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FOOTBALL

Ronaldo could play against Man United in Super Cup

Page 2

CRICKET

Ali bowls England to Test series win over South Africa

South Africa, set a huge 380 for victory, were bowled out for 202 shortly after tea on the fourth day when Ali took two wickets in two balls to remove Morne Morkel and Duanne Olivier



AFP
 Manchester

Moeen Ali finished a brilliant campaign with a five-wicket haul as England beat South Africa by 177 runs in the fourth Test at Old Trafford yesterday to seal a 3-1 series win.

Victory, achieved with more than a day to spare, also saw Joe Root triumphant in his first Test series as England captain.

South Africa, set a huge 380 for victory, were bowled out for 202 shortly after tea on the fourth day when Ali took two wickets in two balls to remove Morne Morkel and Duanne Olivier.

That gave the off-spinner a return of five for 69 in 19.5 overs and 25 wickets in total in a series where he also scored 252 runs.

This result meant England had won their first home Test series against South Africa since 1998.

It was also just South Africa's second defeat in 20 away Test series, their other overseas campaign reverse in that sequence coming against India in 2015/16.

South Africa, 43 for three at lunch, saw Hashim Amla (83) and captain Faf du Plessis (61) put on 123 for the fourth wicket.

But Ali then took three wickets for five runs in 11 balls – including the prize scalp of Amla – as the Proteas collapsed from 163 for three to 173 for six. Earlier, Ali, both the man-of-the-match and the man of the series, made 75 not out off just 66 balls in England's second innings 243, having been dropped on 15.

That left South Africa facing a mammoth chase, with no side having made more to win in the fourth innings of a Test at Old Trafford than England's 294 for four against New Zealand in 2008.

South Africa's already difficult task was not helped when they lost both openers, leaving them at 18 for two.

It was also just South Africa's second defeat in 20 away Test series, their other overseas campaign reverse in that sequence coming against India in 2015/16

Dean Elgar, who made a gritty second-innings hundred in England's 239-run victory in the third Test at The Oval, fell for five yesterday when caught behind off Stuart Broad.

Heino Kuhn, struggling to cement his Test place, repeatedly played and missed before, on 11, edging James Anderson, again bowling from the newly-named James Anderson End, to Cook.

Temba Bavuma again battled hard until, from the last ball before lunch, he was given out caught behind on review off Toby Roland-Jones.

Amla completed a 100-ball fifty with his ninth four, a pull off Ben Stokes. He then twice forced Stokes off the back foot for two stylish offside fours before driving Ali for six.

But with South Africa 163 for three, Amla missed an intended whip shot off Ali and was lbw, although England, for the second time on Monday, had to first review umpire Kumar Dharmasena's original not out decision.

No replays were required when Quinton de Kock (one) edged a drive off Ali to Alastair Cook in the slips.

And 173 for five became 173 for six when Theunis de Bruyn fell for a duck, nicking Ali to slip fielder Stokes.

The end came quickly for South Africa, 182 for six at tea.

Du Plessis, who played at Old Trafford for Lancashire, had added just one to his tea score when he was caught behind off Anderson, England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker.

Anderson, who finished with three for 16, then had Kagiso Rabada caught in the covers.

Ali, appropriately, finished the match with Morkel holding out for a duck before Olivier, also out for nought, was taken by Stokes at slip.

SCORECARD

England 1st Innings 362 (J Bairstow 99, B Stokes 58, J Root 52, K Rabada 4-91)	F. du Plessis c Bairstow b Anderson61
South Africa 1st Innings 226 (J Anderson 4-38, S Broad 3-46)	Q. de Kock c Cook b Ali1
England 2nd Innings (overnight: 224-8)	T. de Bruyn c Stokes b Ali0
A. Cook c de Bruyn b Morkel10	K. Maharaj not out21
K. Jennings c Amla b Rabada18	K. Rabada c Westley b Anderson1
T. Westley c sub (Markram) b Morkel9	M. Morkel c Root b Ali0
J. Root b Olivier49	D. Olivier c Stokes b Ali0
D. Malan c de Bruyn b Maharaj6	Extras (b4, lb3)7
B. Stokes c du Plessis b Olivier23	Total (all out, 62.5 overs, 269 mins)202
J. Bairstow c Rabada b Olivier10	Fall of wickets 1-10 (Elgar), 2-18 (Kuhn), 3-40 (Bavuma), 4-163 (Amla), 5-173 (De Kock), 6-173 (De Bruyn), 7-183 (Du Plessis), 8-195 (Rabada), 9-202 (Morkel), 10-202 (Olivier)
M. Ali not out75	Bowling: Anderson 14-7-16-3; Broad 12-5-24-1; Roland-Jones 9-1-52-1; Ali 19-51-69-5; Stokes 6-1-26-0; Root 2-0-8-0;
T. Roland-Jones c Maharaj b Rabada11	Result: England won by 177 runs
S. Broad c de Bruyn b Morkel5	Series: England win four-match series 3-1
J. Anderson c de Bruyn b Morkel2	Toss: England
Extras (b9, lb13, w2, nb1)25	Umpires: Aleem Dar (PAK), Kumar Dharmasena (SRI)
Total (all out, 69.1 overs, 307 mins)243	TV umpire: Joel Wilson (WIS)
Fall of wickets: 1-16 (Cook), 2-30 (Westley), 3-55 (Jennings), 4-72 (Malan), 5-129 (Root), 6-134 (Stokes), 7-153 (Bairstow), 8-211 (Roland-Jones), 9-237 (Broad), 10-243 (Anderson)	Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)
Bowling: Morkel 13-1-2-41-4 (Inb); Rabada 17-4-50-2 (2w); Maharaj 27-5-92-1; Olivier 12-5-38-3	Previous Results
South Africa 2nd Innings (target: 380)	Jul 06-09: First Test, Lord's: England won by 211 runs
H. Kuhn c Cook b Anderson11	Jul 14-17: Second Test, Trent Bridge: South Africa won by 340 runs
D. Elgar c Bairstow b Broad5	Jul 27-31: Third Test, The Oval: England won by 239 runs
H. Amla lbw b Ali83	
T. Bavuma c Bairstow b Roland-Jones12	



England's James Anderson and teammates celebrate after taking the wicket of South Africa's Faf du Plessis in Manchester yesterday.

TENNIS

Nadal has eyes on world number one ranking

Reuters
 Montreal

Rafael Nadal will return to the top of the ATP world rankings for the first time in three years if he reaches the semi-finals at this week's Rogers Cup in Montreal.

The 31-year-old Spaniard, top seed in Canada in the absence of current world number one Andy Murray, ended last year ranked nine after taking time off to recover from a wrist injury.

While the return of the Mallorcan to the summit would be an incredible turnaround, the French Open champion is refusing to get carried away as he seeks a fourth Rogers Cup title.

"I don't even think about that now. I'm trying to have the right preparation now and that's it," Nadal told the ATP's website.

"I'm going to keep trying to play the way I did in the first part of the season, so if I'm able to make that happen, I hope to have a chance to do well," said Nadal, who is preparing for his first action since losing an epic contest to



Gilles Muller in the fourth round of Wimbledon. Fifteen-times grand slam champion Nadal has spent a career total of 141 weeks as world number one – seventh on the list.

Murray, who is missing from Montreal as he treats a hip problem, has been ranked number one since last November having claimed five successive titles. Nadal opens in Montreal against either Croatia's Borna Coric or Russian Mikhail Youzhny.

Second seed Roger Federer also returns to action in Montreal having won his eighth Wimbledon title last month.

The 35-year-old Swiss is also challenging to return to the world number one spot he has occupied for a record total of 302 weeks during his career.

RALLYING

Al-Attayah aims for fourth victory in Hungary

By Our Correspondent
 Veszprem, Hungary

Qatar's defending FIA World Cup champion Nasser Saleh al-Attayah and Poland's talented young driver Aron Domzala will represent Overdrive Racing in this weekend's Veszprem-based Hungarian Baja, round eight of the FIA World Cup for Cross-Country Rallies.

Al-Attayah arrives in Central Europe with a commanding lead in this year's championship after claiming victories in Dubai, Qatar, Kazakhstan and Spain with his French co-driver Matthieu Baumel and Overdrive's all-conquering V8-engined Toyota Hilux.

The Qatari has won the Hungarian Baja on three occasions (2008, 2014 and 2015) and gave Overdrive Racing its first and only victory in 2014. But Toyotas prepared by the Belgian team have graced the podium in three of the last four seasons: Venezuela's Nunzio Coffaro finished third in 2013 and Dutchman Bernhard Ten Brinke was runner-up in 2015.



Nasser al-Attayah enjoys a commanding lead in the championship.

Poland's Aron Domzala lost ground on his fellow FIA World Cup title contenders after incurring a time penalty following a tyre fire in Spain and the Pole and navigator Maciej Marton

finished out of the points in 12th position. But Domzala is keen to hit back on the Hungarian round of the series and still has his eye on a top three championship finish.

Overdrive Racing's CEO Jean-Marc Fortin said: "This is another important Baja round of the FIA World Cup in Europe and one that is important to both Nasser and Aron for different reasons. Victory for Nasser would put him into a very strong position to regain his FIA World Cup title and Aron is keen to bounce back with a podium finish."

The event is being staged by the Garzone Racing Organisation Promotion Limited in conjunction with the FIA and the National Automobilsport Federation of Hungary (MNASZ).

After technical scrutineering and administration on Thursday, the event gets underway with a ceremonial start in Óváros Square in Veszprem on Friday evening after crews have tackled a shakedown stage earlier in the day and a short 11.41km super special stage from 6pm.

The second leg on Saturday (August 12) consists of two selective sections of 136.6km apiece, starting at 08.30hrs and 13.20hrs respectively. Two further timed stages of 103.2km take place on Sunday from 08.10hrs and 12.10hrs to bring the competitive action to a conclusion.

PREVIEW

Ronaldo could play against Man United in Super Cup

'Real has hunger. We all know where we are and when you finish a season like last year winning, it helps you try to do the same thing coming into the new season'



A child poses in front of trophies at the UEFA Super Cup fan zone in Skopje yesterday ahead of UEFA Super Cup match between Real Madrid and Manchester United.

AFP
Skopje

Cristiano Ronaldo has finally returned to training with Real Madrid and the defending European champions might get the services of the Portuguese superstar in today's UEFA Super Cup clash with Manchester United in Skopje.

Ronaldo's summer has been overshadowed by accusations of tax evasion in Spain, which led to him being charged in a court near Madrid last week, while he was handed an extended summer break by his club after playing for Portugal at the Confederations Cup.

He only returned to training at the weekend, meaning it would be a major surprise if coach Zinedine Zidane were to include the 32-year-old against his former club in the match at the Philip II Arena in the Macedonian capital.

"He needed to rest. He has had his holidays and that was important," said Zidane of the man whose two goals helped propel Madrid to a 4-1 victory over Juventus in the Champions League final in Cardiff two months ago.

That victory saw Real become the first club to retain the trophy in the Champions League era and completed a glorious campaign in which they also won La Liga.

The season started with a 3-2 extra-time triumph against Sevilla in the Super Cup in the Norwegian city of Trondheim.

"Real Madrid is a team, a club, an institution that has hunger. We all know where we are and when you finish a season like last year winning, it helps you try to do the same thing coming into the new season," Zidane - whose team have Barcelona to come at the weekend in the Spanish Super Cup - said in a UEFA interview.

However, his side failed to record a victory during a pre-season tour of the United States that included a high-profile friendly encounter with Jose Mourinho's United in Santa Clara, California.

That International Champions Cup encounter ended in a 1-1 draw before

United won on penalties.

While the Spaniards have made two relatively low-key summer signings in Dani Ceballos from Betis and Theo Hernandez from Atletico Madrid, United have spent big ahead of their return to the Champions League.

The Europa League winners have added the defender Victor Lindelof from Benfica, the midfielder Nemanja Matic from Chelsea and Everton striker Romelu Lukaku and they wrapped up their preparations with a 2-1 win over Sampdoria in Dublin.

MOURINHO PLAYS DOWN REUNION

This match offers a chance for United to start the new campaign on a high before their opening Premier League game against West Ham United next Sunday.

In a glittering career Mourinho has not yet won the Super Cup - his Chelsea team lost on penalties to Bayern Munich in the 2013 edition.

The Portuguese is coming up against the club he coached for three years until 2013 - he did not leave the Spanish capi-

tal on the best of terms but he insisted that experience is not on his mind this week.

"It's something I've been through many times. I left Porto and two months later I was facing them in the Champions League," he told UEFA.com.

"I left Chelsea and a few months later I was facing them with Manchester United. I never look at it in terms of taking on my former club, not at all. So I just look at Real Madrid as what they are: a big club, the European champions, and it's a great motivation for us to play against them."

This annual meeting of the European champions and Europa League winners comes to the Balkan state after going to Prague, Cardiff, Tbilisi and Trondheim in recent years.

But in contrast to the cool conditions in Norway 12 months ago, temperatures in Skopje are expected to reach 40 degrees for much of the week.

The forecast is for it to be upwards of 30 degrees when today's match kicks off at 18:45 GMT.

HAPPY

Klopp satisfied with Red's defence

Reuters
Liverpool

Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp is satisfied with his current defensive options and believes there are few centre backs in the transfer market who could improve his current squad ahead of the Premier League season.

Liverpool were hoping to add Virgil Van Dijk from Southampton but withdrew their interest in the Dutch centre back after Saints accused them of making an illegal approach.

Klopp is prepared to kick off the campaign with Ragnar Klavan and Joe Gomez providing backup to first-choice pairing of Dejan Lovren and Joel Matip at the heart of Liverpool's defence.

"Look out there and tell me five that would make us stronger. Five. Then you win a prize. It's difficult how it is," Klopp has told reporters.

"We have four. I don't think we need more. We cannot force the things and we would never get a centre back just because (of the sake of it).

"I'm happy. You can imagine we are still working on different things and we will see if it works. I am already here to work with



File picture of Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp.

this squad and not just always thinking 'but if we don't get this or this?'

Klopp was particularly impressed by a series of mature pre-season displays by left back Alberto Moreno, who struggled for form during the majority of last campaign.

"What I said is the truth. There is all this talking about signings and then you see Alberto Moreno - what a pre-season. You saw it. He has matured 100 per cent," Klopp added.

"Ryan Kent looked unbelievable, Dom (Solanke) - yes maybe a few guys expected that, maybe not. That's cool and I cannot ignore it."

Liverpool open their league campaign on Saturday with a trip to Watford, three days before the first leg of their Champions League playoff at Hoffenheim.

MOVING ON

Van Dijk submits transfer request

AFP
London

Southampton's in-demand defender Virgil van Dijk has submitted a transfer request, the Netherlands international announced yesterday.

"I am incredibly ambitious and want to achieve as much as I possibly can to fulfil my potential in what is a very short career as a professional footballer," Van Dijk said in a statement released to the media.

"I want to play European football again and challenge for major honours and as such I would like Southampton to consider the interest in me from top clubs should it still exist."

Van Dijk, 26, has been linked with Liverpool, Chelsea and Manchester City.

Liverpool publicly dropped their interest in signing him earlier in the close season after Southampton threatened to report them to the Premier League for an illegal approach.

Van Dijk revealed he had been fined two weeks' wages by Southampton and said he would be appealing against the punishment, which he described as

"unjustified".

He said he felt "frustrated" and "disappointed" that "enquiries from multiple top clubs have been consistently rebuffed".

He also rejected accusations he had refused to train and said he had been told by new manager Mauricio Pellegrino to train away from the first team due to his unsettled mindset.

"As a proud professional I am insulted by the suggestion that it was me who refused to train and so feel it is important to point out the true version of events," he said.

Van Dijk, capped 12 times by the Netherlands, said the saga had "seriously affected" his relationships with people at the club and Southampton's fans.

"I would like to make clear that I have nothing but gratitude to everyone at Southampton for giving me the opportunity to play in the Premier League," he added. "However, the time for me to move on is now and I hope to be able to work with the club to find the best resolution to suit all parties."

Van Dijk joined Southampton from Celtic in a £13 million (\$16.9 million, 14.4 million euros) move in September 2015 and has since emerged as one of the most imposing centre-backs in the Premier League.

LIGUE 1

Sneijder completes Nice signing

AFP
Nice

Wesley Sneijder completed his free transfer to Nice yesterday as the Ligue 1 club secured yet another star name.

Following the signing of France international Hatem Ben Arfa two years ago and Italian bad boy Mario Balotelli last season, unfashionable Nice have done it again to secure the services of another marquee signing.

"Nice can count a third Champions League winner in our squad after Dante and Mario Balotelli," said the club.

"Having arrived on the Cote d'Azur on Sunday night, Wesley Sneijder is an Eagle after passing Monday's medical exam."

Nice have made a habit of securing eye-catching acquisitions with Brazilian Dante, who won the Champions League with Bayern Munich in 2013, and Moroccan playmaker Younes Belhanda both joining last summer.

Belhanda was on a year-long loan and returned to Dynamo Kiev at the end of last season before moving on to Galatasaray, to replace the departing Sneijder.

The Dutchman, his country's all-time record caps holder with



Newly-signed Dutch midfielder Wesley Sneijder attends first training session at the Nice.

131, won the Champions League alongside Balotelli under Jose Mourinho at Inter Milan in 2010.

He is Nice's fifth summer recruit, although they have also seen a few players leave with more still coveted by richer clubs.

The 33-year-old Sneijder has won league titles in four different countries having started his career at Ajax and moved on to Real Madrid, before joining Inter and then Galatasaray.

His signing is a huge boost for Nice, who finished third last year and face a two-legged play-off with Napoli later this month to earn qualification for the Champions League group stages.

BOTTOMLINE

Mourinho looking at Bale

AFP
Skopje

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has sent a message in the direction of UEFA Super Cup opponents Real Madrid by declaring his readiness to bring Gareth Bale to Old Trafford.

Speaking to reporters in the Macedonian capital of Skopje yesterday, Mourinho said he would wait to see what Bale's role in today's match was before deciding whether the Welshman was worth pursuing.

"If he plays tomorrow it is because he is in the plans of the coach and the club, and it is in his own plans and ambitions to stay there. Then I won't even think about it," said Mourinho of the 28-year-old.

"If he is not in the club's plans and it is true that a player like Bale is at the departure gate, I will try to be there waiting for him at the other side.

"But if he plays tomorrow it



Manchester United's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho gestures as his players warm up during a training session.

is the clearest signal that he is staying there."

Bale moved to the Spanish capital from Tottenham Hotspur in 2013 for a then world record fee of 100.8 million euros.

However, injuries restricted his involvement during last season's run-in and he was only a substitute in Real's 4-1 Champi-

ons League final win over Juventus in Cardiff.

He has been linked with a move away from the Santiago Bernabeu with Real among the clubs fighting for the signature of Monaco forward Kylian Mbappe.

The French teenager has been linked with a 180 million-euro

(\$212 million, £163 million) transfer although Manchester City are also keen and Paris Saint-Germain are believed to want him to play alongside their world record recruit Neymar.

United have already splashed out close to £150 million in this transfer window on three players - Swedish defender Victor Lindelof from Benfica, Serbian midfielder Nemanja Matic from Chelsea and Everton striker Romelu Lukaku.

Matic is the most recent arrival and Mourinho admitted he is unlikely to have more than a limited role in today's game at the Philip II Arena, which pitches last season's Europa League winners United against the reigning European champions.

Mourinho also confirmed that, while Marcos Rojo, Luke Shaw and Ashley Young are on the sidelines, Tim Fosu-Mensah did not travel to the Balkans with the squad because he is set to seal a loan move away from the club.

Eric Bailly is still suspended in Europe following his red card

in the Europa League semi-final against Celta Vigo in May and fellow defender Phil Jones is banned too.

His suspension is the result of a run-in with an anti-doping official after United's Europa League final win over Ajax in Stockholm at the end of last season.

"I was expecting that the appeal would be negative," said Mourinho, who is preparing to come up against the club he coached for three years before leaving in 2013.

"The only thing I hope is that tomorrow, the team that wins, if some team wants to celebrate, a player wants to get his medal, enjoy with his teammates, I just expect that the doping committee sends somebody with him and doesn't close him in a room and forbid the guy to enjoy a special moment."

Jones was given a two-game suspension for insulting an official and was fined 5,000 euros after staying on the pitch to celebrate his team's win rather than going straight to a doping control.

SPOTLIGHT

Big-spending Guardiola leads chase of Chelsea

I would like to pay less for the club, for everybody, but the market is the market. All the clubs spend a lot of money – not just us: Man City manager Guardiola

AFP
London

Empowered by a close-season transfer splurge of some £200 million (\$264.8 million, 233.5 million euros), Manchester City are the early favourites to topple Premier League champions Chelsea.

Pep Guardiola endured a bruising first season in English football as City failed to challenge for the title, eventually finishing 15 points adrift of Chelsea in third place.

The club reacted with a glut of new signings – three new full-backs in Kyle Walker, Benjamin Mendy and Danilo, plus goalkeeper Ederson and playmaker Bernardo Silva – and now look a force to be reckoned with.

“I think Manchester City are the team to beat,” said Manchester United great Ryan Giggs in a recent *Sky Sports* column.

“I looked at them towards the end of last season and the forward players they’ve got is scary.”

While City shimmered in attack, they frequently looked vulnerable in defence and resculpting the back four has been Guardiola’s main priority.

Brazilian Ederson replaces the error-prone Claudio Bravo in goal, while dynamic pair Walker and Mendy will add thrust on the flanks after becoming the world’s two most expensive defenders.

City also have John Stones and Eli-aquim Mangala on their books, giving them four of the most expensive defenders ever, but with total spending in the league having exceeded £900 million, Guardiola is unrepentant.

“I would like to pay less for the club, for everybody, but the market is the market,” said the City manager.

“All the clubs spend a lot of money – not just us.”

MOURINHO’S SECOND SEASON

Across town at Manchester United, Guardiola’s old sparring partner Jose Mourinho is also looking to kick on after ending a difficult debut season with a silver flourish.

United finished outside the top four for the third time in four seasons, but secured a Champions League berth by winning the Europa League and also tasted glory in the League Cup.

Mourinho’s teams traditionally peak in his second season and he has strengthened in each department with the acquisitions of Victor Lindelof, Nemanja Matic and Romelu Lukaku.

Mourinho won the league in his second seasons at Porto, Real Madrid and Inter Milan, as well as in both of his stints at Chelsea, but he expects this season’s title race to be an almighty scrap.

“Normally the second season should



File picture of Manchester City’s Spanish manager Pep Guardiola reacting during a UEFA Champions League match.

be better than the first, but again, this is modern football. The reality is totally different,” he told ESPN.

“It’s getting much harder for everyone, so we don’t know.”

Chelsea, the champions, have thus far failed to significantly enhance a squad that now faces the twin rigours of a league title defence and Champions League campaign.

Alvaro Morata has replaced the exiled Diego Costa up front, Tiemoue Bakayoko has taken Matic’s place in midfield and Antonio Rudiger brings extra defensive cover, but Chelsea still look a few players short.

In the meantime, manager Antonio Conte says his main priority is to avoid what he has saltily called “the Mourinho season” in reference to the 10th-place finish that followed Chelsea’s 2015 title win.

AMBITIOUS EVERTON

Chelsea were sensationally upstaged by

“I think Manchester City are the team to beat,” said Manchester United great Ryan Giggs in a recent newspaper column. “I looked at them towards the end of last season and the forward players they’ve got is scary.”

Arsenal in last season’s FA Cup final and lost to them again in Sunday’s Community Shield, but Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger retains little margin for error.

While Wenger has pulled off the big-name signing of Alexandre Lacazette from Lyon, Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil are now in the last years of their contracts and fan dissent will quickly return if results go awry.

Mauricio Pochettino’s Tottenham Hotspur are trusting in the same formula that swept them to second place last season and must adapt to a new temporary home at Wembley while White Hart Lane is rebuilt.

Fourth last season, Liverpool have

signed relatively modestly, adding Mohamed Salah, Dominic Solanke and Andrew Robertson to their ranks.

Both Jurgen Klopp’s team and their title rivals will be mindful of the menace posed by Everton, whose ambitious transfer dealings articulate their determination to crash the top six.

Everton have splashed out on young English talents like Jordan Pickford and Michael Keane, as well as bringing Wayne Rooney back to the club after his record-breaking 13-year spell at Manchester United.

Having secured promotion from the Championship alongside Newcastle United, Brighton and Hove Albion and Huddersfield Town return to the top flight for the first time in 34 and 45 years respectively.

In a novelty for the 2017-18 season, players suspected of diving will face retrospective disciplinary action that could result in two-game suspensions.

WARNING

We cannot afford a slow start: Wenger



File picture of Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger.

AFP
London

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger believes the strength of competition in the Premier League means his side cannot afford another false start if they are to challenge for the title.

Arsenal have lost three of their last four opening games, with last term’s 4-3 defeat at home to Liverpool setting the tone for a campaign in which they missed out on Champions League qualification for the first time since 1997.

Wenger’s men launch the new campaign at home to Leicester City on Friday and he urged his players to harness the momentum from a promising pre-season that culminated in victory over Chelsea in Sunday’s Community Shield.

“We want to find a good balance between the confidence we can get out of these games and the urgency that every Premier League game demands,” he told reporters at Wembley.

“We had some bad starts in the last four years in the first game of the Premiership.

“But we had the intensity in our preparation games that is needed to be ready so let’s go into the Premiership with the same discipline, the same spirit, and see where we can go.

“If you look at the Premiership, you have seven, eight teams who will say, ‘We can win the Premier League!’ That makes it very interesting.”

Arsenal beat Chelsea 4-1 on penalties to win the Community Shield for the third time in four years after the game finished 1-1.

Arsenal were without Alexis Sanchez, Mesut Ozil and Aaron Ramsey, with the former still regaining fitness after the Confed-

erations Cup and the two other players nursing minor injuries.

Wenger said Ozil had a “little chance” of playing against Leicester after taking a kick on the ankle in training and said Ramsey was in a similar position as he works to overcome a “little calf problem”. Wenger also said there was “nothing bad” about the injury sustained by club captain Per Mertesacker, who had to come off after being accidentally caught in the face by Gary Cahill’s elbow.

Mertesacker’s replacement, new Bosnian defender Sead Kolasinac, impressed Arsenal’s fans with a series of shuddering challenges before cancelling out Victor Moses’s opener with a headed 81st-minute equaliser.

Alexandre Lacazette, Arsenal’s club-record £46.5 million (\$60.6 million, 51.6 million euros) signing from Lyon, had a more low-key debut, but Wenger was encouraged by his performance.

“Lacazette is stronger every week,” said Wenger of the France international, who hit the post midway through the first half.

“Today is the first time where you see that physically he’s ready. He still needs to adapt to the intensity of the game.

“In the first half he had very interesting movements. I believe he’ll become stronger and stronger.”

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte defended his decision to allow Thibaut Courtois to take a penalty after the goalkeeper hoisted his effort over the crossbar.

“Courtois is one of the best players to kick penalties,” said Conte. “If you have a player that shows you during the training sessions to be one of the best, you pick him to shoot the penalty. But don’t forget (Alvaro) Morata is a forward and he did the same.”

DEFIANCE

Neymar not bigger than Barca: Bartomeu



File picture of PSG’s Neymar (R) talking with his father, Neymar Srn.

AFP
Barcelona

Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu insisted no player is bigger than the Catalan giants yesterday in the wake of Neymar’s world record 222 million euro (\$264 million) move to Paris Saint-Germain.

Bartomeu and his board are under pressure to wisely reinvest the huge sum, which more than doubled the previous record for a transfer fee, before the transfer window closes on August 31.

“No player is above Barca,” Bartomeu told the world congress of Barca supporters groups. “You know that Neymar formed part of the success of our club, but Neymar is now history. He wanted to go. It was his decision although we did everything in our hands for him to stay.”

Barca were powerless to stop Neymar leaving after PSG met the buyout clause in the Brazilian’s contract, which he had signed just last year.

However, Bartomeu defended himself from criticism that the club should have insisted on inserting a much higher buyout

clause in that deal to fend off PSG’s millions.

Neymar’s clause rose from 200 to 222 million from July 1 and would have jumped to 250 million had he entered the third year of the five-year deal.

“We foresaw that he could leave in the future, that is why we raised his buyout clause in the new contract,” added Bartomeu.

“Receiving this money allows us to face the future with guarantees to strengthen the team.

“When the doubts over his future began we were calm because his decision would be a good one.

“If he stayed we would maintain a great player and if he went, obviously paying his clause, we had the guarantee of being able to bring new players.”

Barca have been linked with a series of potential replacements for Neymar with Liverpool’s Philippe Coutinho heading their wish list.

Yet, Bartomeu promised to be act with “prudence” despite having to deal in a transfer market characterised by hyperinflation due to booming television rights deals. “The 222 million euros that we received for Neymar Jr will be administered with prudence, rigour and serenity,” he said.

BOTTOMLINE

Restless Conte fights to avoid slump

AFP
London

Fuelled by the personal intensity that inspired Chelsea’s return to the top, Antonio Conte has vowed to stop the champions becoming the latest victims of the Premier League’s sophomore slump.

A glance at recent Premier League history has provided all the motivation Conte requires as the Chelsea manager plots his team’s title defence, which gets under way against Burnley on Saturday.

The last two English champions both sacked their manager in the midst of title hangovers the following season, with Jose Mourinho axed by Chelsea in 2015 and Claudio Ranieri ousted by Leicester City last term.

Warning his players not to rest on their laurels, Conte said: “We know the next season will be tough.

“Two coaches have been sacked from Chelsea and Leices-



File picture of Chelsea’s Italian head coach Antonio Conte.

ter after winning the league and I want to avoid this.

“The players want to avoid the bad season they had with Mourinho. We are working very well and we hope to find the best solution.”

Conte’s concerns have been exacerbated by a close season that has been far from plain sailing, despite his family vacation to soak up the Sardinian sun on

a plush yacht last month.

Since being drenched in champagne by his jubilant players at the climax of their title-winning campaign, Conte has become embroiled in disputes with his employers over a new contract and transfer issues.

He was also drawn into a damaging feud with Diego Costa after telling the Brazil-born Spain striker via a blunt text message

that he was no longer in his plans.

Costa embarrassed Conte by making the message public, in the process making it much harder for Chelsea to demand a hefty fee for the forward, who remained exiled from the squad throughout pre-season.

As Conte’s contract negotiations rumbled on and Inter Milan began to circle, reports emerged suggesting he might quit after just one season in frustration at Chelsea’s failure to land his top transfer targets.

TRUCE

Aware Chelsea benefited from the extra recovery time afforded by their lack of European commitments last season, Conte wants to add depth to his squad for a twin assault on the league and Champions League.

Yet Manchester United stole a march on him to sign Everton striker Romelu Lukaku and while Manchester City have spent over £200 million (\$264.8 million, 233.5 million euros), Chelsea seemed to be dawdling.

SPOTLIGHT

Dutch win a tasty topping on women's game boom

'We did wonder how big the tournament would be. We knew it would depend on how we performed, but we could hardly have dreamed it would be this big'



File picture of Netherlands' forward Vivianne Miedema (2nd R) celebrating with teammates after scoring a goal during the UEFA Women's Euro 2017 final.

AFP
Enschede

The six-goal final of the women's football Euro in the Netherlands put a fine topping on a tournament proving the sport is growing across the continent, with record attendance and TV rating figures.

A growth in the number of teams to 16 from a previous 12 raised overall attendance to more than 240,000 people at the 31 games, up from 217,000 four years ago — with all Dutch games sold out, UEFA said.

"We did wonder how big the tournament would be. We knew it would depend on how we performed, but we could hardly have dreamed it would be this big," said Dutch coach Sarina Wiegman.

The final drew a crowd of 28,000, which is much less than in 2013, but fans who paid exorbitant prices for tickets on the Internet attributed this to the limited capacity of the Enschede arena.

"In Amsterdam or Rotterdam it would be better, also for the women, if they could play at a bigger stadium," Dutch fan

Thea Mussche told AFP before the final in which the hosts beat Denmark 4-2.

She and her husband got their tickets for 80 euros each, against the highest official price of 60 euros but prices on the Internet climbed well over 100 euros on the day of the match.

Television ratings grew as well, and "record women's Euro audiences have been achieved in many markets, including the Netherlands, Denmark and the United Kingdom," UEFA said in a press release before the final.

Euro newcomers Austria, who made it to the semi-finals alongside England, sparked a women's football fever in their country, with millions watching the games and a thousand fans showing up for a triumphant welcome in front of Vienna's city hall.

"It is incredible that women's football has finally found a place in the society," beamed Austrian captain Victoria Schnaderbeck.

"We are incredibly proud because it hasn't always been like this."

Dutch striker Vivianne Miedema said she had noticed increased interest from

the public.

"We've seen already in this tournament if we had a day off and we went on the street that a lot of girls and a lot of other people recognised us," said Dutch striker Vivianne Miedema.

"The tournament has been really big, with all the little fans, it's just amazing that they wear the little t-shirts with Miedema and Martens on their back."

GROWING QUALITY

Wearing an orange hat and holding a Dutch flag, fan Maria Kentin said it was "very good that (women) get more exposure."

"Men's football is not doing really well at this time so everybody likes women's football now," she added, pointing out the Dutch men's failure to qualify for Euro 2016 and struggling in the 2018 World Cup qualification.

Women's football can hardly compete with men's in terms of money — a survey published this week put the women's tournament budget at eight million euros compared with 300 million euros for the men's Euro 2016.

The survey found 50 percent of the

women players were not paid by their clubs, and 35 percent of national team players received no remuneration for representing their countries.

But the growing popularity suggests the trend may soon change — in the United States, protesting women players made their federation nod to a deal raising their wages sharply earlier this year.

Besides, the quality of the women's game has grown remarkably in recent years, said England coach Mark Sampson.

"Ten years ago, there was a significant physical difference between the best teams and the rest of the teams," he said.

"What's happened in the recent years is that the teams physically have matched up so the technical skills, the game and the standing have become incredibly important."

His Danish counterpart Nils Nielsen said the increased competition was beneficial.

"I think it's good for women's football that the competition gets harder and harder. That makes the whole game of women's football more interesting," he said.

CHINESE SUPER LEAGUE

Towel row, scuffles in bitter China draw

AFP
Shanghai

Fabio Cannavaro's Tianjin Quanjian took aim at rivals Shanghai SIPG yesterday following a bad-tempered draw in the Chinese Super League punctuated by incidents on and off the field — including over a towel.

Opposing fans briefly scuffled outside the stadium following Sunday's 0-0 stalemate in Shanghai, according to videos on social media, while on the pitch there were several flashpoints between players and staff of the two sides.

Tianjin players posed with white towels after the game, an ironic nod to a first-half dispute with Andre Villas-Boas's Shanghai over the visitors using towels to dry the ball for throw-ins.

At one point during the match a ballboy and member of Tianjin's staff wrestled for a towel on the sidelines, and the Tianjin official was consequently ordered away from the side of the pitch.

Villas-Boas and members of Cannavaro's backroom staff also engaged in a slanging match, but

both managers were tight-lipped after the game.

Tianjin however were more forthright on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter.

"We condemn any form of soccer hooliganism under any circumstances, location or reason," Tianjin, third in the CSL, said in a statement.

"We hope that all teams and fans on the away side can fully enjoy and shout their support and safely return home."

The post accompanied a picture of Shanghai fans and one of their banners reading: "Viewing with virtue, shouting with technique, wild with restraint."

But in the statement Tianjin said pointedly that slogans "should be implemented in action".

In response Shanghai urged their fans to behave "in a civilised manner".

"As a football team in Shanghai we constantly keep in mind that our words and deeds should be worthy of the glory of the city," the club said on Weibo.

The weekend draw left Shanghai second, three points off leaders and reigning champions Guangzhou Evergrande.

Don't come to China just for money: Cannavaro

Fabio Cannavaro has warned that foreign stars who move to China in the belief that it will be an easy payday are doomed to fail.

The Italian World Cup winner and coach of Chinese Super League (CSL) side Tianjin Quanjian signed prolific striker Anthony Modeste on loan last month from Cologne with a view to a permanent 29-million-euro (\$34mn) move.

The Frenchman joins a growing list of expensive signings moving to China on big contracts, with Carlos Tevez at Shanghai Shenhua reportedly on among the highest wages in world football.

Tevez has flopped spectacularly however and looks sure to leave China at the end of the season in November.

Cannavaro, who at Tianjin has overseen the rejuvenation of

Brazilian forward Alexandre Pato and also manages Belgian international Axel Witsel, said: "It depends on the character. "If the players come here with motivation, they can really

enjoy it. But if the players come here just to get money, they won't enjoy it."

Speaking ahead of Sunday's CSL clash at second-placed Shanghai SIPG, Cannavaro said: "Football in China is not easy. You play in stadiums like this where if you are not fit, if you don't concentrate 100 per cent, you cannot play." Cannavaro, a former defender who lifted the World Cup as captain of Italy in 2006, denied that Modeste had swapped top-level European football in Germany for China only for a cash windfall.

"If you change countries, if you come to Asia to play, of course the money is important because it is not just about glory," said Cannavaro, who has led Tianjin to third in the CSL table.

"But I said to Tony (Modeste) about our project: we are a young club but we want to improve a lot in the next two to three years and our objective is to win the Asian Champions League."

IN SUPPORT

Oscar ban harming China title hopes, says Villas-Boas

AFP
Shanghai

Andre Villas-Boas fears that the prolonged absence of banned Brazilian star Oscar could torpedo Shanghai SIPG's Chinese Super League title hopes.

The Portuguese coach saw his side finish the weekend three points behind leaders Guangzhou Evergrande following a dry 0-0 home draw with third-placed Tianjin Quanjian on Sunday.

Both sides failed to create many chances during an ill-tempered game and Villas-Boas was left to rue the absence of attacking midfielder Oscar, the Asian-record, 60-million-euro man who is reaching the end of an eight-game ban for triggering a brawl in a CSL game in June.

Oscar returns this month Villas-Boas believes it is no coincidence that his team has hit a rough patch of form during the player's lengthy suspension.

"It was the decision by the CFA (Chinese Football Association) to suspend one of the best players in the world for eight games, so what can we do?" a clearly frustrated Villas-Boas asked after the game.

"Of course we miss Oscar. It's been a long spell without him... it's just too much.

"We brought him for a reason. We ended up loaning one of the most creative players last season, (the Argentine Dario) Conca, to Brazil and creativity is one of the things of my teams and of course we miss players of his calibre.

"Our bad spell responds to the fact that we had Oscar suspend-



File picture of Shanghai SIPG player Oscar (C).

ed for eight games."

The CFA banned Oscar after accusing him of sparring an all-out brawl against Guangzhou R&F when he appeared to deliberately fire the ball at an opposing player.

In seven league games since, Shanghai have won only three times. Reigning champions Guangzhou Evergrande have also stumbled, but they beat Tianjin Teda 3-0 on Saturday.

Villas-Boas and Fabio Cannavaro, his opposite number at Tianjin Quanjian, were unhappy with some of the officiating in Sunday's stalemate.

Shanghai's bruising forward Hulk and Tianjin's Alexandre Pato — two Brazilian internationals — were at the centre of a series of run-ins between the two sides.

Villas-Boas, already banned this season for two games for criticising the Oscar suspension, and Italy's Cannavaro both declined to elaborate on their grievances, fearing CFA punishment.

"I prefer not to answer because it can be controversial," the Portuguese said, when asked by AFP if he felt that the away side had targeted Hulk.

BOTTOMLINE

Villa treble takes NYC to victory

AFP
New York

New York City captain David Villa's first Major League Soccer hat-trick lifted his side to a 3-2 win over New York Red Bulls at Yankee Stadium on Sunday.

The Spanish superstar has eight goals in his past eight matches and now leads the league with 17 goals this season — one more than Nemanja Nikolic of the Chicago Fire.

Villa opened the scoring in the 28th minute, getting behind the Red Bulls back line and dribbled around charging Red Bulls goalkeeper Luis Robles to finish.

Bradley Wright-Phillips then scored twice for the Red Bulls, his left-footed shot in the 41st minute making it 1-1 before his 64th minute strike gave them a 2-1 lead.

Villa's solo run yielded a equalizer in the 72nd, and three minutes later he drew a call in



File picture of New York City captain David Villa.

the area against Red Bulls defender Sal Zizzo.

Villa crossed up Robles on the ensuing penalty, going low in the left corner and New York City held on for a second straight win over their cross-town rivals.

"I would put today in the top three best games since I became coach of the team," City manager Patrick Vieira said. "We had to be at our best to win."

On the opposite coast, the Portland Timbers ended their

home slump with a 3-1 victory over the Los Angeles Galaxy.

Portland hadn't won at home in almost two months and came into the match having dropped to seventh place in the Western Conference.

The win that moved them up to fifth owed much to David Valeri, whose 31st-minute blast gave the Timbers a 2-1 lead.

Liam Ridgwell's goal had put Portland up after just four minutes.

The Galaxy's Emmanuel Boateng responded just a minute later to make it 1-1.

The video assisted review system implemented this weekend by MLS then came into play.

Gyasi Zardes tapped in a rebound from right in front of the goal to apparently give the Galaxy a 2-1 lead.

But referee Drew Fischer called for a review that showed Zardes handled the ball and instead of a goal he had a yellow card.

Galaxy manager Sigi Schmid

said the call made after the review was correct.

"Video replay is fine," Schmid said of the system implemented by MLS this weekend — after the All-Star break — for the remainder of the season.

"It's important to get the calls correct, and it certainly got the call correct."

After the overturned goal, the Timbers regained control.

Valeri's goal was followed by Alvas Powell's insurance goal in the 53rd minute.

Galaxy goalkeeper Brian Rowe admitted that the players struggled to keep their energy flowing after the review setback.

"You find yourself in a different mindset once the game is tied again," he said. "It adds an extra layer to (the game)."

Rowe said it's something players will just have to get used to as video review expands in the global game.

"VR getting introduced changes the flow of the game a little bit," he said.

MLB

Dodgers complete first ever season sweep of NY Mets

The Dodgers outscored the Mets 57-15 in winning all seven games between the teams this season

Reuters
Los Angeles

Ryu Hyun-jin combined with two relievers on a one-hitter on Sunday night as the Los Angeles Dodgers continued their historic rampage by completing a three-game sweep of the New York Mets with an 8-0 win in the Major League Baseball.

Justin Turner went 2-for-4 with a two-run homer, a double, two stolen bases and three runs for the Dodgers, who have won 44 of their past 51 games dating to June 7. The Dodgers outscored the Mets 57-15 in winning all seven games between the teams this season — the first time either team has swept the other since New York began play in 1962. Los Angeles earned its fourth win in a row.

RED SOX 6, WHITE SOX 3

Chris Young hit two homers and tied a career high with five RBIs to help Boston complete a four-game sweep of Chicago. Eduardo Nunez also homered for the Red Sox, who won their sixth straight game and outscored the White Sox by a 22-11 margin in the series.

ATHLETICS 11, ANGELS 10

Trailing by four runs with two outs in the eighth inning, Oakland ripped six straight hits off Los Angeles relievers Blake Parker and Bud Norris to pull out a win and take the weekend series from Los Angeles. Chad Pinder had four hits for Oakland, including a homer, and Mark Canha and Khris Davis also went deep.

NATIONALS 9, CUBS 4

Matt Wieters hit a tiebreaking grand slam as Washington scored five runs in the eighth inning and beat Chicago. Wieters drove in five runs and hit his third career grand slam. Brian Goodwin also homered, and Anthony Rendon drove in two runs for the Nationals.

YANKEES 8, INDIANS 1

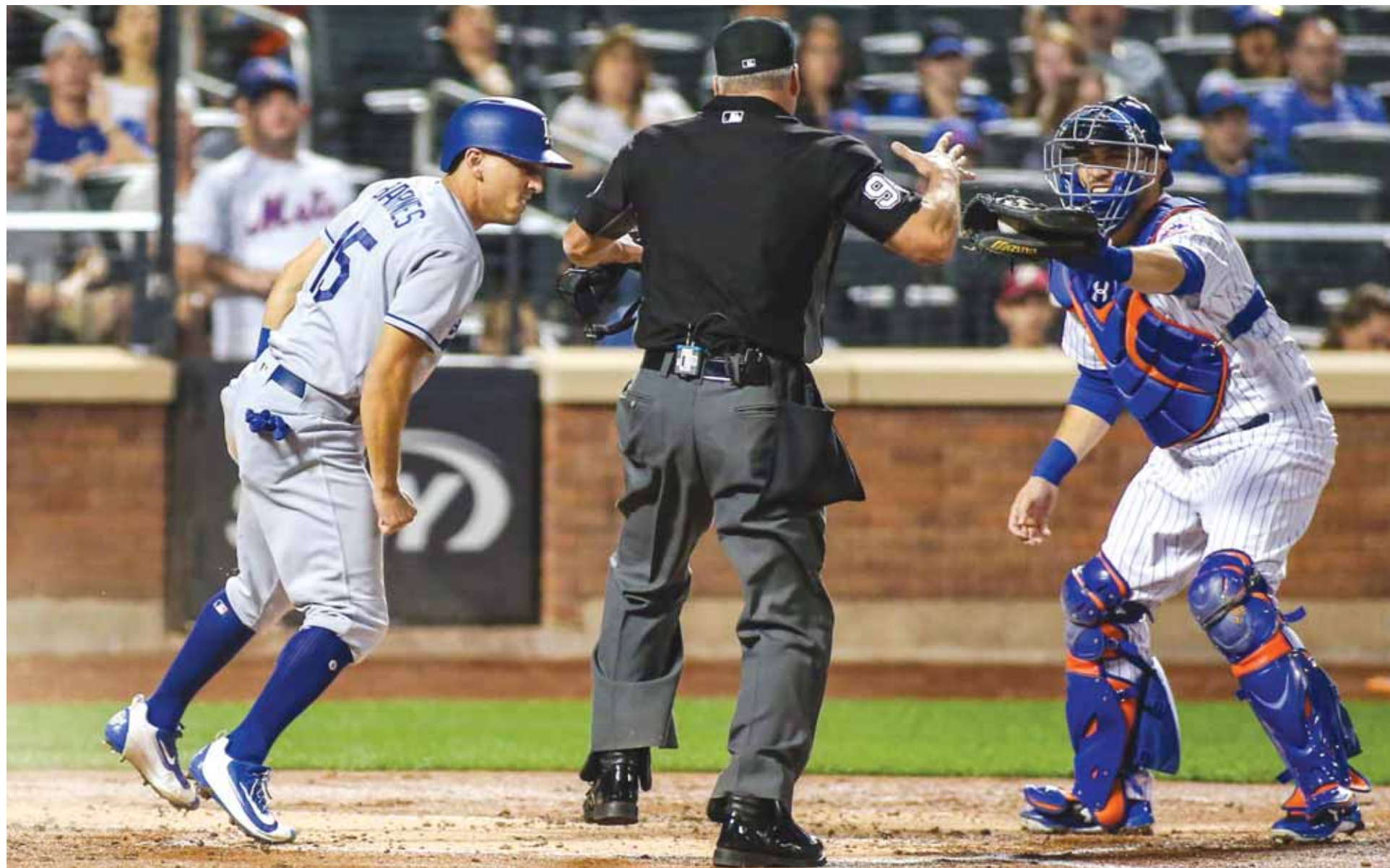
Aaron Judge hit his league-leading 35th homer, and Jacoby Ellsbury hit a tiebreaking three-run triple in the sixth inning and New York salvaged a four-game split with Cleveland. Luis Severino (9-4) combined with four pitchers on a two-hitter. Severino allowed one run on two hits with nine strikeouts in 6 2/3 innings.

ASTROS 7, BLUE JAYS 6

Juan Centeno hit the game-winning single as Houston scored four runs in the ninth to beat Toronto. Alex Bregman hit a two-run, game-tying triple off Toronto closer Roberto Osuna (3-3), and Carlos Beltran drove in a run before Centeno lined the game-winning single.

MARINERS 8, ROYALS 7 (GAME 1)

Danny Valencia, Kyle Seager and Nelson Cruz homered in the first two innings as Seattle raced out to a big lead and held off Kansas City in the first game of a doubleheader. The Mariners took a 7-0 lead within the first 13 batters of the game. Valencia homered two batters in, Seager hit his 18th later in the first inning, and Cruz hit the



New York Mets catcher Travis d'Arnaud (right) argues with home plate umpire Tim Timmons to have Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Austin Barnes (left) called out in New York. (USA TODAY Sports)

first of his two homers in the second.

ROYALS 9, MARINERS 1 (GAME 2)

Melky Cabrera and Eric Hosmer were a combined 6-for-9 with seven RBIs, and each hit a home run as Kansas City routed Seattle to split the doubleheader. Cabrera hit a three-run homer in the third inning, and Whit Merrifield added a solo shot in the frame. Hosmer went deep in the sixth, and he and Cabrera each had a run-scoring hit in a four-run seventh.

CARDINALS 13, REDS 4

Jose Martinez hit his first career grand slam as St. Louis cruised to a victory over Cincinnati. Kolten Wong and Paul DeJong had three hits apiece for the Cardinals, which tied a season high with 16 hits. Every starting position player contributed at least one hit and one run.

RAYS 2, BREWERS 1

Steven Souza Jr. hit a solo shot to left field with no outs in the ninth inning, and Tampa Bay edged Milwaukee.

Souza gave Tampa Bay its first walk-off homer since May 2014 when he hit the second pitch of the ninth from Jacob Barnes (3-3) over the left field wall. It ended the longest active streak in baseball without a walk-off homer at 277 games.

TWINS 6, RANGERS 5

Eduardo Escobar scored the tiebreaking run just before the third out was recorded in the fifth inning on Robbie Grossman's single as Minnesota edged Texas.

Escobar scored just before Grossman was thrown out at second by right fielder Shin-Soo Choo. The play was upheld after Texas challenged.

PIRATES 5, PADRES 4 (12 INNINGS)

Sean Rodriguez capped his return to Pittsburgh by leading off the 12th inning with a homer to beat San Diego. Rodriguez, claimed off waivers from the Atlanta Braves on Saturday, hit a 2-1 pitch to left field off of Buddy Baumann (0-1). It was the third career walk-off homer for Rodriguez, who missed the first half of the season recovering from an off-season car accident.

ORIOLES 12, TIGERS 3

Jonathan Schoop, Chris Davis and Trey Mancini hit consecutive homers as Baltimore routed Detroit. Manny Machado homered and drove in five runs for Baltimore, which hit five homers for the third time this season.

MARLINS 4, BRAVES 1

Marcell Ozuna hit a three-run homer and JT

Realmuto hit a solo homer in the first inning as Miami beat Atlanta. Jose Urena (10-5) allowed a run and three hits in six innings to improve to 7-0 away from Miami this season.

PHILLIES 3, ROCKIES 2

Cameron Rupp hit a two-run double in the ninth inning as Philadelphia rallied to beat Colorado. Charlie Blackmon doubled three times, the third driving in a run in the eighth to give Colorado a 2-1 lead before Rupp won it for the Phillies.

GIANTS 6, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Jeff Samardzija pitched 6 1/3 strong innings, Jarrett Parker hit a two-run homer, and San Francisco defeated Arizona. The Giants beat the Diamondbacks for the second straight game and won the series 2-1 against a team that is in the thick of the wild-card chase.

NFL

Falcons' Collins banned 10 games for second doping offence

AFP
New York

At Atlanta Falcons cornerback **Jalen Collins** has been suspended for 10 days without pay for a second violation of the NFL's performance-enhancing drugs policy, the league said Sunday. Collins, 24, served a four-game suspension last season for his first offence.

The league did not divulge details of Collins' latest violation. "We are extremely disappointed that for the second straight season we are dealing with a suspension for Jalen," Falcons general manager Thomas Dimitroff said in a statement. "Such are the consequences when certain choices are made. Our decisions going forward will be based on what (coach) Dan (Quinn) and I feel is best for the team."

Collins is allowed to participate in practice and pre-season games during his suspension, which starts at the beginning of the regular season. Collins was projected to be a starter this season after filling in for injured star Desmond Trufant last season.

He started in Atlanta's Super Bowl loss to the New England Patriots in February. Collins, who had two interceptions last season, is eligible to return to the Falcons' active roster on November 21.

DOLPHINS AGREE ONE-YEAR CONTRACT WITH QUARTERBACK CUTLER

The Miami Dolphins agreed to a one-year, \$10 million contract with quarterback Jay Cutler on Sunday, according to multiple reports. The deal also includes incentives that could push Cutler's income to \$13 million. Cutler was sought by the Dolphins after



starting quarterback Ryan Tannehill sustained a serious injury to his left knee on Thursday. The former Chicago quarterback worked with Dolphins coach Adam Gase when the latter was offensive coordinator of the Bears in 2015.

Cutler was released by the Bears this off-season and retired to take a television job with Fox Sports as a TV analyst in May.

He indicated he would consider a return to the NFL under the right circumstances. The Dolphins have not announced a timetable for Tannehill's recovery or even if he will undergo surgery, which likely would be season-ending. Cutler, 34, enjoyed success in his one season playing under Gase. He compiled a career-best 92.3 quarterback rating. He passed for 3,659 yards and 21 touchdowns against 11 interceptions.

49ERS' SMITH SUFFERS TORN PECTORAL MUSCLE

The San Francisco 49ers' worst fears were realized regarding an injury suffered by

linebacker Malcolm Smith on Saturday as an MRI exam revealed a torn pectoral muscle that is likely to sideline him the entire season.

Immediately after Saturday's practice, coach Kyle Shanahan said Smith would probably be out for a long period, but might be able to return sometime this season. His chances of returning this season were diminished considerably by the MRI findings, which were confirmed by the team.

Smith joined the 49ers as a free agent in March after signing a five-year, \$26.5 million deal. He played in 15 games, including 14 starts, for the Oakland Raiders last season, and he started all 16 games in 2015, when he had four sacks for the Raiders. Smith was the MVP of the Super Bowl following the 2013 season while playing for the Seattle Seahawks.

SURPRISE FOR BRADY'S MOTHER

New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft surprised Tom Brady's mother with a Super Bowl LI ring in recognition of her health scare fighting cancer and the impact it had on her son last season.

Brady collected his fifth Super Bowl ring in February when the Patriots overcame a 25-point deficit in the third quarter to defeat the Atlanta Falcons in overtime.

Brady dedicated the game to his mother, Galynn Brady, and said the victory was that much more special when she was able to travel to Houston for the Super Bowl. Kraft revealed after the game that Galynn underwent chemotherapy and radiation to treat cancer throughout the 2016 season. Brady's father, Tom Sr., previously told the Boston Globe that Galynn finished cancer treatments in April.

BASEBALL ROUND-UP

Former Phillies catcher Daulton dies

Reuters
Philadelphia

Former Philadelphia Phillies All Star catcher **Darren Daulton** has died at the age of 55 after battling brain cancer, the team said on Sunday. After doctors discovered two brain tumours in 2013, Daulton was later diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer.

Daulton was a key member of the Phillies team that reached the 1993 World Series, losing to the Toronto Blue Jays in six games. "All of us at the Phillies are saddened to hear of Darren's passing," Phillies Chairman David Montgomery said in a statement. "From the day that we drafted him until today, he constantly earned our respect and admiration as both a player and person. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Amanda, his parents, his brother and his four children. (He) was truly 'one of a kind' and we will dearly miss him."

Daulton was selected to the National League All Star team three times in his 14-year career. He played with the Phillies almost his entire career until spending his final 52 games with the Florida Marlins in 1997, helping them win a World Series title.

MARINERS ACQUIRE ALONSO FROM ATHLETICS

The Seattle Mariners acquired All-Star first baseman Yonder Alonso from the Oakland Athletics on Sunday in exchange for



minor league outfielder Boog Powell. Alonso, 30, was hitting .266 with 22 home runs, 49 RBIs, a .369 on-base percentage, .527 slugging mark and a .896 OPS in 100 games with Oakland this season.

The 2017 American League All-Star has set career highs in home runs, on-base percentage, slugging and OPS. Powell, 24, hit .194 (7-for-36) with two RBIs in 23 games over three stints with Seattle this season as he made his major league debut.

He spent the majority of the season with Triple-A Tacoma, batting .340 with six home runs and 33 RBIs in 58 games. The Mariners also acquired right-handed pitcher Ryan Garton and catcher Mike Marjama from the Tampa Bay Rays in exchange for left-hander Anthony Misiewicz, infielder Luis Rengifo and a player to be named later.

ROYALS PLACE PEREZ ON 10-DAY DISABLED LIST

The Kansas City Royals placed

All-Star catcher Salvador Perez on the 10-day disabled list with a strained intercostal muscle on the right side of his chest. An MRI exam revealed the injury after Perez left Friday night's game against the Seattle Mariners after six innings.

The move was retroactive to Saturday. Royals manager Ned Yost told reporters the "worst-case scenario was four weeks" for Perez being out but hopes it will be more like 10 to 14 days.

YANKEES' HOLLIDAY SUFFERS LUMBAR STRAIN

The New York Yankees placed designated hitter Matt Holliday on the 10-day disabled list with a left lumbar strain.

It is the second time this season the 37-year-old Holliday has been put on the DL. The move is retroactive to Saturday. Holliday was first sidelined on June 28 with a viral infection. Since his return after the All-Star break, he is just 11-for-81 (.136) with one home run and two doubles.

RUGBY

Not end of road for 'The Bus', says All Blacks coach

'Julian's been a very, very good All Black for us and done some great things'

AFP
Wellington

Coach Steve Hansen insisted Julian 'The Bus' Savea has a future with the All Blacks despite dumping the blockbusting wing from his Rugby Championships squad yesterday. Savea, who has scored 46 tries in 55 Tests, missed out as a fit-again Nehe Milner-Skudder returned to the frame in Hansen's 33-man squad.

Savea had previously been a regular in New Zealand's 11 jersey since 2012, but he now finds himself dropped on his 27th birthday and in an increasingly precarious position. He was only required for the third Test in the Lions series, and was then relegated to the bench by the Wellington Hurricanes for their Super Rugby semi-final against South Africa's Golden Lions. But Hansen said Savea's All Blacks career was not over, adding that he would be meeting with the giant wing later this week. "Julian's been a very, very good All Black for us and done some great things — I feel for him a wee bit at this stage," Hansen said.

"He's disappointed and so he should be. He's done a lot in the jersey, he's enhanced it when he's worn it and his time's not over. We've organised to talk to him later in the week where he'll be better ready to hear the messages and there are some good messages to give him."

With the exception of Milner-Skudder and a recall for prop Nepo Laulala, the squad reflects the frontline players used in the recent drawn series against the British and Irish Lions. Milner-Skudder has been making a rapid return to form after being out of rugby for most of the past two years with injury problems. He last played for the All Blacks in the 2015 World Cup final.

Of the two All Blacks to take off-shore contracts following the Lions Tests, Charlie Faumuina's departure has opened the door for Laulala. But the selectors opted not to replace Aaron Cruden, instead reducing their fly-half ranks to Beauden Barrett and Lima Sopoaga.

Damian McKenzie has been named as a replacement for fullback Ben Smith, who

Julian Savea, who has scored 46 tries in 55 Tests, missed out as a fit-again Nehe Milner-Skudder returned to the frame in All Blacks' 33-man squad.



will take an extended break from the game following the first two matches. "For us, it's case of re-establishing ourselves and building on our good work from last year and during the recent Lions series," Hansen said.

"There were some clear things learnt in the Lions series and this is a great chance for us to implement those; to continue to grow our skill execution and the mental side of our game, and develop our leadership and the leadership group."

Hansen said he also had to be mindful of the impact that the Rugby Championship travel, which involves playing in Australia, South Africa and Argentina, would have on the All Blacks' end-of-year northern hemisphere tour.

"There is a massive travelling component to the Championship, which comes at a cost at the end of the year, so we'll be

looking to implement some new strategies to try and overcome that," he said. Super Rugby champions Canterbury Crusaders provide the bulk of the squad with 10 players, while there are eight from the Hurricanes, six from the Waikato Chiefs, five Otago Highlanders and four Auckland Blues.

NEW ZEALAND SQUAD:

Forwards: Dane Coles (Wellington Hurricanes), Nathan Harris (Waikato Chiefs) Codie Taylor (Canterbury Crusaders), Wyatt Crockett (Crusaders), Owen Franks (Crusaders), Nepo Laulala (Chiefs), Joe Moody (Crusaders), Ofa Tu'ungafasi (Auckland Blues), Scott Barrett (Crusaders), Brodie Retallick (Chiefs), Luke Romano (Crusaders), Sam Whitelock (Crusaders), Sam Cane (Chiefs), Vaea Fifita (Hurricanes), Jerome Kaino (Blues), Kieran Read (Capt, Crusaders), Ardie Savea (Hurricanes), Liam Squire (Otago Highlanders)

Backs: Tawera Kerr-Barlow (Chiefs), TJ Perenara (Hurricanes), Aaron Smith (Highlanders), Beauden Barrett (Hurricanes), Lima Sopoaga (Highlanders), Ryan Crotty (Crusaders), Ngani Laumape (Hurricanes), Anton Lienert-Brown (Chiefs) Sonny Bill Williams (Blues), Jordie Barrett (Hurricanes), Israel Dagg (Crusaders), Rieko Ioane (Blues), Nehe Milner-Skudder (Hurricanes), Waisake Naholo (Highlanders), Ben Smith (Highlanders).

Utility replacement: Damian McKenzie (Chiefs)

NEW ZEALAND ITINERARY

Aug 19 v Australia, Sydney
Aug 26 v Australia, Dunedin
Sept 9 v Argentina, New Plymouth
Sept 16 v South Africa, Auckland
Sept 30 v Argentina, Buenos Aires
Oct 7 v South Africa, Cape Town

FOCUS

Tuilagi, Solomona sent home from England camp

AFP
London

Manu Tuilagi and Denny Solomona have been sent home from an England training camp due to "team culture issues", the Rugby Football Union announced yesterday.

Britain's Press Association said the pair were disciplined after returning drunk from a night out on Sunday during a three-day get-together in Teddington, southwest London.

"We will not be commenting further," the RFU said in a short press release. Leicester centre Tuilagi, 26, was only recalled to the England fold last Thursday, a succession of injuries having prevented him from playing for his country since March 2016.

New Zealand-born Sale wing Solomona, 23, made his England bow during a two-Test tour of Argentina in June, crowning his debut with a match-winning try in a 38-34 win in San Juan. England head coach Eddie Jones had assembled a 37-man squad for the training camp, which was due to finish yesterday.

Jones spoke in glowing terms about Tuilagi last week, explaining that his display in England's 38-21 win over New Zealand in 2012 showed he was worth persevering with despite his injury problems. "I've got no idea where he is really until we see him," Jones said. "But I do know he can

demolish the All Blacks, so he's worth time, he's worth effort and worth a lot of care. Manu's just got to get fit and healthy."

Tuilagi has a chequered disciplinary record, his misdemeanours including a conviction for assault and a five-week ban for punching England colleague Chris Ashton.

He also had to issue an apology after being caught making 'bunny ears' behind the back of former British Prime Minister David Cameron during a Downing Street photo-call in 2013.

Leicester head coach Matt O'Connor said he intended to discuss the matter with Tuilagi. "This is particularly disappointing because Manu has worked so hard to get back to fitness after long-term injury and to get back into the England squad," O'Connor said in a statement.

"This matter has been dealt with by the RFU and we will talk to Manu on his return to the club," the statement added.

Rugby league convert Solomona will also have to face the music when he returns to Sale. "This is disappointing news because Denny has worked so hard since joining the club last December," Sale's director of rugby Steve Diamond said in a statement.

"He hasn't had much time off and his performances earned him a place on the recent England tour to Argentina. This matter has been dealt with by the RFU and I will speak to Denny on his return to Carrington."



England rugby team's Joe Launchbury (centre) talks during a training session in London yesterday. (Reuters)

HANSEN DEFENDS ALL BLACKS' HOTEL CHOICE AS 'SPY-GATE' CASE OPENS

Wellington: All Blacks coach Steve Hansen defended their decision to stay at the same Sydney hotel where they reported the discovery of a listening device in the team meeting room ahead of last year's test against Australia.

Hansen's comments came as Adrian Gard, a security consultant used by the All Blacks, faced a court hearing in Sydney yesterday on a charge of public mischief involving the discovery of the device at the Intercontinental hotel at Double Bay last August. Police have alleged Gard made a false claim by reporting the bug had been found. Gard, who was arrested in February, pleaded not guilty to the charge in March. The All Blacks

will stay at the hotel next week in the leadup to the opening match of the Rugby Championship against Australia and Hansen shrugged off reporters' questions about the decision.

"It's a good hotel," he told a media conference in Christchurch on Monday after naming his 33-man squad for the Rugby Championship. "There are potential bugs in every hotel. Even your one."

Gard had worked with the All Blacks on security arrangements for over a decade before his arrest in February and had also provided protection services for former US President Bill Clinton and other celebrities.

Hansen confirmed the All Blacks were working

with the same firm that managed their security during last year's visit to Sydney and also reiterated his belief that Gard was innocent.

The New Zealand Rugby Union waited a number of days after the device was discovered before alerting Australian police and making a public announcement on the morning of the match against the Wallabies.

The delayed announcement angered the Australian Rugby Union, who blamed the All Blacks for the "distraction" that the media attention created for both teams.

The hearing, which is being held at Sydney's Downing Centre court continues, today.



NBA

Richardson extension worthy of Heat front-burner

By Ira Winderman in Miami
Sun Sentinel

Eric Spoelstra calls it "the microwave society," the hunger to know right now what time eventually will reveal. For the Miami Heat coach, it remained a mantra through what started with the pain of 11-30 last season and ended with the comfort of the opposite record over the second half of the schedule.

And now the start button again has been pressed for the Heat, this time with Josh Richardson's eligibility for an extension, a window that opened Thursday, on the two-year anniversary of his rookie agreement.

It is a worthy debate, whether two seasons from his selection at No. 40 out of Tennessee in 2015 Richardson is deserving of what could be a four-year, \$42 million extension that would kick in starting in 2018-19.

There also is absolutely no rush, unless there is concern about the futures market by either side. Why? Because the deadline for reaching such an extension is June 30. This is not the mid-October deadline the Heat face on Justice Winslow's 2018-19 team option.

Nor is it the opening-night deadline on the 2017-18 guaranteees for Rodney

McGruder and Okaro White. So, for the moment, consider this moment. Based on the current NBA climate, the Heat would be wise to push pen and paper in front of Richardson sooner rather than later. Consider that when Richardson's extension would kick in for 2018-19 his new deal would start at \$9.4 million.

As a matter of perspective, Kelly Olynyk will earn \$11.1 million that season, Dion Waiters \$11.6 million, Goran Dragic \$18.1 million and Tyler Johnson \$19.2 million. Heck, Wayne Ellington's qualifying offer for that season is \$8.2 million. It basically is the cost of doing business these days, even if you're not a guaranteed starter going forward.

It also is an irony of the rookie scale.

Because on the eve of this coming season, the Heat can lock in Winslow for \$3.4 million for 2018-19. So the Heat's 2015 second-round pick could wind up making nearly three times as much that season as the Heat's 2015 first-round pick.

Logic often must be suspended during such moments, because when it comes to the NBA salary scale, there is precious little. At salaries of \$9.4 million, \$10.1 million, \$11.2 million and \$12 million, Richardson could well turn into a bargain going forward.

If he can avoid the multiple injuries that short-circuited his 2016-17



When Josh Richardson's (right) extension would kick in for 2018-19, his new deal would start at \$9.4 million.

If he can develop a definitive Heat niche. If he can reemerge as two-way presence the elevated hope at the end of 2015-16. The thing is, just because the maximum allowable extension for Richardson is about \$42 million over four

seasons (based on where the next salary cap falls), it doesn't mean the max has to be offered. Yet in today's NBA economy, it also doesn't appear as if anything less would suffice.

The alternative is to allow Richard-

son to enter free agency next July, when, with his three seasons of service, he would stand as a restricted free agent. That would allow the Heat to match any outside offer, with this year's market showing that the spending frenzy of

the 2016 offseason was an anomaly created by a one-time exponential jump in salaries.

Richardson's status, with full Bird Rights, also would mean no repeat of Tyler Johnson's back-loaded contract. Whatever the numbers would be in an outside offer sheet for Richardson, the annual salaries would be mandated to be relatively equal.

So ultimately, ask this: Do the Heat know enough about Josh Richardson now to commit to eight-figure salaries through '21-22?

Then remember that two of the Heat's next four first-round draft choices are due to the Phoenix Suns to complete the 2015 acquisition of Dragic. So it's not as if the draft pipeline can replenish (with the Heat also without a second-round selection until 2022).

So what is the right call if we turn to that microwave that Spoelstra so detests, and require an immediate answer that can surely otherwise wait?

If I'm the Heat: Get that signature before the first ball bounces during training camp.

If I'm Richardson and his representation: Take the long view toward 2018 free-agency, with the maximum extension likely to remain an available fallback position at any point in the interim.

GOLF

Matsuyama wins WGC Bridgestone Invitational

'I played with Tiger four years ago when he shot 61, so I knew 61 was the number'

AFP
Los Angeles

Hideki Matsuyama fired a course record-equalling nine-under par 61 yesterday to win the Bridgestone Invitational by five strokes for a second World Golf Championships win. The world number three from Japan marched to the title with an eagle and seven birdies.

His 16-under total of 264 put him five in front of two-time major winner Zach Johnson, who closed with a 68 for 269. Matsuyama, the first player from Asia to win one of golf's elite WGC titles, added the Bridgestone trophy to the HSBC Champions crown he claimed in October.

The dominant performance came in the final tune-up event for golf's best before the last major of the season, the PGA Championship next week at Quail Hollow in North Carolina.

Matsuyama kick-started his round with an eagle at Firestone Country Club's par-five second, where he chipped in from just off the green. He capped his round with birdies at 16, 17 and 18 to join Jose Maria Olazabal, Tiger Woods and Sergio Garcia as the only players to shoot 61 on Firestone's South Course. "In fact, I played with Tiger four years ago when he shot 61, so I knew 61 was the number today," Matsuyama said. "I was thinking about that at 16 — I knew if I birdied 16, 17 and 18 I could get there."

He did — rolling in a six-footer at the last — and will go into the PGA Championship a hot favourite to become the first Japanese man to win a major championship — although he noted that he's never been particularly successful in the PGA Tour event at Quail Hollow.

"All I can do is my best," Matsuyama said. That was certainly good enough on Sunday — although Matsuyama said he had no expectation of such a round after his pre-round practice. "You wouldn't have believed how I warmed up this morning," he said.

"I was not hitting it good on the range. I did hit some good shots, but I was nervous all the way around because I really wasn't sure of my swing today."

Nevertheless, his eagle and three birdies saw him leading when he made the turn. American Charley Hoffman applied some pressure with five birdies in his first 11 holes, but couldn't maintain his consistency in a 66 that saw him settle for third place on 270.

Johnson, who shared the overnight lead with Belgian Thomas Pieters, had three birdies and a bogey in his two-under ef-



Hideki Matsuyama of Japan holds the Gary Player Cup after winning the World Golf Championships Bridgestone Invitational in Akron, Ohio, on Sunday. (AFP)

fort — but parred his way through the last seven holes as Matsuyama consolidated his lead.

Johnson, seeking his first win since the 2015 British Open, was encouraged by his game but said of Matsuyama: "Clearly, we all ran into a buzz saw today."

Pieters's one-over 71 was good enough for fourth place on 272. Northern Ireland star Rory McIlroy carded a 69 to head a group on 273 that also included Scotland's Russell Knox (68), England's Paul Casey (67) and Canadian Adam Hadwin (69). British Open champion Jordan Spieth, who will be pursuing a career Grand Slam at the PGA Championship, closed with a 68 that left him in a group sharing 13th on 276. "My game improved each and every day, even though my score didn't reflect it today so I'm really excited going into Quail Hollow," Spieth said.

After his stunning win, Matsuyama closed in on Spieth and Dustin Johnson at the top of the world golf rankings. The Japanese cut the gap to less than 0.1 points to Spieth in the rankings, as he looks to regain the world number two spot. Johnson remains at the summit, although his lead has been cut, while Rickie Fowler moved back into the world's top 10 at the expense of US Open champion Brooks Koepka. American Charley Hoffman broke into the top 20 for the first time in his career after finishing third in Akron.

LEADING SCORES AFTER FINAL ROUND (USA unless noted):

- 264 — Hideki Matsuyama (JPN) 69-67-67-61
- 269 — Zach Johnson 69-67-65-68
- 270 — Charley Hoffman 68-69-67-66
- 272 — Thomas Pieters (BEL) 65-70-66-71
- 273 — Paul Casey (ENG) 70-69-67-67, Rory McIlroy (NIR) 67-69-68-69, Russell Knox (SCO) 66-71-68-68, Adam Hadwin (CAN) 68-69-67-69
- 274 — Rickie Fowler 70-71-67-66
- 275 — Thorbjorn Olesen (DEN) 73-70-67-65, Hudson Swafford 70-69-70-66, Scott Hend (AUS) 70-69-63-73
- 276 — Jordan Spieth 67-70-71-68, Adam Scott (AUS) 68-71-69-68, Xander Schauffele 70-69-69-68, Kevin Chappell 72-67-68-69
- 277 — Dustin Johnson 68-75-68-66, Henrik Stenson (DEN) 72-70-68-67, Matt Kuchar 71-72-66-68, Jhonattan Vegas (VEN) 69-71-68-69, Brooks Koepka 71-69-67-70, Daniel Berger 71-68-68-70, Bubba Watson 67-74-66-70
- 278 — Francesco Molinari (ITA) 71-73-69-65, Brendan Steele 73-68-69-68, Charl Schwartzel (RSA) 70-69-70-69, Jason Day (AUS) 71-66-70-71

Autistic golfer dreams of Green Jacket

Anseong, South Korea: Golf is among the most solitary of sports, its players engaged in a constant struggle with themselves as they compete against the implacable opponent of par. But for autistic newly qualified professional Simon Seungmin Lee, it is a way to escape from his enclosed self and engage with the world.

The 20-year-old South Korean, who grew up in the US, has been medically assessed as having the communication skills of a child half his age — and the socialisation abilities of a 10-month-old baby. But six years after taking up the clubs, and following five failed attempts, he secured professional status at a Korea PGA trial in May — one of the few autistic people to do so anywhere in the world.

His next goal is a tour card at the Korea PGA qualifying school in November. "I love golf," said Lee, who has difficulty speaking and whose mother helped him communicate throughout the interview. "I want to win the Masters," he added.

Lee started showing symptoms in his early childhood in the United States where his father, a South Korean diplomat, was stationed. "He started avoiding eye contact and replying with what the other person had just said. My heart sank one day when I said, 'Good night Seungmin', and he replied 'Good night Seungmin', instead of 'Good night mother'," she said of the phenomenon known as echolalia.

He tends to show attachments to certain objects — another common symptom — most notably a Patrick the Starfish character doll he was given when the family went to the Universal Studios theme park in Orlando, Florida 10 years ago. Asked by his mother who he would rescue first from a sinking ship, her or the doll, Lee grimaced and groaned, unable to make up his mind. At age eight, he was placed in a special education system in the US, where he started playing ice hockey as a sports therapy. Six years later, he turned to golf, which he had been practising during summer vacations.

Autistic golfers are not completely unprecedented. Moe Norman, who won 55 Canadian Tour and other Canadian events from the 1950s to the 1970s, is believed to have suf-



Simon Seungmin Lee practices his putting at a golf club. (AFP)

fered from the disorder. A metaphorically reliable hitter of the ball, he has been described as "a supernaturally gifted yet cruelly misunderstood athlete".

Lee is cognitively impaired, but has a remarkable rote memory and his motor skills appear to be highly developed, according to his golf coach Kim Jong-Pil. "I think he was born as a golfer," he said. When they started working together, teaching him was harder than instructing 20 normal athletes at the same time, Kim said.

"As he has trouble communicating, I had to teach him with actions and poses, not by words, showing him every right pose and proper muscle movement and fixing his own by touching him," he said. Etiquette was another challenge, with Lee not understanding why he should stay quiet when other players were teeing off.

But once he learned the ropes, he never looked back.

"All I worry now is he is practising too hard," said the coach. But Lee's autism may act as an advantage in competition, he said, when pressure can adversely affect performance.

Lee's caddy Kim Bong-Sub, also a professional golfer, said Lee is especially strong in approach shots and putting, but has trouble making decisions — often the case with autistics — such as whether to lob the ball or roll it towards the hole.

Golf is hugely popular in South Korea, whose women players dominate the global game, taking five of the top seven places on the current LPGA money list. Lee made his debut on the country's professional golf tour at the KPGA Caido Golden V1 Open in June by invitation.

He failed to make the cut, but has secured sponsorship from South Korea's Hana Financial Group.

TENNIS ROUND-UP

Red-hot Keys clinches title

AFP
Los Angeles

Madison Keys looked to be in US Open form early yesterday at the WTA Tour's Stanford tournament, beating American compatriot CoCo Vandeweghe 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 for her third career title. The 22-year-old Keys was pleased with the win after battling injuries this year which caused her to miss the first two months of the season following wrist surgery. "It hasn't been the easiest last couple of months, but this means a lot to me," said Keys, who earned her first win of 2017. Keys also said the victory will give her confidence going into the US Open, the last Grand Slam of the year which begins in three weeks in New York.

"It finally feels like I'm on the right track and feeling good about my tennis again. It feels amazing to have a title at home and on hard courts. I'm really, really happy that this is kind of the start of my US Open Series."

The world No. 21 Keys reached the final by eliminating reigning Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza in straight sets, so it didn't come as a surprise she played her best tennis in the final. It was the first career WTA meeting between Keys and Vandeweghe but they are no strangers off the court. The two Fed Cup teammates shared a long embrace at the net after Keys closed out the win with back-to-back forehand winners.



Madison Keys waves to the crowd after beating CoCo Vandeweghe in the final to win the Stanford Open in Stanford, California, on Sunday. (AFP)

MARATHON MAGICIAN MAKAROVA DROWNS GOERGES TO WIN CITI OPEN

Russian Ekaterina Makarova turned on the marathon magic again to defeat Julia Goerges 3-6 7-6(2) 6-0 and win the Citi Open in Washington DC on Sunday. Seventh seed Makarova came from a set behind for the third successive time to claim her first WTA title in more than three years and after being halted at the Citi semi-finals three times.

A twice grand slam semi-finalist, Makarova fended off seven aces from her fourth-seeded opponent and overcame seven double-faults. Battling to stay in the match, Makarova dominated the second set tie-break and then steamrolled Goerges to claim the title. Makarova's road to the final

included seeing off top seed Simona Halep who retired due to heat exhaustion in the third set of their quarter-final clash.

SIZZLING ZVEREV TAKES FOURTH TITLE OF THE YEAR

Alexander Zverev issued a warning to top ATP rivals after winning the Citi Open for his fourth title of the year — he's not the next generation, he's the now generation.

The 20-year-old German defeated South Africa's Kevin Anderson 6-4, 6-4 to capture the \$355,460 (302,000 euros) top prize at the US Open tuneup event on the Washington hardcourts. World number eight Zverev dropped only nine points on his serve and never faced a break point in becoming the

youngest player to win four ATP titles in a year, or take the Washington crown, since Argentina's Juan Martin Del Potro did it in 2008.

Zverev won his first title last September in St. Petersburg and added trophies this year at Montpellier, Munich and Rome, where he downed Novak Djokovic in the final. He also ousted number four Stan Wawrinka at Miami and pushed Rafael Nadal to five sets in the third round of the Australian Open.

Only Wimbledon and Australian Open champion Roger Federer with five titles has won more ATP crowns this year than Zverev, and that's only because the Swiss star handed the German his lone finals loss of 2017 at Halle in June.

SPOTLIGHT

Errani banned after taking mother's cancer drug by mistake

Reuters
Rome

Italian player Sara Errani has been suspended for two months after a hearing concluded she accidentally took her mother's medication for breast cancer, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) confirmed yesterday.

The 30-year-old former French Open finalist was subjected to an out-of-competition test in February while staying with her parents and her urine sample was found to contain letrozole — a substance used in the treatment of breast cancer.

Letrozole is on the banned drug list of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) which describes it as an aromatase inhibitor that can act as a hormonal and metabolic stimulant. An ITF statement said Errani was charged with an Anti-Doping violation on April 18 and had promptly asked for a hearing before an Independent Tribunal. Former world number five Errani, now ranked 98th, will be ineligible until midnight on Oct. 2 and her results between Feb. 16 and June 7 will be disqualified resulting in the forfeiture of ranking points and prize money in that period.

The Tribunal heard that Errani's mother Flavia has been battling cancer since 2005 and was using a drug named Femara — a brand name for letrozole — after several relapses. In evidence from Mrs Errani, which the Tribunal found "entirely truthful" she says she believed one of her tablets from a blister pack kept near the kitchen worktop, had accidentally fallen and contam-



Errani was charged with an Anti-Doping violation on April 18 and had promptly asked for a hearing before an Independent Tribunal.

In such cases bans of between 0 and 24 months are required. "The Tribunal takes into account the circumstances involved in this case and that the player has not only an unblemished record but has demonstrated, through her evidence which we accept, having been otherwise meticu-

lous in taking precautions to ensure that she acted in compliance with the TADP (tennis anti doping programme)," it said. "As a result of the findings that the Tribunal has made, it concludes that the degree of fault is at the lowest end of the scale."

Errani said in a statement posted on her Twitter account: "I can only stand still and wait for this period to come to an end. I am extremely disappointed — but at the same time — at peace with my conscience and aware I haven't done anything wrong."

The Tribunal heard that letrozole had been known to be used by bodybuilders to increase lean muscle mass.

SHARAPOVA GETS CHINA OPEN WILDCARD

Maria Sharapova has accepted an invitation to make her seventh appearance at the China Open in Beijing. The five-time Grand Slam champion missed Wimbledon and the entire grasscourt season with a thigh injury, then was forced to withdraw from her comeback tournament in Stanford with an arm injury last week.

The Russian has still only played four tournaments since returning in April from a 15-month doping ban for the use of meldonium. "I'm very happy to announce that I will return to Beijing and play the China Open this October," the 30-year-old said in a statement. "This is especially exciting as it will be my first tournament in Asia this year!"

Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza, Caroline Wozniacki, Venus Williams and home favourites Zhang Shuai and Peng Shuai will also take part in the Beijing event, which runs from September 24 to October 8.

ATHLETICS

Bowie completes 100m double for US at Worlds

Bowie, 26, had improved from bronze at the last worlds in 2015 to silver at the Olympics, and on Sunday took the final step to the top of the podium



DIP TRICK: US athlete Tori Bowie (C) crosses the finish line next to Ivory Coast's Murielle Ahoure (L) and Jamaica's Elaine Thompson to win the final of the women's 100m at the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London on Sunday.

DPA
London

Tori Bowie stormed to the 100 metres title yesterday to complete a first women's and men's double for the United States in the blue riband race since 2005 at the world championships.

Bowie edged Ivory Coast's Marie-Josée Ta Lou by one-hundredth of a second with a desperate lunge as Jamaican Olympic champion and pre-race favourite Elaine Thompson of Jamaica had to settle for fifth.

It was the second bad blow in 24 hours for the Jamaicans who have ruled the distance for a decade, with Justin Gatlin winning the men's race Saturday from young compatriot Christian Coleman and leaving only bronze for retirement-bound Jamaican superstar Usain Bolt.

The last American 100m double came 12 years ago in Helsinki from Gatlin and Lauryn Williams. Greek pole vaulter Ekaterini Stefanidi and Belgian heptathlete Nafissatou Thiam did better than Thompson as they added the world title to Olympic gold from last year in Rio.

New Zealand's Tomas Walsh ambushed



Poland's Anita Wlodarczyk celebrates after winning the women's hammer throw yesterday.

the American favourites in the men's shot put, while Kenya's Geoffrey Kirui and Kenya-born Bahraini Rose Chelimo came from behind to win the marathons on London's iconic Tower Bridge. Bowie, 26, had improved from bronze at the last worlds in 2015 to silver at the Olympics, and on Sunday took the final step to the top of the podium. She clocked 10.86 seconds, dipping across the line just ahead of Ta Lou.

Dutch 200m world champion Dafne Schippers claimed bronze in a time of

10.96. "The dive (across the line) doesn't feel too good now. But it has saved me at championships in the past. I never give up until I am over the line," Bowie said.

Thompson never got into the race and managed only 10.98, admitting: "I didn't execute my race well. I just don't know what happened."

Unbeaten all year, pole vaulter Stefanidi once again defied her fear of heights when she soared a national record 4.91m on her first attempt before failing three times on a championship record 5.02m and embarking on her lap of honour to the sound of Zorba The Greek.

American rival Sandi Morris took silver as at the Olympics. Venezuela's Robeilys Peinado and dethroned champion Yarisley Silva of Cuba shared bronze. In the heptathlon, Thiam underlined her multi-event dominance after the retirement of Briton Jessica Ennis-Hill who, earlier in the evening, received her reallocated 2011 world championships gold medal amid a big roar from the full house of 56,000.

Even though she was far behind her personal best 7,013 points from two months ago, Thiam won comfortably with 6,784 points. Germany's Carolin Schaefer got silver with 6,696 points and Anouk Vetter took bronze in a Dutch record 6,636.

"It's really incredible, I am super happy," Thiam said. "It was a really difficult year, with a lot of pressure but I managed to produce a great performance."

Walsh meanwhile improved from Olympic bronze to world championship gold with 22.03m in a strong series in which even his third-best put of 21.70m would have given him the title. American holder Joe Kovacs took silver with 21.66m and bronze went to Croatia's Stipe Zunic.

Yesterday, Anita Wlodarczyk hammered home her dominance to win a third world title at a canter, clinching the hammer gold.

The Pole had been the one to beat going into the competition. With two Olympic titles to her name, the world record holder has not been beaten since early 2014.

After a slow start she took the lead on her fourth throw in the London Stadium, with a 77.39 metre effort, and clinched gold with 77.90. "I am happy and see you next time," the 31-year-old told the crowd. China's Zheng Wang won her first world medal by throwing 75.98 to claim silver. Despite three no-throws in the final, Wlodarczyk's compatriot Malwina Kopron's first attempt of 74.76 was enough to secure her the bronze medal, and a best ever finish at senior level.

AMBITIOUS

Bowie proves grandma right, now shoots for double

Reuters
London

In 2012, Tori Bowie sat at home in Sand Hill, Mississippi, when the Olympics were being held in London and watched the world's greatest sporting event race by without her.

As a 21-year-old long jumper who had missed the U.S trials with injury, she gazed at the 200 metres final on television that night and, in a Eureka moment, was moved to suggest to her grandmother: "I really think I can beat those ladies."

Five years on, in the very same stadium on Sunday night, Bowie, the long jumper turned sprinter, brought her prediction to life by becoming world 100 metres champion — and for her next trick, she is already thinking of a golden double.

Still, the 26-year-old could never have credited the dramatic fashion in which she was to win the title on Sunday night, chasing down Josee Ta Lou, of the Ivory Coast, dipping perfectly at the line before losing her balance and falling flat on her face.

Having done well to avoid what could have been a nasty injury, she rose to look faintly amazed that she had won in 10.85 seconds to join compatriot Justin Gatlin as a shock sprint winner as the U.S celebrated its first 100 metres double since 2005.

"The dive doesn't feel too good now," said Bowie. "But that has saved me at championships in the past. I never give up until I'm over the line."

"Ta Lou went away fast but she always does. It didn't bother me and I just kept pumping my legs and arms until the finish."



"I have a few cuts but I'll be ready for the 200m. I'm not afraid of what is to come."

Her opponents are increasingly learning to fear her, though. This race was supposed to be all about the dominant Jamaican Elaine Thompson, who had comfortably defeated Bowie in their two previous meetings in last year's Olympic final and this summer's Diamond League race in Shanghai.

Yet while Thompson underperformed in a way she could not explain after a superb semi-final run, Bowie came on strong to underline the quality that she had also demonstrated in the Rio Games.

After winning silver in the 100m there and bronze in the 200m, she completed her set of medals with gold in the relay.

"Don't get me wrong," she said in an interview later. "I'm extremely content with my silver and bronze medals. But once I won the gold, I fell in love."

Now, she has her eyes trained on the 200m.

"In the US trials, I ran four days in a row. I'm a little beaten up but at least I've got a couple of days rest here," she smiled.

Bowie loves the idea of gold now.

Gatlin's father flays London crowd for booing son

London: Justin Gatlin's father has asked the fans to lay off his son after the 35-year-old was booed inside the London Stadium while accepting his 100 metres World Championships gold medal.

American Gatlin, who has served two suspensions for doping offences, ruined Usain Bolt's farewell on Saturday by beating the Jamaican sprinter in his final individual race.

"He is very strong and can deal with it. Only here. He only gets it here," Willie Gatlin told the Times.

"The people booing need to read the reports. He has never

committed a crime. They need to go and look at what was said."

Willie said Justin had been fully rehabilitated in the US and that he could be a role model for children.

"He gets invited into schools all the time and does lots of talks," he said.

Gatlin was banned for two years in 2001 after failing a dope test for amphetamines found in prescribed medication he had been taking since a child for Attention Deficit Disorder. This suspension was later reduced to one year on appeal.

BOXING

'Status quo' at AIBA until September court ruling

Reuters
Geneva

A Swiss court rejected yesterday an urgent provisional management shakeup at amateur boxing's ruling body AIBA, ruling the push to oust embattled president Wu Ching-Kuo could wait for a proper hearing.

"The Swiss court has announced today (Monday) its decision to reject the requests for urgent provisional measures," AIBA said in a statement.

"The court has decided that the condition of extreme urgency was not fulfilled."

Wu's executive committee has passed a motion of no-confidence against his leadership and had asked Swiss courts to approve a temporary administration, accusing the Taiwanese president of financial mismanagement.

AIBA's executive committee meeting in Moscow last month passed the no-confidence motion, claiming that the body was on the brink of bankruptcy.

The organisation's headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland were closed for a week following the no-confidence vote, before reopening on August 2.

Executive committee member and Wu rival Pat Fiacco of Can-

ada told AFP last week that AIBA had racked up debts worth 15m Swiss francs (\$15m). Fiacco said they wanted Swiss justice to take "provisional measures" until October or November when an AIBA board meeting will vote on the no-confidence motion.

Wu has meanwhile charged his rivals with trying to pull off "a military coup", and insists the organisation is on sound financial footing.

According to yesterday's statement, the Lausanne court saw no reason to rush through emergency measures.

"A hearing is scheduled on 17 August 2017, at the occasion of which the parties and their legal counsels will be heard. A decision on provisional measures will then be rendered by the court," it said.

"This decision maintains the status quo and AIBA will therefore keep functioning in full accordance with its statutes," it added, stressing that this meant Wu and his management team would remain in place.

According to a spokeswoman for the Lausanne court, Liliane Beuggert, a ruling in the case is not expected until September.

In the meantime, AIBA said it was focusing on organising the next World Boxing Championships in Hamburg from August 25 to September 2.

BOTTOMLINE

Australia's 'Golden Girl' Betty Cuthbert dies aged 79

Reuters
Sydney

Australian sprinter Betty Cuthbert, the only athlete to have won the Olympic 100, 200 and 400 metres titles, has died aged 79 after battling multiple sclerosis for nearly half a century, Athletics Australia said yesterday.

Cuthbert won the 100m and 200m double as a teenager at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and returned after a brief retirement to claim the 400m title in Tokyo eight years later in the final race of her career.

She also anchored Australia to the 4x100m relay gold in a world record time at the Melbourne Games and remains the joint



second most decorated Australian Olympian behind swimmer Ian Thorpe.

That relay record was one of 16 she set during her career and she was among the first batch of

athletes inducted into the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Hall of Fame in 2012.

Cuthbert was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1969 and had spent much of the latter part of her life confined to a wheelchair.

She returned to the public eye when the Summer Games were hosted by her home city of Sydney in 2000 and was one of the bearers of the Olympic flame at the opening ceremony.

Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull led a flood of tributes to Cuthbert yesterday.

"Rest in peace Betty Cuthbert — an inspiration and a champion on and off the track," he posted on his official Twitter feed.

The sight of the blonde Cuthbert pounding down the track to

victory in her distinctive high-striding style with her mouth agape was among the most enduring images of the Melbourne Olympics.

Only 18, her haul of three gold medals in one Games was unprecedented for an Australian, although swimmers Murray Rose and Dawn Fraser later matched her feat to add more gloss to the country's first Olympics.

"The Golden Girl tag attached itself to her for all the years afterwards, symbolic of her entrenchment in the collective affection of a nation," Australia's peerless Olympic historian Harry Gordon wrote of Cuthbert.

Cuthbert set four world records in 1958 but injury was to hamper her campaign at the 1960 Olympics in Rome and she

retired for 18 months immediately afterwards.

A woman of deep religious convictions throughout her life, Cuthbert said an "inner voice" had persuaded her to return to the track in 1962 for a tilt at the inaugural women's 400 metres crown in Tokyo.

Running what she later described as the only flawless race of her career, Cuthbert stormed to victory in 52.01 seconds ahead of Britain's Ann Packer.

Her battle with multiple sclerosis began only a few years later but Gordon said it had not left her embittered.

"She is utterly content, usually bright to a point of perkiness, sustained by the company of friends and memories and the comfort of deep faith," he wrote in 2000.