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Markram powers
South Africa to
7-wicket win over
New Zealand



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Tryba tops CSI3-W
Grand Prix at
Amir's Sword
Championship



Sunday, February 15, 2026
Sha'ban 27, 1447 AH

GULF TIMES SPORT



TENNIS

Resurgent Muchova
beats Mboko in
Qatar Open final to
end title drought

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HORSE RACING

Wathnan Racing's Lippo De Carrere claims Amir's Sword

Guyon rides five-year-old bay to upset win ahead of favourite and defending champion Al Ghadeer

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Wathnan Racing's Lippo De Carrere produced a stunning upset to capture the HH The Amir's Sword, edging out defending champion Al Ghadeer on the final day of the prestigious HH The Amir's Sword Festival yesterday.

At Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club's Al Rayyan Racecourse, Lippo De Carrere surged past Al Ghadeer to claim the \$2.5mn showpiece for purebred Arabians, the highlight of the four-day festival. The Group 1 contest saw the five-year-old bay – ridden by Maxime Guyon and trained by Alban de Mieulle – deliver a performance worthy of the occasion, quickening in the home straight before holding on gamely to prevail by a length.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani presented the HH The Amir's Sword to HE Sheikh Hamad bin Tamim al-Thani, HE Sheikh Jassim bin Tamim al-Thani and HE Sheikh Joaan bin Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani, who received the coveted Sword on behalf of Wathnan Racing, owner of Lippo De Carrere, winner of the sword race.

His Highness the Amir also presented trophies to the winning riders of the Al Sabiq Championship, held on the sidelines of the festival. The first four places were secured, in order, by Abdulla Salem al-Mansoori aboard Kahilan Al Sakab, Majid Nasser al-Nuaimi with Dahess Al Sham, Mohamed Kamaan Saeed al-Hajri on Malzoom, and Faleh Faraj al-Otaibi riding Nawasi.

In HH The Amir's Sword race, the early stages unfolded at a measured tempo, with Al Ghadeer racing prominently and setting the pace while HM Alchahine held a close position among the leading group. Lippo De Carrere travelled comfortably within striking distance, always poised just behind the principals as the field approached the home turn.

Once in the straight, Lippo De Carrere was produced to challenge and surged to the front, asserting with a decisive change of gear. Al Ghadeer attempted to rally and close the gap in the final strides, but Lippo De Carrere found enough to hold him at bay and secure the sport's most prestigious Arabian title.

Al Ghadeer, owned by Al Shaqab Racing and trained by Francois Rohaut, stayed on strongly under Christophe Soumillon to take second, finishing three lengths ahead of HM Alchahine. The latter, representing National Stables and prepared by Helal and Tahnoon Alalawi, kept on gamely to secure third. "I had a perfect race with Lippo De Carrere. Everybody knows it is difficult to beat Al Ghadeer. The race was good and it was easy. Lippo De Carrere is a very strong and good horse," Guyon said after the race.

Deep Monster also completed a notable week for Japanese racing by landing the HH The Amir's Trophy under Tom Marquand.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani crowned the winners of HH The Amir's Sword, HH The Amir's Trophy and HH The Amir's Silver Sword at Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club's Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani crowned the winners of HH The Amir's Sword, HH The Amir's Trophy and HH The Amir's Silver Sword at Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club's Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday.



Maxime Guyon rides Wathnan Racing's Lippo De Carrere to HH The Amir Sword victory.

RESULTS HH THE AMIR'S SWORD FESTIVAL - DAY 4

WINNERS: (Horse, Trainer, Jockey)

1 - HH The Amir's Sword - Purebred Arabian (Class 1 Gr1)

Lippo De Carrere, Alban de Mieulle, Maxime Guyon.

2 - HH The Amir's Trophy - Thoroughbred (Class 1 QA-Gr1)

Deep Monster, Yasutoshi Ikei, Tom Marquand

3 - HH The Amir's Silver Sword - 4yo Purebred Arabian (Class 1)

Alhaarith, Francois Rohaut, Christophe Soumillon

4 - HH The Amir's Shafra - Thoroughbred Handicap Cup (Class 2)

Basalt, Jassim al-Ghazali, Maxime Guyon

5 - Qatar International Cup - Purebred Arabian (Class 1 Gr1)

Wafei, Alban de Mieulle, Maxime Guyon

Chdia, Alban de Mieulle, Christophe Soumillon

6 - Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Cup - Thoroughbred (Listed QA Gr2-Class 1)

International

Make Me King, Hamad al-Jehani, Pierre-Charles Boudot

7 - Al Rayyan Mile Cup - 3yo Thoroughbred (Class 1 QA-Gr2)

International Invitation Race

August George, Jassim al-Ghazali, Maxime Guyon

8 - Dukhan Sprint Cup - Thoroughbred (Class 1 QA-Gr3)

International Invitation Race

Quinault, Stuart Williams, Marco Ghiani

9 - Qatar International Thoroughbred Handicap Cup 90-110 (Class 2)

International Runners

Wafei, Alban de Mieulle, Maxime Guyon



Fireworks light up the sky after the conclusion of the HH The Amir's Sword Festival at the Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club's Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday. This year's edition marked a historic milestone as the flagship festival was staged over four days for the first time, coinciding with QREC's 50th anniversary. The festival featured a total of 32 races.

Deep Monster completed a notable week for Japanese racing by landing the HH The Amir's Trophy under Tom Marquand. **PICTURES:** Juhaim



PREVIEW

Boycott averted, India and Pakistan set for blockbuster

India fret on opener Abhishek Sharma's fitness as Pakistan spinner Tariq's action intrigues fans

Reuters
Colombo

India and Pakistan will clash in the Twenty20 World Cup in Colombo today, still feeling the aftershocks of a tumultuous fortnight in which Pakistan's boycott threat - later reversed - nearly blew a hole in the tournament's marquee fixture.

With bilateral cricket a casualty of their fraught relations, emotions run high whenever the bitter neighbours lock horns in multi-team events at neutral venues.

India's strained relations with another neighbour, Bangladesh, have further tangled the geopolitics around the World Cup.

When Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland in the 20-team field for refusing to tour India over safety concerns, the regional chessboard shifted.

Pakistan decided to boycott the Group A contest against India in solidarity with Bangladesh, jeopardising a lucrative fixture that sits at the intersection of sport, commerce, and geopolitics.

Faced with the prospect of losing millions of dollars in evaporating advertising revenue, the broadcasters panicked. The governing International Cricket Council (ICC) held hectic behind-the-scenes parleys and eventually brokered a compromise to salvage the tournament's most sought-after contest.

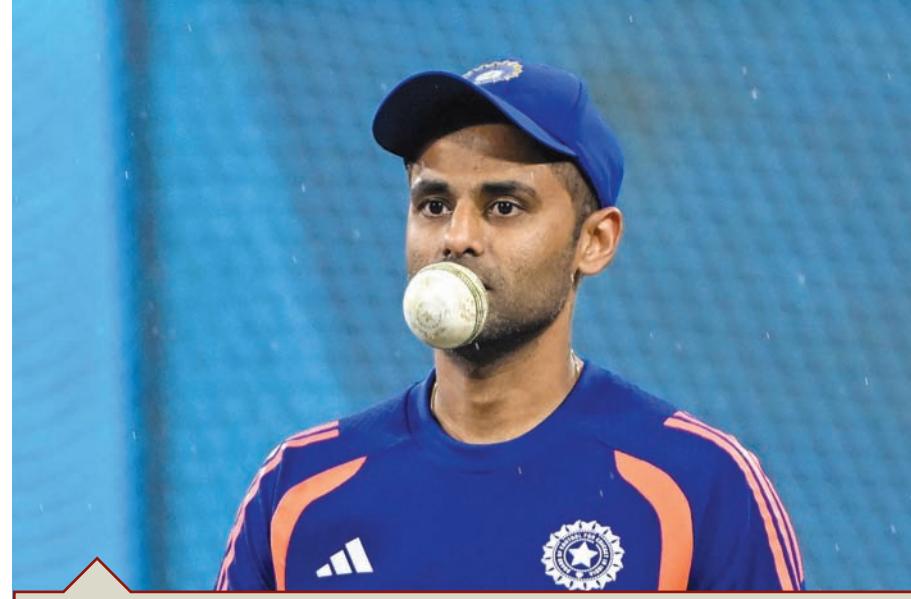
Strictly on cricketing merit, however, the rivalry has been one-sided.

Defending champions India have a 7-1 record against Pakistan in the tournament's history and they underlined that dominance at last year's Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

India beat Pakistan three times in that single event, including a stormy final marred by provocative gestures and snubbed handshakes.

Former India captain Rohit Sharma does not believe in the "favourites" tag, especially when the arch-rivals clash.

"It's such a funny game," Rohit, who led India to the title in the T20 World Cup two years ago, recently said. "You can't just go and think that it's a two-point victory for us. You just have to play good



Suryakumar: India v Pakistan 'not just another game'

COLOMBO: India captain Suryakumar Yadav admitted yesterday that no matter how much his team tried to prepare for today's T20 World Cup clash against Pakistan as "just another game", it would be much more than that. "It's a big platform, obviously," Suryakumar told reporters in Colombo, venue for today's massive Group A showdown. "No matter how much you say that it's just another game, it is a big game."

The biggest and most lucrative clash in world cricket has sold out the 35,000-capacity R Premadasa stadium with hundreds of millions more expected to watch on television.

The game was only confirmed as going ahead late on Monday night after the Islamabad government made a U-turn on its order to boycott the blockbuster Group A game.

"We don't play them often, don't even play them regularly," said the Indian skipper.

"But at the end of the day, we try to keep things simple and try to execute our best game."

"There is pressure, but there is a big opportunity," said Suryakumar.

"According to me, when you play an

India-Pakistan game, it's more about the occasion."

The Indian captain would not say whether his players would shake hands after snubbing the Pakistan team in three Asia Cup meetings in Dubai last year.

"I will break the suspense tomorrow," he said.

"Wait for 24 hours, let us play the game which is more important."

India achieved a hard-fought 29-run win against United States in their first match of their title defence in Mumbai a week ago, before crushing Namibia by 93 runs in Delhi on Thursday. But Suryakumar played down the hype around Pakistan spinner Usman Tariq and his unique sling-arm bowling action that has an exaggerated pause in the delivery stride.

"We have practised with similar types of bowlers and similar actions so we will try to execute what we are practising in the night sessions," said Suryakumar.

Suryakumar said dashing opener Abhishek Sharma has recovered well from a stomach bug and was likely to play.

Both Pakistan and India have won their opening two Group A matches and the winners will qualify for the Super Eight Stage.

cricket on that particular day to achieve those points."

Both teams have opened their World Cup campaigns with back-to-back wins, yet India still appear to hold a clear edge. Opener Abhishek Sharma and spinner

Varun Chakravarthy currently top the batting and bowling rankings respectively. Abhishek is doubtful for the Pakistan match though as he continues to recover from a stomach infection that kept him out of their first two matches.

Ishan Kishan has reinvented himself as a top-order linchpin, skipper Suryakumar Yadav has regained form, while Rinku Singh has settled into the finisher's role in India's explosive lineup.

Mystery spinner Chakravar-

Agha expects right spirit but unsure about handshakes

COLOMBO: Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha expects today's politically charged Twenty20 World Cup showdown with bitter rivals India to be played in the right spirit but is unsure about whether the customary pre-match handshakes between the teams will happen.

The sides will clash for the first time since last year's Asia Cup final, a tense event staged following military conflict between India and Pakistan that nearly escalated into a fully-fledged war between the nuclear-armed neighbours. The latest meeting comes after Pakistan, who were angered by Bangladesh's removal from the tournament for refusing to play in India over security concerns, threatened to skip the contest before abandoning that plan.

"I expect game should be played in the spirit that it has always been played since its inception," Pakistan captain Agha told reporters in Colombo yesterday.

India beat Pakistan three times in the Asia Cup, including in the September 28 final in Dubai, but refused to shake hands with their opponents before or after matches. "We'll find out tomorrow (if it happens)," Agha said.

Pakistan's boycott threat put at risk one of the sport's most lucrative fixtures, leaving

broadcasters fearing millions of dollars would be lost in advertising revenue. The International Cricket Council (ICC) held a series of negotiations before securing a compromise to ensure the match would go ahead as planned.

"India v Pakistan is a game of high magnitude ... Tomorrow's game is no different," Agha added.

"From our side, before heading into the tournament, we were prepared for all possible scenarios - whether the game would go ahead or not."

Agha said the captains carried much of the pressure.

"It's an added responsibility when you are the captain of your side and you're representing your country," he said.

"You can't run away from the responsibility. When you're representing your country and captaining a side, there will be pressure. You just need to find a way to deal with that."

With the threat of rain today looming large, Agha said Pakistan were ready to adapt.

"We cannot control that but we're ready to make adjustments if the game gets shortened," he said.

Both teams have won their opening two matches of the tournament.

MATCH REPORT

Jensen, Markram shine as South Africa beat NZ

Reuters
Ahmedabad

South Africa are on the brink of reaching the Twenty20 World Cup's Super 8 stage after captain Aiden Markram's storming half-century led them to a dominant seven-wicket victory over New Zealand yesterday, securing their third straight Group D win.

New Zealand suffered their first loss in the campaign after they posted 175-7, as South Africa's Marco Jansen took four wickets.

In response, opener Markram hit four sixes and eight boundaries in his unbeaten knock of 86 off 44 balls, the highest by a South African captain in the tournament's history, helping his team reach 178-3 with 17 balls to spare.

Last edition's finalists South Africa chose to bowl first in Ahmedabad, and it immediately paid off as player of the match Jansen (4-40) dismissed most of New Zealand's top order by the seventh over.

Finn Allen (31 off 17 balls) tried to mitigate the damage after Tim Seifert and Rachin Ravindra fell to Jansen. But Jansen got Allen caught at mid off in the sixth over, leaving New Zealand struggling at 58-3.

Mark Chapman (48) and Daryl Mitchell (32) turned things around with a 74-run partnership for the fifth wicket, until Jansen got Chapman caught by Ryan Ricketton at backward point in the 14th.

New Zealand scored only 17 runs in the next four overs, until James Neesham's unbeaten 23 off 15 balls got them to a fighting total.

Chasing 176, South Africa got off to a



South Africa's Marco Jansen (left) and captain Aiden Markram during the 2026 ICC T20 World Cup group stage match against New Zealand in Ahmedabad yesterday. (AFP)

fast start with Markram hitting three sixes and five boundaries to steer his team to 62-0 in four overs.

Losing fellow opener Quinton de Kock (20) did not affect Markram, who hit Mitchell Santner for a six down long on to reach his half-century in just 19 balls. By the time Ricketton (21) fell in the eighth over, South Africa had already crossed the 100-run mark.

With the required run rate falling below six, Markram did not hit a single boundary in the next seven overs, and focused on rotating the strike, getting South Africa within 28 runs of victory

with 30 balls left.

"It's about managing it through the right phases I guess, but up front you've seen how teams are taking on the power-play and we'd be silly not to try that. It's not always going to come off but when it does... we can get ahead of the game," said Markram.

David Miller, who scored an unbeaten 24, cleared the mid wicket boundary to bring up the winning runs.

South Africa will conclude their group campaign against the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday, a day after New Zealand play Canada.

SPOTLIGHT

Banton powers England to victory over Scotland

AFP
Kolkata

Tom Banton's unbeaten 63 led England to a five-wicket T20 World Cup victory over Scotland in Kolkata yesterday that kept Harry Brook's side on course for the Super Eights.

Victory in their final Group C match against Italy tomorrow at the same Eden Gardens stadium will see England safely into the next round.

After bowling Scotland out for 152, England racked up 155-5 in 18.2 overs, with Jacob Bethell scoring 32, Sam Curran 28 and Will Jacks (16 off 10 balls) hitting a six and a four to finish the job.

"I think our full focus was on tonight and then obviously on to Italy in two days' time," said Banton, who hit form after scoring just four runs in England's first two matches. "It's T20 cricket. It's a high-risk game. And you've got to keep backing yourself. At times it goes against you. And it's hard."

"You've got to keep coming back, keep trying hard, keep practising. Luckily, today's my day."

England wobbled at the start of their chase as the new white ball swung under the floodlights with the sun going down.

Phil Salt fell third ball to Brandon McMullen for just two and when Jos Buttler picked out McMullen off Brad Currie they were 13-2.

Scotland bowled tightly until Bethell broke the shackles by hitting McMullen for a six and two fours in the fifth over.

Spinner Mark Watt also came in for some punishment, conceding 22 off his first over as Banton took him for three huge sixes.



A 66-run partnership ended when the left-handed Bethell on 32 helped a leg-side delivery from Oliver Davidson into the grateful hands of Brad Wheal at short fine leg. Captain Brook did not last long, scooping Michael Leask over his shoulder to Wheal to make it 86-4 but England were always in control and got home with 10 balls to spare.

BRIEF SCORES
England 155 for 5 (Banton 63*, Bethell 32, Davidson 1-12) **beat Scotland 152** (Bethell 49, Rashid 3-36, Archer 2-24) **by five wickets**

IRELAND THRASH OMAN

In yesterday's first game, Ireland beat Oman by 96 runs after stand-in captain Lorcan Tucker blasted an unbeaten 94 off 51 balls to set up a total of 235-5, with support from Gareth Delany (56) and late fireworks from George Dockrell (35 off 9).

BRIEF SCORES
Ireland 235 for 5 (Tucker 94*, Delany 56, Shaheen 3-33) **beat Oman 139** (Kaleem 50, Mirza 46, Little 3-16) **by 96 runs**

TENNIS

Resurgent Muchova beats Mboko in Qatar Open final

THE IN-FORM CZECH WINS HER FIRST TOUR TITLE SINCE 2019, GETS RICHER BY \$665,000

AFP
Doha

Karolina Muchova captured her first WTA 1000 crown and her first title since 2019 with an impressive 6-4, 7-5 victory over Canadian teen sensation Victoria Mboko in the Qatar Open final yesterday.

After battling back from a set and a break down in the semi-finals against Maria Sakkari the previous night, Muchova, 29, was in fierce form against Mboko to clinch the biggest title of her career.

"It's been a while since I won a tournament, so it's nice to get that feeling again, to be reminded of that victory feeling again," said Muchova during the trophy ceremony.

"I'd like to congratulate Victoria, you're still a teenager but you play with so much maturity, I'm sure you have many titles ahead of you."

A former French Open finalist, Muchova's career has been hampered by injuries but she has started 2026 in fine fashion, amassing a 12-2 win-loss record over the past six weeks.

Her title run in Doha will lift her from 19 to 11 in the world rankings, while Mboko guaranteed herself a



Qatar Tennis Federation President Nasser al-Khelaifi presents the winner's cheque to Karolina Muchova after she won the Qatar TotalEnergies Open in Doha yesterday. PICTURES: Noushad Thekkayil

top-10 debut tomorrow by making the final. Muchova put together a clean opening set, landing an impressive 75 percent of her first serves, and dropping just three points behind that first delivery.

The Czech faced zero break points across the 43-minute set and showcased her prowess at the net to take a solid step towards the title.

Mboko made adjustments on return in the second set, and managed to decode her opponent's

serve to carve a 4-2 gap but her advantage was short-lived as Muchova broke twice and wrapped up the contest in 94 minutes.

The 19-year-old Mboko has the most match wins on the women's tour this season with 13 to just three defeats. She will rise to number 10 in the world tomorrow.

"It's not the outcome I wanted but I think there's many positives to take away," said Mboko, who was competing in her fourth WTA final, and second at the 1000 level.

DANILINA AND KRUNIC WIN DOUBLES CROWN

Anna Danilina of Kazakhstan and Aleksandra Krunic of Serbia claimed the women's doubles title at the Qatar TotalEnergies Open 2026, after defeating Latvia's Jeļena Ostapenko and China's Hsieh Su-wei in three sets.

Held on the main court at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, Danilina and Krunic secured the final with a scoreline of 0-6, 7-6, 10-8.



Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic celebrates after she beat Victoria Mboko of Canada 6-4 7-5 in the Qatar TotalEnergies Open final.

The honoring ceremony after the final was headlined by the Qatar Tennis Federation's Secretary General Tariq Zainal and its Executive Director Saad al-Mohannadi, who is also the Tournament Director of the Qatar TotalEnergies Open 2026.

ARCH-RIVALS ALCARAZ, SINNER SET FOR POTENTIAL FINAL IN DOHA

DOHA: The draw for the 2026 Qatar ExxonMobil Open was released Saturday, positioning top seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain and second seed Jannik Sinner of Italy for a potential meeting in the final. Alcaraz, 22, enters the ATP 500 event as the top seed and will play his first match since winning the Australian Open last month. That victory made him the youngest man in history to complete the Career Grand Slam. The Spaniard opens his Doha campaign against Arthur Rinderknech. If the seeds hold, Alcaraz is projected to face 2023 champion Daniil Medvedev in the semi-finals. On the other side of the draw, Jannik Sinner is set to make his tournament debut. The 24-year-old Italian has not competed since reaching the semi-finals in Melbourne. He begins play against Tomas



Jannik Sinner of Italy during a press conference in Doha yesterday. Sinner is in Doha for the Qatar ExxonMobil Open 2026 which will be played at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex.

Machac, an opponent he holds a 2-0 record against. Sinner's projected semi-final opponent is third seed Alexander Bublik, who is currently

competing in the Rotterdam semi-finals, will face a qualifier in the first round. His path could include a second-round match against former World

No. 14 Arthur Fils, who is returning to the tour after an eight-month absence due to a back injury. The field also features several other Top 20 players in the PIF ATP Rankings, including defending champion Andrey Rublev, 2024 finalist Jakub Mesić and Karen Khachanov. Rublev is a two-time Doha champion, having also lifted the trophy in 2020 when the event was still an ATP 250. Khachanov claimed the title in 2024. Alcaraz and Sinner lead the field as the top two seeds. Bublik is seeded third, followed by Daniil Medvedev in fourth and Rublev in fifth. Jakub Mesić, Khachanov and Jiri Lehecka complete the top eight seeds. Three former champions are competing this year: Rublev, Medvedev and Khachanov.



ATP players and QTF officials during the draw ceremony for this week's Qatar ExxonMobil Open 2026 which will start tomorrow at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex.

The Qatar ExxonMobil Open in Doha, which this year runs from February 16-21, has announced a total prize money of \$2,833,335 for the 2026 edition.

\$529,945 The singles champion will earn

\$174,050 The winning doubles team will split

WINTER OLYMPICS

Speed skating star Stolz blazes to 500m crown for his second Milano Cortina gold

Reuters
Milan

American speed skating phenomenon Jordan Stolz once again stole the spotlight yesterday, rocketing to the men's 500 metres title at the Winter Olympics and securing his second gold medal of these Games. Stolz had already met the towering expectations by winning the men's 1,000m on Wednesday, the United States' first speed skating gold of Milano Cortina. He topped a 500m podium rounded out by Dutchman Jenning de Boo with silver and Canada's Laurent Dubreuil with bronze. The 21-year-old tore through the distance in an Olympic record 33.77 seconds, finishing 0.11 ahead of De Boo.

Drawn in the 13th of 15 pairs and starting from the inner lane, Stolz once again lined up against his Dutch rival - the same head-to-head matchup from the 1,000m, where the American struck gold and De Boo took silver.

Stolz powered off the line before unleashing the explosive top-end speed that has become his trademark.

De Boo pushed hard to keep him within reach, clipping the barrier after crossing the line as Stolz saluted a raucous, Dutch-dominated crowd.

Among those rocking the stands were Stolz's compatriot and the most decorated gymnast in history, Simone Biles. Earlier, Dubreuil - skating in the 10th pair - briefly broke the Olympic record with a 34.26, before Stolz obliterated it minutes later.

Poland's Damian Zurek and De Boo were considered the strongest challengers to Stolz over the distance but neither could halt the American's surge as he once again rose above the field at his second Olympics.

Stolz has evolved into a world-beating sprinter in recent seasons, collecting seven



Jordan Stolz of the US celebrates after winning gold and setting a new Olympic record in the 500m speed skating event at Milano Cortina 2026 Olympics yesterday. (Reuters)

world championship titles and holding the 1,000m world record.

His latest triumph delivered the United States their fifth gold medal of these Games, joining Breezy Johnson's women's downhill victory, the figure skating team event title, Elizabeth Lemley's win in women's moguls and Stolz's own 1,000m success.

Both of Team USA's speed skating medals at these Olympics now belong to him.

CANADA OFF TO FLYING START IN WOMEN'S TEAM PURSUIT

Before the men lined up for their 500m final, the women contested their team pursuit quarter-finals yesterday.

Defending champions Canada pro-

gressed smoothly into Tuesday's semi-finals, joined by 2022 silver medallists Japan, the Netherlands and the United States as the four fastest teams.

Canada entered the event as favourites once again. The trio of Ivanie Blondin, Valerie Maltais and Isabelle Weidemann - the same line-up that won gold at Beijing 2022 - arrived in Milano Cortina leading the 2025-26 ISU World Cup standings, reaffirming their status as the team to beat.

The opening quarters pair featured the Netherlands, bronze medallists four years ago, against Kazakhstan. The Dutch skated cleanly, while Kazakhstan's race unravelled early after a blade clash caused one skater to drop out, leaving them unable to finish.

GOLF

Rahm, DeChambeau set for Adelaide title battle

Reuters
Adelaide

Jon Rahm recorded a walk-off eagle on the 18th hole yesterday to pull into a tie with Bryson DeChambeau for first place after the third round of LIV Golf Adelaide in Australia.

The two stand at 19-under for the tournament, five strokes ahead of their nearest competitor.

Rahm's electric finish to his round of 6-under 66 at Grange Golf Club wasn't without questions, however.

The Spaniard's initial drive on the par-4 final hole sailed off course, however his ball was ruled to be impeded by infrastructure brought in for the event. He was given a free relief on a line near the fairway. Rahm then holed out from approximately 200 feet to join DeChambeau atop the leaderboard.

That spoiled an otherwise brilliant day for DeChambeau, who made nine birdies in an 11-hole stretch to highlight his round of 8-under 64 yesterday.

"Well, it was shocking, obviously. I didn't know that's what could happen, so that was most of what the shock was," DeChambeau said of Rahm's 18th hole. "It was like, what the heck, you can do that? I didn't know that. But ultimately, I didn't really know from my perspective that it was OK over there, so I was kind of shocked."

Rahm was asked if the final round at Adelaide will represent the closest thing to a Ryder Cup today singles tournament, given the big, loud crowds that have lined the course.

"Quite frankly, it's hard to replicate Sunday in Ryder Cup," the two-time



LIV individual season champ said. "It's hard to say it will be the same feel, especially we're not home or away for anybody. It should in theory turn into a two-man race. In that essence, it should have that feel. But I wouldn't put it past someone shooting 10-under (on Sunday)."

Anthony Kim (68 yesterday) resides in third place at 14-under, one stroke ahead of a three-golfer contingent that includes home favorite Cameron Smith. The Australian joined that group with a sizzling bogey-free round of 8-under 64 yesterday.

"Giving six shots to both Bryson and Jon is probably not where you want to be on the last day, to be honest," Smith said. "It's going to take a lot."

"If I went out there and played similar to what I did (on Saturday), I think I'm in with a chance. I don't think it's easy out there. I think you can definitely get on the back foot here quickly, particularly early in the round."

Lucas Herbert (67) also is reeled in that group at 13-under after reeling off a string of six straight birdies.

As for the team competition, Rahm's heroics have allowed Legion XIII to sit in first place at 45-under.

Amir crowns winners of HH The Amir's Sword for Showjumping and Dressage



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani awarded the winners of HH The Amir's Sword for Showjumping and Dressage at the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club. HH The Amir's Sword for showjumping was awarded to Saudi Arabia's Abdulla Alsharbatty, while Khaled Almobty also of Saudi was crowned second and Belgium's Pieter Devos third. HH The Amir's Sword for dressage was awarded to Qatar's Jassim al-Kuwari, while his compatriots Wejdan Majed al-Malki was crowned second and Maryam Ahmad al-Boinin third.



SHOWJUMPING

Tryba tops CSI3-W Grand Prix as Amir's Sword concludes

Al-Mahmoud topped the CSI3*-W 140cm Faults and Time class aboard Perle Van Dorperheide

By Sports Reporter
Doha

France's Lara Tryba produced a superb performance aboard Chageorge to win the CSI3*-W 150cm Grand Prix on the final day of the HH The Amir's Sword Showjumping Championship at Al Shaqab.

The feature class on the final brought together 38 combinations, with 13 progressing to the jump-off where precision and pace proved decisive. Tryba delivered a flawless round in 33.28 seconds to secure top honours. Fellow French rider Megane Moissonnier finished second aboard Qoup de Coeur de Muze in 34.12 seconds, while Germany's Hans-Dieter Dreher claimed third with Harley de La Cense after four faults in 40.72 seconds.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia's Abdulla Alsharbatty aboard the 13-year-old mare Diriyah had captured the CSI5* 160cm Grand Prix to claim the prestigious Amir's Sword. The blue-riband class, which carried total prize money of €1.5mn, attracted 44 combinations in a demanding two-round contest, with 13 advancing to a decisive jump-off.

Last to go, Alsharbatty produced a flaw-

less round in 36.29 seconds to seal victory. Fellow Saudi rider Khaled Almobty had set an early benchmark with a clear effort in 37.45 seconds on Diana du Plevau Z, while Belgium's Pieter Devos completed the podium aboard Casual DV Z in 39.20 seconds.

Yesterday, in CSI5* 150cm Faults and Time competition, Great Britain's Millie Allen guided Quick Diamant HR to victory with a clear round in 62.47 seconds. Spain's Sira Martinez Cullell finished second aboard Texas in 64.95 seconds, with France's Ines Joly third on Come On Z in 65.51 seconds. The class featured 27 combinations in a tightly contested battle against the clock.

The CSI3*-W 145cm Accumulator saw Britain's Oliver Fletcher take the win aboard Krack Bleu C with a maximum 65 points in 48.71 seconds. Tryba added another podium finish, placing second on Falco Ste Hermelle, while Qatar's Saad Ahmed al-Saad finished third with Craquante de Mazin.

In the CSI3*-W 130cm Grand Prix, Qatar's Khalid Jassim al-Suwaidi claimed victory aboard E.T.'s Queeny Z after a clear jump-off round in 35.34 seconds. Saad Ahmed al-Saad secured second on Fashion des Douits, while Bahrain's Sultan Abdulaziz Mayoof Alromaihi took third with Grappa.

Qatar's Ibrahim Yousuf al-Mahmoud topped the CSI3*-W 140cm Faults and Time class with a faultless effort aboard Perle Van Dorperheide in 63.73 seconds. France's Jean Francois Rondoux finished second on Inter-Larus, followed by Egypt's Abdallah Haitham in third with Consagros.

In CSI3*-W 120cm Accumulator action, Qatar's Jassim al-Kuwari claimed victory aboard Cesar des Marquets, ahead of Saudi Arabia's Faisal Fahad Alodah and Halah Alrasheed.

The CSIY-B 130cm Group VII series qualifier was won by Sheikh Fahad Jassim al-Thani riding Lavesther, with Hend Abdulhadi al-Hajri second and Mohammed Jassim al-Thani third. The CSIY-B 120cm qualifier saw Hadi Mansour al-Shahwani take top honours aboard Monopoly, followed by Nasser Hamad al-Maadheed and Mohammed Faisal al-Marri.

National classes also produced competitive finishes. Sultan Jassim al-Suwaidi won the Special Two-Phase 100cm class on Ardfray Apollo, while Saif Nasser Ali claimed the Optimum Time 60cm class aboard Roubignac, ahead of Sultan Mohd al-Suwaidi and a joint third for Sheikh Nasser Hamad Khalifa al-Thani and Nawal Bahamdan.



France's Lara Tryba aboard Chageorge celebrates after winning the CSI3*-W 150cm Grand Prix at HH The Amir's Sword Showjumping Championship at Al Shaqab.

FOOTBALL

Sadd begin Amir Cup title defence with win over Markhiya

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Sadd began their quest for a record-extending 20th Amir Cup crown with a thrilling 2-1 victory over Al Markhiya in a Round of 16 clash at Grand Hamad Stadium yesterday.

After a goalless first half, Rafa Mujica broke the deadlock in the 75th minute from a penalty and then added a second goal, brilliantly assisted by Akram Afif. Mohamedou Naby Sar scored Al Markhiya's only goal in stoppage time, while the excitement reached its peak when a dangerous shot from Al Markhiya struck the post. Al Sadd will face Al Shamal in the quarter-finals. At Suhaib Bin Hamad Sta-



Action from Amir Cup Round of 16 match between Al Sadd and Al Markhiya at Grand Hamad Stadium in Doha yesterday.

BUNDESLIGA

Kane helps Bayern widen gap at the top

AFP
Bremen

Harry Kane scored twice in the first half as Bayern Munich cruised to a 3-0 win at Werder Bremen yesterday, restoring their six-point lead atop the Bundesliga table.

Borussia Dortmund's 4-0 victory over Mainz on Friday drew them within three points of the league leaders but Bayern sent a clear response. They were in control from start to finish in Bremen, with Leon Goretzka joining the England captain on the scoresheet in the 70th minute.

Kane has 26 goals in 22 Bundesliga games this season and 41 in all competitions, 13 of those from the penalty spot.

Kane's second strike brought



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane celebrates scoring a goal during the Bundesliga match against Werder Bremen in Bremen yesterday. (AFP)

up 500 goals in his career for club and country and the striker told reporters: "500 is a great number - a lot of hard work and dedication has gone into it."

"All I can say is thanks to all of my teammates and managers over the years - and I look forward to the next 50, the next 100."

Bayern lined up without the suspended Michael Olise for the first time in 89 matches in all competitions since the France winger arrived from Crystal Palace in 2024. Bremen kept the league leaders at bay in the opening stages but Kane gave Bayern the lead with 22 minutes played,

converting a penalty after VAR found Lennart Karl was felled in the box. It was the third straight match Kane had given Bayern the lead from the penalty spot.

Bayern doubled their lead three minutes later when Kane snuck a low shot in off the right post from the edge of the box. Bayern captain Manuel Neuer was subbed off at half-time with a recurrence of a calf injury, but sporting director Max Eberl said it was "nothing dramatic" and a "precautionary measure".

Bremen's Marco Gruell hit the post shortly after the break but Bayern put the game to bed when Goretzka swept home with 20 minutes remaining.

Hoffenheim continued their turnaround this season, beating Freiburg 3-0 at home with goals from Fisnik Asllani, Ozan Kabak and Valentin Gendrey as they tightened their grip on third spot.

Newcastle oust 10-man Villa from FA Cup, Man City beat Beckham's Salford

Newcastle beat 10-man Aston Villa 3-1 thanks to a double from Sandro Tonali to reach the FA Cup fifth round yesterday as Marc Guehi scored his first goal for Manchester City in a 2-0 victory over fourth-tier Salford. Both Villa and Newcastle have failed to win the competition since the 1950s and another opportunity for Unai Emery's men to end a 30-year wait for silverware vanished after a first half red card for goalkeeper Marco Bizot. Tammy Abraham had fired the home side in front with his first goal since returning to Villa last month. But the game swung in the Magpies' favour when Bizot charged off his line to wipe out Jacob Murphy and deny a clear goalscoring opportunity. Newcastle's fightback saved the officials from an embarrassing moment becoming more

controversial when Lucas Digne's handball, that was clearly inside the box, was given as a free-kick instead of a penalty. With VAR not in operation at this stage of the competition, the decision could not be reviewed. But Newcastle levelled from the resulting free-kick anyway as Tonali's strike deflected past the helpless Emi Martinez. Tonali has been linked with a move to Arsenal come the end of the season and the Italian showed why he is in-demand with a blistering strike from outside the box to turn the tie around. Nick Woltemade then netted his first goal in 15 games to take Newcastle, who last lifted the trophy in 1955, into the last 16. Owned by Manchester United legends David Beckham and Gary Neville, Salford were playing in the fourth round for the first time in their history. The League Two

side were humbled 8-0 when they faced City in the third round last season, but pushed Pep Guardiola's men far closer. City took an early lead through Alfie Dorrington's own goal, but there were only nine minutes left when England defender Guehi delivered the decisive blow with his maiden goal since signing from Crystal Palace in January. Third-tier Mansfield produced the upset of the day by winning 2-1 at Premier League Burnley to reach the fifth round for the first time since 1975. Ten-man West Ham edged through as the in-form Cryseco Summerville clinched a 1-0 win at League One Burton after extra-time. Freddie Potts was sent off soon after Summerville's strike in the first period of extra-time, but the Premier League strugglers held on to survive a gruelling fourth round clash.