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Captain Patidar stars as RCB hammer GT to reach IPL final



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Sabalenka and Osaka advance, Medvedev eliminated

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Dhul-Hijjah 10, 1447 AH

GULF TIMES

SPORT

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026

14
DAYS TO GO

TRIVIA

What year was the first World Cup ever held?
1930 in Uruguay.

FIFA WORLD CUP

Qatar squad leaves Doha for last round of preparations

By Sports Reporter
Doha

A 28-member Qatar football squad - coached by Julen Lopetegui - yesterday left Doha for Dublin where they will play an international friendly against Ireland tomorrow.

Following their friendly in Dublin, the Qatar squad will then leave for Los Angeles, United States, where they are scheduled to play their final friendly against El Salvador on June 6.

On Monday, coach Lopetegui announced a 28-member squad. The squad will be trimmed to 26 on or before June 2nd deadline announced by FIFA.

The FIFA World Cup will be staged across the United States, Canada and Mexico from June 11 to July 19.

Two-time Asian champions Qatar secured qualification for a second consecutive FIFA World Cup - the first on merit - after progressing through the play-offs against Oman and the UAE late last year.

Al Annabi have been drawn in Group B and will open their campaign against Switzerland on June 13 at San Francisco Bay Area Stadium before facing co-hosts Canada on June 19 in Vancouver and Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 24 in Seattle.

Qatar will base their FIFA World Cup campaign in Santa Barbara, California, with the national team



Qatar coach Julen Lopetegui and players departed from the Hamad International Airport for Dublin yesterday.



set to train at Westmont College after FIFA confirmed team base camps for the 2026 tournament.

The Qatar squad will stay in the coastal Californian city during the expanded 48-team World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico from next month.

FIFA announced the official list of team base camps, with Qatar assigned to Santa Barbara, where Westmont College will serve as the team's training site as the Gulf nation prepare for another appearance on football's biggest stage.

"Team Base Camps are an inte-

gral part of the fabric of any FIFA World Cup," said Heimo Schirgi, FIFA World Cup 2026 chief operating officer.

"They are where teams put down roots, train and recuperate, and experience the day-to-day rhythms of the tournament," he added.

Defending champions Argentina and England were both assigned bases in Kansas City, while the majority of participating nations will be stationed across the United States.

According to FIFA, 39 of the 48 competing teams will be based in the United States, with seven

teams located in Mexico and two in Canada.

Iran were confirmed to be based in Tijuana, Mexico, with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum saying on Monday that the country would allow the team to stay there to avoid potential United States visa restrictions.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Miserly Arsenal face PSG firepower in style clash

'WE WANT TO BE THE BEST AND THE MOST DOMINANT TEAM IN EVERY ASPECT OF THE GAME'

AFP
Barcelona

Arsenal's immovable object meets the unstoppable force of Paris Saint-Germain in Saturday's Champions League final offering a pronounced clash of styles.

Holders PSG's flowing attack is arguably the continent's most exhilarating, while Mikel Arteta's Arsenal are wedded to a pragmatic approach which ended their 22-year wait to win the Premier League.

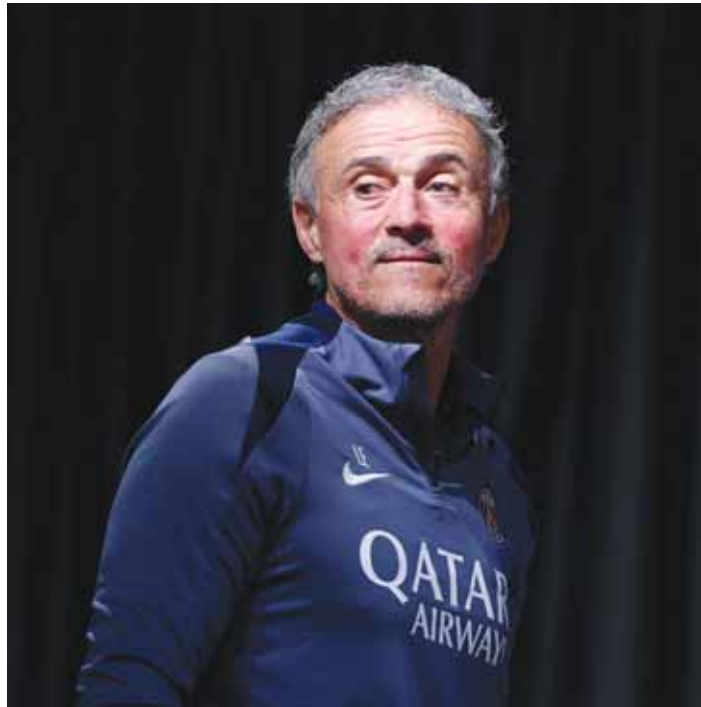
The Gunners' football this season has not won over many neutrals but after years of nearlys and almos, Arteta's strategy has paid dividends.

Arsenal's consistency beat out Pep Guardiola's Manchester City to be crowned champions of England and led them back to Europe's summit two decades after reaching the 2006 final.

In the Champions League Arsenal have conceded only six goals in 14 matches and are unbeaten - by contrast PSG let in 22 through the tournament.

"Without the ball, they are the best team in the world," said PSG coach Luis Enrique of the north London side.

Arteta's side depends on structure and discipline, seeking to control opponents by stopping them reaching dangerous areas, limiting their shots in the box - no Premier League team has conceded fewer. The Gunners aggressively press opponents high, seeking to dominate territory, and hate giving the ball away themselves, avoiding risk in their passing.



Paris Saint-Germain head coach Luis Enrique (left) and Arsenal's manager Mikel Arteta



They possess imposing, physical players, from impressive centre-back pairing Gabriel and William Saliba, through the spine of the team, in Declan Rice and imposing strikers Viktor Gyokeres and Kai Havertz. That aids their dead ball mastery, under the cunning eye of set piece coach Nicolas Jover, whom they signed from Manchester City in 2021.

Swiss newspaper *Blick* pondered whether Jover was "ruining football", with the Frenchman reportedly paid a bonus per goal scored via a set piece.

"We want to be the best and

the most dominant team in every aspect of the game," said Arteta, imploring his team to score even more from dead balls. With 27 Premier League goals scored this season from dead ball situations, 38 percent of their total, some have labelled Arsenal 'Set Piece FC'.

"Every time they get a corner, my head is in my hands," former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher told Sky Sports. "I've never seen anything like this before in football."

After three consecutive second place finishes, Arsenal recognise winning ugly is better than not

winning at all. "I don't know how you celebrate one goal different to another - maybe for YouTube one is nicer than another," said Arteta unperturbed by criticism.

Arsenal won seven games 1-0 this season in the Premier League, keeping 19 clean sheets.

If teams do penetrate the backline, they must beat David Raya, enjoying a superb season in goal.

The Spaniard has matched the record of nine clean sheets in the Champions League. A 10th could secure the trophy. Their struggles from open play, particularly when star winger Bukayo Saka was out

injured, frustrated even their own supporters at times.

Yet as tens of thousands turned up to celebrate the Premier League title, nobody was complaining. Those joyous scenes outside the Emirates stadium, with some players joining the fans until past five in the morning, allow Arsenal to double down on their approach, particularly against a team as lethal as PSG.

While Arsenal have sometimes lacked star power in attack, opponents PSG boast several electric forwards who thrive in organised chaos and will back themselves

to break down the competition's toughest defence. Coach Luis Enrique may have weeded his team of superstars but Ousmane Dembele, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Desire Doue are some of the most dynamic attackers on the planet.

The French champions demolish teams in transition with searing pace, helping top scorers PSG net 44 goals in the Champions League, one short of the all-time record of 45.

PSG showed their attacking prowess in the first leg of their semi-final tussle with Bayern Munich, edging the German giants 5-4 in an all-timer. Arsenal seek to reduce risk, PSG encourage it.

"When we can keep the ball and create space, it makes the match easier," said Luis Enrique after his team put five past Chelsea in the last 16 first leg.

"We showed that we are a real team, unpredictable."

They racked up eight goals against the Blues on aggregate, plus six against Bayern Munich and four against Liverpool in the other knockout games.

If the final does not follow the script, it will be because Luis Enrique tears it up.

In the second leg against Bayern he shifted strategy and denied Vincent Kompany the end-to-end contest he expected in a 1-1 draw.

"We can't always win with magic or extraordinary play," said Doue.

However for the most part PSG, who put five goals past Inter Milan in last season's final, have done just that. Whichever style emerges triumphant will determine who leaves Budapest with the European crown.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Patidar shines as Bengaluru crush Gujarat by 92 runs

The defending champions reach final for second time in a row



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Virat Kohli and Rajat Patidar celebrate the wicket of Gujarat Titans' Rahul Tewatia during their IPL match at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP
Dharamshala, India

Rajat Patidar led from the front with an unbeaten 93 to help defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru storm into the IPL final with a 92-run thrashing of Gujarat Titans yesterday.

Captain Patidar's 33-ball knock steered Bengaluru to 254-5 and then their bowlers combined to bowl out Gujarat for 162 in 19.3 overs in the first qualifier in Dharamshala.

Gujarat will have another shot at making the final when they go into Friday's second qualifier in Chandigarh where they will face the winner of the eliminator between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Rajasthan Royals.

The final takes place in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Star batter Virat Kohli hit 43 to

lay the foundation for Bengaluru's mammoth total - the highest ever in an IPL play-off - after being invited to bat first.

The 37-year-old Kohli, who has stepped away from Test cricket and T20 internationals, is chasing a second straight IPL title with Bengaluru after waiting 18 seasons to lift his first in 2025.

Kohli and Devdutt Padikkal, who made 30, put on 72 for the second wicket before Jason Holder hit back for Gujarat with two wickets in three balls.

Holder got Kohli to drag the ball back onto his stumps and then had the left-handed Padikkal caught behind by wicketkeeper Jos Buttler.

SLOPPY FIELDING

But Bengaluru quickly rebuilt the innings with Patidar and Krunal Pandya putting together a counter-attacking stand of 95 off 47 balls. Both Patidar and left-

handed Pandya hit a flurry of fours and sixes including in a 28-run 15th over as Gujarat faltered with dropped catches and sloppy ground fielding.

Kagiso Rabada dropped Patidar on 20 and a few fielding blunders let Bengaluru race away before Pandya top-edged Rabada to deep midwicket.

Patidar kept up the charge as he reached his fifty off 21 balls with a six off Rabada.

Patidar lost another partner in Tim David, bowled by Prasad Krishna for four, but finished with a flourish alongside Jitesh Sharma who hit 15 off five balls.

In reply, 2022 champions Gujarat were never in the chase after being reduced to 51-5 inside six overs.

Gujarat started briskly with in-form opener Sai Sudharsan starting with two successive fours off New Zealand quick Jacob Duffy.

But the bowler had his revenge

in a lucky manner in the next over when Sudharsan was out hit wicket, the bat slipping out of his hand and hitting the stumps as he played a sparkling cut to the cover boundary.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled skipper Shubman Gill for two and Josh Hazlewood rattled the stumps of Buttler, who departed for 29.

Wickets kept tumbling as pace bowler Rasikh Salam struck twice in one over and the writing was on the wall.

Impact substitute Rahul Tewatia made 68 to save Gujarat the blushes after they slumped to 88-8 in 11.2 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

Royal Challengers Bengaluru 254 for 5 (Patidar 93*, Kohli 43, Holder 2-39, Rabada 2-54) **beat Gujarat Titans 162** (Tewatia 68, Duffy 3-39, Krunal 2-16) **by 92 runs**

FOOTBALL

PSG invite fans at CL viewing party at Novo Cinemas in Doha Oasis



Paris Saint-Germain is inviting supporters across Qatar to come together for a special UEFA Champions League final viewing party at Novo Cinemas in Doha Oasis, on Saturday, May 30, 2026, as the Club prepares for one of the biggest nights in its history.

The event will bring PSG fans together to experience the excitement, passion, and intensity of European football's biggest stage in a unique matchday atmosphere, surrounded by fellow supporters of the Rouge & Bleu.

This year's UEFA Champions League final represents a historic milestone for Paris Saint-Germain, with the Club aiming to achieve the extraordinary feat of winning back-to-back UEFA Champions League trophies, a moment that could further cement PSG's place among Europe's football elite.

PSG is calling on all supporters in Qatar to rally behind the Club and show their colours with pride. Fans are encouraged to attend wearing their official PSG jerseys, bringing their energy, passion, and unwavering PSG spirit as the Club pursues another historic European triumph.

Doors will open at 6:30pm, with kick-off scheduled for 7:00pm. Entry to the viewing party is free of charge, however advance registration is mandatory to attend.

Due to limited capacity, entry will only be granted to registered guests, and seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Fans are strongly encouraged to register early to secure their place.

ROAD TO BUDAPEST FINALS JERSEY

To mark PSG's journey to the fi-



nal, the Club has also officially launched the exclusive "Road to Budapest Finals" jersey, giving supporters the opportunity to wear a symbol of this historic campaign and stand behind the team in true PSG fashion.

The official jersey is now available for purchase exclusively at the PSG Store in Villaggio Mall, with fans encouraged to wear it proudly at the viewing party and throughout the final.

The viewing party promises an unforgettable experience for the PSG community in Qatar, bringing fans together to celebrate the Club, share the emotion of the occasion, and support the team as it chases European glory once again.

With a vibrant fan atmosphere, shared passion, and one of football's biggest nights on the line, Novo Cinemas at Doha Oasis will be the place to be for every PSG supporter on May 30.

Wear your PSG colours. Bring your PSG spirit. Support the Club as we aim to make history together. Ici c'est Paris!

Fans can register here:
<https://form.jotform.com/261443126379459>

Inglis named captain for Pakistan ODIs following Marsh injury

SYDNEY: Australia has turned to a fourth-choice skipper for the upcoming ODI series against Pakistan, kicking off this weekend, after Mitchell Marsh became the latest high-profile casualty to be sidelined from the tour.

Josh Inglis will take the captaincy reins for the three-match series.

he decision comes after it was revealed that Marsh sustained an ankle injury while playing in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Australia's standard 50-over captain, Pat Cummins, alongside his deputy Travis Head (who has captained the T20I side four times), are both unavailable. Their absence is due to a scheduling clash with the IPL playoffs, which overlap with the matches set to take place in Islamabad and Lahore.

This leaves Inglis to guide the squad. Interestingly, the wicketkeeper-batsman has filled this exact role once before back in November 2024, coincidentally also against Pakistan, and also during a period when a large chunk of the first-choice squad was missing.

Marsh has already flown back to Australia after sitting out the Lucknow Super Giants' final IPL fixture last week. Cricket Australia has yet to name a replacement for him in the ODI squad.

"Marsh... will remain in Perth for further assessment and treatment until further notice," said a Cricket Australia spokesperson.

"His availability for the white ball tour of Bangladesh will be determined in due course."

The leadership void is part of a wider player shortage, as Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, and Mitchell Starc are all bypassing both the Pakistan and Bangladesh tours.

Head is scheduled to link up with the national team later in Bangladesh once his IPL commitments wrap up.

Furthermore, reinforcements like Cooper Connolly, Xavier Bartlett, and Ben Dwarshuis are slated to join the squad for the three ODIs



in Dhaka. The trio were initially bypassed under the assumption that their IPL franchise, the Punjab Kings, would qualify for the playoffs.

These rapid squad changes highlight the logistical headaches facing Australian selectors for a series that launches just 24 hours before the IPL final, with Marsh's sudden injury throwing another wrench into their plans.

However, Marsh's unfortunate exit opens a door for teenage prospect Ollie Peake, boosting his chances of earning an international debut against Pakistan.

Australia squad for Pakistan ODIs: Josh Inglis (c), Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Matthew Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Riley Meredith, Oliver Peake, Matthew Renshaw, Tanveer Sangha, Liam Scott, Matt Short, Billy Stanlake, Adam Zampa

Pakistan squad: Shaheen Shah Afridi (c), Salman Ali Agha (vc), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Ahmed Daniyal, Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Maaz Sadaqat, Muhammad Ghazi Ghorri, Naseem Shah, Rohail Nazir, Sahibzada Farhan, Shadab Khan, Shamyil Hussain, Sufyan Moqim

Itinerary:
May 30: First ODI, Rawalpindi Stadium, 9:30pm AEST
June 2: Second ODI, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, 9:30pm AEST
June 4: Third ODI, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, 9:30pm AEST

CYCLING

Vingegaard obliterates Giro rivals with stage 16 win in Swiss Alps, extends overall lead to 4 mins

Reuters
Bellinzona, Italy

Jonas Vingegaard underlined his dominance on uphill finishes at the Giro d'Italia, launching a solo attack on the climb to Cari to claim victory on stage 16 yesterday.

It marked the Dane's fourth stage win of the race and further tightened his hold on the leader's jersey, with overall honours now looking increasingly assured on his Giro debut.

On Monday's rest day, Vingegaard declared his desire to win a stage while wearing the pink jersey, and quickly followed up that promise in Switzerland on the 113-km ride from Bellinzona. His lead at the top is now over four minutes.

"We wanted to try to win in the pink jersey and obviously it can also go wrong," Vingegaard said after the stage win.

"So we chose the first option to do it because if we failed then we would have another one as well."

Vingegaard made his attack less than 7 km from the top, and as in his three previous stage wins, the Visma-Lease a Bike rider was followed home by Felix Gall (Decathlon CMA CGM), but this time the Austrian lost over one minute.

Gall did move into second overall but with five stages left and two more mountain rides to come, the likelihood is Vingegaard will only increase his lead further before



Team Visma - Lease a Bike's Jonas Vingegaard celebrates on the podium wearing the maglia rosa jersey after stage 16 with former cyclist Vincenzo Nibali during the Giro d'Italia - Stage 16 from Bellinzona to Cari - in Switzerland yesterday. (Reuters)

the race concludes in Rome on Sunday.

Australian Jai Hindley (Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe), the 2022 Giro winner, came in third. Long-time race leader, Portugal's Afonso Eulalio (Bahrain Victorious), trailed in over three minutes behind Vingegaard and dropped from second to fifth overall.

It may have been the shortest road stage of this year's race but with two ascents of the Torre and Leontica double-header, and the

11.6-km category-one climb to the summit finish, it proved a gruelling ride in the Swiss Alps.

The early breakaway group was whittled down to four riders, but they knew their chances were doomed with the peloton closing in and triple-stage winner Jhonatan Narvaez was first to give up the ghost, followed by Giulio Ciccone and Einer Rubio.

That left Australian Chris Harper alone out front at the start of the climb to Cari. But with

Vingegaard's Visma teammates pushing at the front of the main bunch, he was quickly closed down.

"It's a long climb. It took around half an hour, I guess, and again, my teammates today, they did an amazing job," Vingegaard said.

"They pulled from the start and didn't give the breakaway any chances and on the last climb they reduced the bunch and then I had to do the rest."

TENNIS

Sabalenka, Osaka advance but Medvedev eliminated

Top-ranked Sabalenka mows down Bouzas Maneiro as Medvedev falls in opener to Australian Walton

Reuters
Paris

World number one Aryna Sabalenka sealed a stylish win to make the second round of the French Open, while Naomi Osaka brought runway flair to Roland Garros, but sixth seed Daniil Medvedev unravelled on a searing yesterday in Paris.

Reigning Paris champion Coco Gauff recovered from a sluggish start to outclass Taylor Townsend 6-4 6-0 with several Americans also progressing despite a heat-wave in the French capital making conditions challenging for players and fans.

Dressed in a black-and-red mesh outfit and wearing a diamond necklace, Sabalenka dismissed Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-4 6-2 win before brushing off concerns about the added flourishes by saying she was completely at ease.

"I like to challenge myself," the Belarusian told reporters.

"But at the same time, the dress is super light ... I don't feel the dress on me. I was thinking it's going to be super hot wearing black, but it doesn't feel like black colour on me, I feel really comfortable.

"And the diamonds, I don't really feel the heaviness of it, but I can imagine how it looks from the outside ... for me, it's important to look good. If I feel good looks-



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka plays a backhand return to Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro during their match on day 3 of the French Open in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

wise, I perform better and I feel great."

While Sabalenka set the tone, former world number one Osaka added a touch of Parisian flair as she walked onto Court Suzanne Lenglen in a sequined blouse and a black mesh floor-length train before unveiling a layered yellow-brown and gold match dress.

The tennis was equally sparkling as the 16th seed overcame tricky German Laura Siegemund 6-3 7-6(3) before hinting at the inspiration behind her match outfit.

"I feel like ... you know the Eiffel Tower at night when it's sparkly? I

think I look like that a bit," Osaka said.

Daniil Medvedev has never been comfortable in the Roland Garros spotlight and the Russian crashed 6-2 1-6 6-1 1-6 6-4 to Australian wildcard Adam Walton for his seventh opening-round defeat in 10 appearances at the Grand Slam.

"I don't want to find excuses," he said. "I know why I don't really play my best at Roland Garros, but if I say it, it's excuses. So I'll keep it to myself.

"Maybe I should consider playing a tournament before (it), which I usually don't do before Grand

Slams, but when it doesn't work, why not? That's the only thing I'll consider next year." Walton said hailing from Queensland and being comfortable in furnace-like conditions helped him prevail.

"I grew up in the heat. I've always preferred when the court gives my shots extra, which is what the heat does," he added.

"I seem to be able to last. I'm not saying I last better than him, but I last better than probably the field in the heat. Just given the way I play, that's one aspect that is huge for me, because I'm not the most talented player out there."



Daniil Medvedev reacts to a point against Australia's Adam Walton during their match in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

Walton was joined in the next round by compatriot Alex de Minaur, who advanced after rising Belgian Alexander Blockx was forced to withdraw with a right ankle sprain, while Alexandre Muller retired injured trailing Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-2 3-0.

Briton Cameron Norrie pulled out injured from a major for the first time as a rib issue meant he was unable to continue after going down 7-6(7) 2-0. American Learner Tien dished out the bagels during his 6-0 2-6 6-0 6-2 win over Cristian Garin, while compatriots Zachary Svajda, Emma Nav-

arro, Iva Jovic, Claire Liu, Ann Li all went through with little trouble.

A day after French favourite Gael Monfils went out of his home Grand Slam for the final time, Parisian fans were given a glimpse of the future as teenager Moise Kouame downed 2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic 7-6(4) 6-2 6-1.

Victory meant the 17-year-old wildcard became the youngest man to win a Grand Slam main draw match in 17 years.

"It's a lot of emotion, it's exceptional," Kouame said. "Coming into this tournament, I didn't know what to expect."

SPOTLIGHT

At sweltering Roland Garros fans and players try to stay cool as heat wave sweeps across Europe

AFP
Paris, France

Fans, players and staff at the French Open yesterday toughed it out under the heat dome that has swept western Europe.

France set a May temperature record on Monday and temperatures were forecast to pass 34 degrees celsius (93 Fahrenheit) again yesterday in what Meteo France called "a heatwave, notable for its early onset and prolonged duration."

"Well, it's warm," said French player Arthur Rinderknech after he won on Monday. "We're not used to that warmth in Paris at the French Open."

Roland-Garros's first-aiders treated 25 people on Monday and about 15 by the middle of yesterday afternoon, fire and safety officer Michel Franco Durand told AFP.

"We were expecting worse," he added.

In the early rounds at Roland Garros, the first match starts at 11am (0900GMT) and even fans without show-court tickets can watch matches on the mostly unshaded outer courts until after sunset.

Out on court 14, Corinne and Ray from Victoria, in Canada, had avoided sitting as they watched Iva Jovic beat Alexandra Eala in yesterday's midday sun.

"The seats are so hot," Corinne



A general view of spectators outside the courts during the French Open in Paris yesterday. (Reuters)

said. "So we stood at the rail." "We're not used to this heat, but who is?"

A few yards away Mike Lipschutz from Boca Raton in Florida said he was.

"It was great," he said. "It felt like home."

His friend Jim, a New Yorker who did not want to give his surname, was less happy.

"I was freaking out. I had a towel on my head. I had a hat. I was hid behind those lights."

Mike's wife Risa said they had come an hour early to chose their seats.

"We're from South Florida. So we're used to the heat," she said.

Noah from Charleston was downing a cool drink in the shade

of a concession stand. "It's tough, but you know, I think it's something that we all sort of expected," he said.

"It's worse than it normally is in Paris, but there's plenty of areas to find shade, drinking plenty of water. Great tennis to enjoy.

"It's brutal. I've seen a couple of people look like they're more tired than others."

He said he had learned to cope with extreme heat growing up in the American south.

It was a point echoed by American player Ben Shelton, who said the conditions "would help the US Group in this tournament."

"All of us live in Florida, so that physical part becomes less of a factor," he said.

"The heat is a factor and is going to help us.

Norwegian Casper Ruud found it a challenge as he beat Roman Safiullin on Monday in a five set marathon saying he had "a kind of heat-stroke feeling".

"In the fourth set I felt, at times really dizzy and just really tired and walking around like a zombie," he said.

Some are happy to see the sun beat down.

Flo Rannou works at a stand selling the official sunscreen of Roland Garros outside the main show court Philippe Chatrier. It opened during the chilly qualifying tournament last week.

"It was a rough start," she said. "It was rainy for three days and it was hard to sell. People didn't need sunscreen. Then we sold a lot when it became super-sunny and super hot."

Alia at a large ice cream concession outside the other show court Suzanne Lenglen said sales had been so good that on Monday she could not see the end of the queue and had not left her till for nine hours. It could have been worse.

"On Sunday we ran out of ice cream," she said.

Staff, fans and players have strategies. On Court Simonne-Mathieu, when the groundskeepers watered the court they would lift their hose and spray spectators. "Stay hydrated" women's number one seed Aryna Sabalenka called to fans at Chatrier after her win yesterday.

Marc Marquez set for Italian GP return, Pirro steps in for injured Alex



Ducati Lenovo Team's Marc Marquez and Red Bull KTM Factory Racing's Pedro Acosta during the sprint race at the French Grand Prix at Bugatti Circuit, Le Mans, France, on May 9, 2026. (Reuters)

MILAN: Reigning MotoGP champion Marc Marquez is set to return for the Italian Grand Prix this weekend, his team Ducati said yesterday, following two surgeries after his crash at Le Mans earlier this month.

Marquez missed the French Grand Prix race as well as the Catalan Grand Prix weekend after fracturing his foot in a nasty highside crash in the sprint at Le Mans. The 33-year-old had surgery on a metatarsal fracture as well as a separate shoulder operation, which was originally scheduled for after his home Catalan Grand Prix. "Following a positive medical check, Marc will travel to Mugello tomorrow," Ducati said in a statement. "He is scheduled for a final trackside assessment on Thursday to secure the 'fit to race' clearance for the Italian Grand Prix."

Ducati's Italian test rider Michele Pirro will replace Marquez's brother Alex on the Gresini Racing bike after the Spaniard suffered a horror crash at the

Catalan Grand Prix. Alex will miss the Grands Prix in Italy and Hungary after suffering a marginal fracture in a vertebra near his neck, along with a fracture to his right collarbone.

Brawn teams up with Pramac as strategic advisor

Former Formula One team boss Ross Brawn has joined MotoGP outfit Pramac as a strategic advisor and board member. The 71-year-old Briton, whose Brawn team won the 2009 Formula One constructors' and drivers' titles, was also a key figure in Michael Schumacher's golden era at Ferrari and later his team boss at Mercedes. Brawn was involved in 22 Formula One world titles in his decades in the sport. "Motorsport has always been about people, teamwork and continuous improvement, and I look forward to supporting (principal) Paolo (Campinoti) and the team and contributing where my experience may be useful," he said.

COMMENT

Surprised DeChambeau says he is fairly optimistic on the future of LIV Golf

Reuters
Seoul

Bryson DeChambeau admitted that several LIV golfers were caught off guard after Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund announced its financial commitment will end at the conclusion of the 2026 season.

"We were surprised that they pulled out as quickly as they did," DeChambeau said yesterday, two days prior to the start of LIV Golf Korea.

"We didn't really see that coming. But that's OK. One door closes, another opens. I think that's the way a lot of us are looking at it. I think we all have optimism

that there is a business plan that makes sense for team golf. I'd quite honestly actually - how do I say it? I'm very optimistic with the business plan of team golf compared to other models, in my opinion."

Per Sportico and CNBC, LIV Golf is pitching a reduced 10-event international schedule to potential investors.

The league reportedly is seeking \$250mn to \$350mn in funding to continue operations beyond this year.

According to the reports, LIV Golf's investment pitch outlines a plan built around international tournaments and uses the high attendance figures in Australia and South Africa as benchmarks.

"Other models have worked, as well, so I'm not going to say that

is better than the other, but I do see value in what team golf can provide not only worldwide but also in grass rooting the game of golf," DeChambeau said. "National support, team national support, city local support - we grass root ourselves there. There's ... quite a few ideas that we have that could be interesting. We'll see if investors like it or not. I'm giving all I can to make it happen, and if it doesn't, it doesn't happen."

POTENTIAL POST-2026 OPTIONS.

DeChambeau, 32, told reporters earlier this month that he has talked with the PGA Tour regarding his potential post-2026 options. The two-time major champion also is looking into the possibility

of expanding his YouTube channel.

DeChambeau joined LIV Golf in June 2022 and was among 11 golfers who filed an antitrust lawsuit against the PGA later that year challenging their suspensions from the Tour.

While DeChambeau had plenty to say on the topic, Dustin Johnson had a quick answer yesterday when asked for his personal view of PIF's support being halted or retracted.

"Long LIV Golf," he said.

Signed to a multi-year contract extension in January, Johnson was one of the first players to defect for LIV Golf and became the Saudi-backed circuit's first season champion in 2022.

Johnson, 41, won the US Open in 2016, the Masters in 2020 and is a 24-time winner on the PGA Tour.



American golfer Bryson DeChambeau talks to the media ahead of the start of LIV Golf Korea yesterday.

COMMENT

Demotion fueling Palace's European run: Glasner

'EVERYBODY WANTS TO PARTICIPATE, BUT A FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE TOMORROW'

AFP
Leipzig, Germany

Oliver Glasner yesterday called on his Crystal Palace side to atone for their Europa League demotion by beating Rayo Vallecano in the UEFA Conference League final today and returning to the competition.

Speaking ahead of the final in Leipzig, Germany, Glasner, who will leave the club after today's game, said victory would return Palace to a competition they "deserved" to play in this season.

Palace qualified for a debut Europa League campaign when Glasner guided them to last season's FA Cup, the first title in their history. But UEFA stripped Palace's right to play in the competition due to multi-club ownership rules and they started in the Conference League instead.

"For me, the best thing would be winning tomorrow, but not just for winning tomorrow, but because then they play European football in the Europa League next year," Glasner said.

"Then we get next year what we should have got this year."

The coach promised to follow Palace's journey next season, even if he was no longer in the dugout.

"I would like to watch on TV that they start the Europa League with the desire and the confidence



Crystal Palace manager Oliver Glasner with players Maxence Lacroix, Jaydee Canvot and Chadi Riad during a training session yesterday. (Reuters)

that they can win the Europa League as well. "This would make me really happy, because then I see you can create a mindset together."

The Austrian said his side "fully embraced" the Conference League

from the moment the decision became clear.

"For teams accustomed to playing in the Champions League, it might not be the most glamorous European competition.

"But when you are a club participating in a European competition for the very first time in your history, it is simply an outstanding experience."

Glasner, who won the Europa

League as Eintracht Frankfurt manager in 2022, will sign off from Palace having overseen a level of success unprecedented in the club's history. In addition to last year's FA Cup victory over Man-

chester City, Palace beat defending Premier League champions Liverpool in the Charity Shield to open this season.

Glasner said he told his players to relax and embrace the week.

"It's quite relaxed... We'll go to dinner. I don't know what the players are doing, but they're all adults. I hope nobody goes into a bar or something."

Glasner said injured duo Adam Wharton and Chris Richards trained on Tuesday but a call on their inclusion will be made on match day. "I'll only nominate a starting XI who is 100 percent fit... Of course, they've still got some pain but I think many players are feeling pain after such a long season.

"Everybody wants to participate, but a final decision will be made tomorrow."

Opponents Rayo are also on a fairytale run and could win a first major trophy in their history by winning on Wednesday.

Midfielder Oscar Trejo said his team wanted to repay the faith of their fans who have supported them on a "magical" run to a first European final. "It's something magical," said Trejo, who will leave the south Madrid club after a decade after Wednesday's game.

"It's something we dreamed of. It's been a tough process. We will go out all guns blazing tomorrow and we'll try and enjoy it to the very last moment."

SPOTLIGHT

Allegri's sacking underscores Italian 'reheated soup' warning

Reuters
Milan

Massimiliano Allegri proved himself a winning manager when he first took charge at Juventus and AC Milan but follow-up spells at each club have ended in disappointment - a pattern Italians refer to as 'minestra riscaldata', or 'reheated soup'.

The phrase is widely used in Italian football to describe a club bringing back a former coach in the hope of reviving former glories, and in Allegri's case lightning struck twice.

Allegri was sacked by Milan on Monday after one season in charge having failed to achieve Champions League qualification, a far cry from his debut campaign at the club when he delivered the Serie A title in 2011.

The 58-year-old's patient, conservative style of play has long divided opinion, but fans rarely complain when their side are winning trophies.

When Juventus hired Allegri in 2014 to replace Antonio Conte, who resigned after winning three consecutive league titles, his arrival sparked protests from the fans.

Allegri had little trouble winning them over though with five Serie A titles in five seasons, along with four Coppa Italia wins, but the failure to secure the Champions League trophy despite reaching two finals, saw them part ways.

After Allegri spent two years away from management, Juve came knocking again, but his only success in three seasons came in the Coppa Italia, which ironically led to his dismissal.

Allegri was sent off during the Cup final against Atalanta,



launching his tie in the air and opening his shirt halfway before storming down the tunnel.

After the game, he clashed with match officials, Juventus staff and a newspaper director and, after his sacking, Allegri took another year out.

Allegri went back to Milan in May last year and for quite a while it appeared as if his return could spark a revival.

They last won the Scudetto in 2022 and were then taken over by RedBird Capital Partners, but the new owners have had little success.

Their only trophy was last season's Italian Super Cup, not enough to save Sergio Conceicao's job as Milan finished eighth in the league and out of Europe.

That was seen as a major advantage for Allegri, with no European football to contend with, and Milan quickly emerged as serious title challengers.

After an inauspicious start, a 2-1 home loss to promoted Cremonese, Allegri's side went on an unbeaten run of 24 league games,

keeping pace in a tight battle at the top, until Inter Milan took charge.

Milan's first defeat since the opening day came in February, but was soon followed by a derby win over Inter. Then came Milan's late-season collapse, winning just three of their final 10 games and losing six.

They did, however, still have Champions League football without their grasp going into the last day of the season.

Instead, Allegri's campaign ended as it began, a 2-1 home defeat, this time by Cagliari, except there was no room for recovery.

Former Bournemouth manager Andoni Iraola is the early favourite to replace Allegri, and the Spaniard's high-intensity football would be a welcome respite for Milan fans.

Allegri's brand of football, playing mainly to avoid defeat rather than to win, can only survive when success follows.

According to media reports, his next job could take him to Napoli, with Conte having left, or Italy's national team.

FOCUS

Arsenal players in spotlight as FIFPRO sounds alarm on workload

Reuters
London

Arsenal's triumphant campaign has become an unlikely poster child for soccer's escalating workload crisis, with players' union FIFPRO warning deep runs across competitions are taking a toll on players through increased injury risk in a World Cup year.

Arsenal's success story comes with a sobering statistic, with five players - David Raya, Martin Zubimendi, Declan Rice, Viktor Gyokeres and Eberechi Eze - projected to feature in 78 to 83 matchday squads this season for club and country.

Midfielder Zubimendi has borne the heaviest burden, appearing in all 38 Premier League games as Arsenal claimed the title while racking up 67 appearances across all competitions for the club and Spain - more than any other player.

Rice has played 65 games and Gyokeres 63, with the trio set to add more with the Champions League final and the World Cup approaching. Arsenal also reached the League Cup final and FA Cup quarter-finals this season. "There is evidence to suggest that workload is a real issue, we have years of data to support it," Darren Burgess, a high-performance consultant for FIFPRO and Juventus performance di-

rector, told reporters. "We know injuries are now workload-related. Workload is increasing year after year even though we have evidence it's detrimental."

The issue extends beyond mere minutes on the pitch, Burgess explained, while travel also takes an additional toll, especially for midweek European fixtures. "Players involved in midweek matches don't return home until 3 or 4 am... They play on Wednesday night and they're being asked to perform on Saturday at midday, travelling away," he added.

"The data shows their physical output during games is compromised when they play back-to-back matches. It's not guesswork, it's objective proof. The impact is enormous."

The looming World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada - starting just 11 days after the Champions League final against Paris St Germain - adds another layer of concern for former Real Madrid fitness coach Gregory Dupont.

"Players who play the Champions League final won't have time for full preparation, to acclimatise to the heat, to play at your full level of fitness," said Dupont, who was also the fitness coach of France during their 2018 World Cup triumph.

"We need regulations if we want to protect not only players but football as well."

Dupont warned that 56%

of World Cup matches will be played at temperatures above 28 degrees Celsius, potentially leading to reduced distance coverage per game, while time zone changes across three host countries present additional challenges.

"We fear the World Cup will turn into the survival of the fittest," said Maheta Molongo, CEO of the English Professional Footballers' Association.

"No player is asking for sympathy, they understand they're privileged people. They don't live in a bubble."

"Ultimately, as much as they'd love to play every game, they're not robots."

Molongo highlighted the example of Arsenal skipper Martin Odegaard, who missed several games this season due to injuries - not ideal preparation ahead of Norway's first World Cup appearance in 28 years.

Odegaard averaged 46 games for Arsenal in his last three seasons but played only 35 times this season.

"He's an unbelievable professional who looks after himself... You could not dream of someone more exemplary. But look at how many games he missed this year and how many he played in previous years," Molongo said.

"Is it fair that instead of focusing on football he has to focus on his own body? That shouldn't be the case... Despite sleeping well and eating well, he's injured."



Arsenal's Spanish defender Martin Zubimendi (left) dribbles the ball during the Premier League match against Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park in south London on May 24. (AFP)

TWO-TIME BALLON D'OR WINNER PUTELLAS LEAVING BARCA

Barcelona women's star Alexia Putellas will leave the Catalan giants at the end of her contract this summer bringing a "perfect story" to a close, she said yesterday. "The eternal captain will close the curtain on her career as a Barca player after 14 years with the first team," said Barcelona in a statement.

The two-time Ballon d'Or winner, 32, helped Barca claim a fourth Champions League title on Saturday as they beat Lyon in Oslo, completing a quadruple. "I've always said that you can't defend this shirt (only) halfway, and I understand that I have given everything I have," said Putellas in a video on Instagram. "I said I wanted the final moment to come when I was at my best, giving everything and with 100 percent energy."

"That's it, now it's time. It has been a perfect story." Putellas has been linked by Spanish media with a

move to London City Lionesses, who belong to Lyon owner Michele Kang, among other sides. She will play her final home match as a Barca player against Real Sociedad today in Liga F. "Fourteen seasons and more than 500 matches, with moments that will remain forever in Barca's memory and in my heart," continued Putellas. "I have been, and will always be, just another cule (Barca fan), like you. That's why I don't want this to be a sad moment. This is just a chapter that ends. "But luckily, I was born a cule and I will die a cule. So we'll see each other again." The 2023 World Cup winner could claim another Ballon d'Or this year after her strong performances ensured Barca did not suffer in Aitana Bonmatí's absence after she broke her leg in December.

(AFP)