002, also won 2-1 by Zimbabwe.

For Qatar, the match forms one part of a broader preparation phase ahead of the Arab Cup Qatar 2025, where they will compete in Group A alongside Tunisia and two play-off winners (Syria/South Sudan and Palestine/Libya). The friendly also provided Lopetegui with a chance to assess depth across all lines, including goalkeepers Shehab al-Laithi, Mahmoud Abu Nada and Meshaal Barsham, as well as a mix of experienced players and rising talents.

FOOTBALL

Haaland: the force behind Norway's World Cup dream

Haaland bagged a double in Sunday's 4-1 victory over Italy

Reuters
Manchester


Norway's Erling Haaland and teammates celebrate after their win over Italy in the World Cup qualifiers at the San Siro in Milan yesterday. (Reuters)

When Erling Haaland walked off the pitch at the San Siro stadium after helping seal Norway's first World Cup berth since 1998, it was the culmination of a mission the 25-year-old has carried on his shoulders for years.

Haaland bagged a double in Sunday's 4-1 win over Italy to bring his extraordinary scoring tally in 2026 World Cup qualifying to 16 goals, twice any other player in Europe. His total includes five goals in an 11-1 thrashing of Moldova and a goal in at least one in each of Norway's eight matches.

"It's about getting into situations where I can mostly score," the Manchester City striker told reporters after Sunday's win. "It was absolutely crazy. I'm proud and this is absolutely fantastic. The fact that we can come here and win 4-1... shows that we are a bit unpredictable."

Haaland's nearest goal-scoring challengers are England captain Harry Kane, Netherlands forward Memphis Depay and Austria's Marko Arnautovic, who all have eight apiece. "Haaland is a goal machine," an appreciative Norway manager Stale Solbakken said. "I'm happy that Italian fans applauded him too. This is an audience who saw great players playing here over the years and I'm happy that they appreciated Haaland's performance too."

That applause was not just for the goals, but for the spectacle of a six-foot-five battering ram of a striker who combines raw power with precision, and who has become one of football's most feared forwards.

Haaland told reporters recently that getting Norway to the World Cup is "the main goal" of his career. But securing their ticket to the 2026 tournament in the US, Mexico and Canada is more than just a personal milestone for Haaland, it is a statement about Norway's evolution, he said.

"We have broken codes and become better individual players," he said. "People have had real breakthroughs, like Antonio Nusa and Oscar Bobb, who starts matches for Manchester City. It's important to pinch yourself, for the small nation we are. I feel like this is the start of something big. It's just important to enjoy the moment."

As Norway heads to the 2026 World Cup, Haaland will be at the heart of their ambitions - not just as a scorer, but as the leader of a team and nation that has dared to dream big. The striker is beloved in the small Scandinavian nation of less than six million people.

In his hometown of Bryne, there are several Haaland murals. There was even a three-metre tall wooden Haaland statue that was stolen in 2022 amid rumours it was taken by a disgruntled fan who thought it looked nothing like him. Haaland's leadership was on display during Thursday's 4-1 win over Estonia. He gave an emotional speech at halftime to help break the deadlock, and then made headlines for a cheeseburger run afterward when, still dressed in his Norway kit, he picked up dozens of burgers for teammates.

DR Congo upset Nigeria and keep 2026 World Cup dream alive

Johannesburg: Democratic Republic of Congo ended Nigeria's hopes of qualifying for the 2026 World Cup with a penalty shootout victory in the African play-offs final on Sunday.

DR Congo and Nigeria drew 1-1 after extra time in the tie in Rabat and the central Africans won 4-3 on penalties to book a place in inter-confederation play-offs in Mexico next March. In a nerve-riddled shootout in which four spot-kicks were saved and another missed, DR Congo captain Chancel Mbemba defied a bottle thrown toward him and torrential rain to convert the winning penalty as his country seek a return to the global showpiece after a lengthy absence.

Two of the saves were made by substitute goalkeeper Timothy Fayulu, who replaced Lionel M'Pasi in the final minute of extra time. DR Congo was called Zaire when the country qualified for the only time in 1974. It was not a happy debut as they failed to score, and conceded 14 goals, including nine against Yugoslavia.

Nigeria lie 19 places above DR Congo in the world rankings and were pre-match favourites, but DR Congo recovered from conceding early to look the likelier winners the longer the match proceeded. Nigeria, who needed 78 minutes to break the scoring deadlock in a 4-1 semi-finals victory over Gabon three days ago, were ahead within three minutes against the Congolese.

A cross was only partially cleared and a hard, low shot from outside the area by Brentford midfielder Frank Onyeka was deflected by Burnley defender Axel Tuanzebe past M'Pasi. DR Congo slowly recovered from the shock of falling behind so early against the Super Eagles and levelled after 32 minutes.

Veteran forward Cedric Bakambu crossed and when Nigeria captain Wilfred Ndidi failed to control the ball in the six-yard box, Mechak Elia pounced to beat goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali.

Star Nigeria striker Victor Osimhen, scorer of five goals in his last two international appearances, suffered an injury late in the opening half and was replaced by Akor Adams for the second period. As the second half of regular time progressed the teams became increasingly cautious, especially Nigeria, who almost gifted the lead to DR Congo on 83 minutes.

A defensive mix-up involving Nwabali ended with DR Congo substitute Mahmoud Mayele just failing to snatch the lead. DR Congo thought they had taken the lead 19 minutes into extra time, but the Moroccan referee disallowed the goal, ruling scorer Noah Sadiki had committed a foul.

Victory qualifies the Congolese for a six-nation inter-confederation mini-tournament in Guadalajara and Monterrey from March 23.

Cherif and Ahmed enter Round of 32 at World Championships


Qatar's Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan scored a straight sets win over Hammarberg Timo and Berger Tim of Australia yesterday and qualified for the Round of 32 at the Beach Volleyball World Championships 2025 in Adelaide. The Qatar pair prevailed 21-12, 22-20 in their third and final group stage match. Younousse and Tijan had earlier beaten pairs from Cuba and Switzerland. They now now next play George Wanderley and Saymon Barbosa of Brazil today.

FORMULA 1 QATAR GRAND PRIX

Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East gears up for second appearance


Qatari driver Abdulla al-Khelaifi returns this year, stepping up from Pro Am class to the Pro category with QMMF.

As anticipation builds for the thrilling conclusion to the Formula 1 2025 season, Lusail International Circuit (LIC) has confirmed the return of the Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East (PCCME) as one of two electrifying support races for the Qatar Grand Prix 2025.

Running from November 28-30, the one-make series will once again join forces with the FIA Formula 2 Championship, delivering non-stop wheel to wheel racing on the penultimate weekend of the year. This marks the PCCME's second consecutive outing as an official F1 support race at LIC, building on the resounding success of its 2024 debut that saw German driver Janne Stiak dominate proceedings with a double victory.

Porsche's flagship one-make series, now in its third season under the Carrera Cup banner, unleashes the full potential of the iconic 911 GT3 Cup (type 992) cars. With identical machinery ensuring no technical edges, the focus is purely on driver skill, strategy, and teamwork in intense, sprint style battles across the 5.38km circuit. The series features three main classes, Pro, Pro Am, and Masters plus GCC and Rookie classifications, providing a level playing field for emerging talents from the region and beyond. Qatari driver Abdulla al-Khelaifi returns this year, stepping up from Pro Am class to the Pro category with QMMF. After his standout P3 overall and class victory in last year's Race 2 at LIC, exemplifies the home-grown potential the series nurtures.

Rooted in a rich legacy, the PCCME enters its 17th year of collaboration between Lechner Racing and Porsche in the Middle East. Launched as the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East in 2009, it evolved into the Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East in 2019 before ascending to full Carrera Cup status. Over the years, it has launched careers of regional stars like Abdulaziz al-Faisal, Khaled al-Qubaisi, and Al-Faisal al-Zubair, offering unparalleled coaching, testing, and race experience to nurture local talent alongside international pros.

After a commanding double victory in Bahrain's season opener, newcomer Taichi Watarai and the Seven X Seven team from Japan have set an early benchmark for the season, while Caleb Sumich showed impressive pace despite a weekend of misfortune.

In Pro Am, Cedric Chassang, Australia's Sam Shahin, and Japan's Bankcy delivered standout performances, immediately positioning themselves as key contenders in a fiercely competitive field. With strong GCC momentum from Khaled Alahmadi, Masters leader Krister Andero, and local hero Abdulla al-Khelaifi — a breakout star of 2024 — expected to return, the championship is gearing up for a thrilling season filled with raw speed, class battles, and rapidly emerging rivalries.

The PCCME slots perfectly into a stacked support race calendar. These high stakes, one make single seater showdown with 22 identical cars gives tomorrow's F1 hopefuls a global stage to impress.

Only limited tickets are available for the Qatar Grand Prix at https://tickets.lcsc.qa