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Just in: Bolt loses

JAMAICAN SUPERSTAR STUNNED IN FINAL 100M RACE OF ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER BY AMERICA'S GATLIN

AFP
 London

American veteran Justin Gatlin was booed after he stunned Usain Bolt to win the 100m world title in London yesterday and rain on the Jamaican's farewell race in the blue riband event.

Gatlin, who has served two doping bans and won silvers behind Bolt at the last two World Championships, clocked 9.92 seconds, with teammate Christian Coleman winning silver in 9.94sec.

Bolt suffered a dreadful start and could only claim bronze in 9.95sec.

"I'm sorry I couldn't end it on a winning note, but I want to thank you for your support," said Bolt, who embraced Gatlin after they streaked through the line with no clear victor immediately apparent.

"It's been a wonderful experience as always."

Gatlin was afforded the same rough reception as he had in the heats and semi-finals, loud boos and jeering ringing around the same stadium where in 2012 his rivalry with Bolt was presented as 'good against evil', given the American's doping-tainted past

Gatlin was afforded the same rough reception as he had in the heats and semi-finals, loud boos and jeering ringing around the same stadium where in 2012 his rivalry with Bolt was presented as 'good against evil', given the American's doping-tainted past.

That continued unabated after it became clear Gatlin, a sprinter whose past divides track and field, had gatecrashed Bolt's party.

But Gatlin has form as the last man to beat Bolt over 100m – by a hundredth of a second in Rome in 2013 – and at the age of 35, can still produce the goods, something he has in the past ironically credited with his four years of forced exile from the track.

The evening was all supposed to be about the 30-year-old Bolt claiming a



RESPECT: Justin Gatlin of the US bows to third placed Usain Bolt of Jamaica after winning the 100m sprint at the World Championships yesterday. It was the first ever defeat for Bolt in a major event.

remarkable 12th world gold to add to his eight Olympic golds in what has been a glittering career.

And what a gaping hole his absence will leave, no matter how brave a face track and field's governing body the IAAF try to put on it.

Of his 19 global golds, 13 have come in individual events and allied with a charismatic personality, it has guaranteed Bolt recognition as one of the world's most successful sportsmen.

"It feels like most of Kingston is in

Stratford tonight," the stadium announcer said of the welcome afforded Bolt in the eastern London stadium now home to West Ham United in the English Premier League. In temperatures of 19 degrees Celsius (68F), Bolt the showman demonstrated exactly what athletics will miss when he bows out. The sell-out 60,000 crowd roared as he entered the stadium to do his final warm-up on the track.

Stripped to a vest and tight shorts in the black, green and yellow of Jamaica,

chants of "Usain Bolt" rang around in a surprisingly tense atmosphere.

Gatlin, on the other hand, was emotionless as loud jeers welcomed him.

Starting in lane four, Bolt was incredibly slow to react out of the blocks, the 100 and 200m world record holder behind Coleman in the lane outside from the off. The crowd, on their feet, roared, and so Bolt responded as he has so many times before. After 50 metres, he moved into his famed "drive phase", head coming slowly up as part of the process that



Ethiopia's Almaz Ayana celebrates winning the final of the women's 10,000m athletics event at the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London yesterday.

RESULTS

Men's 100m Final: 1. Justin Gatlin (US) 9.92 2. Christian Coleman (US) 9.94 3. Usain Bolt (Jamaica) 9.95 4. Yohan Blake (Jamaica) 9.99 5. Akani Simbine (South Africa) 10.01 6. Jimmy Vicaut (France) 10.08 7. Reece Prescod (Britain) 10.17 8. Su Bingtian (China) 10.27
Men's Long Jump Final: 1. Luvo Manyonga (South Africa) 8.48 2. Jarrion Lawson (US) 8.44 3. Ruswahl Samaai (South Africa) 8.32 4. Aleksandr Menkov (Authorised Neutral Athlete) 8.27 5. Maykel Masso (Cuba) 8.26 6. Shi Yuhao (China) 8.23 7. Wang Jianan (China) 8.23 8. Michel Torneus (Sweden) 8.18 9.

Emiliano Lasa (Uruguay) 8.11 10. Radek Juska (Czech Republic) 8.02 11. Fabrice Lapierre (Australia) 7.93 12. Damar Forbes (Jamaica) 7.91

Men's Discus Throw Final: 1. Andrius Gudzius (Lithuania) 69.21 2. Daniel Stahl (Sweden) 69.19 3. Mason Finley (US) 68.03 4. Fedrick Dacres (Jamaica) 65.83 5. Piotr Malachowski (Poland) 65.24 6.

Women's 10000m final: 1. Almaz Ayana (Ethiopia) 31:16.32 2. Tirunesh Dibaba (Ethiopia) 31:02.69 3. Agnes Jebet Tirop (Kenya) 31:03.50 4. Alice Aprot Nawowuna (Kenya) 31:11.86 5. Susan Krumins (Netherlands) 31:20.24

unleashes the full power from his long legs. But it was not quite enough.

Teeth gritted and eyes glued on the big screen of the Trevor Brooking Stand, Bolt streaked through the finish line but any fairytale individual finish to a startling career was dashed by Gatlin and young pretender Coleman.

Meanwhile, Olympic champion Almaz Ayana of Ethiopia produced an extraordinary display in her first race of the

season winning the world 10,000 metres title by almost a minute yesterday.

The 25-year-old, who smashed the world record when winning in Rio last year, finished over 46 seconds clear of her legendary compatriot Tirunesh Dibaba, the three-time Olympic gold medalist and five-time world champion who took silver after being unable to go with the scorching pace of the winner. Kenya's Agnes Tirop took the bronze.

FOOTBALL

Fans hail Neymar as PSG stroll to opening win

AFP
 Paris

Paris Saint-Germain celebrated the arrival of Brazilian superstar Neymar in festive style with a comfortable 2-0 victory over Amiens in their Ligue 1 opener yesterday. The Parc des Princes in Paris reverberated to the sound of Neymar's name chanted over and again before kick off as the world's most expensive player was presented to fans.

"Paris is magic," said Neymar as he vowed to "win lots of trophies" for his mega-rich employers following his 222-million-euro (\$264mn) transfer from Barcelona.

Neymar has been bought to bring Champions League glory to PSG's Qatari owners and on this evidence he won't be needed for humdrum domestic matters as the newly-promoted visitors were nonchalantly dismissed.

"This (signing) shows the ambition from both sides: we're trying to improve and for Neymar this bet is also to take a step forward," said PSG coach Unai Emery.

"Our ambition is to get closer to winning trophies and the Champions League is one of those."

Last season's top scorer Edinson Cav-



Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar (R) poses with PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi (L) during his presentation to the fans at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris yesterday.

ani opened the scoring three minutes before the break with Javier Pastore notching the second 10 minutes from time of a one-sided affair.

"There was a great atmosphere, the fans pushed us to win and I hope they will continue to do so the whole season," added Emery. "We controlled the match with our possession and chances. If there had been more clarity, we could have scored more goals and had an easier win."

Amiens had given notice of the extent of their ambition right from kick-off, rugby-style pumping the ball deep into PSG territory and out of play for a throw-in. Thereafter they spent most of the match camped on the edge of their own area. Six minutes in and PSG carved Amiens open with slick passing to put Cavani in on goal, but the Uruguayan slipped his shot just past the post.

Like Arsenal in the Premier League, PSG were often guilty of over-playing the ball, and when Angel Di Maria slotted into an empty net after a mesmerising move, it was ruled out for Cavani having been offside when playing the penultimate pass.

There was a festive atmosphere and an almost casual confidence amongst the PSG players that the goals would come as they wove intricate patterns



Paris Saint-Germain fans cheer during their Ligue 1 opener against Amiens yesterday in Paris.

around the pitch, multiplying the tricks and flicks as Amiens' overworked defenders held on grimly.

On a rapier counter-attack, Di Maria's cross was cut out as he tried to pick out a return pass to Pastore rather than shoot himself. With PSG's embarrassment of attacking riches closely guarded, it was midfielder Adrien Rabiot who found space from Cavani's pass but his shot was blocked by a sliding Prince Gouano. Full-back Leyvan Kurzawa was next to go close with a header that sailed just over. And so it was Cavani who showed

them how it was done, controlling a cross from league debutant Dani Alves on his thigh and firing home low left-footed.

Such was PSG's ease they could even afford to replace captain Thiago Silva, who had a muscular problem, with Presnel Kimpembe at half-time.

Still they carved Amiens open at will, with Di Maria, whose place in the team could come under threat from Neymar, having a lob caught by goalkeeper Regis Gartner before another chip hit the side-netting.



SPOTLIGHT

Brilliant Farah dominates for epic 10,000m win

'It was one of the toughest races of my life. With one lap to go I nearly get tripped, twice, that was hard. But I just had to be mentally stronger and think I didn't work this hard for nothing'



Britain's Mo Farah wins the final of the men's 10,000m athletics event at the 2017 IAAF World Championships at the London Stadium in London on Friday night.

Reuters
London

Mo Farah launched the World Athletics Championships in scintillating fashion on Friday with another consummate 10,000m triumph that further embellished his claim to being the greatest distance racer in the sport's history.

With 55,000 of his home fans roaring their support at the London Stadium, the 34-year-old Briton sprinted away with his 10th consecutive gold medal in a global track final, a dazzling sequence that ranks among the greatest feats in sport.

Farah survived being clipped twice from behind in the final lap, nearly tripping over and being forced to take a step off the track, and he ended with cuts and bruises to his "bad legs" that needed treatment.

Yet still he was able to unleash one more trademark burst down the home straight to speed away from Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei and Kenya's Paul Tanui.

The Briton clocked 26 minutes 49.51 seconds, the world's fastest time in 2017, in what proved perhaps the hardest-earned of all his magnificent triumphs as he protected his six-year unbeaten streak in major championships.

Silver medalist Cheptegei, just 20, clocked a lifetime best 26:49.94, chasing Farah all the way to the line, and Tanui 26:50.60.

Yet, five years to the very night when he won the 25-lap title at his home Olympics on "Super Saturday" in the same London Stadium, Farah had still not lost that invincible aura, clocking a searing 55.63 seconds for the last lap in spite of his stumbles.

It was the perfect way for him to begin his final championship as a track runner before he turns his attentions to the roads as a marathon man.

"What a way to end my career in London. It's special," Farah said, after hugging his children on the track.

"It was one of the toughest races of my life. With one lap to go I nearly get tripped, twice, that was hard. But I just had to be mentally stronger and think I didn't work this hard for nothing."

After an epic test in which the powerful Kenyan and Ugandan athletes combined with mid-race bursts to test Farah's re-

solve more fiercely than ever before, the Briton had to show remarkable composure on the final lap.

Twice as he led straight after the bell while still closely pursued by four hunters, Farah was clipped.

The first time, his heel was caught by Tanui and on the second bend, the same Kenyan brushed his arm, sending Farah off balance so that he took one step into the infield.

Yet despite momentarily losing his rhythm, the champion regrouped to take control on the back straight and he scorched off the final bend to forge clear and take his third successive world 10,000m title by a couple of metres.

It was the fastest he had run in any of his five global 10,000m victories by more than 11 seconds.

Still, though, he has only done half the job with the 5,000 metres to come next week and the prospect of completing a fifth straight 5,000/10,000 distance double in global championships.

Whether the battering he took will affect his hopes remains to be seen but the race certainly took a toll, as he reckoned the second incident involving Tanui with about 300 metres left had hurt him.

"I've got such long strides that I got caught and at that point I was just trying to stand up and think 'I can't go down, I can't go down,'" he said.

The 16th edition of the Championships could not have been set up more ideally for Britain to celebrate a home triumph in the first medal event and Farah, as ever, did not disappoint his legion of fans.

After he crossed the line, he swore that the noise in the stadium matched the incredible din of his 2012 tours de force when he won the 10,000m and 5,000m here.

Down the years, his main opponents from Kenya have tried in vain to upset Farah's equilibrium, sometimes working in teams and varying their pace and tactics but the master racer always has an answer in the sprint denouement.

A couple of blistering 61-second laps were thrown in to try to shake him but Farah's composure never wavered as he moved up the field to join the leaders and gestured to the crowd to turn up the volume.

"I just wanted to play with the guys' heads," he said.

Farah confident of 5,000m triumph despite stitches

Reuters London: Mo Farah is confident that he can win the 5,000 metres at the World Athletics Championships despite suffering cuts and bruises and needing three stitches in his left leg after his epic 10,000 metres triumph on Friday.

The 34-year-old Briton was left concerned about his left knee, which he hurt in a clash with Kenyan bronze medalist Paul Tanui during a frenetic last lap.

Yet he was adamant that he would be "fine" to shoot for his fifth consecutive golden 5,000/10,000m distance double at a global championship as he had four days of recovery time before the heats of the shorter event on Wednesday.

Asked by the BBC if he could achieve the double in his final championships as a track runner, Farah responded: "I've got a few scratches, I've got a few bruises but if I believe enough, and if I rest up enough, it's possible. I do believe."

The Briton says it will be his last championship track event before he concentrates on marathon running and he hopes to make it the perfect farewell next Saturday by winning a seventh world title.

Reflecting on the 10,000m, Farah reckoned he had never experienced a race as difficult as the one on Friday, when he faced the biggest test of his six-year unbeaten streak in the championships from the concerted efforts of his Kenyan, Ugandan and Ethiopian rivals.

"With 3,000 to go, I was hurting and I was tired and there was a lot of stuff going on, a lot of elbows. Physically, that race was crazy," he said.

Ultimately, though, he would not be ruffled, winning his 10th successive global track title in world championships and Olympics with his fastest-ever championship 10,000m run, 26 minutes 49.51 seconds, the quickest in the world this year.



Mo Farah with his children after his 10,000m win on Friday.

HOT CONTENDER

McMaster's driving ambition to upset model rival Clement

AFF
London

Kyron McMaster could become one of the unlikeliest world champions if he wins the 400 metres hurdles title having recently been more used to the horsepower of driving a truck.

However, the 20-year-old — who would give the British Virgin Islands their first ever medal in the championships — is a hot contender having posted the best time in the world this year of 47.80 seconds.

The youngster will be up against some seasoned competitors such as Puerto Rico's two-time world silver medalist Javier Culson and the outstanding American Kerron Clement, who won successive world titles in 2007 and 2009 and at last captured the Olympic gold in Rio last year.

Should McMaster and Clement be side by side hurdling the last obstacle in the final (which is on Wednesday though heats get underway on Sunday with the semis on Monday) it will be a case of the bulky truck driver taking on the svelte shape of a man who models in his spare time and has appeared in a Beyonce video 'Run the World (Girls)', which has been viewed over 300million times on YouTube.

McMasters proud as punch parents — who convinced him to ditch his studies at university in the United States last year because the authorities there wanted him to compete despite being injured — are convinced their son will return from London with a medal.

"I suspect, at the World Championship in London, he is gonna bring home a medal — the first medal of that nature and magnitude to the BVI," his father Anthony told British Virgin Islands Online in May.

His parents, though, say McMaster — who showed his potential when he took bronze in the world junior championships last year behind Jamaican Jaheel Hyde — will have to make a choice in terms of his career path because he cannot combine both trucking, his truck is his baby accord-



ing to his mother Jocelyn, and athletics.

"His manager (Norman Peart who is also Usain Bolt's) told him that, if he is serious about athletics and wants to go all the way, he has to put the trucking aside," his father said.

"That's something we are still trying to figure out. They said the truck — the gravity and the momentum and the vibration and whatnot — it counteracts your muscles with the training you are doing in athletics.

"Kyrion has a three-yard truck, and you know trucking is hard — lifting stuff, moving them, and whatnot...But that's how he makes his living," added his father.

Clement on the other hand has been a full-time athlete for over a decade although the 31-year-old Trinidad-born hurdler — who moved to the United States aged 13 — has found time to model in his spare time and then there was the Beyonce video of course.

"Years later they ask about Beyonce stuff, it was fun I love to be a part of entertainment. That was a great experience to be a part of that with Beyonce," he told the Sydney Morning Herald in January.

"It's funny. Everyone knows now," added Clement, who beat McMasters in the London Diamond League event in July.

Clement, who cheekily admits he prefers Mariah Carey to Beyonce, is also a keen photographer but is focused still on adding a third world 400m hurdles gold to his tally before other pursuits take over.

FOCUS

Qatar's Haroun in 400m semis

QNA
London

Qatar's Abdalrahman Haroun advanced to the semi-finals of the 400m at the World Athletics Championships in London yesterday.

The Qatari clocked 45.27 seconds to be ranked third in Group F behind Jamaican Nathan Allen (44.91s) and American Gil Roberts (44.91s). The first three of the six groups plus the best six runners qualified for the semi-

finals. The semi-finals will be held today and the final on Tuesday.

Haroun said he was in the non-help ninth lane, but he managed to qualify for the semi-finals.

Haroun won the silver medal at the 2016 World Indoor Championships, gold medal in the 2016 World Youth Championship and another gold medal in the 2015 Asian Championships.

Head of Qatar athletics team delegation Talal Mansour praised the performance of Haroun and wished him success.

OPPORTUNITY

Amos safely through in 800m

Reuters
London

The injury-enforced absence of David Rudisha has left the door open for the men's 800 metres title at the World Athletics Championships and half a dozen contenders, led by Nijel Amos, will fancy their chances following yesterday's first round.

Botswana's Amos won silver as an 18-year-old behind Rudisha's world record-setting triumph on the same track in the Olympic final five years ago and although he has been an inconsistent performer since then, he arrived in London in good form on the back of three successive Diamond League victories.

He duly cruised through his heat in one minute 47.10 seconds — more than five seconds slower than his silver-medal winning

time in 2012. Kenya will again expect to be in the medals and their big two had no problems as Emmanuel Korir, fastest in the world this year with 1:43.10 in Monaco three weeks ago, and Kipyegon Bett, the 19-year-old world junior champion advanced comfortably.

Donavan Brazier, 20, looks the brightest hope for an American medal and also qualified well by taking the final heat as the sunny morning was replaced by rain and thunder.

The near-full house created an atmosphere never seen for morning heats — other than at the same stadium in the 2012 Olympics — and athletes of all nationalities praised the fans.

"It was beautiful, I've never seen anything like it. I got to the last 100m and could just hear the roar," said Briton Kyle Langford, who squeezed through as a fast loser.

SPOTLIGHT

Neymar needs competition for place: PSG coach

The signing of players like Neymar, but also the work done on the academy shows the work we're doing to improve the club: PSG coach Unai Emery



Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian forward Neymar during his presentation to the fans at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris yesterday.

AFP
Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Unai Emery said yesterday he wants to keep his top players to give superstar signing Neymar competition for a starting berth in the team.

Brazilian Neymar was introduced to fans before kick-off at the Parc des Princes in Paris ahead of PSG's 2-0 win over newly-promoted Amiens in their opening match of the 2017/18 season.

His new team-mates dominated throughout as South Americans Edinson Cavani and Javier Pastore scored the goals.

Pastore is one of the players whose place in the team is under threat from 222-million-euro (\$264mn) signing Neymar, but rather than think of selling off attacking talent to balance the books, Emery wants the likes of Argentine Angel Di Maria and German Julian Draxler

to stay and push Neymar for a starting berth.

"We need competition for Neymar. We need players who will give competition for Neymar's position," said Emery.

"Draxler can play on the left, right and in the middle. Pastore can play on the left, right and in the middle."

Emery refused to comment on whether some players would have to be sold to comply with UEFA's financial fair play rules as the mammoth outlay to sign Neymar from Barcelona will surely put a strain on PSG's finances.

Emery preferred to focus on what the signing of Neymar brings to the team in terms of competitiveness.

"The signing of players like Neymar, but also the work done on the academy shows the work we're doing to improve the club," he said.

"Everything the club does after discussions with me is because we think it's better. Everything we're going to do (including possible sales) is good."

'EVERYTHING'S POSITIVE'

Despite some in the football world criticising PSG for opening a blank cheque-book to sign star players – Neymar's fee was more than double the previous world record 105 million euros Manchester United paid Juventus for Paul Pogba – Emery said it was good for the club and French football.

"Everything's positive. The PSG fans' enthusiasm for the situation, football here in Paris and France – for everyone it's good.

"It's given the team a bigger plus. Now, with a player like that, we have to see if we can improve and develop together."

Some say PSG's wealth destroys competition in France because no other team has a comparable budget.

But Amiens coach Christophe Pelissier disagreed.

"When you see the quality of the team and the full stadium – the fans come because of the stars, it creates interest," said Pelissier.

"Stars can only improve the league and push players to be better. It's also a present for us. I would have liked Neymar to play.

"We knew we were up against a great team. Whether it was Di Maria or Pastore, why not have Neymar as well? I hope he'll be there when we play them at home."

Red tape prevented Neymar from playing as his international transfer certificate wasn't lodged in time with the French League.

With a reported salary of around 45 million euros before tax, Neymar's status could be unsettling for those players set to be overshadowed by him.

But young centre-back Presnel Kimpembe insisted his arrival was good for the group.

"The atmosphere stays the same. We know that Neymar is one of the best players in the world," said the 21-year-old, a product of the club's youth system.

"It's up to us to make the most of his qualities both on and off the pitch."

REVEAL

Barcelona lost Neymar Sr support over unpaid bonus

AFP
Madrid

Neymar's father and agent, Neymar Sr, has told Spanish radio that Barcelona lost his support to retain his son when they refused to pay a bonus for signing a new contract last year.

The Brazilian joined Paris Saint-Germain on Thursday after the French side paid his 222 million euro (\$264 million) buy-out clause to smash the world transfer record, saying in an Instagram video he had gone against the advice of his father.

However, Neymar Sr claimed the Barcelona board lost his support when they failed to pay the 26 million euro (\$30.8 million) bonus due earlier this week unless Neymar remained at the club this season.

"In that moment Barcelona lost my support when they did that," Neymar Sr told Cadena Cope.

"Until that moment I was on Barcelona's side trying to convince Neymar to stay, but with the attitude of the board I couldn't be on their side because the contract is explicit and clear."

Barca spokesman Josep Vives confirmed on Friday that the club had deposited the bonus with a notary to be paid on September 1 if Neymar stayed.

However, the club has now recovered the money as according to Vives "the player hasn't fulfilled his contract."

Neymar Sr's huge influence over his son's career has been criticised in the media during his four-year spell in Spain.

Barca also paid a 40 million euro bonus to a company owned by the player's parents N&N to bring him to the Camp Nou from Santos back in 2013.

However, Neymar Sr insisted the "brave" decision to move had been his son's.

"The decision was his. He is where he dreamed of being. He is in a comfort zone, calm. He listened to the advice of his friends, of those around him and he wanted to face this challenge," he added.

"I think he has been very brave, he had the right to take this decision."

Neymar is expected to make a staggering 30 million euros net a season over the course of his five-year contract with the French giants.

However, he denied at this presentation that money or stepping out of Lionel Messi's shadow at Barca were reasons for leaving.

And Neymar Sr insisted he never sought to be Messi's heir to the throne at Barca.

"Everyone said he had to replace him, he didn't want to replace him," he added.

"You have to leave Leo alone, he is an idol here. Neymar has to take his own road and accept the challenge he has.

"It wasn't fair either for Leo or Ney that type of judgement that football and people like to make."

Trippier injury overshadows Spurs' 2-0 win over Juventus in pre-season friendly

Tottenham Hotspur defender Kieran Trippier could miss the start of the Premier League season after suffering an ankle injury in yesterday's 2-0 friendly win over Juventus.

Trippier limped off late in the first half at Wembley after the right-back had two crunching collisions with Juventus defender Alex Sandro.

The 26-year-old England international was later seen holding crutches while wearing a protective boot.

"We hope it's not a big issue. It's his ankle," Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino said.

"He's better now than he was at half-time but we must wait." If Trippier's injury proves serious, it will be a major blow for Pochettino, who sold his former first-choice right-back Kyle Walker to Manchester City during the close-season.

Tottenham start their Premier League campaign at Newcastle United on August 13 and Kyle Walker-Peters, a 20-year-old who has never played in the top flight, could be in line to play after coming on to replace Trippier. Spurs midfielder Eric Dier has also filled in at right-back in the past. Trippier was caught on his knee by Sandro in the early stages, but carried on and provided the cross that produced Harry Kane's 10th-minute headed goal.

Another full-blooded clash with Sandro forced Trippier to come off with the twisted ankle in the 41st minute. Christian Eriksen bagged Tottenham's second goal in the 52nd minute when he ran onto Dele Alli's pass, evaded Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon and slotted home.

DESIRE

Ronaldo 'wants to return to England'

AFP
Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo told a Spanish court he "would like to return to England" due to his tax troubles in Spain, Spanish radio station Cadena Ser reported yesterday.

The Real Madrid star was called to testify in court on Monday over accusations he evaded 14.7 million euros (\$17.3 million) in tax on his image rights via a complicated web of shell companies based in the British Virgin Islands and Ireland.

However, Ronaldo has insisted he did not create a "special structure" to manage his image rights when he moved to Real in 2009 but simply maintained the one set up in 2004 while he was at Manchester United.

"That structure had been recommended to the Portuguese captain by United via their specialist sports lawyer Chris Farnell.

"Chris told me it was what all the footballers did and I didn't want to be an exception," Ronaldo added in court.

"On the field I always want to be an exception, but off it I want to be like everyone else."

If Ronaldo is found guilty he faces a fine of at least 28 million euros and potentially a three-and-a-half year jail term, according to the Gestha union of experts at Spain's Inland Revenue.

However, despite being just



TOWARDS ENGLAND! File picture of Cristiano Ronaldo.

the latest in a series of high-profile players to be investigated over their image rights in recent years, Ronaldo believes he is being targeted due to his fame.

"If I wasn't called Cristiano Ronaldo I wouldn't be here," Ronaldo also reportedly told the court according to Spanish media.

The four-time World Player of the Year posted on social media site Instagram on Tuesday: "What bothers people is my brilliance, insects only attack lamps that shine!!!"

Ronaldo returned to training with his Madrid teammates yesterday for the first time since lifting the Champions League final in June.

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane had given Ronaldo an extended break due to his participation in the Confederations Cup with Portugal and his court appearance.

BOTTOMLINE

Monaco start with gritty win

AFP
Paris

Brazilian Neymar may dominate the headlines and bring renewed hope to Paris Saint-Germain but Monaco showed they won't be giving up their Ligue 1 crown easily with a 3-2 win over Toulouse on Friday.

PSG will expect 222-million-euro man Neymar to fire them not just to domestic glory but also European success following his sensational move from Barcelona.

But Monaco are the champions and proved in their Ligue 1 opener they will provide a formidable challenge to the megarich Parisians with goals from Brazilian Jemerson, Colombia's Radamel Falcao and Kamil Glik of Poland allowing them to twice come from behind and snatch three points.

Toulouse threatened to spoil the party by twice taking a shock lead, the first on six minutes.



Monaco's Radamel Falcao celebrates scoring their second goal.

In what looked like a set corner routine that didn't quite go to plan, Andy Delort had to back track out of the area to chest the ball into the danger zone, where the unmarked Zinedine Machach had time to swivel and rifle a

volley across Danijel Subasic.

Monaco may have been forced into selling several stars over the summer transfer window, with Benjamin Mendy, Tiemoune Bakayoko and Bernardo Silva moved on to pastures new, but

they were not the top Ligue 1 goalscorers with almost three goals a game last season for nothing.

Soon enough, the hosts were turning the screw as Thomas Lemar had a shot blocked on the edge of the area before Kylian Mbappe – the Real Madrid target who could fetch a sum close to Neymar's – was denied from a tight angle by goalkeeper Alban Lafont.

Mbappe should have been celebrating his first goal of the season on 19 minutes but Kelvin Amian got back to to intercept a Falcao cross and deny the teenage starlet a tap-in.

BALL-WATCHING

The inevitable came on 28 minutes, though, and in simple fashion as centre-back Jemerson headed home a near post corner from Joao Moutinho, as Toulouse's defence stood ball-watching.

Monaco captain Falcao had been in the thick of things, although his sights were off as he

headed one chance over, saw a left-foot shot blocked and fired a free-kick wildly into the stands.

Monaco carried on after half-time with Lemar forcing Lamont into a plunging save from a well-struck free-kick.

But there was another sting in the tail as reported Chelsea target Djibril Sidibe gave the ball away cheaply to Jimmy Durmaz, who slipped the ball inside to Delort to turn and fire home a daisy-cutter inside Subasic's right-hand post.

Eight minutes into the second period and Monaco had it all to do again.

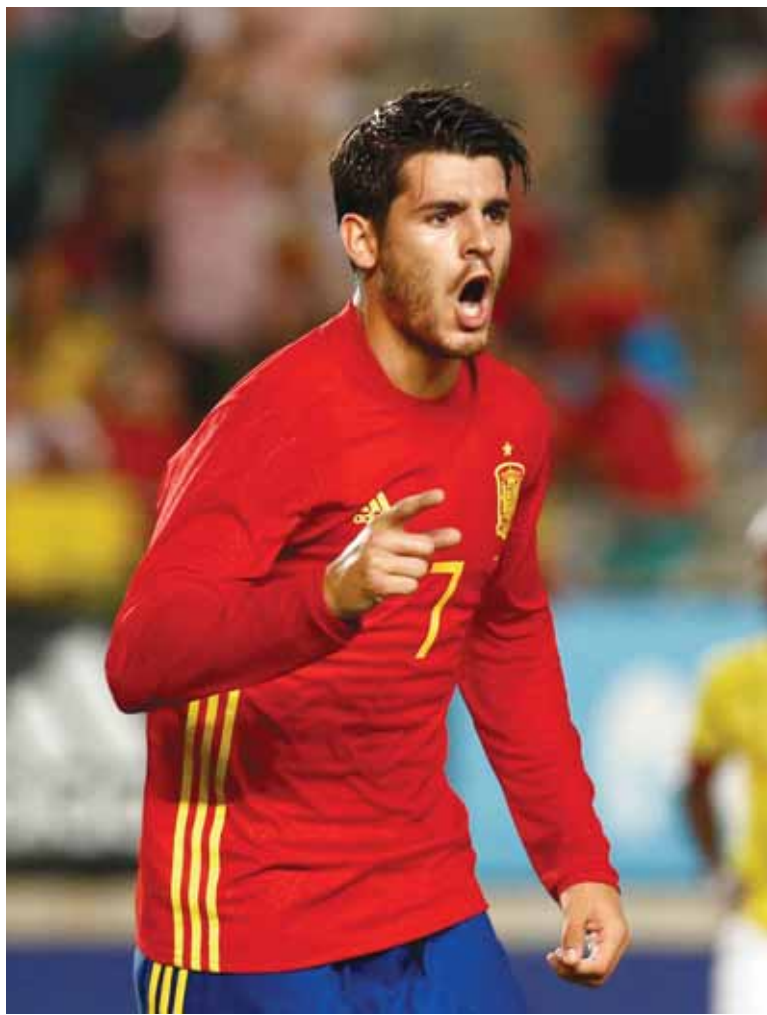
But they didn't have long to wait as Falcao got the goal his industry, if not accuracy, deserved on 58 minutes, holding off Francois Moubandje to power home Jorge's deflected cross.

Mbappe was a constant menace down the left but his final ball often left much to be desired, while Amian ensured with one crunching challenge that the teenage starlet would not be allowed an easy ride.

PREVIEW: COMMUNITY SHIELD

Lacazette, Morata in unexpected showdown

With Lacazette initially set to move to Atletico Madrid and Morata to Man United, the duo will be playing for different teams that they would have expected to be in



File picture of Spain and Chelsea striker Alvaro Morata (L) and Arsenal attacker Alexandre Lacazette. The duo will face each other in today's Community Shield match.

AFP
London

Had the close season panned out as initially expected, Alexandre Lacazette and Alvaro Morata would not be lining up for Arsenal and Chelsea in today's Community Shield at Wembley.

After 14 years at Lyon, Lacazette decided it was time to move on and was reported to have agreed to join up with his France team-mate Antoine Griezmann at Atletico Madrid.

However, Atletico then had a transfer ban upheld over the signing of foreign minors and with the Madrid club barred from registering new players until January 2018, Arsenal stepped in.

Arsenal's fans have been crying out for a top-rank striker ever since Robin van Persie was sold to Manchester United in 2012 and in Lacazette their wish appears to have been granted.

A dead-eyed finisher, the 26-year-old was the top-scoring Frenchman in each of the last three Ligue 1 seasons and left

Lyon having scored 113 goals in his last four campaigns.

He cost Arsenal an initial fee of £46.5 million (\$60.6 million, 51.6 million euros), making him both Arsenal's biggest ever signing and Lyon's biggest ever sale.

Lacazette will form a potentially devastating attacking trident with Mesut Ozil and Alexis Sanchez, but manager Arsene Wenger has warned that he will need time to find his feet in north London.

"Sometimes it takes a few months, sometimes it takes very little time," Wenger said.

"The only thing I must say with Lacazette is that week after week, he looks to adapt quickly. But overall I think it will take him one or two months."

Morata's move to England was no surprise, but the Spain international had been earmarked for a move to Manchester United.

Instead, United hijacked Chelsea's attempt to bring Romelu Lukaku back to Stamford Bridge and the champions switched their attentions to Morata.

The 24-year-old cost Chelsea £58 million and is due to take the place of Diego

Costa, who – completing the love triangle – is at loggerheads with the club over his desire to return to Atletico.

HAZARD OUT

Morata has scored in a Champions League final, netting for Juventus in their 2015 loss to Barcelona, but arrives after a frustrating season as a back-up player at Real Madrid.

Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino has claimed Morata was deterred from joining Spurs two years ago due to his fears about the competition he would face from Harry Kane.

But despite the striker's inability to dislodge Karim Benzema from the Madrid starting XI, Chelsea manager Antonio Conte believes he can reach the very top.

"He is a young player and my task is to help him improve and exploit his quality," said the Italian.

"I know he has great quality to become one of the best strikers in the world."

Today's game, the traditional curtain-raiser to the English season, is a repeat of last season's FA Cup final.

Having streaked to the title, Conte was seeking to emulate his compatriot Carlo Ancelotti by winning a league and FA Cup Double in his first maiden Chelsea season.

But Arsenal blew Chelsea away with a sensational display, Aaron Ramsey's 79th-minute winner securing a 2-1 win that brought Wenger a record seventh success in the competition.

Sanchez could start on the bench for Arsenal, having only returned to training on Tuesday after being given an extended break following his exertions with Chile at the Confederations Cup in Russia.

Centre-back Shkodran Mustafi, likewise, is short of fitness, after also playing at the tournament, while defender Gabriel and midfield pair Francis Coquelin and Jack Wilshere are definitely out.

With Costa frozen out and Eden Hazard absent due to a broken ankle, Conte could try out a new-look strike-force of Morata and Michy Batshuayi.

New recruit Tiemoué Bakayoko has a knee injury, but Victor Moses could play as the suspension incurred by his dismissal in the FA Cup final does not apply in today's game.

PREDICTION

Difficult season in store, says Conte



Chelsea manager Antonio Conte during the press conference.

AFP
London

Frustrated by Chelsea's transfer miscues and under pressure from big-spending rivals, Antonio Conte admits this season will be the toughest of his career.

Just three months ago, Conte was all smiles as he soaked up the acclaim of Stamford Bridge at the climax of Chelsea's Premier League title triumph.

But those blissful memories have been overshadowed by a troubled close-season that has put the Chelsea manager on edge ahead of today's Community Shield clash with Arsenal at Wembley.

Conte is annoyed by Chelsea's inability to land his key transfer targets, with Romelu Lukaku, Alex Sandro and Leonardo Bonucci all eluding the Italian.

Making matters worse, Lukaku moved to title rivals Manchester United, while Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola has spent over £200 million on new signings.

Add in fractious negotiations over his new contract and a bitter feud with Chelsea striker Diego Costa and it's easy to understand why the former Juventus boss rates the challenge ahead as the most daunting of his glittering career.

"For me it will be the most difficult season of my career. I'm sure about this," Conte said.

"There are many reasons that suggest to me next season will be very tough.

"I have this perception. I hope I am mistaken. In England the pressure is high. This league is the strongest in the world.

"You have six teams ready to fight for the title and only one wins it. You want to fight until the end for the title, but it won't be easy."

Despite spending over £100 million on Alvaro Morata, Tie-

moué Bakayoko and Antonio Rudiger, Conte believes his squad is painfully short of strength in depth.

Nemanja Matic and John Terry have departed, Bakayoko and Eden Hazard will miss the start of the season with injuries, and Costa is in exile while Chelsea try to find a buyer following Conte's text message spat with the Spain striker.

Conte's angst was clear when he was pressed on the transfer situation during a media briefing on Friday.

PATIENCE

While he stopped short of openly criticising Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, he made it abundantly clear he expects more signings before the transfer window closes at the end of August.

"For sure this question is good for the club, not for me," he said. "We have to wait for the best moment, the best solution.

"Everyone is trying to do their job. My job is to work and to try to improve my players, to create an identity for my team.

"For the rest I can tell my opinion, but then there is the club to make the final decision.

"In this moment we have a small squad. Everyone can see the situation, not because the coach shouts 'I want this and this!'

"This is the reality. We hope in the future to improve this situation."

Conte admits he is not a patient man, but the intense Italian insists he is willing to focus on improving his current players while he awaits reinforcements.

"In Italy people know I don't have great patience, but I'm learning in England to be more patient, to discover patience in myself," he said.

"It is a pleasure to work with this group of players. I'm sure they want to improve and work harder than last season."

SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP

Griffiths brace helps Celtic rout Hearts

AFP
Glasgow

Leigh Griffiths struck twice as Celtic made a flying start to their Scottish Premiership title defence with a 4-1 thrashing of Hearts yesterday.

Griffiths opened the scoring in the 29th minute before Scott Sinclair made it two five minutes after the break at Parkhead.

The Scotland striker's diving header added to Celtic's advantage before Callum McGregor's unstoppable strike made it four in the 73rd minute.

Hearts grabbed a late consolation through substitute Isma Goncalves.

The manner of Celtic's win sends out a warning to the rest of the league that the Hoops, who collected a treble last season as they finished the domestic campaign unbeaten, will be hard to stop as they chase a seventh successive title.

"We wanted to put a statement down in our very first game. I thought the players were outstanding in all elements of our game," Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers said.

"We scored four and we maybe could have had a few more."

Celtic are level on points with Hibernian, who defeated Partick Thistle 3-1 on their return to the top flight.

Ross County claimed a 2-1 win away to Dundee, while St Johnstone saw off Kilmarnock 2-1 at Rugby Park.

The noise before kick-off was deafening as captain Scott Brown, in his testimonial year with the Hoops, unveiled the championship flag.

However, the atmosphere soon became strangely subdued, not helped by the notable absence of Ultras group The Green Brigade, who were serving the second of a two-game stadium ban following their display of paramilitary style banners at their Champions League qualifier against Linfield.

Nir Bitton had a chance to lift the home support early on when he got on the end of an in-swinging corner from Griffiths, but the Israeli international sent his header into the side-netting.

Celtic should have been in front in the 25th minute when Griffiths was sent clean through by Sinclair, but the striker lashed his effort wide with only the keeper to beat.

Griffiths made amends four minutes later as he fired Celtic in front when he latched on to Bitton's fabulous long ball and slotted home at the second attempt after his first effort was stopped by Jack Hamilton.

The second half was barely five minutes old when Sinclair made it 2-0.

Hearts captain Christophe Berra fluffed his attempted clearance of a Griffiths corner and the ball landed to the English winger at the far post, allowing him to tap in from close range.

Sinclair played a part in Celtic's third goal as he slipped a pass through to McGregor, whose fine cross was headed home by Griffiths from six yards out.

Sinclair was also the architect of Celtic's fourth goal as he raced at the retreating Hearts rearguard before picking out McGregor, who sent a fierce left-foot strike into the roof of the net.

Hearts did manage to pull one back in the 84th minute through Goncalves.

WOMEN: EURO 2017 FINAL

Denmark plan 'Rocky' victory

AFP
Enschede, Netherlands

When Denmark take on hosts Netherlands in today's women's Euro final, it will be like Rocky Balboa fighting Apollo Creed for the second time, said Danish coach Nils Nielsen.

Bracing for their first-ever Euro final in history, the two teams clashed in the group stage when the hosts won 1-0 owing to a 20th-minute spot kick by skipper Sherida Spitse.

"We had a very interesting first match," Nielsen said.

"It's like the 'Rocky' movies. In the first fight between Rocky and Apollo Creed, Apollo Creed was a bit surprised that Rocky actually fought back and we fought back in the second half."

"It's going to be the same with the match tomorrow with Holland, it's going to be like the second match between Apollo Creed and Rocky and this time Rocky's going to win," Nielsen



Denmark's coach Nils Nielsen and player Sanne Troelsgaard during the news conference yesterday.

added.

Denmark will miss midfielder Line Jensen, out with torn knee ligaments since the quarter-finals.

"Those eleven players that will come onto the pitch will be

ready," said Nielsen.

But they will face a mammoth task against the Dutch who have a perfect record at the tournament so far.

In the quarter-final, they impressively routed England 3-0

in front of more than 27,000 fans, while Denmark struggled to beat Euro newcomers Austria on penalties.

The Twente arena in Enschede will be sold out again on Sunday when the rivals seek to become only the fourth team to lift the trophy after eight-time champions Germany, two-time winners Norway and Sweden, who won the first edition in 1984.

"Holland have a lot of pressure because of the fans at the stadium. We also have pressure because we want to win this game," said Denmark midfielder Sanne Troelsgaard.

But Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman said the home crowd was an advantage.

"It gives us a lot of strength. It just stimulates us to play better and it's really good to have so many supporters at the stadium," she said.

She added both teams had grown since that first encounter in the group.

"We both got stronger during the tournament," Wiegman said.

"Both teams want to play a

possession game and want to be dynamic in their game."

She singled out the Denmark attacking duo of Nadja Nadim and skipper Pernille Harder as a special threat.

"We know they have a very strong attack, Nadim is a good player and Pernille Harder is one of the best players in the world."

Netherlands' star striker Vivianne Miedema, who has scored twice so far at the tournament, was more concerned with Denmark's defence.

"They've just conceded two goals so far. It will be hard for us tomorrow," said the 21-year-old, recently signed by Arsenal from Bayern Munich.

"The Danish team is really good, they played really well against us."

She also picked out Denmark's biggest success at the tournament – their surprise 2-1 quarter-final win over odds-on favourites Germany.

"They made sure that Germany went home, which we really liked – but now we know it's a really strong team."

BASEBALL

Darvish twirls gem against Mets in Dodgers debut

I was really worried, because the Dodgers have such great pitchers. I didn't want to pitch bad in the first outing: Yu Darvish, after his superb performance

MCT
New York

In the afternoon before his first start as a Los Angeles Dodger, a 6-0 dismantling of the New York Mets, Yu Darvish received an indoctrination in the methodology of baseball's best team.

At the team hotel in Manhattan, Darvish met with general manager Farhan Zaidi, who advised him on how to attack that night's hitters. Zaidi opened a laptop and revealed how Darvish could optimize his arsenal, altering the locations and pitch sequences he utilized during five seasons with Texas.

"I was like, 'Is that really going to work?'" Darvish said through his interpreter, Hideaki Sato. "But it worked. I really put the trust in him."

The union between Darvish and the Dodgers requires faith. The Dodgers (77-32) believed Darvish was worth the three prospects needed to pry him from the Rangers. And Darvish will need to embrace the suggestions of his new employers. In their first game together, both parties lived up to the hype.

"I was really worried, because the Dodgers have such great pitchers," Darvish said. "I didn't want to pitch bad in the first outing."

He did not. Despite residual jitters from his last outing as a Ranger, Darvish silenced the Mets for seven innings and piled up 10 strikeouts. His new teammates taxed Mets starter Jacob deGrom and bullied the relievers who replaced him. Buoyed by home runs from Chris Taylor, Yasiel Puig and Chase Utley, Darvish led from the moment he stepped on the field.

"It's one start," manager Dave Roberts said. "But he did everything we hoped he would do."

A festival atmosphere greeted the Dodgers when they arrived at Citi Field on Friday. Sandy Koufax visited the clubhouse. Todd Boehly, a member of the ownership group, made an appearance. Players mingled on the field with Alex Rodriguez, who will broadcast Saturday's game for Fox.

Around 5 p.m., Roberts went to talk to Darvish. He found his new pitcher in a casual mood, capable of conducting a conversation without sounding distracted about his evening's task.

But, Darvish would admit later, he was unsure about what would come next. On July 26, Miami roasted Darvish for 10 runs. He finished July with a 7.20 earned-run average in five starts. There were whispers about him tipping pitches and feeling uncomfortable with trade rumours.

Darvish had not answered those questions when Friday began. He harboured some nerves about joining a new team, he admitted. But he also fretted about his



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Yu Darvish pitches against New York Mets in the seventh inning at Citi Field.

own ability.

"I gave up 10 runs in the last outing," Darvish said. "So to come back from that, I was a little concerned about that."

The beginning did not inspire confidence. The first pitch Darvish threw as a Dodger was a 94-mph fastball. Mets outfielder Michael Conforto smacked it into right field for a single.

After striking out Mets third baseman Asdrubal Cabrera with a curveball, Darvish issued a six-pitch walk to first baseman Jay Bruce. Darvish escaped with loud contact. Yoanis Cespedes lined out to left and Darvish snared a line drive by Curtis Granderson for the third out.

"It was about minimizing the damage after the first hit," catcher Yasmani Grandal said. "We were able to do that."

Darvish benefited from his new offense's abundance of talent. Taylor led the game off with a solo shot. An inning later, Puig walloped a homer into left-center field, setting a new career high with 20 in a season. Taylor led off the fifth

Results

Results from the MLB games on Friday (home team in CAPS)

Arizona 2	SAN FRANCISCO 1
LA ANGELS 8	Oakland 6
COLORADO 4	Philadelphia 3
Seattle 5	KANSAS CITY 2
MINNESOTA 8	Texas 4
HOUSTON 16	Toronto 7
ATLANTA 5	Miami 3
BOSTON 3	Chicago White Sox 2
	(11 innings)
LA Dodgers 6	NY METS 0
Milwaukee 2	TAMPA BAY 0
CLEVELAND 7	NY Yankees 2
DETROIT 5	BALTIMORE 2
PITTSBURGH 10	San Diego 6
CINCINNATI 3	St. Louis 2
Washington 4	CHICAGO CUBS 2

with a single and came around to score. As the offense chugged along, Darvish soon settled into a groove. He struck out

two in the second. He worked around a leadoff single, and subsequent stolen base, by deGrom to punch out two more with a pair of 95-mph fastballs in the third. He spotted another 95-mph fastball at the knees to freeze Granderson for a strikeout in the fourth.

"He was lights out," Grandal said. Up three runs, Darvish did not panic when Mets rookie Amed Rosario led off the bottom of the fifth with a single. Darvish permitted another stolen base, but he retired the next two batters. Conforto came up with two outs.

Here, the Dodgers saw the dynamism of Darvish's arsenal. Conforto fouled off a slider. He swung through a curveball. With the count at 1-2, Darvish fired a 94-mph fastball. The baseball veered up and away. Conforto could not hold back. He failed to check his swing and became Darvish's seventh strikeout.

"His stuff looked electric," Utley said. Now to see how Darvish performs in the games to come.

INSPIRATION

Road to Africa idea came from Miami locker room: Spoelstra



File picture of Miami Heat head coach Erik Spoelstra.

MCT
Miami

The road to Africa for Erik Spoelstra began in the Miami Heat locker room.

It was there, in 2015, shortly after the league's first Africa Game, that the Heat coach spoke to forward Luol Deng and assistant coach David Fizdale about participating in that Basketball Without Borders outreach.

The feedback from Deng, who is from what now is South Sudan, was so inspiring that even with Deng having since moved on to the Los Angeles Lakers and Fizdale since becoming coach of the Memphis Grizzlies, Spoelstra made it a point of being part of this year's event.

That has had Spoelstra reflecting from Johannesburg, South Africa, about the experience this week, even before Saturday's exhibition that will be televised by ESPN. Spoelstra spoke shortly after participating in a Habitat for Humanity event that had him working alongside NBA players, referees, coaches and executives.

"Part of the reason I went on this trip this year is from talking to Lu," Spoelstra said. "And Lu expressing his background and the experiences he had growing up was something that really impacted me and everybody on the team. And then when they had the game two years ago, I followed it closely, because of Lu. We talked about it. David Fizdale went on that trip."

"And then, what they talked about after that week, and how emotional it was and how grateful Lu was for having so many people participate in it, Lu was a big reason why I'm over here now helping, and it was great to catch up with him and get back out on the court together again, but doing it from a coaching and service standpoint."

Spoelstra this summer already has hosted a clinic in Hawaii, where he has a home, and now

again is working to strengthen the bond between the game and the next generation, having previously worked on similar NBA trips to his ancestral home in the Philippines. He pointed to the international inroads already made because of former players such as Dikembe Mutombo and executives such as Toronto Raptors President Masai Ujiri, both of whom are part of this trip.

"I just want to be able to give and serve," Spoelstra said. "It's a great game that we all feel so grateful for. I've done a lot of the NBA programs in the Philippines and other places in South Florida. But I've always wanted to be a part of BWB in Africa."

"And I've always really admired Dikembe and Masai and everybody that's done so much great work over here, that I just wanted to be a part of it and to offer my services for the week. However little those may be, I just want to be able to help and contribute."

Among those also on the trip is Heat assistant general manager Adam Simon, and former Heat assistant coach Pat Delany, who is a Charlotte Hornets assistant coach.

"I've traveled enough around the world with the NBA to see how much it's grown, globally," Spoelstra said. "But the kids that are here at camp, they are really so grateful that so many different NBA personnel are over here - players, coaches, front-office executives - just to help. And I think the NBA has done a tremendous job of creating programs and academies to give kids from over here opportunities that they didn't have before. And it's not just about trying to make it to the NBA. It's educational opportunities, social education. All of these things are presented where they weren't before."

Spoelstra said the interest has been overwhelming and inspiring. "It really is just an honor to be a part of this and it's a humbling experience to be a part of this."

NFL

Giants' Manning calls plays instead of running them

MCT
New York

Even when he is given a day off, Eli Manning isn't far from the action.

The quarterback and a handful of other veteran players were bystanders during Friday's light walkthrough practice that lasted just over an hour. But instead of simply observing in his baseball cap, Manning grabbed a walkie-talkie and started calling the plays like an offensive coordinator.

"We wanted to give him a chance to stay dialed in and get those mental reps," Ben McAdoo said of Manning's duties. "Eli, he got to use a little empathy today and see how challenging that really is."

After three days of live contact in shoulder pads, McAdoo said Friday was a day to allow the players to rest their bodies. Manning was among those who were excused from the short workout, along with Brandon Marshall, Damon Harrison, Jonathan Casillas, Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, Janoris Jenkins and John Jerry.

The move falls into place with McAdoo's summer-long plan to rest players when he can. Jason Pierre-Paul was given a day



File picture of New York Giants' Eli Manning.

off earlier this week and Weston Richburg has been limited the past few days.

"It's what's best for them physically at this point," McAdoo said. "It's not what we'd like to do, but it's the right thing to do."

The day of rest comes before today's practice, which is expected to be the longest and most grueling of camp. McAdoo even noted today's practice as a day that would test the players when he spoke at the opening of camp last week.

"We'll crank it back up," he said of today's plan. "It's going to be a heavy situational-football day. We'll have some pads on. It'll be a good practice."

BOTTOMLINE

Cubs' losing streak hits three

MCT
Chicago

We interrupt this playoff preview between the Cubs and Nationals for some breaking news: The Cubs are not in the playoffs yet.

It may seem inevitable after their hot second-half start and the lack of quality competition in the National League Central. Cubs board member Todd Ricketts may have announced it prematurely in June when he told President Trump "We're going to run into these guys (Nationals) in the playoffs and you'll come down and you'll see them crumble."

And it may have felt like October on a crisp, 63-degree afternoon at Wrigley Field.

But nothing is guaranteed in life or baseball, and the Cubs may have some work to do after a 4-2 loss to the Nationals in the opener of the series between divisional leaders.

Arch-nemesis Daniel Murphy cranked a pair of home runs



Chicago Cubs shortstop Javier Baez (9) reacts to striking out during the ninth inning against the Washington Nationals at Wrigley Field.

against Kyle Hendricks, and the Nationals' rebooted bullpen did its job to mute the crowd of 41,396, sending the Cubs to their third straight loss.

While the Cubs improved themselves before the trade deadline, so have the Nationals, who addressed their Achilles

heel when they added relievers Brandon Kintzler, Ryan Madson and Sean Doolittle to their Swiss cheese bullpen. The three combined for 22/3 scoreless innings Friday to give Tanner Roark the victory.

"They're totally different from what we saw in Washing-

ton," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "You want to be ahead of the starter because you don't want to get to that heavy part of the bullpen. ... They really made it a lot thicker."

The Cubs' momentum has been slowed, and they haven't exactly fared well against the better competition this season. They now are a combined 7-14 against the Dodgers, Nationals, Diamondbacks and Rockies, all of whom appear to be locks for the postseason.

Beating the Cubs is a big deal for teams, and they get the best shot from everyone they face. Asked where Thursday's victory over the Cubs ranked this season, Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo replied: "I would say Number 1. They're the defending World Series champions, and you come into this place and you grow up."

The Nationals already are grown up, and manager Dusty Baker has managed to keep them motivated despite virtually having clinched the division in early June.

After Murphy's shots off Kyle

Hendricks gave the Nationals a 3-0 lead, Javier Baez answered with a two-run shot off Roark in the seventh, his career-high 15th of the season. But Carl Edwards Jr. gave up an insurance run in the eighth, and with a man on and two outs, Kyle Schwarber swung and missed at three straight high fastballs from Maddon.

With Jason Heyward on first after singling to lead off the ninth, Baez swung out of his heels at Doolittle's first pitch, then swung and missed two more high fastballs. Maddon said Baez knew the scouting report on Doolittle. Baez admitted he was going for the fences.

"That's just who he is," Maddon said. "To expect something different right now is (asking a lot). He will chase. We know that. The other team knows that. As he gets more mature as a hitter and stops chasing, that's when he's going to get really good. The ball comes off the bat hot."

If Baez learns to lay off those pitches and accept some walks, Maddon predicts "the numbers could be staggering."



MOTOGP

Marquez beats Rossi to Czech pole

Spaniard's 41st MotoGP pole is a fantastic chance of extending his lead

AFP
Brno, Czech Republic

World championship leader Marc Marquez claimed his fourth pole position of the season after beating Valentino Rossi in yesterday's qualifying for the Czech MotoGP in Brno.

The reigning world MotoGP champion clocked 1min 54.981sec on his Honda to finish 0.92sec ahead of Italian veteran Rossi, of Yamaha, with Spaniard Dani Pedrosa at 0.138 for Honda.

The 24-year-old Marquez's 41st pole position in MotoGP, and 69th across the three classes, gives him a fantastic chance of extending his championship advantage.

"Tomorrow we'll see what weather conditions we have, as it looks a bit unstable and not as warm," said Marquez.

"It will be a long, hard race but we should be able to fight for the podium in either the dry or the wet, so we're looking forward to it and to enjoying the race."

Considering his domination of the last four seasons that have delivered three top-class titles, Marquez does not have a very good record around the Brno circuit and is without a win since 2013.

But he was in fine fettle in qualifying, and his rivals will have to find some extra speed to beat him in Sunday's race.

"I'm very happy with today because I knew that making the pole would be tough, as I normally struggle at this track, but I tried for it anyway," he added.

The world champion's compatriot Maverick Vinales struggled though, and qualified down in seventh place as he looks to cut the five-point gap to Marquez at the top of the riders' standings.

In the tightest title battle since the points system was changed in 1993, the 38-year-old Rossi is still in the hunt for



Repsol Honda rider Marc Marquez (left) and Movistar Yamaha rider Valentino Rossi do wheelies during the qualification round for the Czech MotoGP in Brno yesterday. (AFP)

a tenth world title.

The legendary Italian has only won once this season, but has remained consistent and is only ten points adrift of Marquez in fourth.

He produced an impressive second lap in qualifying to take second place, after going third-fastest in both the third and fourth practice sessions earlier in the day.

"It's a shame for the pole, because we were close, but the second place is a very good result and front row is a good

place to start the race from tomorrow," said Rossi.

"I knew I had a good potential and on the second run I was in the right position, with clear track in front, and I rode well. I was able to push without making any mistakes."

The other world title contender, Ducati's Andrea Dovizioso, showed reasonable speed on Saturday and will start the race from fourth place.

Briton Cal Crutchlow and former world champion Jorge Lorenzo com-

plete the second row.

CZECH MOTOGP QUALIFICATION

1. Marc Marquez (Honda)	1:54.981
2. Valentino Rossi (Yamaha)	+0.092
3. Dani Pedrosa (Honda)	+0.138
4. Andrea Dovizioso (Ducati)	+0.460
5. Cal Crutchlow (LCR Honda)	+0.508
6. Jorge Lorenzo (Ducati)	+0.571
7. Maverick Vinales (Yamaha)	+0.682
8. Danilo Petrucci (Ducati Pramac)	+0.757
9. Alvaro Bautista (Ducati)	+1.046
10. Johann Zarco (Yamaha Tech3)	+1.094

SPOTLIGHT

Qatar basketball team heads to Lebanon for 2017 FIBA Asia Cup

QNA
Doha

The Qatar national basketball team will leave for Beirut today to take part in the 2017 FIBA Asia Cup, which will take place from August 8 to 20, 2017. Al Anabi will play in Group B with Iraq, China and the Philippines, while Group A includes Syria, Jordan, Iran and India. The third group includes Lebanon, New Zealand, South Korea and Kazakhstan, while Group D has Australia, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

The Qatari team will meet their

Iraqi counterparts on August 9 and face the Chinese team on August 11 and conclude their group matches against the Philippines on August 13.

Al-Anabi's technical team led by Qusay Hatem chose 12 players to participate in the tournament including Mohamed Hassan Abdul Muti, Mohamed Abdel Aziz, Abdel Rahman Yahya, Abdel Rahman Saad, Omar Abdelkader, Arfan Said, Mohamed Youssef, Mansour El Hadary, Ahmed El Darwish, Abdel Rahman Muftah, Nasser El Rayes and Sami Monroe.

The Qatari team had participated in two friendly tournaments in China last month in preparation for the 2017 FIBA Asia Cup.

FOCUS

NZ look at ways to combat fatigue in Rugby Championship

Reuters
Wellington

All Blacks coach Steve Hansen believes fatigue was a major factor in the team's performances falling off at the end of 2016 and is looking at ways to prevent it happening in this year's Rugby Championship.

Playing some breathtaking rugby, the All Blacks went through the tournament unbeaten last year but they struggled to meet their very high standards on the end-of-season tour to the northern hemisphere that included a first loss to Ireland.

Hansen said one of the reasons might have been the departure of several veterans after the 2015 World Cup, which forced other players to shoulder more responsibility.

"Last year I felt... that we were just hanging on," Hansen told the *New Zealand Herald* yesterday.

"A lot of that was because of the experience we had lost. If you look at it in a simple way, we lost four or five A-plus-plus guys after the World Cup. So our B-plus guys stepped up and that is not too big a jump.

"But you need your C guys to jump up to being B guys and that can be difficult. Our leaders shouldered a lot more responsibility than they normally would.

"I think mentally that was taxing." Hansen's side open this year's Rugby Championship against the Wallabies in Sydney on Aug. 19 and play Michael Cheika's men again a week later in Dunedin.



They then host Argentina on Sept. 9 and South Africa on Sept. 16 before ending the tournament with away matches against the Pumas on Sept. 30 and the Springboks a week later.

The All Blacks also play Australia in a third Bledisloe Cup clash in Brisbane on Oct. 22.

"The big banana skin is nine weeks, seven tests and round the world twice with 10 time changes," Hansen said. "If we are going to do anything that is the area we have to be smarter.

"We have got some ideas. How do we deal with the travel? How do we have some guys fresh? Can we do that by not making them go all the way around the world?"

While Hansen did not spell out what he had planned, the *Herald* said he could be mulling sending a younger side to Argentina while allowing the older players to head straight to South Africa.

"Such a plan would serve another useful purpose," *Herald* rugby writer Gregor Paul wrote.

"It would give the coaching panel an opportunity to have a good look at the next generation as a few of them have already shown they are going to be pushing hard to play a major role at the next World Cup."

TENNIS

Nishikori escapes upset bid, faces Zverev in semi-final

AFP
Washington

Top-10 rivals Kei Nishikori and Alexander Zverev advanced to a semi-final showdown at the ATP and WTA Citi Open on Friday while second-ranked Simona Halep retired with heat fatigue.

Ninth-ranked Nishikori, the 2015 champion on the Washington hardcourts, saved three match points in a tension-packed second set before rallying to beat 225th-ranked American 20-year-old Tommy Paul 3-6, 7-6 (8), 6-4 after two hours and 40 minutes.

"It was a great battle," Nishikori said. "He almost had it. Happy to win."

Zverev, a 20-year-old German seeking his fourth ATP title of the year and ranked a career-high eighth, took only 57 minutes to eliminate Russia's Daniil Medvedev 6-2, 6-4.

"I felt so good from the start," Zverev said. "It was a great match for me. It's just all coming together now."

It will be the first career meeting between Nishikori and Zverev.

"I'm sure it's going to be a tough match," Nishikori said. He has been playing really well."

"Kei has been in the top 10 for a long time now," Zverev said. "He's going to be a tough test on the hardcourts."

Saturday's other semi-final sends US eighth seed Jack Sock — a 7-5, 6-4 winner over Canadian third seed Milos Raonic — against South African 15th seed Kevin Anderson, who blasted 21 aces to de-



Kei Nishikori of Japan celebrates his win over Tommy Paul (not pictured) of the United States at the Citi Open in Washington DC on Friday. (USA TODAY Sports)

feat 200th-ranked Indian qualifier Yuki Bhambhani 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, after ousting top seed Dominic Thiem on Thursday.

A day after complaining that severe heat left her feeling "a bit dead," French Open runner-up Halep quit her quarter-final match in even more scorching conditions, allowing Russian seventh seed Ekaterina Makarova to advance 2-6, 6-3, 1-0.

"It was just the heat. I felt a little bit sick and I couldn't continue," Halep said. "I had a headache and I felt sick."

KEI'S EXPERIENCE PAYS OFF

Nishikori's second-set drama intensified when Paul, in only his sixth career

ATP main draw, hit a cross-court winner for an 8-7 tie-breaker edge. But Paul followed with a wide forehand, a backhand beyond the baseline and a miss-hit, handing Nishikori the set after 73 gruelling minutes.

"For sure he got a little bit tight," said Nishikori. "But those points I played good points. I didn't make any unforced errors. Very focused. Experience worked well for me."

Nishikori, in his first event since a third-round Wimbledon exit, broke in the third game of the final set and held serve from there to eliminate Paul, who reached his first career ATP quarter-final last week in Atlanta.

"It was a tough match but it was a lot of fun," Paul said. "It was awesome. I didn't want to leave the court when I was done."

Nishikori hasn't won an ATP title in 18 months, making his 30th start this week since winning last year at Memphis, a run that includes six losses in finals.

Raonic's title drought reached 19 months and 30 events after falling to Sock. The 2014 Washington winner last lifted an ATP trophy in 2016 at Brisbane.

'CRAZY HOT AND HUMID'

US eighth seed Sock won 12 of the last 14 points over Raonic in the first set and broke the Canadian in the penultimate game of the second on the way to an 85-minute victory. "I was able to scrap out some balls and stay in some points to finish it off," Sock said. "It has been crazy humid and hot."

Sock has a 2-1 career edge on Anderson, winning their most recent meeting in last year's Auckland semi-final.

Top seed Halep broke Makarova three times to take the first set in 30 minutes, but the Russian battled back to win the second set and broke to open the third before Halep retired.

Halep, who defends her title next week in Toronto, played the day's first match three times this week, hitting the most humid and sweltering conditions. Organizers denied her request for a late match Friday. Next for Makarova is a semi-final against 20-year-old French fifth seed Oceane Dodin. The other semi matches Germans Julia Georges and Andrea Petkovic.

ELSEWHERE

Muguruza cruises, Kvitova eliminated at Stanford

Reuters
Cary, North Carolina

Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza made short work of Ana Konjuh to move into the semi-finals of the Stanford Classic on Friday, while second seed Petra Kvitova was thrashed 6-2 6-0 by 18-year-old American

Catherine Bellis.

Top seed Muguruza, playing in the first match of the day, eased through her quarter-final 6-1 6-3 against the fifth seed at Stanford University in California, breaking the 19-year-old Croat five times in a match that lasted barely an hour.

"I think today I was very accurate," said the Spaniard in an on-court interview. "Ana is such a powerful player and super young, I knew I had to be concentrated.

"I had to match her, be aggressive as well. I'm happy that I did it, and that it didn't turn bad in the second set.

"I think she served a little bit better, and did less mistakes... made the match a little bit more equal. It was a little tougher in the second set."

Local product Bellis is one of three Americans in the semi-finals along with Coco Vandeweghe and Madison Keys.

Kvitova dropped the first game to

love on serve and it did not get much better from there as she ran up 26 unforced errors.

The Czech missed six months after being stabbed in her left hand by an intruder at her home in the Czech Republic in December.

Bellis, ranked 44th in the world, will take on fellow Californian Vandeweghe in a Saturday semi-final, while Muguruza will face third-seed Keys.

Kohlschreiber wins eighth ATP title



German Philipp Kohlschreiber claimed the eighth ATP Tour title of his career by brushing aside Joao Sousa in the final of the claycourt event at Kitzbuhel yesterday. The 33-year-old eased to a 6-3, 6-4 victory over his Portuguese opponent, who remains without a tournament win since 2015. Kohlschreiber had lost his two previous tour finals, but he recovered from a break down in the opening set with four straight games. The world number 47 had to fight back from 3-1 down in the second set as well, but once again Sousa gave up four games on the trot to slump to defeat. It was Kohlschreiber's first title since winning on the Munich clay in May 2016, and he will move up six places in the new world rankings on Monday.

Federer plays first post-Wimbledon victory match Wednesday

Roger Federer will play his first match since winning his 19th Grand Slam title last month at Wimbledon next Wednesday at Montreal, ATP Rogers Cup organisers said Friday. The 35-year-old Swiss has a first-round bye in the Canadian hardcourt event, his first tuneup for the US Open, which begins August 28 in New York. Federer's first foe since claiming his eighth Wimbledon crown will be the winner of a first-round match between Canadians Vasek Pospisil and Peter Polansky, according to the draw made Friday. For the first time since 2011 in Monte Carlo, top-ranked French Open winner Rafael Nadal and second-ranked Federer, who also won this year's Australian Open, find themselves at opposite ends of a draw as top seeds. Nadal's first match will be against either Croatian Borna Coric or a qualifier.

CRICKET / SL VS IND, DAY 3, 2ND TEST

Mendis hits defiant ton but India on top

Hosts were 209 for two at close, still trailing India by 230 runs



Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis (left) plays a shot as Indian wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha (right) and Cheteshwar Pujara (centre) look on on third day of the second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Ground in Colombo yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Colombo

India tightened its grip on the second Test against Sri Lanka despite a fighting century by Kusal Mendis during the hosts' follow-on in Colombo yesterday.

Mendis put on 191 runs for the second wicket with opener Dimuth Karunaratne (92 not out) before falling to paceman Hardik Pandya for 110 just before stumps on day three.

The hosts were 209 for two at close, still trailing India by 230 runs in their second innings. Karunaratne and nightwatchman Malinda Pushpakumara on two were at the crease.

"Credit to them, they batted really really well. I don't think we did too much wrong," India's ace spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who took five wickets in Sri Lanka's first innings, told reporters.

"Hopefully we will try and nick them off tomorrow. I think this wicket will get slower and slower. It is not going to be easy work tomorrow for sure," said Ashwin.

Earlier in the day, Sri Lanka nosedived from their overnight 50-2 to 183

all out at lunch, handing the visitors a chance to clinch the three-match series 2-0.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Niroshan Dickwella, who top-scored for the hosts with 51 in the first innings, said the team needs to back itself at the Sinhalese Sports Club Ground.

"We weren't good in the first session. We had plans before the second innings started," said Dickwella.

"Track is not difficult at all. We adapted brilliantly. We had a plan and we executed it well and that's the reason why we are 209 for two.

"We have to back ourselves 100 percent. We might get out playing positive shots... We are international players and we need to adapt quickly," Dickwella added.

The islanders were in early trouble in the second innings when pacer Umesh Yadav got opener Upul Tharanga out for two after lunch on a seemingly deteriorating pitch.

The left-right batting combination of Karunaratne and Mendis then dug in their heels to thwart the Indian bowling attack, forcing skipper Virat Kohli to rotate his options.

The duo handled the Indian spinners with aplomb, using their feet to

good effect as they combined the right dose of caution and aggression.

"They both are great players. They executed the plans and used the crease and swept well. Mendis has been a brilliant player in his small career," said Dickwella.

Mendis, who hit his third Test hundred, played an attacking game as he smashed 17 boundaries before letting go of his hard work with a catch to wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha.

The Colombo-born Karunaratne remained patient during his 200-ball knock so far as he played out the remaining few overs with debutant Pushpakumara in a tense finish to the day.

But it was the first session that hit the hosts hard as they lost eight of their remaining wickets and conceded a 439-run lead in response to India's formidable 622-9 declared.

The Dinesh Chandimal-led Sri Lanka need at least a draw to stay alive in the series.

SCORECARD
INDIA 1st innings 622-9 dec
SRI LANKA 1st innings
D. Karunaratne c Rahane b Ashwin 25

U. Tharanga c Rahul b Ashwin 0
K. Mendis c Kohli b Yadav 24
D. Chandimal c Pandya b Jadeja 10
A. Mathews c Pujara b Ashwin 26
N. Dickwella b Shami 51
D. de Silva b Jadeja 0
D. Perera b Ashwin 25
R. Herath b Shami 2
M. Pushpakumara not out 15
N. Pradeep b Ashwin 0

Extras (b4, lb1) 5
Total (all out; 49.4 overs) 183
Bowling: Shami 6-1-13-2, Ashwin 16.4-3-69-5, Jadeja 22-6-84-2, Yadav 5-1-12-1
Fall of wicket: 1-0 (Tharanga), 2-33 (Karunaratne), 3-60 (Chandimal), 4-64 (Mendis), 5-117 (Mathews), 6-122 (De Silva), 7-150 (Dickwella), 8-152 (Herath), 9-171 (Perera), 10-183 (Pradeep)

SRI LANKA 2nd innings
D. Karunaratne not out 92
U. Tharanga b Yadav 2
K. Mendis c Saha b Pandya 110
M. Pushpakumara not out 2
Extras (nb2, w1) 3
Total (2 wks; 60 overs, follow-on) 209
Bowling: Yadav 9-2-29-1, Ashwin 24-6-79-0, Shami 6-2-13-0, Jadeja 16-2-76-0, Pandya 5-0-12-1
Fall of wicket: 1-7 (Tharanga), 2-198 (Mendis)

EQUESTRIAN

Qatar Knights continue participation in Global Champions Tour

QNA
London

Qatar's Sheikh Ali bin Khalid al-Thani and Bassem Hassan will continue to participate in the Longines Global Champions Tour event, which will conclude today, in London.

Sheikh Ali and Hassan took part in the first two events, 145cm high and 150cm high, but didn't find their rhythm. They then participated in the 155/160 event of a single 5-star tour and Sheikh Ali finished 12th in a time of 75.32 seconds.

The Doha Qatar Knights team, consisting of Sheikh Ali and Bassem Hassan, was in 15th place in the group competition, which was won by the Berlin Lions.

Doha Qatar Knights remain fifth in the overall standings after 112 matches with 164 points.

The world's top riders and teams compete for Longines Global Champions Tour for top honours. The events are attended by riders from 18 countries including Qatar, which has been a key participant since 2008, and hosts the closing round, which will be held at Al Shaqab, a member of Qatar Foundation, from November 9-11.

GOLF / WOMEN'S BRITISH OPEN

Park rockets up leaderboard at Kingsbarns



Reuters
London

South Korea's Inbee Park rocketed up the women's British Open leaderboard with eight birdies in a superb third-round 64 at Kingsbarns yesterday - moving to within a stroke of overnight leader In-Kyung Kim on 10 under.

Park narrowly missed a long birdie putt on the 18th that would have put her in the joint lead before her compatriot had even teed off for his third round on the Scottish course.

The 29-year-old Olympic champion, bidding for a second British Open title after her 2015 triumph, began the day at two under and birdied her opening two holes.

She picked up three more shots before the turn and birdied the 11th, 13th and 17th to post an eight-under round and close in on the lead.

American Stacy Lewis, winner in 2013, also took advantage of the relatively kind conditions with a seven-under 65 to move to nine under after her three rounds.

Lewis finished with four consecutive birdies.

GOLF / WGC-BRIDGESTONE INVITATIONAL

Walker leads Pieters by two, Spieth, McIlroy in hunt

AFP
Los Angeles

Jimmy Walker, gearing up for his PGA Championship title defense, fired a five-under par 65 on Friday to take a two-shot lead at the halfway stage of the World Golf Championships Bridgestone in Akron, Ohio.

Walker shook off lengthy weather delays as thunderstorms disrupted action at Firestone Country Club.

He carded six birdies with just one bogey en route to a 36-hole total of seven-under 133.

Walker edged ahead of overnight leader Thomas Pieters of Belgium when he rolled in an eight footer for birdie at the 15th.

Pieters then fell further back with a bogey at the par-three 15th, where he was unable to get up and down from a bunker.

He had two birdies and two bogeys in an even par 70 for 135.

"I played decent," Pieters said. "I hit plenty of greens - I think a bit less than yesterday. The driver was still a little bit off. Ball striking's been good, same today. Missed a couple short ones on 17 and 18, but rolling the putter nicely, so looking forward to this weekend."



Jimmy Walker acknowledges the crowd after making his putt on the eighth hole during the second round of the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational golf tournament in Akron, Ohio, on Friday. (USA TODAY Sports)

It was a further stroke back to Rory McIlroy, Zach Johnson and Hideki Matsuyama on 136.

McIlroy, playing his first tournament since sacking longtime caddy J.P. Fitzgerald as he tries to turn around a so-far disappointing season, chipped in for birdie at the 16th en route to a one-under 69 while Japan's Matsuyama and America's Johnson

both shot 67.

"Once we got back out there after the delay, I think everybody felt a little flat," McIlroy said of playing after the afternoon delay of more than three hours. "I didn't help myself by missing a few chances as soon as we came back out. Luckily I found one birdie coming in."

Australian Jason Day turned in a four-under 66 to join a group of six

players on 137 that also included British Open champion Jordan Spieth, who signed for a 70.

Day had charged up the leaderboard with four birdies in his first five holes and five birdies on the front nine.

But he appeared to tweak his troublesome back, and had two bogeys and a birdie coming in.

MARATHON DAY

Organisers had moved up tee times in a bid to beat the weather and Walker, who was diagnosed with debilitating Lyme Disease in April, admitted the day "did feel like a marathon".

But he added that for him it was "a great day".

"(I) played solid, hit it well, made some putts - just solid, a solid day of golf."

Walker, who hasn't lifted a trophy since making his major breakthrough at last year's PGA Championship, hasn't contended on the big stage this year. He missed the cut at the US Open and finished tied for 54th at the British Open, and said he wasn't thinking about his title defense at Quail Hollow next week.

"It's just important for me to have a good week," he said. "I haven't had too many this year, it's been kind of rough. But things have been trending, I feel like, and hopefully this is shades of things to come."

HORSE RACING / QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL

Qatar Racing's Scorching Heat wins on final day

'It's great to ride a winner for Qatar Racing. It's a big team effort'

By Sports Reporter
Chichester, England

Andrew Balding enjoyed a memorable Qatar Goodwood Festival, when Scorching Heat won the Qatar Stewards' Sprint Handicap and became his third winner of the week. He also has three second-place finishes on the scoreboard.

The favourite burst into the lead inside the final furlong and won by three-quarters of a length from Tommy G and Son of Africa, while Royal Brave was fourth.

The first four finished in the middle of the track, and Oisín Murphy, who rode the winner in the colours of Qatar Racing, said: "I didn't know where the best ground would be, but when I cantered to the start I noticed tyre tracks or something similar in the middle, as though Jeeps had been there, and I just thought any divots that would be there might have been knocked down.

"I've no idea if that's the best place to be, but that's where I went.

"It's great to ride a winner for Qatar Racing [he is retained as that organisation's first-choice rider] and also for Andrew Balding. It's a big team effort, and the staff put up with times when the horses are running good and bad - it's fantastic they are being rewarded with winners during this big meeting."

Balding said: "He's a decent horse, but I'm delighted we even got into the race - I didn't for a minute think we would. This is his sort of ground. He needs a strongly-run race, and it's difficult to believe we haven't been able to get cover for him before today. He won, and he needs things to fall right for him - the faster they go in front the better. Everything fell right for him today.

"These are difficult conditions on which to make up any ground, but if you are there with a chance with a furlong to go you are going to be difficult to get past.

"I should think he could be an Ayr Silver Cup horse this year, and, hopefully, a [Qatar] Stewards' Cup and Ayr Gold Cup horse next year."

JOHNSTON IS LEADING TRAINER
However, it was Mark Johnston who won



Jockey Oisín Murphy (right) rides Qatar Racing's Scorching Heat to victory in the Qatar Stewards' Sprint Handicap at Qatar Goodwood Festival yesterday. PICTURES: Juhaim

the Leading Trainer's Award, his 11th at Goodwood. Johnston's two winners on the day - Soldier In Action and Dee Ex Bee - ensured that he surpassed Balding for the top award.

Soldier In Action got up on the line to beat Blakeney Point by a head in the mile and six furlongs Qatar Summer Handicap. Later in the day, Dee Ex Bee won the seven-furlong Qatar EBF Stallions Maiden in style by two and a quarter lengths in 1m 28.62s.

"It means a lot to me to be leading trainer here," said Johnston. "We always throw a lot of darts at the board, but we didn't have as many runners as some people here this year as we were a bit thin on the ground. It is a big relief to get four winners. I was very worried about the rain, but the week has worked out well, better than expected."

QNB London's Hassan al-Hammadi presented the trophies to the winners of the race.

"The Festival is a huge success every year and it underlines Qatar's role in such prestigious sports events," he said. "We are fascinated by what we have

seen on the final day with such huge turnout due to the significance of the event in the UK. The racing and everything involved was brilliant by all means. Qatar's name has been promoted very well here with dozens of thousands of spectators attending the Festival, which I expect will go from strength to strength with the continued Qatari sponsorship one year after another."

CRYSTAL OCEAN STOUTE'S TENTH QATAR GORDON STAKES WINNER

Crystal Ocean put clear water between himself and four rivals to run out an impressive winner of yesterday's G3 Qatar Gordon Stakes.

He became the tenth winner of the famous race for trainer Sir Michael Stoute, who won it last year with Ulysses.

Crystal Ocean, who is owned by Sir Evelyn Rothschild and was bred at his family's Southcourt Stud, holds an entry in the G1 St Leger, and is clearly well-regarded by his trainer.

After the son of Cape Cross had beaten Khalidi by three and a half lengths, with

Mount Moriah back in third, Stoute said: "We have loved this horse from early days - he's a lovely stamp of a horse with a good mind. He goes on soft ground - we know that because he did so in the Dante - but today's going was a big concern being among the worst you can get after such phenomenal rain."

LANCELOT FIRST QATAR GOODWOOD FESTIVAL WINNER FOR IVORY

Hertfordshire trainer Dean Ivory saddled his first Qatar Goodwood Festival winner yesterday, and in one of the meeting's feature races.

Victory for the Ivory-trained Lancelot Du Lac in the £250,000 Qatar Stewards' Cup over six furlongs was a second win in the contest for jockey Frankie Dettori, who succeeded on Magical Memory in 2015. Dettori made plenty of use of seven-year-old Lancelot Du Lac, keeping clear of bunching before coaxing his partner home three-quarters of a length ahead of runner-up Aeolus. Upstaging was a further nose behind in third, a head in front of fourth-placed Growl.

No decline in our results, says Al Shaqab Racing's Khalifa al-Attiyah

By Sports Reporter
Chichester, England

Al Shaqab Racing executive director Khalifa bin Mohamed al-Attiyah said there has been no decline in the racing operation's results at the 2017 Qatar Goodwood Festival given the number of runners they had in this edition.

"The heavy rains on the second day of the Festival resulted in the withdrawal of a number of Al Shaqab's runners and some of these were favourites," he said.

"Even Zelzal, who ran in Qatar International Stakes (Gr1 PA), didn't win because of the soft ground. We were also concerned about Al Jazi's participation yesterday with the soft ground, but she imposed herself and won the Group Three seven-furlong L'Ormarins Queens Plate Oak Tree Stakes.

"Why is the focus on Al Shaqab alone? What did the major farms, including Coolmore and Godolphin, do at the Qatar Goodwood Festival? The number of horses Al Shaqab has is nearly 15 percent of the horses each of them have. Evaluation, therefore, should be based on objective facts. Al Shaqab has had a huge interest in breeding recently and the outcome of such trend will be realised soon both for thoroughbreds and pure Arabians. We will not stay on top alone in every race because there are others who work hard and know very well the value of work in this area. In addition, Europe's top horses run in the Qatar Goodwood Festival and this makes the races tougher," added al-Attiyah.

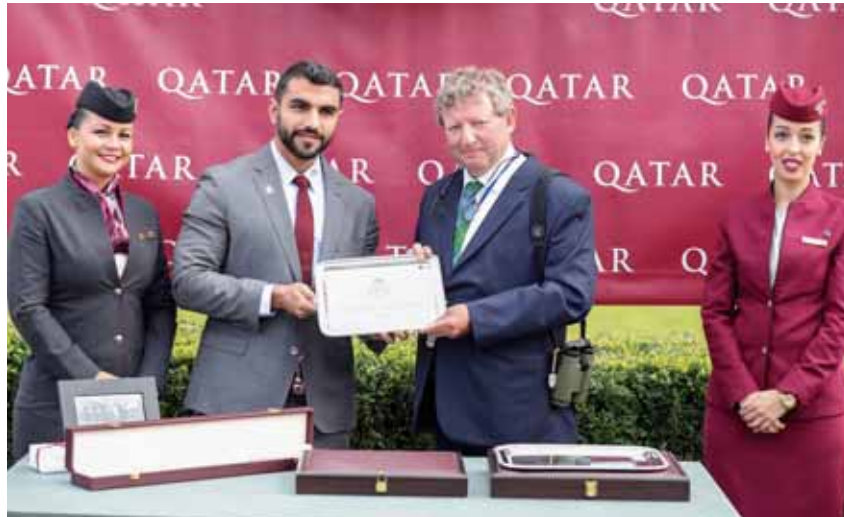
'PLEASED WITH PRESENCE OF QATARI STUDENTS IN ENGLAND'

Also present on the final day of the Festival was assistant cultural attaché of the Embassy of Qatar in the United Kingdom, Fahad Mohamed al-Kuwari.

"We, as Qataris, are pleased with the QREC's sponsorship of the Qatar Goodwood Festival. It was very interesting to see the huge turnout over the five days of the Festival, which adds to the event and the Qatari sponsorship. In addition, it was wonderful to see Qatari students here as they were invited to attend the event. QREC provided transport for them from London to Goodwood and I do thank QREC for this very good gesture," he said. "The two wins by Al Shaqab's Al Jazi and His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani's Tayf underline the fact that Qatar's horse racing and equestrian sport are progressing. We look forward to more in future and to further promote the standing of Qatar worldwide."



Sultan al-Kaabi presents the trophy to jockey Silvestre De Sousa, who rode Battered to victory in the Qatar Handicap at Qatar Goodwood Festival yesterday.



QNB London's Hassan al-Hammadi presents the trophy for Qatar EBF Stallion Maiden Stakes, which was won by Dee Ex Bee, yesterday.



Mubarak Ajan al-Kuwari (left), Second Secretary of the embassy of the State of Qatar in the United Kingdom, presents the trophy to Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid al-Maktoum after Battash won the Qatar King George Stakes at Qatar Goodwood Festival on Friday.

CRICKET / ENG VS SA, DAY 2, 4TH TEST

England's Anderson presses home advantage

Reuters
Manchester, England

Jimmy Anderson put England in firm control on the second day of the fourth test at Old Trafford yesterday, with his four wickets leaving South Africa trailing by 142 runs with just one first-innings wicket remaining.

Anderson's 4-33, ably supported by fellow seamer Stuart Broad, reduced South Africa to 220-9 at the close and gives England, who lead 2-1, a great chance of securing their first home series win over the Proteas since 1998.

Earlier Anderson had provided support to Jonny Bairstow, who struck a brilliant 99, 46 of those runs coming in a last-wicket 50-run partnership with the bowler.

Bairstow's enterprising and entertaining knock ensured England made a good first-innings total of 362.

Lancashire paceman Anderson certainly enjoyed the chance to bowl from the newly named 'James Anderson End' at his home ground - with all of his wickets coming from there.

"I felt like I couldn't bowl badly, certainly this morning," he said. "It

feels very strange still to hear it be announced, but I'm thrilled and nice to get some wickets there as well."

Anderson was a threat from the outset. He picked up the wicket of Dean Elgar for a duck before lunch, trapping the South African opener lbw with just his third delivery.

Hashim Amla looked in good shape, but after making 30 runs off 35 balls, he edged a leg-side delivery from Toby Roland-Jones to Bairstow.

The surface was looking increasingly placid and while England's seamers were accurate and keeping the run-rate down, they were not posing too many questions for Heino Kuhn and Temba Bavuma.

The pair looked to have dug themselves in but spinner Moeen Ali, a hat-trick hero in the last test, tempted Kuhn forward with a nicely flighted delivery and Ben Stokes pocketed the catch at slip.

After tea, though, Anderson produced a devastating spell of three wickets from 24 balls as England turned the screw.

Bavuma (46) misjudged by leaving a ball which cut back in to take his off-stump. Two balls later the crowd sensed a major momentum shift when skipper Faf du Plessis's inside edge rattled the stumps.

Theunis de Bruyn tried to drive a



England's James Anderson celebrates the wicket of South Africa's Faf du Plessis on second day of the fourth Test at Old Trafford in Manchester yesterday. (Reuters)

full-length delivery from Anderson but was undone by the movement and edged to England skipper Joe Root at second slip.

Keshav Maharaj misjudged the length of a Moeen delivery and found himself on the back foot, hit on the pads in front of the wicket as the tour-

ists reeled.

Quinton de Kock showed some resistance, making 24 runs from 66 balls, before he nicked Broad's rising delivery to the grateful Bairstow.

Broad struck again in the final over of the day, with Stokes producing a brilliant, low, diving catch at gully to dis-

miss Kagiso Rabada.

The day had begun promisingly for South Africa who had made quick progress in the morning session, picking up three early wickets to have England at 312 for nine.

But Bairstow, rotating the strike well, went on the offensive, with his fine attacking innings including a superb straight six off Duame Olivier.

The Yorkshireman, who had been dropped by wicketkeeper De Kock on 53, fell just one short of his fourth test century, ruled lbw after attempting to sweep spinner Maharaj.

Seamer Rabada finished with figures of 4-91. (Reporting by Simon Evans, editing by Pritha Sarkar)

SCORECARD

ENGLAND 1st Innings (o/n 260-6)

A. Cook c de Kock b Maharaj 46
K. Jennings c de Kock b Olivier 17
T. Westley c de Kock b Rabada 29
J. Root lbw b Olivier 52
D. Malan c du Plessis b Morkel 18
B. Stokes b Rabada 58
J. Bairstow lbw b Maharaj 99
T. Roland-Jones c Bavuma b Rabada 4
M. Ali c du Plessis b Rabada 14
S. Broad b Morkel 7
J. Anderson not out 4

Extras (b6, lb6, nb2) 14

Total (all out, 108.4 overs) 362

Fall of wickets: 1-35 (Jennings), 2-92 (Cook), 3-92 (Westley), 4-144 (Malan), 5-187 (Root), 6-252 (Stokes), 7-271 (Roland-Jones), 8-303 (Ali), 9-312 (Broad), 10-362 (Bairstow)

Bowling: Morkel 26-5-92-2 (1nb); Rabada 26-7-91-4; Olivier 21-3-91-2; Maharaj 30.4-9-58-2; De Bruyn 5-0-18-0 (1nb)

SOUTH AFRICA 1st Innings

D. Elgar lbw b Anderson 0
H. Kuhn c Stokes b Ali 24
H. Amla c Bairstow b Roland-Jones 30
T. Bavuma b Anderson 46
F. du Plessis b Anderson 27
Q. de Kock c Bairstow b Broad 24
T. de Bruyn c Root b Anderson 11
K. Maharaj lbw b Ali 13
K. Rabada c Stokes b Broad 23
M. Morkel not out 18

Extras (b3, nb1) 4

Total (9 wks, 68.3 overs) 220

Fall of wickets: 1-2 (Elgar), 2-47 (Amla), 3-84 (Kuhn), 4-131 (Bavuma), 5-132 (Du Plessis), 6-146 (De Bruyn), 7-167 (Maharaj), 8-189 (De Kock), 9-220 (Rabada)

Bowling: Anderson 15-4-33-4; Broad 14.3-4-45-2; Roland-Jones 11-3-41-1; Ali 21-5-57-2; Stokes 6-0-34-0 (1nb); Malan 1-0-7-0