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FOCUS

Qatar's Barshim poised for giant leap in London

Agencies
 London

Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim is poised for a giant leap to global superstardom when he competes for the high jump gold at the IAAF World Athletics Championships in London today.

The wiry 26-year-old is already an Arab and Asian sporting icon, having won a bronze and silver at the Olympics besides a world indoor gold in addition to several Asian honours. But it's a gold medal at the Olympics or the outdoor World Championships that puts an athlete in a totally different league, and Barshim would be all keyed up for the

big occasion at the London Stadium. Five years ago, Barshim overcame a painful stress fracture in his back win the bronze at the 2012 London Olympics. Some medical experts were of the opinion that Barshim should pull out of the event as it could cause further harm, but the Qatari nevertheless went ahead to clinch the bronze in a thrilling competition.

It's that never-say-die attitude more than the bronze that catapulted him to fame and remains the defining moment of his career so far.

"It was hard because every doctor I spoke to said my season was done and that would be the end of my Olympic dream," Barshim reminisced later.

"I was quite messed up in my head

and I had many negative thoughts. I was lucky to surround myself with positive people; my coach, family and friends. It was at this point I thought I have two choices: I can either continue to complain about it or I can try to do something about it."

Barshim, however, was adamant, saying he knew more about his body than the doctors.

"I was really stubborn. I thought, 'I know my body best and even if I have a 50 per cent chance of making the Olympics, I should do everything possible to compete in London,'" he added.

Despite not being able to lift weights or train properly in the build-up to the Olympics, Barshim went ahead and gave it his best shot.

"The first time I jumped for almost three months came in the qualification warm up. The jumps felt terrible, I had no feeling in my arms and legs. I had no time to find my old rhythm. Yet somehow I made it through qualification and that felt good.

"Leading into the final, I knew I was not in good shape but I had to banish any negative thoughts. I looked to my coach and we both agreed that I had nothing to lose. I just had to go out and enjoy myself, jump for my family and my country."

It's this commitment to Qatar that will drive him when he takes on a competitive field today. With a season's best of 2.38m, the best among the finalists, today could be the day when global superstardom beckons for Barshim.



2017 IAAF WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Injury hits Bolt's swansong; Britain win 4x100m relay

Farah denied final gold by Ethiopian Edris in 5,000m; Bowie anchors the United States in women's 4x100m victory

Agencies
 London

Usain Bolt's final appearance on the track ended in agony yesterday as he pulled up injured running the final leg of the World Championships 4x100 metres relay as Britain beat the United States for a shock gold medal.

Bolt, who had to settle for bronze in the individual 100 metres, had been hoping to sign off from the sport by leading Jamaica to a fifth successive relay gold but they were already struggling in third when he collected the baton.

As he tried to gain ground, Bolt pulled up and fell to the floor with what looked like a hamstring injury.

The United States, with individual gold and silver medallists Justin Gatlin and Christian Coleman running the second and fourth legs, had been expected to push the Jamaicans all the way.

Instead, a brilliantly executed race by Chijindu Ujah, Adam Gemili, Danny Talbot and Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake gave Britain gold in 37.47 seconds, the best time in the world this year.

The US took silver in 37.52 with Japan third in 38.04.

EDRIS EDGES OUT FARAH

British athletics legend Mo Farah narrowly failed to complete a fifth successive global double yesterday when he finished second behind Ethiopian Muktar Edris in a thrilling 5,000 metres world final.

The 34-year-old, whose winning run in the 5,000m at Olympics and world finals stretched back to 2011, fought desperately to claw back the deficit in the finishing straight but Edris held on to win in 13min 32.79sec.

Farah, a two-time double world champion and two time double Olympic champion, finished in 13:33.22. Farah, who had won the 10,000m last Friday to open the championships with a bang, said he couldn't have given it more but added he had proved that it was possible to break up the Ethiopian and Kenya hegemony over the distance races.

"I gave it my all, 110%," said Farah. "I don't think there was any more I could have done. They (the Ethiopians) run as a team. "Never feel like you can't beat the Kenyans and Ethiopians - anything is



Jamaica's Usain Bolt pulls up injured in the men's 4x100m final as Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake (left) races to victory for Great Britain at the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London yesterday. (AFP)

possible."

American Paul Chelimo added world bronze to his Olympic silver, timing 13.33.30.

US RECLAIM 4X100M WORLD TITLE, BRITAIN TAKE SILVER

Individual champion Tori Bowie anchored the United States to victory in the women's 4x100 metres relay.

The Americans, Olympic gold medallists in Rio last year, were led off by Aaliyah Brown who flew out of the blocks to start the run that brought them the world title they last won in 2011.

Allison Felix ran the second leg before passing on to Morolake Akinosun who handed the baton to Bowie, the 100m world champion.

The 26-year-old was shadowed

down the final straight by Briton Daryll Neita who led her team to silver ahead of 2015 champions Jamaica.

GERMAN VETTER WINS JAVELIN, ROHLER MISSES OUT

Germany's Johannes Vetter won the javelin event yesterday as his great rival and Olympic champion Thomas Rohler missed out on the podium.

Vetter's opening throw of 89.89 metres was enough to win the gold and the 24-year-old was overcome with emotion after clinching the title, mopping his tears on a German flag.

Czech Republic pair Jakub Vadlejch and Petr Frydrych threw personal bests of 89.73 and 88.32 respectively to take silver and bronze.

Rohler, who like Vetter has thrown over 90 metres this season, was beaten

into fourth with 88.26.

PEARSON ROARS BACK TO WIN 100M HURDLES

Australia's Sally Pearson completed one of the great sporting comebacks when she overcame two years of injury agony to win the world 100 metres hurdles title at the age of 30.

Pearson, world champion in 2011 and Olympic gold medallist in 2012, missed the last two seasons through hamstring and achilles injuries and a badly broken wrist but blasted back to win in 12.59 seconds, screaming "oh my God" repeatedly after crossing the line.

"I've worked so hard, I don't know what has just happened out there. I'm so tired but I'm sure it will sink in soon," Pearson said.



Muktar Edris (right) of Ethiopia celebrates winning the men's 5,000m final ahead of Mo Farah of Great Britain in London yesterday. (Reuters)



Tori Bowie (centre) of the US is congratulated by Asha Philip (left) of Great Britain after the US victory in the women's 4x100m final yesterday. (Reuters)

Dawn Harper Nelson, who won gold at the 2008 Olympics and was one of four Americans in the final, took silver in 12.63 ahead of Germany's Pamela Dutkiewicz (12.72).

LASITSKENE WINS HIGH JUMP

Russian Maria Lasitskene, competing as a neutral, defended the women's high jump title yesterday.

Lasitskene took her win record to 34 from her 36 most recent competitions indoors and outdoors, and her 2.03-metre best extended her winning

streak to 25.

Ukraine's Yulia Levchenko claimed silver with 2.01m, with Poland's Kamila Licwinko taking bronze (1.99).

MAYER WINS DECATHLON

France's Olympic silver medallist Kevin Mayer won gold in the world decathlon. Mayer amassed a total of 8,768 points from the 10 disciplines in the gruelling two-day event. Germany's Rico Freimuth took silver with 8,564 while teammate Kai Kazmirek claimed bronze (8,488).



2017 IAAF WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Schippers back on top after hard times

Dutchwoman retains her 200m world title to join likes of Ottey and Felix

AFP
London

Dafne Schippers joined illustrious company when she retained her world 200 metres title and the crown of last year was replaced by the return of the broad grin of 2015.

There may have been no Elaine Thompson, her bete noire of last year who won both the Olympic 100m and 200m with Schippers taking silver in the latter, or America's 100m world champion Tori Bowie but it mattered not a jot to the statuesque 25-year-old Dutchwoman.

For Schippers' thrilling victory over the diminutive Ivorian Marie-Josée Ta Lou – taking silver as she did in the 100m – placed her name among the goddesses of the event Jamaica Merlene Ottey and Allyson Felix of the United States in winning the 200m world title more than once.

For Schippers it was a case of showing she was not a flash in the pan and that her decision to change her coach – from her old heptathlon to a sprint expert – had been justified.

"It was very important to win. I worked so hard in the last years and last year was not the easiest for me," said Schippers, whose family were in the stadium watching.

"I changed everything and got a new coach, so I'm very happy.

"I fought for that!" That fighting spirit ethos which is prevalent amongst the sprinters is one of the factors that persuaded Schippers to ditch the heptathlon.

"Yes, sprinters are more like gladiators but I don't really miss the heptathlon. I like to beat the tough girls," she told *The Guardian* last year.



Dafne Schippers (left) of the Netherlands crosses the finish line to win the women's 200m final at the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London on Thursday. (AFP)

Schippers may prefer the gladiatorial combat of the sprints once they rise from the blocks but despite her imposing physique she does not enjoy the trash talk and intimidatory pre-race eyeing up of opponents.

"People do do that," she told *The Guardian*.

"But I chose not to do it myself. It's just not my style. I find it amusing when other sprinters do and I just smile at them.

"The girls in the heptathlon are definitely more easy-going and much friendlier," said Schippers.

'IT'S HARD WITH MY SKIN'
Schippers, whose relations with Jamai-

can star Thompson she admits are 'very bad', has also had to face questions as to whether she has been doping – severe acne on her face and back prompting question marks.

"I hate it," she told the *Daily Mail* last year. I hate it when people ask me those questions.

"I work so hard as a really good athlete, do my diet, follow the sleep patterns and live my life for the sport.

"When someone asks you things like that, it's really hard. What can you say? It's hard with my skin. It's me and who I am. Acne is something that runs in the family, even our mother had acne until she was 30 or 40. Some people say, 'Oh that's a typical sign of doping'.

"As a woman, it's not so funny to suffer from acne."

For now, though, Schippers can bask in the glory her golden girl image restored plus her marketability although it is hard to imagine what more her home town of Utrecht can do to honour their favourite daughter.

"After Beijing (in 2015), when I walked on the streets, there were a lot of people asking for autographs, pictures on the streets," she said after Friday's victory.

"It was harder to deal with it but in fact it is cool because I did a great job. And to have a bridge, which is the most important bridge in our country – that is special to have my name on that."

FOCUS

Reese wins fourth long jump world title

Reuters
London

American **Brittney Reese** claimed her fourth world long jump title on Friday after a tense, tight contest in which only six centimetres separated the top four competitors.

Darya Klishina, competing as a neutral athlete after the Russian federation was banned over state-sponsored doping, took silver for her first medal at a major finals after jumping seven metres for the first time in six years.

Titleholder and Olympic champion Tianna Bartoletta won bronze, squeezing on to the podium with her last jump ahead of Serbia's Ivana Spanovic who missed out on a medal at a global finals for the first time since 2013.



Reese won with a leap of 7.02 metres on her third attempt and had to endure a nerve-racking finale after receiving a red flag on her next three jumps.

The 30-year-old said it was an emotional moment after her grandfather

passed away two weeks ago.

"I was doing this for him and I know he would have been cheering for me," she said. "I'm a stronger person than I probably think I am. It has shown me mentally at my best.

"I'll be continuing to Tokyo 2020. I'm not done yet, I can assure you."

Klishina jumped consistently well before producing her best effort in the fifth round with exactly seven metres.

She finished ninth at last year's Olympics after being cleared at the last minute to be the only Russian track and field athlete to compete in the Games.

"I was waiting many years (for seven metres)," she said. "I wanted to show this result in an Olympic Games, but I did not have a chance with the whole situation around me. Now it was the right time, at a world championships, to jump this."

Bartoletta began sluggishly and had dropped to sixth after four rounds but saved her best for last with 6.97 metres – still well short of her personal best of 7.17 which she achieved to win in Rio last year.

"I just didn't get any rhythm," said Bartoletta who also won Olympic sprint relay golds in London and Rio.

"I was just too late on the board and I couldn't hit it right. I kept trying to stay mentally strong throughout the competition and it got me a medal but I'm disappointed that I couldn't deliver my true form."

Her last jump was one centimetre better than Spanovic's best which the Serb produced in the second round and gave her the lead. Spanovic, bronze medalist at both the Olympics and the last World Championships, also produced 6.91 with her final jump.

BOTTOMLINE

Fajdek wins hat-trick of hammer golds for Poland

Reuters
London

Pawel Fajdek, the colourful hammer champion from Poland, became the first man to win three successive world championship titles with a dominant triumph on Friday.

The bespectacled, tattooed 28-year-old, whose world championship triumphs have gone hand in hand with Olympic calamities, completed a hammer double for Poland after Anita Wlodarczyk's equally conclusive triumph in the women's event.

The silver went to Russian Valeriy Pronkin, competing under the neutral flag after being given permission to take part by the IAAF only last month, as he produced a final-round throw to consign Fajdek's Polish rival Wojciech Nowicki to the bronze.

It was a typically commanding victory for one of the biggest favourites of the entire championships as the bearded Fajdek produced easily the three biggest throws of the night, headed by one of 79.81 metres.

On winning, the 120kg giant threw himself on to the hammer circle and lay on his back, arms and legs outstretched in delight.

"I've waited for this competition at this stadium for five years," he said, re-



Pawel Fajdek of Poland celebrates after winning gold in the men's hammer throw final in London on Thursday. (Reuters)

flecting on how miserable he had been in the 2012 Olympics when he failed to reach the final.

"So it was very important for me to get this revenge for the Olympics in here. Three-times world champion, I made history! What more could I expect?"

Inexplicably, Fajdek had not just

failed to qualify for the London Olympic final but also last year in Rio when he was an even more dominant favourite.

"I was ready to throw the Polish record in Rio but I do not know what was going wrong. I have been still in shape, well prepared and I showed what I should have shown even before,"

he said.

After producing the eight best throws of the year, he was not about to let yet another gold pass him by.

After a no-throw and a disappointing second effort, he unleashed successive efforts of 79.73m, 79.81m and 79.40m that demolished the field.

Nowicki looked set to make it a Polish one-two with his third-round effort of 78.03, before Pronkin surpassed that mark by 13 centimetres at the last time of asking.

For Fajdek, the victory reestablished his dominance of the event under his female coach Jolanta Kumor. Famously, one of his throws during a practice session once ended up hitting his previous 80-year-old coach Czeslaw Cybulski and breaking his leg.

This year, after 12 consecutive wins, he was beaten at the Polish championships by Nowicki but his compatriot once again, just as in Beijing and Rio, had to settle for the bronze.

The team of Russian authorised neutral athletes had won just one medal at the championships, a silver for the 110 metres hurdler Sergey Shubenkov, before Pronkin landed another silver.

"Before my fifth attempt I asked God, my coach, my girlfriend and all the people who supported me to help me to get this medal," said the 23-year-old Pronkin, who then proceeded to launch his best two throws.

SPOTLIGHT

Coburn and Frerichs complete US one-two in steeplechase

Reuters
London

Emma Coburn and Courtney Frerichs stunned the World Championships by winning gold and silver in a dramatic women's 3,000 metres steeplechase final on Friday, the first Americans to get medals in the event.

The duo were not counted among the outright favourites heading to London, although Coburn did win bronze at the Olympics last year.

The woman who beat her to gold in Rio was world record holder Ruth Jebet of Bahrain, who led at the 1000m and 2000m splits. But going into the final lap, Jebet faded and was overtaken by the Americans and Kenyans Hyvin Jepkemoi and Beatrice Chepkoech.

The leading pack was heavily congested heading into the last 200 metres.

But Coburn launched herself over the final water jump in a daring move that led to her surging down the final straight to win in a Championship record time of 9 minutes 2.58 seconds.

"Oh my goodness, what a race to

be part of," she said. "I have memories from 2015 and 2016 where I went too early for the last push, so I just had to keep trusting myself and be patient, and it looks like it paid off."

"I never expected to win in that time but I kept pressing. It is pretty amazing to get a championship record."

"I just expected the others to finish quickly, so I just kept pushing to make sure I got that gold that I wanted so much."

She is the first American athlete since Horace Ashenfelter, who won gold at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, to win a global title in the 3,000m steeplechase.

Frerichs finished in 9:03.77 to complete a brilliant one-two for the US and smash her own personal best by 16 seconds. Both women's times were well under the American national record, set by Coburn at the Olympics last year.

"I would never have believed this could happen. Maybe fifth or sixth, but silver? Wow, I am shocked. This is an absolute dream," Frerichs said.

"I felt like the crowd gave me a lot of energy and lifted me to my greatest ever performance."



US athletes Emma Coburn (foreground, left) celebrates with compatriot Courtney Frerichs (foreground, centre) after winning the women's 3,000m final in London on Thursday. (AFP)

Kiprop earns crack at El Guerrouj's four 1,500m crowns

Reigning champion Asbel Kiprop led a powerful trio of Kenyans into today's 1,500 metres final at the World Athletics Championships, giving himself the chance of shooting for a fourth successive gold medal in the metric mile event. The 28-year-old Kiprop, seeking to equal the record of four successive titles set by Morocco's world record holder Hicham El Guerrouj, kept out of trouble on the wide outside before sprinting home a comfortable second in a robust heat on Friday. He followed home his compatriot Elijah Manangoi, the fastest man in the world this year, who ran a controlled race to win the opening semi-final in 3 minutes 40.10 seconds, four-hundredths of a second clear of the onrushing Kiprop. "I have a lot of experience from world championship races. I've been doing this for many years and I'm ready for anything," said Kiprop, after doing well to steer clear of the familiar rough-and-tumble of a competitive battle following a slow first lap. "It was very tactical today but there was a lot of pushing, so I stayed at the back to stay out of trouble. I knew I had the speed in my legs over the last lap but I just waited for my moment to ease through and qualify."

Botswana miss out after baton drop, US run year's fastest time

Botswana missed out on the men's 4x400 metres relay final at the World Athletics Championships yesterday after dropping the baton in their semi-final heat while the United States ran the year's fastest time. Bahamas, Olympic champions on the same track five years ago, also failed to qualify for the final as did Jamaica. Botswana, among the title favourites, were fifth but quickly making up ground on the leaders at the end of the third leg of the second semi-final when Nijel Amos tried to hand the baton to Karabo Sibanda. Sibanda took the baton but it slipped out of his hand and, as he went to pick it up, he collided with Brazil's Anderson Henriques who was left sprawled on the track and had to be helped away. Sibanda went on to complete the race and Botswana still finished sixth, ahead of Japan. The US, aiming for a seventh world title in a row, ignored the trouble behind them as they stormed away to win the heat in 2:59.23 ahead of Trinidad and Tobago and Belgium. Belgium snatched third spot from Britain when Kevin Borlee pipped Martin Rooney on the final straight.

Independent anti-doping lab for Russia

In a key step to get Russian athletes back into international action Moscow has decreed a new, independent anti-doping lab, reports said yesterday. Russia was accused in a damaging World Anti-Doping Agency report last year of widespread state-sponsored doping. Its athletics team was barred from last summer's Rio Olympics and has also missed the 2017 World Athletics Championships currently underway in London. Some Russian athletes were granted permission by the IAAF to compete as neutrals in London. Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev signed the decree August 10 and the move is aimed at legitimising local controls as the previous anti-doping body RUSADA has been internationally suspended since 2015. The new set up will, unlike RUSADA, be independent of the Ministry of Sports, and instead come under the power of the State University of Moscow.

HORSE RACING

Shaqab's Khataab records his first Group 1 victory

'He is a very good horse, but his career has been dogged by health issues'



Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club general manager Nasser Sherida al-Kaabi (left) presents the trophy to Al Shaqab Racing's executive director Khalifa bin Mohamed al-Attiyah after Khataab won the Doha Cup (Gr1 PA) at Deauville, France, yesterday. **PICTURE:** Zuzanna L'upa

Agencies
Deauville, France

It was in the very final strides in the Doha Cup (Gr1), at Deauville yesterday, that Al Shaqab Racing's Khataab snatched victory from Lightning Bolt.

The five-year-old, bred by Haras du Grand Courgeon, was held up in last position during the race, before coming up with a run wide on the outside, looking for fresh ground. The title holder, Sylvine Al Maury, who was also held up, came to take a close third place at the end.

The win was Khataab's first in a Group 1, having finished fourth at this level last time out.

"He is a very good horse, but his career has been dogged by health issues," Khataab trainer Thomas Fourcy said after the win. "For the moment, we have found a way to manage him. He needs to run fresh, and it helps him to have regular care. It has paid off today. He has beaten two very classy horses. However, these two had run only 13 days ago, at Group 1 PA level. After having tough races in England, and the rain helped him. For now, Khataab will be aimed towards the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe weekend. In October, even on good ground, he should run well as he has class."

JOUDH REMAINS UNBEATEN

Joudh, who carries the colours of Yas Horse Racing Management, remained unbeaten in four runs, winning the Al

Jockey Jerome Cabre (right) rides Al Shaqab Racing's Khataab to victory in the Doha Cup (Gr1 PA) at Deauville, France, yesterday.



Rayyan Cup (Gr1 PA) yesterday. The filly, running over 2,000m for the first time, was held up last during the race. Her jockey Mickaël Barzalona followed Al Shaqab Racing's Rijm when she made her move, and took the lead in the final 100m. Dynamites took third place. This was Joudh's second Group 1, af-

ter her win in June in the Qatar Coupe de France des Chevaux Arabes.

"The conditions today were very different to those at Chantilly. She has come on well since that win, as she showed here. In this ground, you don't want to make any effort more than necessary," trainer Didier Guillemin said.

"For three-year-old purebred Arabians, 2,000m in soft ground is a big challenge. That is the reason that they slowed down in the final turn. She will go to the race at Saint-Cloud, the Qatar Arabian Trophy des Pouliches and then ultimately to the French Arabian Breeders' Challenge Pouliches-Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan."

BOTTOMLINE

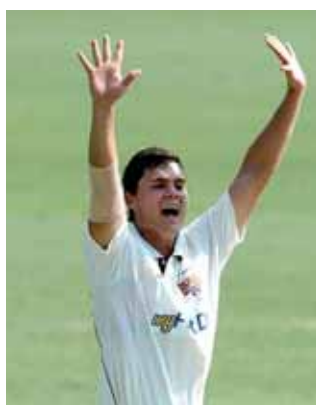
Swepson realistic over chances, Agar to bat higher

Reuters
Sydney

Uncapped Australia leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson recognises he is heading to Bangladesh as the third-choice slow bowler but is hoping his ability to get prodigious turn will earn him a Test call-up.

Swepson, who toured India earlier this year but did not play, was added last week to Australia's squad for their two-Test series in Bangladesh, which starts on Aug. 27.

The 23-year-old, however, understands that offspinner



Nathan Lyon and left-arm orthodox spinner Ashton Agar are likely to be ahead of

him in the selectors' minds.

"I was added late, so you'd probably think that the other two blokes are ahead of me at the moment," Swepson told reporters at the team's training camp in Darwin yesterday.

"But anything can happen. I've just got to prepare to play and if it doesn't happen, then so be it. I'll just take the experience as it comes and I'm looking forward to it."

Swepson's ability to get turn was highly respected by leg-spinning great Shane Warne, who urged selectors to bring him into the side for their programme at home last summer.

The Queenslander, however,

was not included until the tour of India earlier this year, where he said he had picked up a great deal of knowledge.

"I picked up a few things in India just being around the squad, and being able to be at Test matches and watch how the blokes go about it," he said.

"Coming back this pre-season, I was really happy with where my bowling was at and I think that was on the back of being on that Indian tour."

While Agar's ability to tie up one end with a superior economy rate to Swepson is likely to earn him the nod, it is actually his batting that could give him a leg up in future selections, ac-

ording to captain Steve Smith. Agar still holds the record for the highest Test score as a number 11 when he struck an impressive 98 on debut against England as a teenager in 2013.

The 23-year-old has scored two first class centuries and eight half centuries and Smith said he felt Agar could potentially transform into a batsman who bowls rather than a bowler who can bat.

"I think he's got that ability," Smith told Cricket Australia's website (www.cricknet.com.au).

"Right now... he's probably playing mainly as a spinner who can bat a bit. But I think he's certainly got the capability to bat in the top six at some point."

CRICKET

Spinners put India on backfoot after Dhawan century



AFP
Pallekele, Sri Lanka

Shikhar Dhawan smashed a scintillating century for India, but Sri Lanka's spinners struck five times to leave the tourists on edge after the first day of the third Test yesterday.

Malinda Pushpakumara took three wickets and Lakshan Sandakan two, leaving India on 329-6 at the close, with Wriddhiman Saha on 13 and Hardik Pandya on one.

Pushpakumara rattled the Indian top-order with his left-arm spin after a 188-run opening stand between Dhawan, who hit 119 in 123 balls, and Lokesh Rahul. Left-arm wrist spinner Sandakan's wickets included the prized scalp of Indian skipper Virat Kohli for 42.

"The Sri Lankan bowlers bowled well and pulled the match a little bit on their side," Dhawan, who celebrated his sixth Test century, told reporters.

"We got a good start and still feel at the end of the day, 329 is a good score. Those (who) are batting now are capable of scoring big runs," said Dhawan, adding India are looking to get 400 and more.

The left-right opening batting team of Dhawan and Rahul, who made 85, took India through the first session against a hapless Sri Lankan bowling attack.

Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal then rotated his spinners in the second session and India lost three top batsmen in just 11 overs.

The 30-year-old Pushpakumara, who made his Test debut

in the second Test in Colombo, removed the openers to bring the hosts back into the contest.

Rahul, who scored his seventh consecutive Test fifty, mistimed a drive to mid-on and Dhawan soon followed his partner to the pavilion.

Rahul joined Everton Weekes, Andy Flower, Shivnarine Chandernepaul, Kumar Sangakkara and Chris Rogers on the list of batsmen who have made seven consecutive 50-plus scores in Tests.

Kohli tried to stem the rot during an 84-ball innings, ended when he edged a Sandakan delivery to slip.

Kohli and India toiled in the last session. The innings run-rate plummeted from around five in the morning session to 2.76 after tea.

"It's not easy to score runs out there and even outfield is not that quick. When Sri Lanka come out to bat, we are going to make sure that we squeeze them hard," said Dhawan.

Pace spearhead Vishwa Fernando chipped in with the wicket of Ravichandran Ashwin, who was caught behind after a hard-working 31.

"The bowlers came and bowled pretty well. Especially the spinners. We let them to 320 (329) for the first day. I'm really, really happy with the spinners," Sri Lanka's fast bowling consultant Chaminda Vaas said.

"At the end, the way Vishwa bowled in the last two spells was also good. I think the way he's going he has a future and potential," added the former paceman.

India elected to bat first as they eye a series sweep after taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in Colombo.

SCORECARD

India 1st Innings

S. Dhawan c Chandimal b Pushpakumara 119
L. Rahul c Karunaratne b Pushpakumara 85
C. Pujara c Mathews b Sandakan 8
V. Kohli c Karunaratne b Sandakan 42

A. Rahane b Pushpakumara 17
R. Ashwin c Dickwella b Fernando 31
W. Saha not out 13
H. Pandya not out 1

Extras (b6, lb5, nb2) 13

Total (6 wickets, 90 overs) 329

To bat: K. Yadav, M. Shami, U. Yadav

Fall of wickets: 1-88 (Rahul), 2-219

(Dhawan), 3-229 (Pujara), 4-264 (Rahane), 5-296 (Kohli), 6-322 (Ashwin)

Bowling: Fernando 19-2-68-1, Kumara 15-1-67-0, Karunaratne 5-0-23-0, Perera 8-1-36-0, Sandakan 25-2-84-2, Pushpakumara 18-2-40-3

Sri Lanka: D. Chandimal, U. Tharanga, D. Karunaratne, K. Mendis, A. Mathews, N. Dickwella, Di. Perera, M. Pushpakumara, L. Sandakan, V. Fernando, L. Kumara

Toss: India

Umpires: Richard Illingworth (ENG), Rod Tucker (AUS)

TV umpire: Bruce Oxenford (AUS)

Match referee: Richie Richardson

VOLLEYBALL

Qatar beat Kazakhstan to stay in contention

FIVB
Ardabil, Iran

Qatar shut out Kazakhstan 3-0 (25-21, 25-17, 25-18) to stay in contention for a spot in the 2018 World Championships to be hosted jointly by Italy and Bulgaria next year.

It was Qatar's second win in three matches in the Asian qualifiers being played at the 6,000-capacity Rezazadeh Stadium in the city of Ardabil, Iran.

Only the top two teams in the five-round single round-robin tournament will qualify for the 2018 World Championship.

Qatar had beaten South Korea in their opening match before going down to China on Friday.

Meanwhile, Iran remain the

only undefeated side in the tournament after they beat China 3-0 (25-21, 29-27, 25-20). M Ebadipour scored 14 points while F Ghaemi added 11.

Play continues today with South Korea meeting China and Iran hosting Kazakhstan.

Last month Japan and Australia claimed the other two berths available to Asian teams, through a qualification tournament held in Canberra.

Hosts Italy and Bulgaria, defending champions Poland have direct tickets to the FIVB's flagship tournament. France, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Russia, Serbia, Finland, and Belgium from Europe plus Japan and Australia from Asia, and Brazil from South America have already secured their berths through continental qualifiers.

TENNIS

Aggressive Federer punches ticket to Montreal semis

'It pays off playing aggressively here in Montreal, plus I feel comfortable at net, so why not spend some time there instead of slugging it out from the baseline'



Roger Federer of Switzerland celebrates his victory over Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain during day eight of the Rogers Cup presented by National Bank at Uniprix Stadium in Montreal on Friday.

AFP
Montreal

Swiss star Roger Federer out-classed Roberto Bautista Agut as he inched closer to his sixth title of the season with a 6-4, 6-4 win in the quarter-finals of

the Montreal Masters on Friday.

Federer hammered five aces, made just two double faults and won 81% of his first serve points in the 68-minute centre court match. He dominated at the net, winning 21 of 25 points.

"It pays off playing aggressively here in Montreal, plus I feel comfortable at net, so why not spend some time there instead

of slugging it out from the baseline," Federer said. "I think I did a good job again, even though it was tough to control the ball. I got some decent rhythm going."

Federer advances to the semi-finals where he will face Robin Haase of the Netherlands, who defeated Diego Schwartzman 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 earlier in the day.

Bautista Agut struggled on his serve as he was broken three times and won just 65% of his first serve points.

"Today, I felt that I didn't get into the rhythm of the match and I didn't feel the ball well," he said. "Roger plays very fast and he didn't want to rally with me, so he went for his shots."

Federer posted his seventh consecutive win over the Spaniard and improved his season record to 34-2. He has a ATP Tour high five titles in 2017.

He will face Dutchman Haas in just the second career meeting between the two.

The pair met in a Davis Cup World Group play-off in 2012 with Federer winning 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

Federer's chances of winning another title this season were given a boost when top seed Rafael Nadal was upset by world No. 143 Denis Shapovalov of Canada on Thursday night.

Shapovalov, who needed a wild card to gain entry into the tournament, continued his Cinderella run Friday by rallying to beat Frenchman Adrian Mannarino 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Mannarino became the fourth established ATP player this week to fall at the hands of the 18-year-old lefthanded Canadian.

Shapovalov's win over Mannarino came just 24 hours after he defeated 10-time French Open champion Nadal to get into the quarters. Shapovalov also upset former US Open winner Juan Martin Del Potro in the second round.

Shapovalov started slowly by dropping the first set before settling into the match in the second. After a rain delay, Shapovalov broke Mannarino to take a 4-2 lead in the second set. Her served out the set in the ninth game.

"It's tough to come out and serve after a 12-minute rain delay, I knew that was a very big turning point," Shapovalov said. "When I broke him, I got that little bit of confidence, and I started believing in my shots again."

Haase rallied after losing the opening set to improve to 5-0 all-time against Schwartzman.

Haase has had to overcome several injuries in his career but says he is finally in a good place.

"I wasn't the player I was before my injury," Haase said.

"I was not as fast. I was insecure. I had a lot of problems with other injuries after. Then this kind of eats you up inside mentally. It drains you because you know you can do better."

"I've been working on it a lot in the past few years. I started to believe more and more again. My game is better."

Fourth seeded Alexander Zverev defeated South Africa's Kevin Anderson in straight sets 7-5, 6-4 to set up a clash of rising stars with Shapovalov.

Zverev, 20, is the youngest player ranked in the top 20 in the world and Shapovalov became the youngest since 1990 when he reached the quarter-finals of the Masters 1000 event.

GOLF

Kisner takes PGA lead as Matsuyama opens with bogey



Kevin Kisner of the United States.

AFP
Charlotte

American Kevin Kisner seized the early lead in yesterday's third round of the PGA Championship after Japan's Hideki Matsuyama opened with a bogey at Quail Hollow.

Kisner stood on eight-under par after an opening par with Matsuyama falling one stroke back after missing a five-foot par putt at the formidable first, which saw 30 bogeys and three double bogeys yesterday without surrendering a birdie.

Australia's Jason Day and American Chris Stroud shared third on six-under with South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen, the 2010 British Open winner and a three-time major runner-up, in fifth on five-under and no one else less than six shots off the pace.

World number three Matsuyama, coming off a World Golf Championships victory last week at Akron, could become the first Japanese man to win a major title.

Since 1947, the only players to win the week before the PGA and take the major title as well were Tiger Woods in 2007 and Rory McIlroy in 2014.

Matsuyama, whose six top-10 finishes in 20 prior major starts include a runner-up effort in June's US Open, would be only the second Asian man to win a major after South Korea's Yang Yong-Eun at the 2009 PGA.

Matsuyama matched the best showing by a Japanese male golfer in a major, the 1980 US Open runner-up finish by Isao Aoki. World number 25 Kisner, a US PGA Tour winner three months ago at Colonial, needed 109 tries to claim his first tour victory in 2015 at Sea Island. The 33-year-old lives only a two-hour drive south of the course.

"I'm excited about the way I'm playing. I'm excited about being in the last group," Kisner said before his round. "If I hit the fairways I can make a lot of birdies."

Seventh-ranked Day, the 2015 PGA winner and last year's runner-up, has endured a season of struggles but could turn his campaign in a single weekend by winning another Wanamaker Trophy.

He was in the final group with Matsuyama and Kisner, who shared the 36-hole lead on eight-under 134.

American Chris Stroud, a US PGA Tour winner last week to take the last spot in the PGA field, finished off the last five holes of a second-round 68 yesterday morning after a thunderstorm delay Friday.

Stroud, 35, is ranked 203rd and playing his first major since the 2014 PGA. It's just the ninth major of his career and only the third where he made the cut.

Only 16 players broke par in the first 36 holes at Quail Hollow and the 7,600-yard layout appeared equally formidable in early third-round scoring.

Francesco Molinari, whose second-round 64 was the best round ever for an Italian in a major, fell to two-under after opening with a double bogey and then a bogey.

Fourth-ranked McIlroy, trying to snap a three-year drought since his most recent major win at the 2014 PGA, opened with back-to-back 72s, but would need the best comeback in PGA history to take the top prize of \$1.89mm (1.59mm euros).

World number two Jordan Spieth, who captured his third career major at last month's British Open, was trying to become the youngest to complete a career Grand Slam this week. But a third day of struggles left him too far back for a realistic hope of catching the leaders.

AMBITION

Wu, 13, wins longest match in USGA history

Reuters
San Diego

Chia Yen Wu of Taiwan set two records on her way to the semi-finals at the US Women's Amateur Championship in southern California.

At 13, Wu became the youngest semi-finalist, while her quarter-final match on Friday stretched for 12 extra holes, the longest in US Golf Association championship history.

Wu, the 63rd seed, sank a 20-foot putt to finally end her match against American Lauren Stephenson as the sun was slipping below the horizon at San Diego Country Club.

Earlier, at the eighth extra

hole, Wu drained a 75-foot birdie putt to match Stephenson's birdie and extend the marathon match.

"My caddie just told me, 'I want to go eat dinner,'" said a smiling Wu, referring to club champion Scotty Patel, who put his local knowledge to good use.

"He reads the lines pretty well, and he tells me, 'You can make it,' and gives me confidence," Wu said.

Patel said he tried to keep Wu loose throughout the playoff.

"She says she has 14 boyfriends in her bag. Every single club in her bag is her boyfriend," he joked.

Wu also dodged a bullet in qualifying, emerging from an 11-woman playoff for eight spots in the championship proper.

Qatari Women's Sports Committee organises second 3x3 basketball competition

Doha: A 3x3 basketball tournament was launched by Qatar's Women's Sports Committee began yesterday at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Center. The competition is part of the preparations of the 3x3 basketball ladies team for the Asian championships in China that will take place in November.

Al Rayyan beat Al Waab 16-9. Al Samal defeated Lusail 21-5 and

Qatar Academy prevailed over Al Wakrah 3-2 in yesterday's matches.

Qatar Basketball Federation official Salha al-Nuaimi said that the competition was the best preparation possible for the team ahead of participating in the upcoming Asian championships. She said this is the second time the tournament is being organised and wished them well.

BOTTOMLINE

Halep, Svitolina claim last two Toronto semi-final berths

AFP
Toronto

Simona Halep continued her quest to defend her title at the WTA Toronto tournament with a straight sets win, while Elina Svitolina needed three sets to book the last semi-final spot yesterday.

Halep defeated Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia 6-4, 6-2 while fifth seeded Svitolina rallied from a first set loss to beat reigning Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

The pair took to the court early yesterday morning after Friday's rain delays forced the quarter-finals to stretch into a second day. They now face the daunting task of having to play their semi-final later in the day.

"Yesterday was really tough, waiting like six or seven hours here on site so I was a little bit tired," Halep said. "But I came



Simona Halep of Romania plays a shot against Caroline Garcia of France (not pictured) during the Rogers Cup tennis tournament at Aviva Centre. Picture: Dan Hamilton-USA TODAY Sports

here today and I got ready before this match and I'm really proud that I could play so well.

"Caroline is not an easy opponent, so I tried everything I could to win today because I really wanted to play semi-finals again today here in Canada."

Halep needed 70 minutes to advance as she didn't drop a serve and broke Garcia three times.

Halep said she is confident her legs will hold up when she faces Svitolina later in the day for a spot in the final.

"It's not going to be easy, at this level, to play two matches in the same day. But I think I'm ready, I feel strong enough in my legs. It's not going to be easy; I'll be playing against a very good opponent. I just want to give my best, enjoy the match, and try to fight," Halep said.

The other semi-final sees Danish sixth seed Caroline Wozniacki take on Sloane Stephens of the United States.

MLB

Phillies lose as season wanes into tryout for rotation

Loss to Mets not good audition for Pivetta, who allowed five earned runs

By Matt Breen
Philly.com (TNS)

The Phillies will play 49 more games this season before they empty their locker stalls inside the home clubhouse at Citizens Bank Park and depart for the winter. Consider each of those games as auditions for the five roles in next season's starting rotation.

Aaron Nola and Jerad Eickhoff have claimed their places, leaving a handful of candidates to compete for the three remaining jobs and convince the front office that outside help is not warranted. Friday night's 7-6 loss to the Mets was not a good audition for Nick Pivetta. The right-hander lacked command of his fastball and allowed five earned runs in 4 2/3 innings.

Pivetta has shown flashes since arriving from triple A, but has yet to provide consistency. He has allowed 11 earned runs over 7 1/3 innings in his last two starts and has a 7.58 ERA over his last nine starts.

"There's a lot of season left to go and it's moving in the right direction," Pivetta said. "Keep working hard. Keep your head up. Keep believing in yourself because I know the team believes in me. And just going with the punches. You get knocked down, get back up. Just keep moving forward. I have confidence in myself that I'll get through this."

The Phillies spotted Pivetta a three-run first-inning, but he spoiled the lead. They then rallied to tie the game before he dug them into a two-run hole. Cesar Hernandez took him off the hook with a tying homer in the eighth but Hector Neris allowed a homer to the first batter he faced in the ninth. It was rookie Ahmed Rosario's first career homer. And it sealed another Phillies' loss as they have dropped all five home games to the Mets this season and have been outthemed, 17-4.

Two of those 17 homers came against Pivetta. Yoenis Cespedes and Michael Conforto both hammered his fastball for home runs. Pivetta attacked with his fastball, throwing it as a first pitch to 16 of the 22 batters he faced. But the pitch was hit hard. The right-hander relies heavily on his fastball command and ran into trouble on Friday without it.

"It's always command," manager Pete Mackanin said. "He didn't command his fastball. He didn't have command of his breaking stuff. It's always mistakes out over the plate. He was behind a lot. The answer is always



New York Mets shortstops Amed Rosario (left) and Jose Reyes celebrate their victory against the Philadelphia Phillies at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on Thursday. (USA TODAY Sports)

command and control." Righthander Vince Velasquez, another rotation candidate, was placed on the disabled list with a bruised finger on his pitching hand. His return is unclear. Zach Eflin pitched well this week against Atlanta, but will get a better test on Sunday against the Mets. Mark Leiter has strung together two dominant relief appearances and will likely fill in for Velasquez, giving Leiter the chance to audition. Jake Thompson and Ben Lively are at triple A after mixed results in the majors.

"This is all part of the learning curve," Pivetta said. "There's a lot I have left to learn. I have a lot of time. There's a lot of season left and we have a good team here. There's a lot of guys I can learn from."

The home run to Rosario was the first Neris has allowed since June 23. The righthander has not been perfect

over the last seven weeks, but he has been more than solid. He entered the ninth inning with a 1.66 ERA in his last 21 games. But none of that mattered as he watched Rosario circle the bases.

Rhys Hoskins went 0 for 4 with a walk as he still looks for his first major-league hit. Tommy Joseph, perhaps motivated by Hoskins' arrival, had a pair of run-scoring hits. Odubel Herrera went 2 for 4 and stretched his hitting streak to a career-high 14 games. His first-inning double was his 50th extra-base hit of the season.

Hernandez' eighth-inning home run - a "surprise," manager Pete Mackanin said - was his seventh of the season. One more and he'll equal his career total before this year. Freddy Galvis followed with a single, as did Herrera, who somehow managed to drive a hit to shallow center after being jammed by a curveball that seemed

to break on his hands.

The rally was short-lived. Hoskins struck out after swinging late on a Hector Robles' fastball. Nick Williams ended the inning with a fly out and the Phillies handed the game - and the loss - to Neris.

RESULTS

LA Angels	6	Seattle	5
San Diego	4	LA Dodgers	3
Oakland	5	Baltimore	4
Chicago Cubs	8	Arizona	3
St. Louis	8	Atlanta	5
Cincinnati	11	Milwaukee	10
Chicago White Sox	6	Kansas City	3
Texas	6	Houston	4
Cleveland	5	Tampa Bay	0
Miami	6	Colorado	3
Minnesota	9	Detroit	4
Pittsburgh	4	Toronto	2
NY Yankees	5	Boston	4
NY Mets	7	Philadelphia	6

SPOTLIGHT

Jeter part of group approved to buy Marlins for \$1.2bn: report

By David Lennon
Newsday (TNS)

After a Cooperstown-worthy playing career in the Bronx, it appears that Derek Jeter will pursue a sixth World Series ring as the next chief executive officer of the Marlins.

Team owner Jeffrey Loria reportedly has accepted the \$1.2-billion bid of the group headlined by the former Yankees captain. Jeter spent the past few months rounding up investors to meet Loria's asking price, and that finally came together Friday with New York venture capitalist Bruce Sherman putting up the majority stake, according to multiple reports.

The *Miami Herald* was first with the details of the agreement, which will have to be voted on by the other 29 owners. The deal needs 75 percent approval, but with the commissioner's office seemingly in Jeter's corner all along, that shouldn't be an issue.

Jeter's pursuit of the Marlins has been ongoing since the season began. There were indications that he had the inside track as early as May before former Florida Governor Jeb Bush dropped out of his ownership group and later joined another.

The Yankees were unavailable to comment before Friday night's series opener against the Red Sox. Their reaction isn't likely to be much different from what it was in April, when many were asked about the possibility of Jeter being part owner of the Marlins.

"He's a guy, no matter what he's involved in, he's going to be successful," Brett Gardner, a teammate of Jeter's from 2008-14, said at the time. "I'm excited for him."

Jeter reportedly is one of approximately 16 investors, a collection that also includes former NBA great Michael Jordan, who recently came on board when Jeter was in the recruiting process. The *Miami Herald* reported that Sherman will have control of the Marlins and that Jeter - who is investing roughly \$25 million himself - will handle the baseball and business operations.

It's a mammoth undertaking for a rookie CEO, and history has shown that success is not necessarily guaranteed in these transitions.

"Great players don't always translate to great executives, as we've seen," CC Sabathia said in April, "so we'll have to wait and see what happens for him. Like I said, he's wanted to do this, he's very capable of doing this. We'll have to see how it plays out... but I think Jeter has a lot to offer."



In this May 14, 2017, picture, former New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter laughs during a pre-game ceremony to retire his jersey number and unveil his monument park plaque before the game against the Houston Astros at Yankee Stadium in Bronx, New York. (USA TODAY Sports)

MOTOGP

Marquez romps to pole in Austria

AFP
Spielberg bei Knittelfeld, Austria

World champion Marc Marquez on a Honda stormed to pole position for today's Austrian Grand Prix ahead of Ducati pair Andrea Dovizioso and Jorge Lorenzo.

Having won the last two GPs, three-time world champion Marquez has a 14-point lead in the standings over Maverick Vinales, who was fourth on Saturday with his Yamaha teammate Valentino Rossi seventh.

It is a third straight pole for Marquez who posted a time of 1min 23.235sec to beat Dovizioso by 0.144sec for the 42nd pole of his 70-race career.

Marquez, 24, has taken control of the Moto GP season after struggles earlier in the season had left him fourth following June's Dutch GP, behind Vinales, Dovizioso and Rossi.

Despite claiming back-to-back wins in Germany and the Czech Republic, the Spaniard was only fifth in Austria 12 months ago in a race where Ducati went 1-2 thanks to Andrea Iannone and

Dovizioso. "I'm feeling much better than last year at this circuit, so this is the most important thing," said Marquez.

"Last year we were struggling to be in the top five but this year it looks like we have a good rhythm; we tried many things and it looks like we have a good base.

"I have some doubts about the rear tyre because today I tried the medium and it seems like it has good potential - but with used tyres I feel good, I was riding well and that's the most important. And to be on pole, after the race in Brno, gives me a good feeling and a good mentality. But I know tomorrow we need to finish our job this weekend."

MotoGP qualifying results (top 10)

1. Marc Marquez (Honda)	1:23.235
2. Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati)	+0.144
3. Jorge Lorenzo (Ducati)	+0.386
4. Maverick Vinales (Yamaha)	+0.519
5. Danilo Petrucci (Ducati Pramac)	+0.545
6. Johann Zarco (Yamaha Tech3)	+0.644
7. Valentino Rossi (Yamaha)	+0.747
8. Dani Pedrosa (Honda)	+0.750
9. Cal Crutchlow (LCR Honda)	+0.789
10. Andrea Iannone (Suzuki)	+0.950



Repsol Honda's Marc Marquez celebrates after racing to pole in the qualifying session for Austrian MotoGP at Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, Austria, yesterday. (AFP)

NFL ROUND-UP

Cowboys Elliott banned six games

AFP
Dallas

The National Football League has slapped Dallas Cowboys player Ezekiel Elliott with a six-game ban for violating the league's personal conduct policy.

The 22-year-old Elliott was suspended after a number of alleged domestic violence incidents involving his former girlfriend.

He is accused by her of five domestic assault incidents in July 2016 in Columbus, Ohio. He has been under NFL investigation, although the city attorney's office has said he would not face criminal charges.

His suspension is expected to begin on September 2 and he will be eligible to return to the Cowboys on October 23 after the team's week seven-game against San Francisco.

"After reviewing the record, and having considered the views of the independent advisors, the (NFL) commissioner (Roger Goodell) determined that Elliott engaged in conduct that violated NFL policy," the league said in a statement.

The NFL Players' Association also issued a statement saying it is reviewing the league's decision and has been "in touch with Ezekiel and his representatives to consider all options."



MIAMI'S MCMILLAN TO MISS SEASON

Miami Dolphins rookie middle linebacker Raekwon McMillan will miss the entire 2017 season after suffering a torn ACL in his right knee during the team's preseason opener on Thursday.

The Dolphins announced the news after Friday's MRI exam displayed the tear.

KNEE INJURY TAKES OUT REDSKINS' MURPHY FOR SEASON

Washington Redskins linebacker Trent Murphy will miss the entire 2017 season after tearing the ACL and MCL in his left knee in Thursday's preseason game.

Murphy was previously slated to miss the first four games of the season after being suspended for violating the NFL policy on performance-enhancing substances.

WATKINS HEADS FROM BILLS TO RAMS

Wide receiver Sammy Watkins was traded by the Buffalo Bills to the Los Angeles Rams along with a Bills' 2018 sixth-round draft pick for cornerback EJ Gaines and a 2018 second-round pick.

Buffalo also traded cornerback Ronald Darby to the Philadelphia Eagles for wide receiver Jordan Matthews and a 2018 third-round pick.

PUTTING IN THE HARD YARDS



Qatar national team players during a training session. The Maroons are currently attending a camp in London in preparation for their upcoming 2018 World Cup qualifiers against Syria (August 31) and China (September 5).



Qatar coach Felix Sanchez Boas



PREVIEW

Barcelona seek Super Cup tonic to Neymar hangover

'We've had a good pre-season and we are coming into the game in good condition. But on Sunday the real thing starts, with a competitive game and a title at stake...'



WE'RE READY FOR BARCA: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (C) takes part in a training session at Real Madrid sport city in Madrid yesterday.

AFP
Barcelona

Barcelona host rivals Real Madrid in the first leg of the Spanish Super Cup today (2000GMT) badly in need of a morale-boosting win following the world record sale of Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain.

Despite banking 222 million euros (\$261 million) for the Brazilian, Barca's scattergun approach to finding a replacement has so far been unsuccessful with bids for Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho and Ousmane Dembele of Borussia Dortmund so far rebuffed.

New Barca coach Ernesto Valverde must therefore try to down the European and Spanish champions with a weaker squad than the one which missed out to Real for the La Liga title last season.

However, Barca did manage to beat

Madrid without the then suspended Neymar the last time the sides met in competitive action back in April as Lionel Messi won an incredible encounter 3-2 with the last kick of the game.

The Catalans also edged last month's Miami friendly between the two in Neymar's last game for Barca 3-2.

Valverde's men completed a perfect pre-season on the field with a fourth straight win by sweeping aside Chapecoense 5-0 on Monday in a match to raise funds for the stricken Brazilian club who lost 19 players and 24 club officials in a plane crash last year.

"We've had a good pre-season and we are coming into the game in good condition," said Valverde.

"But on Sunday the real thing starts, with a competitive game and a title at stake against our biggest rivals."

Gerard Deulofeu was handed Neymar's role alongside Messi and Luis Suarez up

front against Chapecoense on his return to the club after spells at Everton and AC Milan.

And the Spanish international took his chance with a goal and two assists in just 45 minutes on the field.

"It is always a pleasure to play here and even more so with these players," said Deulofeu.

Valverde is likely to stick with Deulofeu, but the former Athletic Bilbao coach could also strengthen Barca's midfield by sacrificing a forward to add Sergi Roberto to the normal midfield three of Sergio Busquets, Ivan Rakitic and Andres Iniesta.

RONALDO RETURN AN OPTION

Despite failing to win any of his pre-season games, Madrid started the new campaign as they ended last season with another trophy as Zinedine Zidane's men proved too strong for Manchester United to win the UEFA Super Cup 2-1 on Tuesday.

Casemiro and Isco were on target as Madrid's midfield dazzled in Skopje, Macedonia, but Zidane will be forced into at least one change from the side that started in midweek as Luka Modric is suspended.

Should Zidane wish to maintain the 4-4-2 system he has utilised to huge success in 2017, Mateo Kovacic is the favourite to replace his Croatian teammate in midfield.

However, Modric's absence increases Cristiano Ronaldo's chances of returning to the Madrid starting XI after making just a brief cameo appearance as a substitute against his former club in Macedonia.

Ronaldo only returned to training with his teammates last weekend on their return from a tour of the USA having been given an extended break following Portugal's participation in the Confederations Cup and a court appearance in Madrid over allegations of tax evasion.

beIN partners with Ooredoo to bring 2017 football season to Ooredoo tv

Ooredoo has announced that its Ooredoo tv service is set to provide full coverage of the 2017 football season through the beIN Full Package, delighting sports fans across Qatar. Football fanatics can watch all the action on beIN from the UEFA Champions League, Spanish La Liga, English Premier League, German Bundesliga and much more, for only QR 110 per month with the beIN Full Package on Ooredoo tv.

To celebrate the beginning of another exciting season, Ooredoo tv has announced all customers who subscribe to the beIN Full Package on Ooredoo tv for one year will enjoy the first two months free.

The beIN Full Package includes 58 channels and covers live and exclusive sports channels as well as premium and exclusive content including programmes for kids, lifestyle, factual, the latest movies, music and more.

Some of the exclusive channels available in the beIN Full Package include: Four beIN movie channels, kids' channels such as Baraem, Jeem, be Junior, Cbeebies, Dreamworks and others. Ooredoo tv is the best next-generation television service for Qatar and offers features such as 4K resolution, time shift, Android apps, parental control, thousands of hours of on-demand content and much more.

STAYING ON

Zidane to extend Real contract



Real Madrid's French coach Zinedine Zidane.

AFP
Madrid

"I enjoy every day here. I'm lucky enough to have this extraordinary squad and I am very happy with it"

Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane confirmed yesterday he will sign a contract extension in the near future with the club he has guided to back-to-back Champions League titles.

"I'm happy because it's a sign of confidence, that we have done good work," Zidane told a pre-match press conference ahead of Real's Spanish Super Cup showdown with Barcelona when quizzed on reports over his future.

Madrid sports daily AS reported the Frenchman will be rewarded with a three-year deal for his feats in not only delivering two Champions Leagues in just 20 months in charge, but also Real's first La Liga title for five years.

"I enjoy every day here," added Zidane, who also ended his illustrious playing career at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"I'm lucky enough to have this extraordinary squad and I am very happy with it."

Zidane added a sixth trophy to his burgeoning collection as a coach when Madrid saw off Manchester United 2-1 to retain the UEFA Super Cup on Tuesday.

However, he acknowledged that even his future will depend on maintaining his winning streak given the high demands placed on coaches at Madrid.

"You could sign a contract for 10 or 20 years, but I know where I am and what I have to do," he continued.

"Within a year you could be gone."

Zidane also warned the European champions against a Barcelona backlash at the Camp Nou today.

Barca are still reeling from the loss of Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain for a world record 222 million euros (\$262 million) with their attempts to land a replacement in Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho and Ousmane Dembele of Borussia Dortmund so far falling short.

Zidane admitted "there aren't many players" with Neymar's individual qualities, but claimed his absence wouldn't give Madrid the upper hand over two El Clasico clashes in four days with the second leg of the Super cup to come at the Bernabeu on Wednesday.

"They have had changes but Barcelona are Barcelona. We know how they play and their idea of how to play isn't going to change," said Zidane.

"Neymar isn't replaceable but there will be others that will do very well. If we think it is going to be easier tomorrow we will be mistaken."

PREVIEW

Lukaku sizes up favoured prey West Ham

'It's truly incredible to see his strength, power and the intelligence he possesses. We hope it is a good year for him and the team'



File picture of Manchester United forward Romelu Lukaku celebrating after scoring a goal during the International Champions Cup match against Manchester City.

AFP
London

Romelu Lukaku's remarkable scoring record against West Ham United means he will expect to hit the ground running when he makes his Premier League debut for Manchester United today.

The Belgium international, 24, scored nine goals in his first nine appearances against West Ham for former team Everton before the east London club finally kept him at bay in a 0-0 draw last April.

Lukaku scored a consolation goal as United lost 2-1 to Real Madrid in the UEFA Super Cup in the Macedonian capital Skopje on Tuesday and his teammates have been impressed by what they have seen in pre-season.

"Lukaku has done a great job with the clubs that he has been at," said United right-back Antonio Valencia.

"I am a kid next to Romelu. He truly is strong. I have seen him work on the field and in the gym.

"It's truly incredible to see his strength, power and the intelligence he possesses. We hope it is a good year for him and the team."

Lukaku, a £75 million (\$97.3 million, 82.4 million euros) capture from Everton, could be one of three players making league debuts for United today along with Victor Lindelof and Nemanja Matic.

CONSERVATIVE OR BOLD?

United manager Jose Mourinho used a conservative 5-3-1-1 system against Real Madrid, but is likely to be bolder against West Ham, who have not won at Old Trafford in 10 years.

Mourinho has no new injury concerns, with Marcos Rojo, Luke Shaw and Ashley Young his only long-term absentees.

Defenders Eric Bailly and Phil Jones return to contention after sitting out the Super Cup through suspension.

Having led United to League Cup and Europa League glory last season, Mourinho's challenge for the new campaign is to turn them into title contenders.

"The Premier League is what you all

Fixtures (GMT)

Newcastle United v Tottenham Hotspur (1230)
Manchester United v West Ham United (1500)

know," Mourinho said on Friday.

"I'd say seven teams to fight for the title and 20 teams to fight for the victory every weekend, every match.

"The club are also what you know. We are involved in four competitions and step by step, match after match, we are going to fight."

United trailed home in sixth place last season, 24 points below champions Chelsea, and have finished in the top four just once since Alex Ferguson retired as manager in 2013.

Javier Hernandez was there as the rot set in under David Moyes and he will make his Old Trafford return on Sunday after joining West Ham from Bayer Leverkusen in a £16 million deal.

The 29-year-old Mexican, known as

'Chicharito' (Little Pea), was a crowd favourite during his five years at United, scoring 59 goals for the club and playing a part in two league title successes.

He admits it will be a strange experience to line up at his old stomping ground in the colours of a different team, but says he will not allow sentiment to cloud his focus.

"It's my old club with my old fans and my old stadium, so probably I cannot celebrate," he said.

"But as well it would be my first goal with my comeback with a club that has a lot of confidence in me."

West Ham manager Slaven Bilic has reshaped his squad extensively since last season's 11th-place finish.

Former Manchester City pair Joe Hart and Pablo Zabaleta and star signing Marko Arnautovic, a £20 million recruit from Stoke City, could all make their competitive debuts on Sunday.

Left-back Aaron Cresswell and captain Mark Noble are expected to shake off injuries, but Cheikhou Kouyate, Manuel Lanzini, Michail Antonio, Andy Carroll and Diafra Sakho are all sidelined.

DELIGHT

Rooney grabs winner on Everton return



Everton's Wayne Rooney celebrates scoring yesterday.

Reuters
Liverpool

Wayne Rooney marked his Premier League return in Everton colours in perfect fashion with the winning goal in a 1-0 victory over Stoke City at Goodison Park yesterday.

Rooney, who was full of invention and energy throughout, rose well to meet a fine Dominic Calvert-Lewin cross with a looping header into the far corner on the stroke of half-time.

The former England captain rejoined his boyhood club last month after 13 years with Manchester United and he instantly looked at home.

"To play for this football club again is a huge deal for me and to score at Goodison in my first game back, it doesn't get much better. A great moment," said Rooney.

"It was a tough game and we were a bit fortunate to go in 1-0 up at halftime. I thought we were the better team in the second half and deserved to win," he added.

The 31-year-old, playing just behind debutant Spanish striker Sandro Ramirez, delivered some clever passes and fed the lively Calvert-Lewin with some perfectly weighted through balls.

"He was clever, comfort-

able on the ball. That is why we signed Wayne, expecting to show his team-mates all that experience, and it was really the case today," said Everton manager Ronald Koeman.

But while Everton dominated large parts of the game, they needed new goalkeeper, Jordan Pickford, to pull off a superb save in injury time to deny Xherdan Shaqiri an equaliser from a long-range drive.

Earlier Calvert-Lewin, the England Under-20 international, who again showed his great potential, could have made sure of the win in the 69th minute when he robbed Kurt Zouma on the edge of the area.

But his fierce blast was kept out by Stoke keeper Jack Butland.

Stoke battled hard and were as well-organised and dogged as ever but lacked the creative touch in the final third.

"Overall I thought we did OK... I didn't think there was too much between the two sides," said Stoke manager Mark Hughes.

"Their keeper made a great save at the end to save the result for them."

But Hughes said there was something inevitable about Rooney's role in the win.

"He was always going to be part of the story... that is what we feared," he said.

HONESTY

Celtic can't always be perfect: Rodgers

AFP
Glasgow

Brendan Rodgers admitted Celtic can't always play perfect football after the champions ground out a 1-0 win at Partick Thistle.

French midfielder Olivier Ntcham's first goal for Celtic midway through the first half settled a hard-fought encounter on Friday.

It extended Celtic's unbeaten domestic run to 51 games as they made it two wins out of two at the start of their defence of the Scottish Premiership.

While Rodgers admits his side slipped below his high standards at Firhill, the Celtic manager praised their resilience in grinding out the win.

"I'm happy with the three points but I'm always happier when we play better," he said.

"We didn't quite perform as well as I would want - our standards are much higher than we

showed - but it shows the resilience in the team to get the result tonight.

"We will hope to perform much better than that and it's certainly what I'll demand in relation to our performance level.

"But, of course, you can't always play perfect football. You're not going to play 38 games in the league and be absolutely brilliant in them.

"That was maybe a game we might have drawn last year having not played great.

"Thankfully it was three points and it's a huge credit to the players that if they're not right on their game they have the ability to see these games out now."

The win was perfect preparation for Celtic as they prepare for their Champions League play-off first leg against Astana at Parkhead next Wednesday.

"I think we've got a better idea of what we're doing. That's always important," he said.

ANGRY

Watford's late leveller leaves Klopp fuming

AFP
Watford

Jürgen Klopp claimed Liverpool were wrongly denied a winning start to the Premier League season as Watford snatched a controversial last-gasp equaliser in a dramatic 3-3 draw yesterday.

Reds boss Klopp was furious that Miguel Britos wasn't ruled offside when the Watford defender poked home from on the goal-line after Richarlison's shot was pushed onto the crossbar by Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet.

Britos's stoppage-time strike capped a rollercoaster encounter at Vicarage Road, which saw Liverpool forced to settle for a point despite twice come from behind to take a 3-2 lead.

"We were unlucky in the end. The equaliser was offside. It's obvious because the linesman is on the line. He needs to see it,"

Klopp said.

"I cannot change it. We would have had defensive areas we need to work on even if we'd won 3-2, but we were the better team. We should have won."

As well as complaining about the officiating, Klopp was also frustrated by Liverpool's failure to finish off Watford.

Sadio Mane's 29th-minute effort had cancelled out Stefano Okaka's eighth-minute header, only for Abdoulaye Doucoure to immediately restore the home side's lead.

Liverpool were back level in the 55th minute through Roberto Firmino's penalty and new signing Mohamed Salah put them ahead in the 57th minute.

"The first half I wasn't too happy with. We passed but couldn't see what we actually wanted. The second half was a lot better," Klopp said.

"We forgot to close the game. We defended a little deep. We have to push up."

BOTTOMLINE

Wenger happy to have Giroud

AFP
London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger expressed "relief" over Olivier Giroud's decision to stay after the France striker earned his side a breathless 4-3 win against Leicester City.

Giroud came off the bench with Arsenal trailing 3-2 in Friday's Premier League curtain-raiser at the Emirates Stadium and after fellow substitute Aaron Ramsey equalised, he headed in an 85th-minute winner.

Alexandre Lacazette's arrival has bumped Giroud even further down the Arsenal pecking order, but having given the 30-year-old the chance to leave, Wenger was thrilled he decided to stay.

"It's fantastic. I opened the door for him at some stage because I know it's important for him to play, but I don't want to him to go," Wenger told reporters.

"He decided to stay and it was one of the great days of recent



File picture of Arsenal's Olivier Giroud celebrating yesterday.

weeks for me. He's a fantastic player, but as well he has a big weight in this squad. It was a relief for me he decided to stay."

Giroud outmuscled Harry Maguire to meet Granit Xhaka's corner with a strong header that hit the bar and bounced behind the line before Leicester goal-

keeper Kasper Schmeichel could club it away.

An admiring Wenger said Giroud was "in his prime" and "at the top of his game."

Lacazette, a club-record £46.5 million (\$60.3 million, 51.1 million euros) signing from Lyon, made a dream start to his

home debut by heading Arsenal in front with just 85 seconds on the clock.

"Lacazette is simple - in every game he's stronger since he joined us," said Wenger, who had seen his side lose at home in three of their previous four opening league fixtures.

"Even when he played on the left, he did very well. He adapts slowly to the way we want to play. He's a collective player and an intelligent player."

Amid the joy - and relief - of victory, there was nonetheless plenty to concern Wenger, not least the manner in which his side conceded all three goals.

"If you were a manager, you're on the bench when you're 3-2 down with 20 minutes to go, and you win 4-3, you're more happy than concerned," Wenger said.

"The goals we conceded, we can work to get rid of that. One was a corner, one was a ball we lost in the build-up and the third goal was a corner again.

"We were quite good last year on corners. With a bit of work we

can get that out of the system."

Leicester manager Craig Shakespeare said he was "disappointed" that referee Mike Dean did not spot what he described as a "definite handball" by Mesut Ozil in the build-up to Ramsey's equaliser.

But he drew encouragement from his side's display. "You have to take some positives," he said. "At the moment, sitting here, I've got a dejected dressing room. To come here and score three has to be pleasing in some respect, but it doesn't feel like it."

Like many of Leicester's players, Vardy endured a post-title slump last season, scoring only 13 times in the league, and Shakespeare was delighted to see him back among the goals.

"All pre-season he's looked sharp and fit," said Shakespeare, who gave Nigerian striker Kelechi Iheanacho his competitive debut as a late substitute.

"We all know Jamie Vardy's attributes. He can be a nuisance for defenders. We encourage him to do that."

SPOTLIGHT

Neymar PSG debut lifts France to fever pitch

AFP
Paris

As the hysteria mounts ahead of Neymar's Paris Saint-Germain debut today focus switched from his record transfer fee to the question of which star would make way for the Brazilian.

Le Parisien daily newspaper suggested it would be Javier Pastore, the silky but fragile Argentine who was the first major signing after PSG were bought by their ambitious Qatari owners, who splashed out a world record 222 million-euro (\$261 million) for Neymar.

"After first giving up his No.10 shirt, will he (Pastore) now give him (Neymar) his place in the team?" one *Le Parisien* headline asked of the player who took up the No.10 shirt after Zlatan Ibrahimovic left last season, only to hand it to the Brazilian this season.



PSG's Brazilian forward Neymar (C) with teammates during a training session.

"Neymar will start on the left at the cost of Pastore," the article claimed.

"So it'll be Neymar, (Edinson) Cavani and without doubt (Angel) di Maria in a three pronged attack," said *Le Parisien*, which then gave a long list of top signings who will be warming the PSG bench.

Alongside Pastore will be the Brazilian Lucas Moura, who is rumoured to be staying as he has been friends with Neymar since the age of nine, and Germany captain at the Confederations Cup Julian Draxler, who arrived just last year in a big money transfer of his own.

Sports daily *L'Equipe* saw things differently, though. "Neymar - the football version," ran their headline in a joke about how the most expensive transfer in football history has dominated news without the 25-year-old forward even

kicking a ball yet.

"A trio of Neymar, Pastore and di Maria will support Cavani," they predicted, but were unsure where the extra man would be cut.

The only sure thing is that Neymar will start.

"He's physically ready to play the whole ninety minutes," PSG coach Unai Emery told AFP.

"He's been working well and we looked hard at tactics and free-kicks," said the Spaniard.

"We all want him in the starting eleven, he's a player we need in the group."

Guingamp coach Antoine Kombouaré, himself a former PSG manager, also wants Neymar to play.

"I want the fans to come Sunday to see Guingamp win... preferably against a side with Neymar in it.

"But the people here are not talking

about Neymar," he claimed. "The people here support their team."

In the tiny Brittany town of Guingamp, with a population of around 7,000, tickets for the match have been changing hands for a king's ransom as the Stade du Roudourou has a capacity of just over 17,000.

"We could have filled a stadium of 40,000 seats with no problem at all," Guingamp president Bertrand Desplat told local newspaper *Le Télégramme*.

"Remember the star of the show is going to be Neymar and for us we want to welcome this very special player and his team in the best conditions possible," he said.

Journalists however may find themselves a bit squeezed for space as the rustic press tribune allowing for 80 press seats has been extended to a blockbuster 350.

EPL

Nine-man Chelsea stunned by Burnley

'Our fight in the second half was good but our first half, we kept losing our heads. After that we lost our heads, conceded two goals. Then it's very difficult to change the result'



Burnley's Sam Vokes celebrates scoring against defending champions Chelsea during their English Premier League encounter yesterday at Stamford Bridge.

AFP
London

Sam Vokes scored twice as Burnley torpedoed defending champions Chelsea 3-2 at Stamford Bridge yesterday in one of the most sensational opening-weekend results in English top-flight history.

Chelsea had captain Gary Cahill and Cesc Fabregas sent off and Burnley took full advantage through Vokes's brace and a superb Stephen Ward effort, with goals from Alvaro Morata and David Luiz coming in vain.

Leicester City lost 2-1 at Hull City on the first day last season, but given the unexpected nature of their title win, this was the biggest opening-day shock since Manchester United's 3-1 loss at Aston Villa in 1995.

"We tried until the end to reach a good result against Burnley. It was a pity because our fight in the second half was very good," said Chelsea manager Antonio Conte.

"But our first half, we kept losing our heads. After the red card we lost our heads, conceded two goals and then it's very difficult to change the final result."

Big-spending Manchester City won 2-0 at promoted Brighton and Hove Albion, while Huddersfield Town marked their top-flight return with a 3-0 win at Crystal Palace that sent them top of the table.

Burnley's win, their first at Chelsea

since 1971, further blackened the mood around Stamford Bridge after a close season during which Conte has grown frustrated by his club's lack of transfer activity.

Chelsea was without the injured Eden Hazard and out-of-favour striker Diego Costa, while £58 million (\$75.5 million, 63.8 million euros) signing Morata started on the bench.

Youth-team graduate Jeremie Boga made his debut, but was hauled off in the reshuffle that followed Cahill's 14th-minute dismissal for a reckless, studs-up foul on Steven Defour.

Vokes put Burnley ahead in the 24th minute, volleying in from Matthew Lowton's cross.

Ward doubled the visitors' advantage in the 39th minute with a blistering left-foot strike from Jack Cork's lofted pass and Vokes added a third before half-time, heading in Defour's cross.

Half-time substitute Morata and Luiz reduced the arrears in the second half, either side of Fabregas's 81st-minute dismissal for a second yellow card, but Burnley hung on for a famous victory.

"Did we expect this situation? No, if we're honest," said Burnley manager Sean Dyche.

"It was a fantastic three points and the referee, I just want to say, was fantastic today."

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola had some £150 million of new recruits on display at Brighton, but it took the pre-season favourites until the 70th



Man City's Sergio Aguero celebrates scoring against Brighton yesterday.

minute to take the lead.

David Silva fed Sergio Aguero to run through and beat goalkeeper Mathew Ryan and five minutes later Lewis Dunk headed Fernandinho's cross into his own net.

CONFESSION

Neymar stays tweet a bluff, admits Pique

AFP
Barcelona

Gerard Pique (right) knew Neymar had decided to leave Barcelona long before the Brazilian completed his world record 222 million euro (\$261 million) move to Paris Saint-Germain, the Barcelona defender admitted yesterday.

Pique has been mocked for posting "he stays" with a picture of him and Neymar together on Barca's pre-season tour to the United States on July 23.

However, Pique claimed he was using social media as a last throw of the dice to keep Neymar with the Catalan giants as the Brazilian had intimated his decision to leave to his former teammates as early as Lionel Messi's wedding on June 30.

"There was a group of players that tried to convince him to stay and the day I wrote the tweet 'he stays' I knew he was going," Pique said on the eve of Barca's Spanish Super Cup first leg clash against arch rivals Real Madrid.

"I knew it was the last shot I had, to use social media and public opinion to try and convince him to stay."

And the Spanish international insisted he didn't regret it despite Neymar's short-lived anger at the post.

"It was to try and help this club, to try and retain a player that for me is unique, with unique talent," added Pique.

"I knew it would be very difficult because it was a decision he had taken a while ago and it wasn't possible, but at least I tried."

NO GRUDGE

Neymar's decision to take what many perceive as a step down from the fierce competition between Barca and Madrid at the top of La Liga to France's Ligue 1 has divided opinion.

The Brazil captain is reportedly set to earn 30 million eu-



ros a season after tax, but Pique called on Barca fans not to hold a grudge against a player who won two La Liga titles, a Champions League and scored 105 goals in four years at the club.

"He has his reasons, I don't know if they are economic or to be the best in the world at a different team, but in the end I don't think we should judge him," said Pique.

"He has made the decision, it is a brave decision, he was here four years and gave us extraordinary performances."

Losing Neymar just before new Barca coach Ernesto Valverde's first season is about to commence has been compounded by the club's inability to sign a replacement in a market characterised by hyperinflation.

Bids for Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho and Ousmane Dembele of Borussia Dortmund have been rebuffed and Pique believes it is impossible to directly replace Neymar.

"Liverpool and Dortmund are making the most of the situation. They are playing their cards and it is a difficult moment for Barca to be able to sign without doubt," he added.

"To replace Neymar who is a unique player with very special talent and a one-on-one ability that no one else has in this sport will be difficult.

"What we have to do is make ourselves stronger and not look for a replacement because there isn't one on the market."

GERMAN CUP

Aubameyang treble helps Dortmund win

AFP
Berlin

A hat-trick for Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and a brace for Robert Lewandowski saw Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich reach the second round of the German Cup yesterday.

Defending champions Dortmund eased to a 4-0 victory over sixth-tier minnows Riesaalingen-Arlen, while Bayern secured a 5-0 win over third division Chemnitz.

A deflected free-kick saw Lewandowski open the scoring for Bayern after just 20 minutes with the Bundesliga champions striking again on the counter-attack shortly after half-time, Kingsley Coman doubling the lead.

Record signing Corentin Tolisso set up Bayern's third goal, sending in a low cross for Lewandowski to tap in his second of the afternoon.

With victory assured, Franck Ribery whipped a direct free-kick into the bottom corner in the 79th minute, and Mats Hummels headed in Bayern's fifth just

before the final whistle.

"The most important thing today was reaching the second round," Lewandowski told *Sky Sport*. "It's always important to score the first goal, and it's not always easy. We didn't have much space today, Chemnitz played defensively."

Dortmund were dominant from the offset, as defender Marc Bartra gave Peter Bosz's team the lead in the 12th minute, and Aubameyang made it 2-0 from the penalty spot just before half-time.

Aubameyang netted his second with a chip over goalkeeper Dennis Klose on 55 minutes, and completed his hat-trick ten minutes from time.

"I'm really happy with the win," said Aubameyang.

"We did exactly what we set out to do. It wasn't a top performance from us, but overall, we can be happy with how we did today."

Elsewhere, Europa League qualifiers FC Cologne scored five against fifth tier Lehe, while Freiburg and Mainz also secured their places in the second round.