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Antonelli leads Mercedes 1-2 as Verstappen fails to make top 10



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Henderson backs England's White after fans boo

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Sunday, March 29, 2026
Shawwal 10, 1447 AH

GULF TIMES SPORT



IPL

Kohli smashes 69 as defending champs Bengaluru hit the ground winning

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QSL CUP

Al Rayyan edge Umm Salal after marathon shootout to reach final



By Sports Reporter
Doha

Al Rayyan booked their place in the final of the QSL Cup after a dramatic 17-16 victory on penalties over Umm Salal, following a 3-3 draw in regulation time at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium yesterday.

The semi-final delivered high drama from start to finish, with Abdulaziz Hazaa's missed attempt proving decisive in the marathon shootout, the only miss in an extended series of spot-kicks. Umm Salal made a dream start when Cristo Gonzalez converted a penalty in the fifth minute after Salem Ali al-Hajr was fouled by Al Rayyan midfielder Gregore inside the final third.

Energised by the early goal, Umm Salal pushed forward and doubled their lead in the 30th minute as al-Hajr turned in a long-range free-kick from Oussama Tammame. With five minutes remaining before the break, Tiago Silva pulled one back for The Lions with a well-taken corner that evaded everyone before nestling into the upper right corner of the net.

Jean Quaisi restored Umm Salal's two-goal advantage in the 65th minute, finishing an overlapping move initiated by Cristo Perez. However, a deflection off Edidiong Udosen from Gabriel Pereira's strike reduced the deficit in the 84th minute. Al Rayyan then secured a last-gasp equaliser through Rodrigo Machado deep into added time to force the match into a decisive penalty shootout.

Today, Al Arabi will meet Muather in the second semi-final at the Thani Bin Jassim Stadium at 6.30pm.

Al Rayyan players celebrate after their win over Umm Salal in the QSL Cup semi-finals at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium yesterday.

Rayyan, Arabi set up Qatar Basketball League final



Al Rayyan and Al Arabi booked their places in the Qatar Basketball League final after hard-fought semi-final play-off victories yesterday at Al Gharafa Indoor Hall. Powered by a sensational 41-point performance from Rolands Freimanis, Al Rayyan edged past Al Ahli 93-88 in a high-scoring encounter. In the other semi-final, Al Arabi secured a dramatic 76-74 win over Al Sadd, holding their nerve in a tightly contested clash to seal their spot in the final.

SHOWJUMPING

Vanderveen claims CSI3* 1.50m title at Al Shaqab Cup

Riding Bull Run's Mary, American completed the course in 63.31 secs

By Sports Reporter
Doha

America's Kristen Vanderveen continued her fine run in Doha, claiming the CSI3* 1.50m Faults & Time title on the penultimate day of the Al Shaqab Cup yesterday.

Riding Bull Run's Mary, she completed the course in 63.31 seconds for an emphatic victory. South Africa's Matthew Morrison on Quebec finished second in 68.17 seconds at Al Shaqab's Longines Outdoor Arena, while Syria's Mohamad Mogheeth Alshehab partnered with Jaguar MS to take third in 68.79 seconds. This is the third international victory for Vanderveen and her horse, who have only been riding together since last January.

Qatar's Bassem Mohammed also starred, winning the CSI5* Special Two Phase 1.45m aboard Wathnan Chacball with a clear round in 34.44 seconds. Fellow Qatari Faleh Suweid al-Ajami on Wathnan Quality Street claimed second in 35.67 seconds, while Alshehab and Saphir Z took third in 36.78 seconds.

Qatar's Sheikh Fahad Jassim al-Thani captured the CSII* Special Two Phase 1.15m title riding Ciara LU, finishing clear in 30.95 seconds. Mohammed Nasser al-Qadi on Calle Cool 47 took second in 35.04 seconds, while Abdulrahman Hamad Juma partnered with Dorus HH to finish third in 35.58 seconds.

Qatar's Mohammed Jassim al-Thani claimed the CSII-B Special Two Phase 1.25m title riding Granie Mouche, finishing clear in 38.13 seconds. Bahrain's Sultan Abdulaziz Mayoof Alromaihi on Johelys de Fondcombe took second in 40.91 seconds, while Kuwait's Madhy Alkhamis partnered with Cash Maker Vd Laarseheide to finish third in 41.27 seconds.

At the CSI3* Special Two Phase 1.35m, Qatar's Saad Ahmed al-Saad rode Craquante de Mazin to victory in 28.40 seconds. Fellow Qa-



America rider Kristen Vanderveen astride Bull Run's Mary won the CSI3* 1.50m Faults & Time title at the Al Shaqab Cup yesterday.

tari Saeed Hamad Juma on Wathnan Diesel claimed second in 28.48 seconds, with Saudi Arabia's Khalid al-Hadi on Capoen finishing third in 28.55 seconds.

In the CSI3* Faults & Time 1.45m class, Jordan's Nasouh Kayali secured first place aboard High Score, completing the course in 71.24 seconds. Germany's Frederike Staack on Chelsius PS finished second in 76.20 seconds, while Kuwait's Fawaz Rashed partnered with Gaia des Forets to take third in 77.07 seconds.

At the CSII* Faults & Time 1.30m, Qatar's Ibrahim Khalid al-Kuwari claimed the title riding Flexy Bel Z with a clear round in 59.99 seconds. Sheikh Fahad Jassim al-Thani on Be Wineham took second in 60.37 seconds, while Canada's Rami Younis partnered with Mauran S to finish third in 67.78 seconds.



Qatar's Bassem Mohammed also won the CSI5* Special Two Phase 1.45m aboard Wathnan Chacball.

FOOTBALL

Defiant Senegal display Afcon trophy before beating Peru

Reuters
Paris

Senegal defiantly displayed the Africa Cup of Nations trophy to their supporters yesterday before going on to beat Peru 2-0 in their World Cup warm-up game at the Stade de France in Paris.

Nicolas Jackson scored four minutes before halftime and Ismaïla Sarr added a second in the 54th as Senegal won their first game since January's Cup of Nations final, when they beat Morocco only to be stripped of the title this month.

An hour before kick off in Paris yesterday, Senegal's players and coach Pape Bouna Thiaw walked around the pitch with the trophy to a delirious reception from a near-capacity crowd as they continue to scoff at the CAF decision. Thiaw had declared on Friday that "we know we're African champions" and the team wore a newly designed strip featuring two stars above their badge, representing success in the Cup of Nations in

2021 and again this year. While the squad was almost identical to the one that played in Morocco, Senegal rested Koulibaly, Mendy, Sadio Mane and Iliman Ndiaye, who were not even on the bench. They still outplayed a modest Peru team.

Jackson had an easy put-away for the first goal after a storming run down the right wing by Senegal's teenage starlet Ibrahima Mbaye, taking over the attacking mantle with Sadio Mane absent. Sarr latched onto a ricocheted ball that fell perfectly into his path but had to power past two defenders before scoring the second goal.

There was also a convincing win for the Ivory Coast as they hammered South Korea 4-0 at Stadium MK, north of London. Like Senegal, the Ivorians are among the nine African countries who will compete at the World Cup in Canada, Mexico and the U.S starting in June. Evann Guessand scuffed home the first goal in the 35th minute after being set up by debutant Martial Godo, who then scored the third himself from a rebound at a corner after 62 minutes. In between, Simon Adingra announced his return to the team with a rasping shot on the stroke of halftime to make it 2-0.

Defender Wilfried Singo, another player back in the squad, side-footed the fourth goal with the last kick of the game.



Senegal's Moussa Niakhate celebrates with Afcon trophy in Paris. (AFP)

IPL

Kohli smashes 69 as RCB hit the ground running

KOHLI HITS 5 FOURS AND 5 SIXES IN HIS 38-BALL KNOCK



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's opening batsman Virat Kohli slices one through the off-side during their IPL match against Sunrisers Hyderabad in Bengaluru yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP
Bengaluru, India

Virat Kohli hit an unbeaten 69 as defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru thrashed Sunrisers Hyderabad by six wickets in the IPL season opener yesterday, after a tribute in memory of the 11 fans who died in a stampede last year.

The fans were honoured with 11 empty seats and a minute's silence ahead of the game, while the players wore black armbands at Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

Bengaluru won their first IPL title in 18 attempts in the 2025 edition, but a victory parade turned tragic outside their stadium.

Yesterday, a big crowd welcomed the home team with the loudest roar reserved for Kohli,

who steered the team's successful chase of 202 in just 15.4 overs.

Kohli hit five fours and five sixes in his 38-ball knock.

Hyderabad posted 201-9 after being put in to bat first as stand-in skipper Ishan Kishan top-scored with 80 from 38 balls, with eight fours and five sixes.

New Zealand's RCB import Jacob Duffy made an instant impact on his IPL debut to return figures of 3-22 from his four overs.

Duffy rattled the top-order, taking the key wickets of openers Abhishek Sharma (7) and Travis Head (11).

Kishan steadied the innings in a fourth-wicket partnership of 97 with South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen, who made 31.

England's Phil Salt took a stunning one-handed catch in the deep after covering lot of ground to dismiss Kishan off Abhinan-

dan Singh. Bengaluru lost opener Salt, for eight, early in the chase but impact substitute Devdutt Padikkal hit a string of boundaries in his 26-ball 61.

Padikkal put on 101 runs with Kohli, who hit some excellent shots including a straight six that hit the sight screen.

Kohli, who plays just the 50-over format for India after retiring from Test and T20 internationals, is still a key player for RCB.

He finished the game with a six and three fours in successive balls to launch RCB's title defence in style.

BRIEF SCORES

Royal Challengers Bengaluru 203 for 4 (Kohli 69*, Padikkal 61, Payne 2-35) **beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 201 for 9** (Kishan 80, Aniket 43, Duffy 3-22, Shepherd 3-54) **by six wickets**

PSL

Samad and Bracewell knocks power Zalmi to successful run chase



Peshawar Zalmi's player Michael Bracewell plays a shot on the leg side during the Pakistan Super League match against Rawalpindiz in Lahore yesterday. (AFP)

Agencies
Lahore

Abdul Samad and Michael Bracewell launched blistering cameos for Peshawar Zalmi, propelling them to a five-wicket win over PSL debutants Rawalpindiz in the afternoon match of the first double-header of the tournament yesterday.

The destructive 64-run partnership between Bracewell (35 not out, 17b, 3x4s, 2x6s) and Samad (33, 11b, 1x4, 4x6s) off just 23 balls set the tone for Zalmi to register the fifth-highest successful run chase in PSL history and the highest target scaled down at the Gaddafi Stadium in all T20s.

The two were paired at the crease following the loss of the fourth wicket, when Zalmi still required a further 85 runs for victory off 35 deliveries.

The 16th, 17th and 18th overs of the chase then fetched Zalmi a combined tally of 53 runs with the help of six sixes as Rawalpindiz bowlers failed to prevent the duo's stunning power-hitting exhibition.

Samad's dismissal at the end of a Mohammad Amir over that cost 19 runs ignited some hopes of a comeback for Rawalpindiz, but Aamir Jamal (17 not out, 5b, 2x4s, 1x6) soon punished Naseem Shah in the proceeding over to haul his side over the line.

Peshawar had a formidable start to the chase of the 215-run target with Mohammad Haris and skipper Babar Azam racking up 62 runs in the Powerplay.

Babar was undone by left-arm spinner Asif Afridi in the ninth over for a 28-ball 39, whereas

Haris fell off the bowling of Amad Butt in the 10th over for a rapid 47 off 28 balls inclusive of four fours and two sixes with the scorecard reading 96-2 at the halfway mark.

Kusal Mendis also chipped in with a useful 17-ball 31 featuring two sixes and a four before becoming Amad's second victim of the day. Of the five bowlers deployed by Rawalpindiz, only Rishad Hossain conceded at a rate of less than 11 runs an over, returning 1-35 in his four overs.

Having elected to bat first, Rawalpindiz rode on Yasir Khan's swashbuckling 83 off 46 balls to post an imposing 214-4 in their 20 overs. After four scoreless balls in the first over, Yasir took charge by hitting the first six of the innings off Shoriful Islam. He was well complemented in his belligerent effort by fellow opener Mohammad Rizwan, who deposited four boundaries in a row against Ali Raza in the fourth over of the innings. The opening partnership surged to 125 in 12 overs when young pacer Ali returned to scalp Rizwan.

Yasir continued his blazing strokeplay, finally falling in the 15th over after clubbing a total of seven boundaries and six maximums. Kamran Ghulam (37, 20b, 2x4s, 3x6s) and Daryl Mitchell (23, 13b, 2x6s) delivered solid cameos to take Rawalpindiz well past the 200-run mark.

Ali was Zalmi's most prolific bowler with two wickets, albeit ending on the expensive side with 42 runs conceded in three overs.

BRIEF SCORES

Peshawar Zalmi 218 for 5 (Haris 47, Babar 39, Bracewell 35*, Samad 33, Butt 2-45) **beat Rawalpindiz 214 for 4** (Yasir 83, Rizwan 41, Raza 2-42) **by five wickets**

COMMENT

Duckett eager to show hunger for England success after Ashes flop

AFP
London

Ben Duckett is determined to show just how important playing for England is to him following a woeful Ashes campaign.

England have insisted they are ready to adapt under coach Brendon McCullum, who remains in charge despite a 4-1 series loss in Australia marred by poor preparation and off-field incidents that led to questions about the team's professionalism.

Opening batsman Duckett, who averaged 20.2 in Australia with a top score of just 42, was also filmed seemingly drunk during a controversial mid-series break in Noosa. "I wasn't proud of how things went in Australia," Duckett said yesterday.

day. "Hopefully, moving forward, we'll just see over time how much playing for England means for us."

Duckett has pulled the plug on a six-figure IPL deal to play for title-holders Nottinghamshire in the County Championship, prioritising his England place ahead of home Test series against New Zealand and Pakistan.

"This is not why I've done it but pulling out of the IPL, turning down a good chunk of money and missing the opportunity to play with and against some of the best players in the world to be here playing for Notts is a step in the right direction to show how much playing cricket for England means to me personally," he said.

"I genuinely don't know whether I'll be in the England team for the first Test (against New Zealand at Lord's on June 4), but I'll do everything I can over the next four or five weeks to be in the best shape of my life."

Australia's Travis Head - who scored over 600 runs in the Ashes series including three hundreds - labelled the reaction to 31-year-old left-hander's Duckett's conduct in Noosa "a bit stiff".

"If we were winning it probably wouldn't have been news and nobody would have cared," said Duckett.

"If it had been Travis Head in that video, people are probably loving it. We were struggling as a side and I was struggling as a player so I shouldn't have put myself in a position like that. That goes for any human being, let alone a professional sportsman. I think it's no secret that we can definitely tighten up on some areas... and to be honest, I'm all for it."

FOCUS

Multan Sultans beat former champs Islamabad United by five wickets

Agencies
Lahore

Multan Sultans kicked off their PSL 2026 campaign with a thrilling five-wicket victory over Islamabad United yesterday.

Islamabad posted 171 for the loss of 8 wickets but Multan completed their win by five wickets after cameos by Steve Smith and Ashton Turner.

Opting to bowl first, newly appointed Multan captain Turner's decision quickly paid off. Islamabad United's top order got off to promising starts, with Devon Conway and Sameer Minhas setting a steady foundation. However, United's momentum was completely rattled by the sensa-



Ashton Turner of Multan Sultans plays a shot during the PSL match against Islamabad United in Lahore yesterday.

tional Momin Qamar. The bowler ripped through the lineup, bagging 3 for 24 and ultimately earning Player of the Match honors. Despite a blazing 40 off 21 balls

from Mark Chapman later in the innings, the Sultans' disciplined bowling restricted United to a competitive but chaseable 171/8.

The Sultans' run chase was a masterclass in pacing, spearheaded by Australian powerhouse Josh Philippe. Making an unforgettable PSL debut, Philippe smashed a fluent 55 off 35 deliveries, lighting up Lahore with five boundaries and two towering sixes. Veteran Smith played an explosive hand with 31, packed with three sixes, while Turner hit 43 off 28 balls.

BRIEF SCORES

Multan Sultans 175 for 5 (Philippe 55, Turner 43*, Irshad 2-28) **beat Islamabad United 171 for 8** (Chapman 40, Sameer Minhas 28, Momin Qamar 3-24) **by 5 wickets**

England quick Tongue backs Cooley to make him a better bowler

London: Josh Tongue is looking forward to becoming the latest England pacer to benefit from the guidance of veteran fast-bowling coach Troy Cooley. Tongue was a rare shining light for England during a recent 4-1 Ashes series loss in Australia where he was omitted for the first two Tests but took 18 wickets in the last three. The 28-year-old quick is optimistic of improving his game still further under Cooley, the fast-bowling coach of England's 2005 Ashes-winning team. Cooley has also worked with the current Australia team's celebrated trio of fast bowlers, as well as India's Jasprit Bumrah and in January the 60-year-old Australian rejoined England's coaching staff. "He's coached the likes of (Mitchell) Starc, (Josh) Hazlewood, (Pat) Cummins and he was part of India as well," Tongue said yesterday. "I had a little chat with him on the phone the other day, I feel like we're going to get on really well and he's going to help me get even better than where I am now."

Following an England and Wales Cricket Board review into the Ashes debacle, England head coach Brendon McCullum has kept his job despite the former New Zealand captain facing widespread calls to be sacked from his post. England were well-beaten in the Ashes but Tongue has now taken 23 wickets in four Tests against Australia at an impressive average of 22.3 apiece. Tongue was also named player of the match in England's lone success at the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, where he took 5-45 in the first innings and seven wickets in the match in total. "I've always wanted to go away on an Ashes (tour) Down Under and to be there for the Boxing Day Test and the New Year's Test in Sydney as well, it's what dreams are really made of," he said. "Doing well at the MCG was the icing on the cake. I want to bring those moments more. I want to try and make an impact when I play games for England and try and put us in good positions to win games of cricket."

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ashwin set to join US Major League

Reuters
Chennai

Spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is set to become the first India international to appear in US-based Major League Cricket (MLC), after San Francisco Unicorns announced his signing yesterday for the Twenty20 competition's 2026 season. Ashwin, who represented India in 287 matches across all formats and took 765 wickets, retired from international cricket in 2024 and ended his Indian Premier League (IPL)

career last year. The 39-year-old, India's second-highest wicket-taker in test cricket behind Anil Kumble, was set to play for Sydney Thunder in Australia's Big Bash League, but missed out due to a knee injury.

"Taking on the mantle as the first Indian-capped player to compete in Major League Cricket is a major responsibility that I fully embrace," Ashwin said in a statement. The MLC begins its fourth season on June 18.

Chennai's Dhoni to miss start of IPL season due to calf strain Mahendra Singh Dhoni is expect-

ed to miss the opening two weeks of the Indian Premier League (IPL) season, the Chennai Super Kings said yesterday.

Wicketkeeper-batter Dhoni, who led Chennai to five titles before relinquishing the captaincy in 2024, has played exclusively in the IPL since retiring from international cricket in 2020. The 44-year-old featured in all 14 of Chennai's matches last season, scoring a total of 196 runs as they finished bottom of the standings.

Chennai, who last won the IPL in 2023, play their first match of the campaign against Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati tomorrow.

FORMULA 1

Antonelli takes pole for Japanese GP in Mercedes one-two

McLaren's Piastri starts third, Red Bull's Verstappen knocked out in Q2

AFP
Suzuka

Kimi Antonelli took pole position for the Japanese Grand Prix ahead of Mercedes team-mate George Russell yesterday as Max Verstappen suffered another qualifying nightmare.

Mercedes have claimed one-two finishes at both grands prix so far in a flying start to the Formula One season and they were again dominant in dry conditions at Suzuka. The 19-year-old Italian Antonelli became the youngest pole-sitter in F1 history two weeks ago in China and he made it two in a row with a fastest lap of 1min 28.778sec.

Early championship leader Russell was second, 0.298sec behind, with McLaren's Oscar Piastri third and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc fourth. Antonelli, who won the first grand prix of his F1 career in China two weeks ago, said it was "a really clean session".

"There's still work to do in these big tracks with the energy, how to find a solution that allows us to push even more and drive without thinking too much," he said. "But overall I think it was good fun."

Russell was fastest in Friday's first practice but he has trailed his younger team-mate in every session since then. The British driver said he was struggling with his car for most of qualifying and admitted it was "not ideal" going into Sunday's race. "I've been really comfortable with the car this whole weekend, it's just in qualifying something didn't quite feel right," he said. "Let's see tonight, maybe we'll get some answers, maybe I can adjust my driving style to compensate."

Russell's problems paled into insignificance compared with those facing four-time world champion Verstappen, who exited in Q2 and starts from a lowly 11th on the grid for Red Bull. The Dutchman, who has won in Japan for the past four years, took pole last year with a track-record lap time. He has railed against new Formula One regulations that see a 50-50 split between conventional



Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli receives a pole position award from Japanese sumo wrestler Kotozakura Masakatsu II after the qualifying session yesterday, ahead of the Formula One Japanese Grand Prix at the Suzuka circuit in Suzuka, Mie prefecture. (AFP)

and electrical power, and labelled his car "undriveable".

"The car never turns mid-corner, but at the same time this weekend, it's just oversteering a lot on entry," he said. "It's really difficult, unpredictable."

Verstappen, who finished sixth in Melbourne and retired from the Shanghai grand prix two weeks ago, added: "We have problems that I cannot explain in detail here."

Verstappen was involved in a public confrontation on Thursday when he ejected a reporter from his news conference.

McLaren's world champion Lando Norris was fifth, followed by Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton and Alpine's Pierre Gasly.

Verstappen's Red Bull team-mate Isack Hadjar was eighth, with Audi's Gabriel Bortoleto and Arvid Lindblad of RB rounding out the top 10. Piastri will be desperate to make an impact in Sunday's race after missing the first two grands prix of the season.

The Australian said his qualifying session was "pretty well ex-

ecuted" after also finishing fastest in Friday's second practice.

"It's nice to be closer," said Piastri of his third place on the grid.

"I think we're learning more and more about the car and about the power unit every weekend."

Esteban Ocon of Haas, Audi's Nico Hulkenberg, RB's Liam Lawson, Alpine's Franco Colapinto and Williams' Carlos Sainz went out in Q2 with Verstappen. Haas driver Ollie Bearman, who finished fifth at the Chinese Grand Prix, was a shock faller in Q3 and will start from 18th.

Cadillac pair Sergio Perez and Valtteri Bottas went out with him, as did Williams' Alex Albon and Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll. The Aston Martin pair, who have yet to complete a grand prix so far this season as they struggle with extreme vibration, finished bottom of the timesheets.

STARTING GRID

- 1st row**
Kimi Antonelli (ITA/Mercedes), George Russell (GBR/Mercedes)

2nd row
Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren), Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari)

3rd row
Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren), Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Ferrari)

4th row
Pierre Gasly (FRA/Alpine), Isack Hadjar (FRA/Red Bull)

5th row
Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA/Audi), Arvid Lindblad (GBR/Racing Bulls)

6th row
Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull), Esteban Ocon (FRA/Haas)

7th row
Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Audi), Liam Lawson (NZL/Racing Bulls)

8th row
Franco Colapinto (ARG/Alpine), Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP/Williams)

9th row
Alexander Albon (THA/Williams), Oliver Bearman (GBR/Haas)

10th row
Sergio Perez (MEX/Cadillac), Valtteri Bottas (FIN/Cadillac)

11th row
Fernando Alonso (ESP/Aston Martin), Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin)

FOCUS

Woods arrested, charged with DUI after Florida crash

AFP
Miami

Tiger Woods was arrested and charged with driving under the influence Friday after a rollover crash near his Florida home, authorities said, as the 15-time major champion's golf career veered into fresh turmoil.

Woods, 50, escaped injury but was detained after his vehicle clipped a truck while attempting to overtake on a residential road on Jupiter Island, flipping onto its side before sliding to a stop.

Martin County Sheriff John Budensiek said Woods - who was arrested for driving under the influence in 2017 - showed signs of "impairment", although he passed a breathalyzer test.

"When it came time for us to ask for a urinalysis test, he refused, and so he's been charged with DUI, with property damage and refusal to submit to a lawful test in the crash," Budensiek said.

In line with Florida DUI laws, Woods was detained at the county jail for eight hours and was photographed departing the facility in a car late Friday. A booking photo showed a red-eyed, stubbly-chinned Woods when he arrived at the jail about two hours after the crash.

Budensiek said drug recognition experts who examined Woods at the scene found the golfer "lethargic" and believed he was impaired with "some kind of medication or drug."

No drugs or medication were found in his vehicle and since Woods refused the urine test, his right under Florida law, authorities "will never get definitive results as to what he was impaired on at the time of the crash," Budensiek said.

While neither Woods nor the driver of the other vehicle was injured, Budensiek said the incident on the two-lane road "could have been a lot worse."

"Had somebody been moving in the opposite direction, we would not be having a conversation saying there was no injuries," he said.

Budensiek said he didn't know how fast Woods was driving in the moments before the crash.

He said the driver of the truck had slowed to make a turn, then tried to move to the side of the road when he saw Woods's fast-moving vehicle attempting to overtake him.

"When I show you the photos, they kind of speak for themselves...you can see that (Woods)



Tiger Woods is driven from the Martin County Jail after being arrested for driving under the influence after a car crash in Stuart, Florida. (AFP)

slid for a decent space before he came to a stop," said the sheriff, who said that after the crash Woods climbed out of the passenger-side window of his Land Rover.

President Donald Trump expressed sympathy for Woods in remarks to reporters in Miami following the incident.

"He's got some difficulty, there was an accident, and that's all I know," Trump said. "Very close friend of mine. He's an amazing person, amazing man, but, uh, some difficulty."

Woods was arrested in Jupiter in 2017 after police found him asleep at the wheel of his damaged car. Woods eventually pleaded guilty to reckless driving and said he had taken a mix of painkillers.

Five years ago Woods was involved in a serious car crash in California that left him with severe right leg injuries that required pins inserted in his foot and ankle and a rod in his tibia as well as a follow-up surgery in 2023. Woods returned from that crash at the 2022 Masters, where he struggled to walk all four rounds on the way to a 47th-place finish.

Woods, whose clean-cut image was left in tatters after a 2009 sex scandal that upended his career, has been working to return from an Achilles tendon rupture last March and back surgery last October.

He competed earlier this week in the TGL simulator indoor golf league finals and had not ruled out playing in next month's Masters, where his five victories include his first major title in 1997 and his most recent in 2019.

"This body ... it doesn't recover like it did when it was 24, 25. It doesn't mean I'm not trying," said Woods, who last competed in a PGA Tour level event at the 2024 British Open. "I keep trying."

TENNIS

Sinner to meet Lehecka in final

AFP
Miami

World number two Jannik Sinner of Italy stretched his win streak over fourth-ranked Alexander Zverev to seven matches on Friday, advancing to a Miami Open men's final against Czech Jiri Lehecka.

The 24-year-old Italian fired 15 aces in beating Germany's Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) after an hour and 53 minutes - boosting his streak of consecutive sets won at the elite Masters 1000 level to 32.

Sinner is trying to become the first man since Roger Federer in 2017 to complete the "Sunshine Double" by winning titles at Indian Wells and Miami in the same year. "Standing here again in a final means very much to me," Sinner said. "We'll try to push in a couple of days but in any case it has been an incredible swing."

Reigning Wimbledon champion Sinner, a four-time Grand Slam winner, also beat Zverev two weeks ago in the Indian Wells semi-finals and seeks his second Miami crown in three years. "Coming here, trying to produce some good tennis, that was my main goal," Sinner said. "Trying to play as many matches as possible. I couldn't do better. I'm very happy."

Also attempting a "Sunshine Double" is world number one Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, who defends her Miami crown against American fourth seed Coco Gauff in Saturday's WTA final.

Lehecka, seeded 21st, dominated 28th-seeded Arthur Fils of France 6-2, 6-2 in the other semi-final at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins.



Jannik Sinner celebrates defeating Alexander Zverev in the Miami Open semi-final. (AFP)

Lehecka is winless in three matches against Sinner without taking a set. "He's an incredible player," said Sinner.

"He's going to be for sure more free than me but I try to control whatever I can control and the rest we'll see how it goes."

Sinner blasted a forehand winner to break Zverev for a 3-1 lead and held from there to capture the first set after 42 minutes on a service winner. Neither player could manage a break into the second-set tie-breaker, which turned when Zverev sent an overhead smash long to hand Sinner a 5-4 lead. Zverev, who last beat the Italian in the fourth round at the 2023 US Open, sent a backhand wide on the next point and Sinner settled matters with a service winner, improving to 8-4 all-time against the German.

"Today has been a very tough encounter. He played some in-

credible tennis," Sinner said. "I was serving very well, especially in the crucial moments, so I'm very happy."

Sinner seeks a 26th career ATP title in his 35th career final. Lehecka, who has not dropped a set in the event, delivered the Frenchman's first four broken service games to advance after 75 minutes.

"It feels great. It's definitely something I've been working towards the whole year and the whole pre-season," Lehecka said.

"I really trusted my game and the work I put in. It didn't matter when, but I knew it would come and today was a nice example of how I want to play. I executed it well so I'm very happy with today's performance."

Lehecka will jump past his current career high ranking of 16th next week. He's assured of leaping eight spots to 14th and with a title would reach 12th.

SPOTLIGHT

Al Thumama Ramadan Football Tournament resumes today

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The third edition of the Al Thumama Ramadan Football Tournament resumes today at Al Furjan Stadium in the Al Thumama area, the organising committee announced.

The tournament being held in cooperation with the Qatar Sports for All Federation for players aged 10 to 14 had been temporarily suspended due to the situation in the region.

Four matches are scheduled, starting after Maghrib prayer. The first match will feature Al Shahaniya against Al Dafna, followed by Al Rayyan facing Al Zaeem. The third match will see Al Wajba take on Abdullah Bin Turki, while the fourth match will pit Al Dafna against the Healthcare team. Organisers expect highly competitive and exciting games, with intense battles for the top positions.

Hassan al-Ishaq, Chairman of the Organizing Committee and member of the Municipal Council, said the resumption of the tournament supports community sports activities and encourages young talents to engage in healthy competition.

"We are delighted by the return of the Al Thumama Ramadan Tournament after its temporary suspension. The primary objective is to provide young players aged 10 to 14 with the opportunity to showcase their football skills and cultivate a spirit of competition and commitment," al-Ishaq said.

He added that the tournament is held in cooperation with the Qatar Sports for All Federation, which consistently supports community sports initiatives.

Al Ishaq concluded by saying the committee is committed to providing a safe and stimulating sporting environment for the children, hoping the tournament will help discover promising football talents with the potential to have a distinguished future in Qatari sports.

Vingegaard nears Tour of Catalonia victory with stage six win

Jonas Vingegaard blazed to stage six victory at the Tour of Catalonia yesterday and tightened his grip on the overall lead. The race favourite accelerated away from the lead group with just over two kilometres to ride to clinch back-to-back stage triumphs in the Pyrenees mountains. Danish Visma-Lease a Bike rider Vingegaard, who dominated at Paris-Nice earlier in March, finished 10 seconds ahead of Lenny Martinez and Florian Lipowitz, who finished second and third respectively. Vingegaard holds a provisional 1 minute 22s lead overall on Martinez, while Lipowitz is third and a further eight seconds behind the two-time Tour de France winner. The 158-kilometre final mountain stage in the lower Pyrenees, starting in Berga and ending at the Sanctuary of Queralt, looked ripe for another Vingegaard triumph and so it proved. Double Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel, who had fallen out of overall contention during a disappointing fifth stage, rode powerfully to help Red Bull team-mate Lipowitz. However, Vingegaard's broke clear of the German

and Frenchman Martinez of Bahrain Victorious with just over two kilometres remaining, and they could not reel him in after that. Vingegaard is now well-placed to win the Tour of Catalonia in his first participation, adding it to a growing resume of high-profile stage races he has won.

The Dane has won the Vuelta a Espana, Tirreno-Adriatico, Criterium du Dauphine and the Tour of the Basque Country. He has started the season in fine form ahead of his tilt at a Giro d'Italia-Tour de France double, having won two stages as well as the overall title at Paris-Nice, and now two more stages in Catalonia. Felix Gall, who started the day second overall, dropped down to sixth, three minutes 17s behind Vingegaard, after he was distanced on a fast descent before the final climb. The seventh and final stage on Sunday takes in seven circuits of the short Montjuic climb in Barcelona, where the Tour de France starts in July. Briton Tom Pidcock did not start after a crash on Friday, even though he recovered to finish that stage, saying he needs a "bit of time for it to heal".

FOOTBALL

Henderson backs England's White after fans boo

Defender had walked out of the 2022 World Cup squad

AFP
London

England midfielder Jordan Henderson pledged to support Ben White after the Arsenal defender was booed during Friday's friendly against Uruguay. White was jeered by England fans when he came on as a second-half substitute in the 1-1 draw at Wembley before hearing more boos after scoring his side's late opener.

The 28-year-old capped a chaotic cameo when he conceded a stoppage-time penalty converted by Uruguay captain Federico Valverde. White was making his first England appearance since he walked out of the 2022 World Cup squad due to "personal reasons".

He then made himself unavailable for selection for the rest of Gareth Southgate's reign as Three Lions boss.

England's current manager Thomas Tuchel has given White a "second chance", but the right-back discovered the fans were less forgiving when he was introduced as Fikayo Tomori's replacement on Friday.

Henderson knows how it feels to feel the ire of the Wembley crowd, after he was booed following an ill-fated move to Saudi Arabia, which earned him criticism given his previous support of the LGBTQ+ community.

"As team-mates we are always there to support. A lot of the fans will be in support of all of the players," the Brentford midfielder said. "I have been through it myself, but that is part and parcel of being an England player. Some of the fans probably don't even know why they are booing, they listen to what is being said in the media, and a lot of the time what the media says isn't true. Not many people know the ins and outs of what happened in Qatar and it is for us to deal with internally."

Henderson, who captained England against Uruguay while Harry Kane rested, said White has been welcomed back into the squad after Tuchel told the defender to explain his self-imposed exile to them. And, with England hosting Japan in another friendly on Tuesday, former Liverpool star Henderson agreed it is up to the rest of the squad to help White cope with the Wembley abuse.

"Ben has been good since he came back in and we will support him as team-mates," Henderson said. "A few of us have been there,



England's defender Ben White (right) scores during the friendly match against Uruguay at Wembley Stadium in London on Friday. (AFP)

it is difficult when it is you, but you have to try not to take it too personally, the media can spin things in certain ways, which isn't always the truth and then fans can pick up on that and think it is the truth. It is really difficult when that happens, so it is important for us to make sure he is OK, which I am sure he is. I was delighted he got on and got a goal, which is the most important thing."

Meanwhile, coach Thomas Tuchel said he had "learned a lot" from England's scrappy 1-1 draw against Uruguay at Wembley even though many of his star players were watching from the stands. Harry Kane, Bukayo Saka and Declan Rice were among the established 11-strong contingent who will join a group that will now be cut down.

England boss Tuchel, who named an expanded 35-man squad for friendlies against Uruguay and Japan, trialled a variety of dif-

ferent players, with Everton midfielder James Garner and Manchester City goalkeeper James Trafford making their debuts. But the German insisted he had learned valuable lessons ahead of the game against Japan - England's final match before the World Cup, which starts in June.

"I learned a lot, because it was a tough opponent and you just see it in the details," he said. "You learn a lot in the details, also the behaviour, and you see the level. "If you play against (Manuel) Ugarte, if you play against (Federico) Valverde in midfield, you see the level. You play against the winners and these defensive players, it's a high level and then you instantly see, so we needed this kind of test."

Tuchel said the match against Marcelo Bielsa's Uruguay, who have also qualified for the World Cup in Canada, Mexico and the United States, had been "the test that I expected".

MOTOGP

Di Giannantonio breaks US Grand Prix lap record for back-to-back poles

Reuters
Austin

VR46 Racing's Fabio Di Giannantonio claimed pole position at the United States Grand Prix after a thrilling qualifying session at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin where the lap record was broken repeatedly yesterday. Di Giannantonio's record-setting time of two minutes 0.136 seconds secured back-to-back pole positions for the Italian who topped qualifying in Brazil last weekend.

MotoGP championship leader Marco Bezzecchi qualified second fastest for Aprilia, with KTM's Pedro Acosta completing the front row. "The team did an incredible job yesterday because we did a big change for this morning and they sent perfectly what they needed to improve, to be faster. For this, I'm super grateful to them," Di Giannantonio said.

"Then we did an amazing lap. This lap was the most adrenaline-packed lap of my life, honestly. For sure, it's a great shot to start from where we are. But we need to be focused and try to give our best in the afternoon (sprint)."

The qualifying turned into a record-breaking bonanza, with the lap record changing hands multiple times during the session. Ducati's former world champion Francesco Bagnaia set the early pace in Q2 by breaking the track record. But his moment in the spotlight lasted barely two minutes until Joan Mir stunned the field by shattering the record again aboard his Honda.

Ducati's reigning champion Marc Marquez was repeatedly frustrated by traffic as he attempted to set a fast lap while his Ducati teammate Bagnaia was seen slap-

ping his fuel tank when other riders impeded his bid for another quick time.

Stewards said they were investigating an incident in which Bezzecchi cut across Marquez, forcing the Spaniard to slow down and abandon his flying lap. "Honestly, I have no idea. I didn't see him," Bezzecchi said when asked about the incident.

Despite the qualifying chaos, Bagnaia managed to secure fourth position on the grid, relegating Mir to fifth. Marquez will start sixth in today's race after setting a time that was half a second slower than Di Giannantonio's pole-winning effort. Aprilia's Jorge Martin was seventh fastest and is joined on the third row by Gresini Racing's Alex Marquez and Honda's Luca Marini.

STARTING GRID

Front row: Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA/Ducati-VR46), Marco Bezzecchi (ITA/Aprilia), Pedro Acosta (ESP/KTM)
2nd row: Francesco Bagnaia (ITA/Ducati), Joan Mir (ESP/Honda), Marc Marquez (ESP/Ducati)
3rd row: Jorge Martin (ESP/Aprilia), Alex Marquez (ESP/Ducati-Gresini), Luca Marini (ITA/Honda)
4th row: Fermin Aldeguer (ESP/Ducati-Gresini), Ai Ogura (JPN/Aprilia-Trackhouse), Enea Bastianini (ITA/KTM-Tech3)
5th row: Raul Fernandez (ESP/Aprilia-Trackhouse), Diogo Moreira (BRA/Honda-LCR), Johann Zarco (FRA/Honda-LCR)
6th row: Fabio Quartararo (FRA/Yamaha), Toprak Razgatlioglu (TUR/Yamaha-Pramac), Brad Binder (RSA/KTM)
7th row: Jack Miller (AUS/Yamaha-Pramac), Franco Morbidelli (ITA/Ducati-VR46), Alex Rins (ESP/Yamaha)



Honda LCR's Johann Zarco (right) and VR46 Racing's Fabio di Giannantonio ride during qualifying session for the Grand Prix of the United States at Circuit of The Americas in Austin.

SPOTLIGHT

Koeman praises Dutch performance after ending Norway's unbeaten run

Reuters
Amsterdam

Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman praised his team's performance after their 2-1 win over Norway in a World Cup warm-up on Friday in Amsterdam, but captain Virgil van Dijk felt there was still work to do ahead of the global football showpiece.

The Dutch next meet Ecuador in Eindhoven on Tuesday and will play Algeria in June as they continue their preparations for the World Cup, which is scheduled from June 11 to July 19 in North America.

"This was simply a very good match from us against a very strong country," Koeman said in a press conference. "It is somewhat typically Dutch to think that when you play Norway, you have to beat them. That is not the case. In the qualifiers, they beat Italy twice. Norway also had good phases against us, but looking at the entire match, I think we deserved to win."

The Netherlands, who were playing without several regulars, fell behind to an early strike from Andreas Schjelderup but fought back through goals from Van Dijk and Tijjani Reijnders.

Van Dijk was less enthusiastic about his side's performance and did not want to answer a question about whether the Dutch were genuine contenders for the World Cup, which is being held in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

"There is still work to be done. In spells it went well, but at other times less so," he said. "I thought we were better in the second half, partly because they were a bit more tired. Ultimately, we had enough chances to score more goals. Defensively, we were also solid. We won deservedly and now we move on."

Friday's win meant the Netherlands blunted Norway's high-



Netherlands' defender Virgil van Dijk (left) celebrates after scoring against Norway in a friendly in Amsterdam. (AFP)

scoring attack and ended their 13-match unbeaten run. Norway were one of two European nations, with England, to win all eight of their qualifying group games. Including Nations League matches and friendlies, the only blip in their last 13 games was an unlikely 1-1 draw with New Zealand in Oslo last October.

On Friday, they opted to rest their most dangerous player. Eleven different players, not counting two luckless Israelis who put the ball in their own net, had scored for Norway as they rampaged through World Cup qualifying thumping 37 goals, the most in Europe. Erling Haaland, who scored 16 of them, was not risked on Friday.

Martin Odegaard was also absent for Norway with Memphis Depay, tied for second in European qualifying with eight goals, and Frenkie de Jong absent for the hosts. After 14 minutes, the crowd rose and applauded in a pre-arranged commemoration of their great former No. 14, Cruyff, who died on March 24, 2016.

Norway briefly silenced the

home support as midfielder Andreas Schjelderup struck after 24 minutes. On the left, the 21-year-old cut to his right leaving defender Denzel Dumfries floundering and slashed a shot through the space and inside the far post.

Van Dijk leapt unsupervised in front of goal to nod home a 35th-minute Reijnders corner to bring the hosts level. Reijnders put them ahead after 51 minutes. The Norwegians gave the ball away in midfield and the Dutch swept quickly forward, the ball reaching Reijnders alone at the far post with time to place his shot inside the near post.

As the substitutes trooped on, the Dutch pressed for more. They finished the match with 14 goal attempts to five from Norway.

At the World Cup, Norway face a stacked group that also contains France, winners eight years ago and runners-up in 2022, and recently-deposed African champions Senegal as well as either Bolivia or Iraq. The Dutch are in a group with Japan, Tunisia and Poland or Sweden.

Barcelona's Raphinha to miss Champions League quarters due to injury

Barcelona: Barcelona attacker Raphinha will miss their Champions League quarter-final tie with Atletico Madrid early next month after suffering a hamstring injury on international duty with Brazil, the La Liga side said. The 29-year-old, who has scored 19 goals in all competitions for Barcelona this season, picked up the injury on Thursday in Brazil's 2-1 defeat by France in Foxborough.

Barcelona, who are four points clear of Real Madrid in LaLiga, host Atletico in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final on April 8 with the return in Madrid on April 14. Raphinha scored twice in Barcelona's thumping 7-2 victory over Newcastle United in the round of 16 earlier this month.

OYARZABAL DOUBLE FIRES SPAIN TO WIN OVER SERBIA

Mikel Oyarzabal scored two terrific goals as European champions Spain beat Serbia 3-0 in a friendly on Friday to underline their status as leading title contenders at this year's World Cup. Real Sociedad forward Oyarzabal, who struck the

winner against England in the Euro 2024 final, hammered in Spain's opening goal in Villarreal after a clever move started by Lamine Yamal. Oyarzabal drilled in his and his team's second goal just before half-time with a crunching drive from 20 metres that flew past Serbia goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic. Osasuna winger Victor Munoz came off the bench to score on his Spain debut and seal a convincing win for Luis de la Fuente's side.

The game was hastily rearranged to replace the Finalissima between Spain and Argentina in Qatar, which was called off after the outbreak of the war in the Middle East. Spain had been set to face Lionel Messi's Argentina in Doha but because of the war, triggered by US-Israeli strikes on February 28 against Iran, organisers looked for a new location or date.

UEFA said Argentina had not accepted any of the various alternative proposals offered, leading to the cancellation of the match. The Finalissima, played since 2022, pits the Copa America champions against the winners of the European

Championship. Spain are now due to face Egypt in Barcelona on March 31. The fixture was also relocated from Qatar and pushed back a day.

WIRTZ SHINES AS GERMANY BEAT SWITZERLAND

Florian Wirtz starred for Germany with two stunning goals and two assists as Germany edged neighbours Switzerland 4-3 in a breathless friendly in Basel on Friday. Switzerland twice led in the contest, with Dan Ndoye and then Breel Embolo putting the hosts in front. But Germany pegged them back both times, with Wirtz the architect of each goal.

His first assist was a pinpoint deep cross for Jonathan Tah's first international goal and his second a defence-splitting pass for Serge Gnabry to make it 2-2.

But the Liverpool winger saved his best for the second half, finding the top corner from the corner of the penalty area to make it 3-2 and then producing another gem to settle the contest in Germany's favour - but he admitted there was some luck involved in his first.

We respect Bosnian team, says Italy's Dimarco

Coverciano, Italy: Federico Dimarco insisted that Italy respect Bosnia and Herzegovina, after he and team-mates were caught on camera celebrating when their opponents reached the World Cup qualifying final by beating Wales. "I respect all clubs and, above all, all national teams. It was an instinctive reaction: we were among friends watching a penalty shoot-out," wing-back Dimarco said at a press conference at Coverciano, the Italy team's training centre.

Italy will attempt to end their World Cup exile when they meet

Bosnia and Herzegovina on Tuesday in Zenica. Italy, who finished a distant second to Norway in their qualifying group, beat Northern Ireland 2-0 in Atalanta in 90 minutes on Thursday. They then watched the end of the game from Cardiff where Edin Dzeko scored a late equaliser to force extra time.

When the Bosnians won in a penalty shootout, Dimarco, Sandro Tonali and other Italian players were shown on state broadcaster Rai celebrating. The reaction was picked up on by their opponents. Miralem Pjanic,

a former Bosnia international who spent nine seasons in Serie A with Roma and Juventus, made clear his unhappiness when he talked to La Gazzetta dello Sport

"Dimarco and the other Azzurri's joy? Honestly, I don't understand why," he said. "We'll have to create a hellish atmosphere for the match. It'll take real character to come away from Zenica with a win."

Dimarco, a former team-mate of Dzeko's at Inter Milan, said the Bosnians should not take offence. Italy failed to qualify for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.