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FORMULA 1

Norris takes Hungary pole, Mercedes domination ends

Norris on pole for the first time this season, Leclerc takes front-row slot, Antonelli moves up to third on grid

Reuters
Budapest

Formula One world champion Lando Norris put McLaren on pole position for the Hungarian Grand Prix yesterday to end Mercedes' qualifying domination.

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton, chasing his first pole since Hungary 2023, missed out by a mere 0.012 seconds after Norris's last lap effort and was then demoted three places by stewards for impeding Norris's teammate Oscar Piastri.

That lifted Ferrari's Charles Leclerc from third to the front row.

Mercedes Formula One leader Kimi Antonelli, fourth at the chequered flag, would have moved up to third place but he was also handed a three-place drop for speeding while yellow warning flags were waved and is set to start seventh. It was the first time this season, in the 11th round, that Mercedes had not secured pole for a grand prix.

MCLAREN BENEFIT FROM CAR UPGRADES

"Very happy to be back on top," said Norris, last year's winner in Hungary who now has a strong chance of repeating the feat at a circuit where overtaking is expected to be tricky with the new era of engines.

"It's been tight the whole weekend but we seemed quick from the

first laps we did and we brought a few upgrades. I'm in the best position for the start. But these guys (Ferrari) get good starts and have been fast all season."

Leclerc, who won at Silverstone and was second in Belgium last weekend, will be the immediate threat to Norris, with last year's polesitter Piastri and Red Bull's Max Verstappen on the row behind with Hamilton fifth.

Antonelli, the championship leader with six wins and 45 points clear of closest rival Hamilton, will now be behind teammate George Russell, who starts sixth.

Hamilton, chasing a record-stretching 10th pole at a circuit where he has also won a record eight times, was fastest after the first runs but was unable to make that stick as Norris put in a final flying effort. The 41-year-old was then summoned by stewards, with the conversation turning to damage limitation.

"I didn't know he was coming," Hamilton said of Piastri. "I thought everyone had finished their lap. It wasn't intentional."

Ferrari team boss Fred Vasseur said it was the team's mistake, with Hamilton not receiving the radio message in time.

Verstappen spun at the end, forcing Antonelli and teammate George Russell to slow as yellow flags were waved - but not enough in the Italian's case.

"The yellow flag came while I was entering the corner so I tried

my best to lift. I did lift but gave up quite a bit of minimum speed compared to before. It was a shame," said the 19-year-old.

ANOTHER BLOW FOR RUSSELL

Antonelli's penalty gave an unexpected boost to Russell's chances of closing the 50-point gap on his teammate, in the last race before the August break, after car gremlins had resurfaced.

"We lost water pressure and I had a water leak. When I stopped on track, the car was leaking a load of water. We don't know where it's come from. Fingers crossed it doesn't affect anything for tomorrow," he said.

Red Bull's Isack Hadjar qualified eighth with rookie Arvid Lindblad ninth for Racing Bulls and Nico Hulkenberg completing the top 10 for Audi. Struggling Aston Martin made a minor breakthrough with Fernando Alonso, four days short of his 45th birthday, making the second phase of qualifying for the first time this season in the team's upgraded chassis. The Spaniard will start 16th with teammate Lance Stroll 20th but at least ahead of both Cadillacs.

McLaren's British driver Lando Norris celebrates winning the pole position after the qualifying session at the Hungaroring racetrack in Budapest yesterday ahead of the Hungarian Grand Prix. (AFP)



BASKETBALL

Oman, Bahrain open FIBA U18 Asia Cup Gulf Qualifiers with wins

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Oman and Bahrain made winning starts to their campaigns in the FIBA U18 Asia Cup Gulf Qualifiers, defeating Kuwait and Saudi Arabia respectively as the tournament tipped off at Al Gharafa Sports Hall yesterday.

Organised by the Qatar Basketball Federation, the six-day competition runs from July 25 to 30 and features five Gulf nations - Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman - competing for two coveted places at the championship in India next month.

The opening round produced two closely contested encounters, with Oman staging a remarkable second-half comeback to edge Kuwait 62-59, while Bahrain defeated Saudi Arabia 62-54 to join Oman at the top of the standings.

Oman recovered from an 11-point halftime deficit to secure one of the most dramatic victories of the opening day.

Kuwait controlled the first half, leading 22-13 after the opening quarter before extending the margin to 40-29 at the break.

Oman gradually fought back by taking the third quarter 16-14 before unleashing a decisive 17-5 run in the final period.

Tight defensive play, effective containment of Kuwait's key players, and clinical fast-break execution proved decisive as Oman completed the comeback to earn their first two points of the tournament.

Bahrain also opened its campaign on a winning note with a 62-54 victory over Saudi Arabia. Bahrain dominated the opening quarter 16-6, but Saudi Arabia



Action from the Bahrain vs Saudi Arabia (right) and Oman vs Kuwait matches on the opening day of the FIBA U18 Asia Cup Gulf Qualifiers which began at the Al Gharafa Sports Hall yesterday. Organised by the Qatar Basketball Federation, the six-day competition runs from July 25 to 30 and features five Gulf nations - Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman.



responded strongly by claiming the second period 20-8 to take the momentum into halftime.

Bahrain regained control after the interval with a commanding 21-11 third quarter, while both teams scored 17 points apiece in the final period, allowing Bahrain to seal an eight-point victory.

Following the opening round, Oman and Bahrain sit jointly atop the standings with two points each, while Kuwait and Saudi

Arabia have one point each. Hosts Qatar will begin their campaign in the second round of matches.

Action resumes today, with Bahrain taking on Kuwait at 5:00pm, followed by Qatar's opening game against Saudi Arabia at 7:00pm. Tomorrow's schedule features Oman against Bahrain at 5:00pm before Qatar meets Kuwait at 7:00pm.

Qatar's will launch its campaign today against Saudi Arabia. The

hosts will be aiming for a winning start as they seek one of the qualifying berths for the continental finals.

The 12-player squad is captained by Abdullah Yassin and includes Tamim Ashraf Abouissa, Mishal Khalid al-Mughni, Moaz Omar Mousa, Azzam Mohamed Yaken, Ziad Tamer al-Johari, Mohamed Saeed Badri, Mahmoud Tamer Ibrahim, Amer Ibrahim Mousa, Owen Ikina, Youssef Walid

Abdelqader and Shahi Mohamed.

After a rest day, competition returns on Wednesday, July 29, with Saudi Arabia facing Kuwait at 5:00pm and Qatar playing Oman at 7:00pm.

The tournament concludes on Thursday, July 30, with Oman meeting Saudi Arabia at 5:00pm, followed by Qatar against Bahrain at 7:00pm.

The qualifiers serves as the pathway to the FIBA U18 Asian

Championship, which will be held in Ahmedabad, India, in August. Played in a single round-robin format, each team contests four matches, earning two points for a win and one for a loss.

The top two teams at the end of the competition will qualify for the continental championship, where four places at the 2027 FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup in the Czech Republic will also be at stake.

CRICKET

Kishan, Varma hit half centuries in easy India win

THE VISITORS SECURE THREE-MATCH SERIES BY GOING 2-0 UP

AFP
Harare, Zimbabwe

Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma struck half centuries to overshadow teenage star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as India beat Zimbabwe by 90 runs yesterday to win a Twenty20 international series.

Wicketkeeper Kishan made 81 off 44 balls and unbeaten Varma 60 from 29 deliveries at Harare Sports Club as the tourists took an unassailable 2-0 lead. The final match is scheduled for today.

A second victory in three days marked a turnaround for India who arrived in southern Africa after series losses in Ireland and England.

Sooryavanshi, the 15-year-old batting prodigy who scored his maiden T20I half century on Thursday in Harare, scored 20 runs.

Put in to bat, India posted 219-5 with whirlwind stands of Kishan and Varma tormenting the Zimbabwe bowlers. Zimbabwe were all out for 129 in reply.

Batting at No. 3, Kishan put on 66 runs for the third wicket with captain Shreyas Iyer (25) and 95 for the fourth with Varma.

Kishan struck two sixes and nine fours before slicing a Newman Nyamhuri delivery outside off stump. Brian Bennett darted forward from deep to pull off a superb catch.

Varma, like Kishan, part of the 2026 T20I World Cup-winning team, struck three sixes and five



India's Ishan Kishan watches the ball after playing a shot during the second T20I against Zimbabwe at Harare Sports Club yesterday. (AFP)

fours in his undefeated knock. Sooryavanshi hit a six and three fours off nine balls before a sliced pull off a Richard Ngarava delivery was caught by Blessing Muzarabani retreating from mid on.

Zimbabwe lie 10 places below India in the world T20I rankings and were always struggling with only opener Bennett (32) and wicketkeeper Tadiwanashe

Marumani (24) enjoying some batting success.

Yash Thakur claimed his first T20I wicket by dismissing Bennett. His delivery outside off was lobbed behind the stumps and Kishan made a simple catch.

Left-arm spinner Abhishek Sharma (3-17), another 2026 T20I World Cup winner, was the most successful Indian bowler.

BRIEF SCORES
India 219-5 in 20 overs (I. Kishan 81, T. Varma 60 not out) v **Zimbabwe 129 in 17.5 overs** (B. Bennett 32; A. Sharma 3-17)
Result: India won by 90 runs
Series: India have unassailable 2-0 lead before final match on Sunday
Toss: Zimbabwe
Man of the Match: Ishan Kishan

ATHLETICS

Lyles claims US 100m title in world-leading 9.79sec

AFP
New York

Olympic gold medallist Noah Lyles powered to his third US 100m title in a world-leading 9.79sec on Friday at the US athletics championships.

Lyles, trailing at the start, surged over the final 30 meters for a convincing victory over veteran Ronnie Baker, who edged Kenny Bednarek for second.

Both were credited with a time of 9.88, with Bednarek taking third.

Former world champion Christian Coleman came in fourth in 9.93.

"In my head, the distance was already made up," Lyles told broadcaster *NBC* of the early gap he erased.

"Coach said 'put my hand in their pocket, don't let 'em get away'."

"I saw where Christian was and I said: 'Oh yeah, my hand is all the way in there; and I just pulled him back and I did what I do,'" added Lyles.

He matched the personal best he set in winning Olympic gold in Paris in 2024 and improved on the previous world leading time this year of 9.82 set by Oblique Seville at the Jamaican championships in June.

Sha'Carri Richardson, the 2023 world champion and 2024 Olympic silver medallist, clocked 10.77sec (wind 0.9m/sec) to win her third national 100m title.

The 26-year-old Texan, whose difficult 2025 campaign saw her finish off the podium in her 100m world championship defense, pulled away relentlessly from training partner Kayla White, who finished second in 10.90.

Tamari Davis was third in 11.00. "It just feels phenomenal to be back in a better place, just healthy mentally, physically and emotionally," Richardson told reporters. "Everything me and coach



Noah Lyles reacts after winning the men's 100m final during the 2026 USATF Outdoor Track & Field Championships at Icahn Stadium in New York City on Friday. (AFP)



Sha'Carri Richardson wins the Women's 100m final at Icahn Stadium in New York. (AFP)

have been working on, it's starting to show consistently."

Lyles will be back in action in the 200m heats.

In a year with no World Championships or Olympic team berths

on the line, some well-known names opted out of the national championships or tweaked their programs at Icahn Stadium in New York City.

Melissa Jefferson-Wooden,

who swept 100m, 200m and 4x100m gold at last September's World Championships, skipped the 100m and will launch her campaign in the 200m heats on Saturday.

Quincy Hall, the 400m gold medallist at the 2024 Paris Olympics, failed to advance from the heats as his 46.47 left him in 16th place in a field led by Khaleb McRae's 44.65.

Cooper Lutkenhaus, the 17-year-old sensation who has bagged two Diamond League victories this year in his first season on the elite circuit, moved safely into the men's 800m final, winning his heat in 1:45.83.

Lutkenhaus clocked the third-fastest time of the first round, led by Wes Ferguson's 1:45.17.

Donovan Brazier, the 2019 world champion who held off Lutkenhaus to capture the national title last year, failed to advance.

BOXING

Fury stops Wach in Thailand to close in on Joshua fight



Britain's Tyson Fury poses with the WBC Metta Humanitarian Belt after defeating Poland's Mariusz Wach during their heavyweight charity boxing bout in Pattaya yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Pattaya, Thailand

Tyson Fury edged closer to a blockbuster heavyweight clash with Anthony Joshua after defeating Poland's Mariusz Wach by technical knockout on Friday, but said he was "not convinced" his fellow Briton would face him.

Fury, 37, outclassed Wach in front of 1,500 spectators in the Thai resort city of Pattaya in a bout that was not broadcast live on television.

Former two-time world heavyweight champion Fury chipped away relentlessly at the 46-year-old until he was pulled out by his corner in the seventh round.

It was Fury's second win in as many contests this year as he returns from a 16-month lay-off.

Attentions now turn to fellow two-time heavyweight champion Joshua's bout in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, against Albania's Kristian Prenga.

Should the 36-year-old triumph, as he is expected to, it will set up a long-awaited clash with his compatriot Fury.

"I got through my test. Let's see if (Joshua) gets through his test," Fury said.

"In Tottenham in front of 70,000 people, he never had the guts to get in the ring and face me. Let's see if he ever does. I'm not convinced."

"Hopefully the next big fight is signed next week," he added.

Fury quashed rumours that he would travel to Jeddah to face off with Joshua and potentially announce their long-awaited showdown, saying he was instead "going home to my wife and kids".

Joshua's meeting with Prenga will be his first professional fight since being involved in a car crash in Nigeria in December that killed two of his close friends, Sina Ghami and Latif Ayodele. His last competitive appearance in the ring was his knockout loss to IBF world champion Daniel Dubois at Wembley Stadium in September 2024.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Bangladesh's Rana out of Australia Tests

AFP
Dhaka

Fast bowler Nahid Rana has been ruled out of the upcoming Test series in Australia due to injury, the Bangladesh Cricket Board said yesterday.

The BCB said the 23-year-old pace star suffered a side injury during the second T20 match against Zimbabwe last week.

"Rana is expected to require around four weeks for tissue healing, followed by another two to four weeks of bowling workload progression, putting his overall recovery period at six to eight weeks," it said in a statement.

Rana is an extraordinary fast-bowling talent, renowned for his raw pace, steep bounce, and aggressive execution.

Standing at 6'5", the young Bangladeshi speedster routinely clocks over 150 km/h, making him his nation's fastest bowler. His high-arm action and sharp back-of-a-length delivery present a formidable, uncomfortable challenge for world-class batters.

Left-arm pace bowler Shoriful Islam, who also sustained a hamstring injury during the Zimbabwe tour, could make a comeback in the second Test, subject to medical clearance.

The 25-year-old would "undergo a fitness assessment around August 12", the BCB said.

Wicketkeeper Litton Das could also be available for the second Test if he recovers from a calf muscle injury, it said.

Bangladesh leave for Australia on July 31, with the first Test beginning in Darwin on August 13. The second Test will be played in Mackay from August 22.

Afghanistan name pace-packed squad

Afghanistan brought back pacers Fazalhaq Farooqi and Yamin Ahmadzai in a strong squad for next month's five-match one-day international series in Ireland, selectors announced yesterday.

The series will be part of Afghanistan's build-up for next year's World Cup to be hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. Ace spinner Rashid Khan will lead the slow bowling attack but his fellow spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman is out as he is still recovering from injury.

The series starts in Bready with the first two ODIs on August 5 and 7, before moving on to Belfast for the remaining three matches on August 10, 12 and 15.

SQUAD: Rahmat Shah (captain), Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ibrahim Zadran, Sediqullah Atal, Hashmatullah Shahidi, Darwish Rasooli, Azmatullah Omarzai, Ikram Alikhil (wk), Nangyal Kharotai, Rashid Khan, AM Ghazanfar, Yamin Ahmadzai, Saleem Safi, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Zia Ur Rahman

WI vs Pakistan series starts



Kavem Hodge of West Indies hits a four during the first day of first Test against Pakistan at Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago, yesterday. Pakistan will play two Tests in this trip to the West Indies. (AFP)

Organisers raise concerns over late pullouts after Sinner, Djokovic skip Montreal event

MONTREAL: The Canadian Open expressed disappointment over the withdrawals of Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic from next week's tournament in Montreal, saying the recurring absence of top players from ATP 1000 events had become a broader issue for the sport.

Sinner withdrew on Friday to prioritise his health nearly two weeks after retaining his Wimbledon title, while 24-times Grand Slam winner Djokovic continued to manage his workload, leaving the US Open tune-up short of star power.

With Carlos Alcaraz still nursing a wrist injury that has kept him out since April, the August 1-13 tournament will again be without three of the sport's top names after Alcaraz, Sinner and Djokovic also missed last year's edition in Toronto.

"We are obviously very disappointed that Jannik and Novak won't be joining us in Montreal this year, especially after they also withdrew from last year's tournament in

Toronto," said the event's tournament director, Valerie Tetreault. "We respect their decisions and understand that, with such a demanding schedule, players' health must remain the priority.

"That said, we believe the frequency of these last-minute withdrawals in the last few years raises a broader issue for our sport. Masters 1000 events are among the flagship tournaments on the tour, and fans rightfully expect to see the world's best compete."

Tetreault added in her statement to the Canadian media that organisers were in discussions with men's governing body the ATP to ensure that the issue would receive "serious consideration" going forward.

"We firmly believe adjustments are needed in the near future to better protect the integrity of our Masters 1000 events while remaining mindful of the realities players face," she said.

The ATP did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for



comment outside regular business hours.

CRITICISM OVER LONG SEASONS

Sinner's pullout from Montreal was particularly noteworthy given the world number one had the chance to claim all nine ATP 1000 titles in a single season, having won the



first five at Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo, Madrid and Rome. The withdrawal also brought fresh focus to a packed schedule some players believe has become too demanding, with world number two Alexander Zverev among those critical of the expanded 12-day format used at seven ATP 1000 events.

More broadly, the men's and women's circuits have faced criticism due to their 11-month seasons, and both the tours came under fresh scrutiny during last year's "Asian swing" of events when extreme heat and humidity led to injuries and withdrawals.

Concerns about player availability extend beyond the ATP Tour, with

top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and Iga Swiatek among the leading women to skip this year's Dubai Championships as they balanced their schedules and recovery needs. ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi defended the crowded calendar last year, saying scheduling remains the players' choice and the tour was working to set clear incentives so the right number of matches are played across the season.

The WTA told Reuters previously that athlete welfare is a top priority and it listened to views on the calendar, through the players' council and representatives on the WTA board, to improve the circuit structure in 2024 and boost compensation.

Sinner and Djokovic are expected to return to action at the Cincinnati Open next month, with defending champion Alcaraz also on the entry list, as they ramp up preparations for the year's final Grand Slam beginning in New York on August 30.

CYCLING

Pogacar inches closer to winning Tour de France

Pogacar only needs to cross finish line to secure 5th title in 7 years

AFP
L'Alpe d'Huez, France

Tadej Pogacar all but sealed a record-equalling fifth Tour de France title yesterday as Ecuadorian Richard Carapaz won the 20th stage on Alpe d'Huez.

With today's 21st and final stage of the 113th edition of the Tour likely to be the usual procession around Paris, Pogacar will need only to cross the finish line to secure a fifth Tour title in seven years.

"Let's arrive in Paris and then we can celebrate this yellow jersey," said Pogacar.

The 27-year-old Slovenian will join cycling greats Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Indurain as the only riders to have won the sport's greatest race five times.

But Pogacar will be the youngest to have done so.

He crossed the finishing line yesterday fourth, arm-in-arm with team-mate Isaac Del Toro, who had done enough to ensure third place overall and victory in the best young rider's white jersey category ahead of French teenage ace Paul Seixas.

Pogacar even had the luxury of letting Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel, who finished second in the stage ahead of American Sepp Kuss in third, snare back around 40 seconds in the overall standings.

Pogacar leads Evenepoel by 6min 26sec going into today's finale, with 22-year-old Del Toro third at 9:42.

Carapaz won his second stage in three days and also secured the King of the Mountains polkadot jersey as he finished eighth overall.

"It was great to win here with a commemorative jersey," said Carapaz. "In the end, it's been a



Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey and Mexican rider Isaac Del Toro wearing the best young rider's white jersey celebrate as they cross the finish line of the 20th stage of the Tour de France yesterday. (AFP)

dream Tour." But it was agony for Kuss who was leading the Ecuadorian by around 15-20 seconds before crashing twice in the final 7km.

The second time, he was only saved from a fatal fall into a ravine by safety netting on the outside of a tight bend on a cliff-hugging mountain pass.

Kuss battled gamely to the end but was even passed by Evenepoel as Carapaz won the brutal 170.9km Queen stage of the race, which included four monstrous climbs.

KUSS COMES UNDONE

Carapaz had started the day foraging off in search of the mountain points he would need to secure the polkadot jersey.

And he did so by taking maxi-

mum points atop the Col de la Croix de Fer, Col du Telegraphe and Col du Galibier.

He had been part of a five-man breakaway that was whittled down to a mano-a-mano between himself and Kuss.

The American had stolen a march to crest the final categorised climb, the Col de Sarenne 15km from the finish, around 10 seconds ahead of Carapaz.

But he came undone on a downhill section, crashing at the exit of a tunnel and then going down again just over a kilometre later.

As he climbed back on his bike, Carapaz whizzed past and Kuss's hopes of salvaging something from this Tour for his Vismalease a Bike team - who had lost leader Jonas Vingegaard to

a crash last week - went up in smoke. Behind the pair, Seixas launched a bid to overhaul a 24-second gap to Del Toro in the white jersey competition but he clearly did not have the legs and when the Mexican counter-attacked, he immediately distanced his French rival.

Seixas battled hard to preserve his fourth place as fifth-placed compatriot Lenny Martinez had managed to follow Del Toro, Pogacar and Evenepoel on the Sarenne climb.

Seixas crossed the finish line in 10th, 2:55 after Carapaz and 1:48 behind Martinez.

That was enough to keep his fourth place, more than a minute ahead of Martinez, on what has been an astonishing Grand Tour debut for a 19-year-old.

GOLF

Kim's 59 lands him 3-shot lead at halfway point of 3M Open

Reuters
Blaine

Michael Kim posted the 16th sub-60 round in PGA Tour history on Friday, shooting 12-under-par 59 to take the lead following second-round play at the 3M Open in Blaine, Minn.

Kim sank a 24-foot, 4-inch birdie putt on the 18th hole for his 12th birdie of the day. In conquering the par-5 18th hole to set a course record at TPC Twin Cities, Kim aggressively pumped his fist in celebration.

At 14-under 128 for the tournament, Kim leads by three strokes.

Kim, 33, is the first PGA player to card a 59 or better this season. He has one PGA Tour win on his resume (2018 John Deere Classic).

"I kind of remember thinking on 18 that you have to go for it, 60 or 61 doesn't really make too much of a difference," Kim said. "To shoot 59 today was pretty cool and feels like I'm part of the history books, which is great."

Kim was the first golfer to score a 59 or better on tour since Jake Knapp, who did so at the 2025 Cognizant Classic in The Palm Beaches.

Kim's day began with back-to-back pars, which belied his upcoming round. He'd only dip back down to par four more times.

He recorded the first of five straight birdies at the third hole and added another on No. 9 to sit at 6-under 29 at the turn. He added birdies at Nos. 10, 12, 15, 16 and 17 before sinking his long putt to end his day. "Yeah, funny enough,

some shots I didn't feel like supremely confident over, but that's kind of golf," Kim said. "I was kind of happy I got away with par on 13. But other parts of my game, like my putting, felt fantastic. When you hit a putt and it does exactly what you kind of envisioned before you hit it, it's an awesome feeling. Felt like that all day out there."

First-round leader Ben Kohles suffered his first bogey of the tournament on the par-5 sixth, but he carded three birdies and finished with a 2-under 69 to sit three shots behind Kim. Kohles is tied at 11 under with Argentina's Emiliano Grillo (67) and Chandler Phillips (65).

"Obviously not as good as yesterday, but yeah, still played just fine," Kohles said. "Hit some really good shots though in there and gave myself some good looks, didn't just quite make them today. Hit good putts, just didn't go in."

Phillips had an impressive eagle on the par-5 12th to go along with four birdies. Grillo had five birdies and a bogey.

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler, making his debut at the event, fell off the pace a little on Day 2. He had been tied for fifth at 6 under coming into the day, but he fell into a tie for 13th at 7 under with his 1-under 70.

Jackson Koivun (68) and Troy Merritt (66) are tied for fifth at 10 under. Three golfers are tied for seventh at 9 under: Zac Blair (65), Billy Horschel (66) and Brian Harman (64). Notables who failed to make the cut of 3 under or better included Denmark's Rasmus Hojgaard (2 under), South Korea's Sungjae Im (1 under), Tony Finau (1 over) and Max Homa (4 over).



Michael Kim of the United States celebrates after making birdie on the 18th green during the second round of the 3M Open 2026 at TPC Twin Cities in Blaine, Minnesota. (AFP)

COMMENT

F1 needs better balance between business and sport, says Norris



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris prepares to enter his car during the first practice session at the Hungaroring racetrack in Budapest. (AFP)

Reuters
Budapest

Formula One has been driven too much by business decisions and needs to remember it is a sport, according to McLaren's world champion Lando Norris.

With drivers chafing at new regulations that have cramped their speed, particularly at last weekend's Belgian Grand Prix, the Briton told reporters ahead of today's Hungarian round that Formula One could do better.

"It's a business," said the Briton. "Everyone wants to make money, so in order for Audi and other teams to come in we had to change these things. It's a shame. It should never have been like that. But that's how businesses

work." Audi have entered the sport this season after taking over Swiss-based Sauber, with the German carmaker encouraged by new rules that have increased the electrical element of the power unit to near-parity with the internal combustion engine. The rules have been tweaked for 2027 to reduce the electrical contribution.

"Formula One will always be great," said Norris, whose car has a Mercedes engine. "It can just be better. "Us as drivers just know it better than everyone else. The thing that's a shame is that Formula One is too heavily led by the fact it's a business nowadays and not how can you make the sport the best possible. It's 'how can you just make the most money as a business?'"

"And that's just not what it should simply be. That's not how a sport should be run. The fact we have hy-

brids, 50-50 and all that, that's just because more teams wanted to come in it and because you make more money."

DIVIDED SPORT

Norris said the Liberty Media-owned sport was also divided between fans who followed Formula One before the arrival of the popular Netflix docu-series "Drive to Survive" and those who have been drawn to it since.

"I think the fans you have nowadays, because they're a lot more personality-based... and not simply of Formula One as a whole sport, I think there's less interest in basically how the actual race goes, and more just 'has the driver done well or not?'" he added.

"I think that's just how the fans have changed over time, and that's completely fine. But the biggest voice should always be ours as drivers...

we have the best idea of how racing should be, how it can be, what's possible, what's not.

"We would just want the best for everything, the best for the fans, the best viewing, the best racing for us, the most fun to drive. And at the minute, we don't... we have very, very little say, and a lot more of it's done because if you can have Audi and other teams in it, it's a bigger win than the drivers being happy."

A Formula One spokesman responded to Norris's comments by saying drivers were listened to more than ever. The sport on track is, and always will be, the priority," he said. "Everyone has benefited from the commercial success of Formula One - the drivers included. Decisions are made for the best strategic outcome for everyone - the fans, teams and partners."

FOOTBALL

Manchester City's Khusanov signs new 5-year contract

The 22-year-old centre-back joined City from French side Lens in 2025

AFP
London

Manchester City defender Abdukodir Khusanov signed a five-year contract extension with the Premier League club on Saturday.

Khusanov helped City win the FA Cup and League Cup last season, as well as finishing second in the Premier League. The 22-year-old centre-back joined City from French side Lens in January 2025.

He has been capped 30 times for Uzbekistan and featured at the World Cup, playing in all three of their Group K matches. "This is a great day for me and my family. I am really happy to extend my stay at City," Khusanov said.

"I've enjoyed every minute since I arrived in Manchester and I feel I am growing and learning a lot as a player.

"I have a new challenge now, which is to impress (new manager) Enzo Maresca and his staff and ensure I am in his team regularly. I am determined to do that."

"Thank you to the City fans for all of your support. It has been really important as I've settled in England and the Premier League.

"Now I am only looking forward. I'm ready to do everything I can to help this Club be as successful as possible."

Khusanov is the second City star



Uzbekistan defender Abdukodir Khusanov is slated for a key role in the new City regime under Enzo Maresca.

to commit his long-term future to the club this week after England forward Phil Foden signed a new four-year deal.

Only 47 games into his City career, Khusanov's lightning speed and tackling prowess have made him one of the Premier League's standout young talents and a real fan favourite at the Etihad Stadium.

Indeed, he was in the final three players nominated for our 2025/26

Etihad Player of the Season award, narrowly losing out to Academy graduate Nico O'Reilly.

Meanwhile, he also played a pivotal role as his homeland Uzbekistan qualified for their first ever World Cup.

His development on and off the pitch has now been rewarded with a new deal.

City's director of football Hugo Viana said: "We've been really pleased and impressed by Abdu-

kodir's development since he arrived in England.

"We're seeing him grow into a brilliant young man and an outstanding defender - but we know this is only the beginning. His physical and technical abilities are top, he has all the assets needed to be a world-class centre-back.

"At just 22, his best years are all in front of him and his potential to get even better is clear for all to see."

COMMENT

Spain coach blasts 'unacceptable' behaviour of Argentina after final

AFP
Madrid

Spain head coach Luis De la Fuente has blasted the "unacceptable" behaviour of several Argentina players and their coaching staff after losing the World Cup final.

Some Argentina players and staff confronted their Spanish rivals after the final whistle of last Sunday's game in New York which Spain won 1-0 after extra time. Argentina players including Atletico Madrid defender Nahuel Molina and former Paris Saint-Germain player Leandro Paredes were involved in the incidents.

"At the time, I didn't realise it. I was celebrating, hugging teammates," De La Fuente told Spanish television.

"But in any case, it is intoler-

able, unacceptable, it cannot be allowed. Players of that stature, whom I praised in the days leading up to the match and continue to praise, who are great players with a tremendous coach, surely they must have felt just as bad as we did seeing those reactions."

De La Fuente praised the exemplary behaviour of his own players faced with these "acts of aggression" and "provocations" which he believes could have escalated into more serious incidents.

Although the scenes were filmed and widely shared on social media, they have not yet resulted in any sanctions against the Argentina players.

FIFA has opened an investigation into the incidents to determine whether there may have been violations of the world football governing body's disciplinary code.



Luis De La Fuente, head coach of Spain, looks on during the World Cup quarter-final against Belgium at Los Angeles Stadium in Inglewood, California, on July 10, 2026. (AFP)

SPOTLIGHT

Howe uncertain if Guimaraes will stay with Newcastle United amid Arsenal interest

AFP
London

Newcastle manager Eddie Howe admitted on yesterday he does not know if Bruno Guimaraes will stay with his club amid interest from Premier League champions Arsenal.

Brazil midfielder Guimaraes is reportedly the subject of a £70mn (\$93mn) offer from Arsenal.

Guimaraes is currently on holiday after Brazil's World Cup last 16 defeat against Norway earlier in July.

The 28-year-old is set to return to Newcastle on Friday ahead of the club's pre-season training camp in Spain.

But Arsenal's mooted interest in Guimaraes is providing a headache for Howe, who lost Alexander Isak to Liverpool after a protracted transfer saga last year.

Speaking after Newcastle's 1-1 draw in a pre-season friendly at Gateshead Howe said: "We don't want to lose our best players

"I've spoken to him (Guimaraes) as I would do. Bruno is just a fantastic person. We've had some really good conversations, both before the World Cup, during the World Cup and after the World Cup. I don't know what's going to happen with Bruno's future. That's for other people to, one,



Newcastle United's Bruno Guimaraes celebrates after their win over Chelsea during the last edition of English Premier League. (Reuters)

speculate about, but also conversations that I'm not part of."

Isak effectively went on strike, refusing to take part in Newcastle's pre-season preparations 12 months ago, in a bid to force through his move to Anfield.

Arsenal are keen on Guimaraes after opting not to match Chelsea's bid in their British record £117 million swoop for England forward Morgan Rogers.

But Howe is hopeful Newcastle

captain Guimaraes will opt to stay at St James' Park. "There's nothing to say Bruno won't be back training with us. You've got to look at it in its own right," he said.

"Bruno is the captain of our football club. He's been an unbelievable player and person all through the time we have worked together. I speak on behalf of everyone at the football club. We absolutely love him and, of course, everyone will want him to stay."

TENNIS

Qatar beat Kyrgyzstan to enter Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group III

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar secured promotion to the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group III after defeating Kyrgyzstan 2-1 in the Group IV semi-finals in Colombo yesterday, capping an impressive campaign with a decisive doubles victory.

The Shanan brothers played a pivotal role in Qatar's success, with Mubarak winning the opening singles rubber before teaming up with his brother Moussa to clinch the decisive doubles match and seal the country's return to Group III.

Mubarak overcame Kirill Kistanov in a spirited three-set battle, recovering from the loss of the opening set to claim a 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 victory and give Qatar an early advantage.

Kyrgyzstan levelled the tie when Mirgiyaz Mirdjaliev defeated Moussa Shanan in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, setting up a winner-takes-all doubles encounter.

In the decisive match, Mubarak and Moussa combined superbly to defeat the Kyrgyz pair of Kirill Kistanov and Mirgiyaz Mirdjaliev 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, completing a memorable comeback and securing Qatar's promotion.

In addition to Mubarak and Moussa Shanan, Qatar's squad also featured Jabr al-Mutawa.



Qatar's Mubarak Shanan and Moussa Shanan in action during the Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group IV semi-final against Kyrgyzstan in Colombo yesterday.

ATLETICO COMPLETE LEE SIGNING FROM PSG

South Korea international Kang-In Lee has joined Atletico Madrid from European champions Paris Saint-Germain, the Spanish club announced Saturday.

"Atletico de Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain have reached an agreement for the transfer of Kang-In Lee, who has signed for our club until June 30, 2031," said the Spanish club.

"A talented left-footed midfielder, the 25-year-old can operate in the attacking midfield role or from either wing, and stands out for his vision, exquisite ball control and ability to pass and shoot," said his

new club. The clubs did not reveal the fee, but a source close to the negotiations told AFP that it was around 40mn euros (\$45.5mn), excluding bonuses.

PSG "warmly" thanked the player who arrived from Valencia in 2023.

He scored 16 goals in 124 appearances for PSG and collected 12 trophies, but had limited playing time under Luis Enrique and suffered a thigh injury in January.

He was an unused substitute as PSG won the last two Champions League finals.

He is Atletico's third summer sign-

ing, following Danish midfielder Morten Hjulmand and Spanish full-back Alejandro Grimaldo.

Meanwhile club stalwart Antoine Griezmann has left for Orlando City in Major League Soccer.

Lee made the last of his 50 international appearances during the World Cup as South Korea were knocked out in the group stage.

PSG have also sold fellow attacker Goncalo Ramos to AC Milan and sources have told AFP the two-time European champions are holding talks with Monaco's Maghnes Akliouche and RB Leipzig's Yan Diomande.

Messi can skip All-Star Game after grueling World Cup: MLS

Lionel Messi will not be required to play in next week's Major League Soccer All-Star Game after representing Argentina in the recent World Cup final, the US domestic league said yesterday.

Inter Miami superstar Messi had been sanctioned last year for skipping the annual showcase, which pits top players from across MLS against rivals from the Mexican Liga-MX. Participation is usually mandatory, with exceptions for injury.

But this year, the World Cup took place in the middle of the MLS season, which paused for a seven-week break, and the league confirmed exceptions had been pre-arranged for players reaching the international tournament's final stages.

"Prior to the start of the 2026 season, Major League Soccer and the MLS Players Association agreed that upon a player's exit from the World

Cup competition, clubs would have individual conversations with each player to determine the appropriate rest and return to training and competition timeline," said the statement.

"Consistent with that agreement, Rodrigo De Paul and Lionel Messi will be excused from participating in the 2026 MLS All-Star Game."

Fellow Argentine De Paul also featured in last Sunday's World Cup final in New Jersey, which Argentina lost 1-0 to Spain after extra time.

Messi had been among the first 11 players named to the MLS squad for this year's All-Star Game, which takes place in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Wednesday. In his absence, stars will include Los Angeles FC's Son Heung-min, the Vancouver Whitecaps' Thomas Muller, and US national team captain Tim Ream, who plays for Charlotte.