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Thursday, November 1, 2018  
Safar 23, 1440 AH

# GULF TIMES SPORT



TENNIS

**Djokovic new number one as Nadal withdraws**

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FOCUS

## BBC, Sky demand action against pirating Saudi broadcaster

By Anthony Harwood  
Gulf Times Correspondent, London

The BBC and Sky have joined forces to demand the European Commission takes action against Saudi Arabia over a pirate TV station supplying viewers with the Premier League, *The Bodyguard* and *Game of Thrones*.

The broadcasters are demanding a formal protest is made to the government in Riyadh over the illegal streaming of shows not only to thousands of viewers in the UK, but also in Europe. Sky operates in seven countries

across Europe and the BBC also licenses its channels across the continent.

But a treasure trove of their content is being made available for free via a sophisticated piracy service, known as beoutQ.

In its letter to Anna Malmstrom, the European Commission for Trade, the BBC said: "The availability of the BBC channels and content via beoutQ's pirate activity will adversely impact BBC studios ability to license these channels to partners throughout Europe and also the ability of our European partners to sell subscriptions to their television services."

When it was launched last year beoutQ was geo-locked to Saudi Arabia as a rival to beIN Sports, the Qatari-based sports channel.

It was set up after Saudi Arabia launched a diplomatic, transport and trade boycott of Qatar and stopped its citizens from viewing top sports events which beIN Sports had exclusive rights to across the Middle East.

The Saudis provoked an outcry when they tapped into the beIN feed and began illegally pirating the Champions League, World Cup, Premier League and Formula One.

Now the beoutQ service is transmitted internationally on 10 channels via

the Arabsat satellite, which is based in Riyadh and which has the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as its largest shareholder.

Its feed, which is no longer restricted to sport but also Hollywood movies, is now being pirated by other operations.

Sky's letter to the EU talks about the "very real threats posed to European broadcasters and rights owners by a relatively new, but rapidly growing, source of audio-visual piracy, namely the beoutQ service".

It continues: "The UK is just one of seven European countries into which Sky supplies services or jobs, and the piracy being displayed by beoutQ neg-

atively affects many European companies and creators."

A BBC spokesman said: "The BBC group is committed to combating piracy of its channels and content worldwide and actively work with our media partners in fighting against piracy operating in the terrain which our partners hold exclusive licenses."

beIN Sports, which has 55 million pay-TV customers worldwide, recently launched a \$1bn lawsuit against Saudi Arabia.

Yousef al-Obaidly, deputy CEO of beIN Media Group said: "It is not just football content that is being stolen by Saudi Arabia - across the 10 pi-

rated channels that beoutQ operates, it steals whatever content it can get away with, including the NFL Super Bowl, Formula 1 Grand Prix, Olympic Games coverage, world tennis grand slams, UFC fights and even Hollywood movies.

"While for political reasons beIN was clearly the primary target of this commercial theft by the KSA, beoutQ and Arabsat have opened a Pandora's box - if it's possible to steal from us, it's possible to steal from any broadcaster or rights holder in the world; and that genuinely puts the entire economic model of sports and entertainment at risk."

48TH ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS DOHA 2018

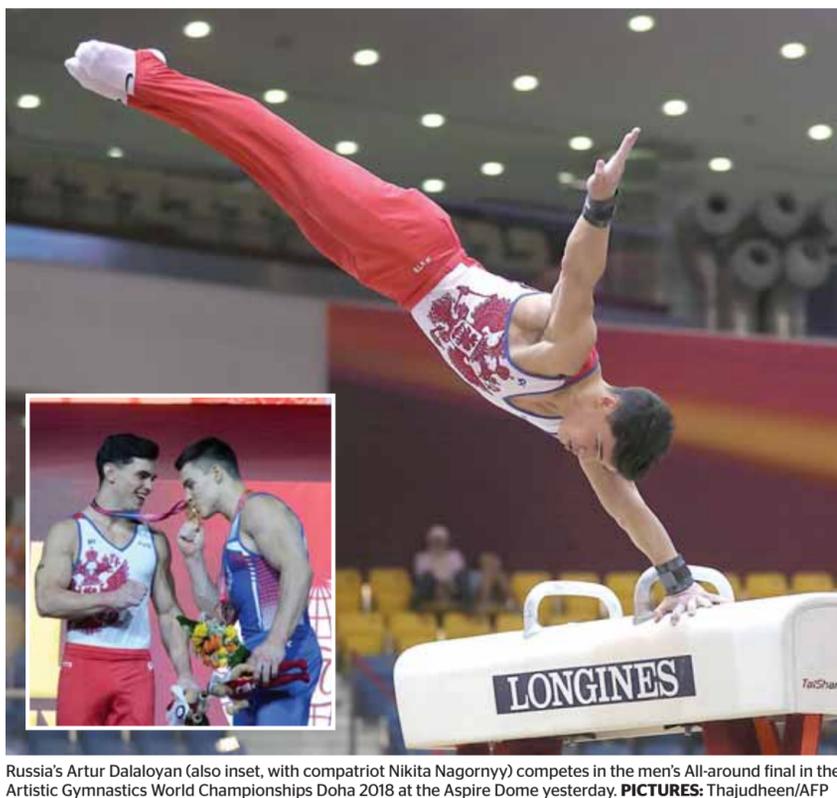
# Dalaloyan finds redemption in world All-around victory

After an error cost Russia the team title on Monday, 22-year-old edges out Ruoteng for gold

By Sahan Bidappa  
Doha

It's been a drama-filled 48 hours for Artur Dalaloyan at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships. On Monday in the team final, the gymnast fell off the Parallel Bars, which cost Russia a gold medal to China.

Post the final, Dalaloyan was gut-wrenched, crying in a corner as he trudged off the Aspire Dome main hall. But yesterday, Dalaloyan had his redemption after he became the first Russian man to win a world championships All-around title since 1999. But it was not before he went through some anxious moments.



Russia's Artur Dalaloyan (also inset, with compatriot Nikita Nagornyy) competes in the men's All-around final in the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships Doha 2018 at the Aspire Dome yesterday. PICTURES: Thajudheen/AFP

**48TH ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS DOHA 2018**

Defending champion Xiao Ruoteng needed 14.234 in the Horizontal Bar to snatch the gold away from Dalaloyan, who had already finished his routines. As it turned out, Ruoteng fell short by .001, which resulted in a tie for the total score of 87.598 points with Dalaloyan.

But the Russian walked away with gold via tiebreak after the judges

threw out each gymnast's lowest score from the six routines.

There was a moment of confusion on Dalaloyan's face, but after the Russian was announced as the winner, he heaved a huge sigh of relief and hugged his teammate Nikita Nagornyy, who took bronze in 86.331.

"When I saw the results I immediately saw that No. 2 came next to (Xiao's) name and, of course, felt happy and amazing," Dalaloyan said, still coming to terms with his dramatic win.

"I had only one goal, and that

was to perform my job from beginning to end without mistakes. I was surprised and can't say anything more. I'm just so happy. I feel good, excellent. I simply tried to put in my best. I can't believe it yet. I need to probably go to my hotel, take a deep breath and realise that yes, I won this championship," the 22-year-old added.

Dalaloyan only said "super" when asked how he felt yesterday, after having gone through the trauma of losing the team gold to China by mere .049 on Monday. "Yesterday was an off-day for me. I tried my

best not to think about it. I didn't train yesterday, and tried to focus on the (All-around) final," he added.

While the battle for gold was expected to be between Ruoteng and Nagornyy, who had finished 1-2 in qualifications, Dalaloyan was consistent in all six of his routines.

After Ruoteng took an early lead, Dalaloyan's high class Parallel Bar routine, which fetched him 15.566 points, enabled the Russian to jump into the top of the standings by .067 going into the last piece of apparatus.

In the Horizontal Bar, Dalaloyan had a relatively reserved routine,

giving Ruoteng hope of retaining his title. However, the Chinese star failed to beat the required total by the narrowest of margins, leading to a short period of confusion before Dalaloyan's name came up at the top of the scoreboard.

"I feel pity about that (losing a close final), but I respect the judges and my rival. I basically want to be number one but anyway. I am still happy with the result," Ruoteng said. "There was a little pressure, but not so much, because I know how to adjust myself and give my best. I am satisfied with my performance," he added.

When asked if he knew the score he needed to win going in as the last gymnast in the competition, Ruoteng said, "I don't pay so much attention to that. I just by myself and try to do my best to perform my routine. When I return to training, I will try my best to improve and be stronger to perform better in future competitions."

Meanwhile, United States' Samuel Mikulak, who was third heading into the final apparatus, had to settle for fifth position after making two significant errors in the High Bar.

The American's mistake helped Nagornyy to bronze, while China's Sun Wei was fourth.

Today, Simone Biles will be eyeing a record-breaking fourth women's world All-around title, which would take her beyond Russia's Svetlana Khorkina.

On Tuesday, she led the US to team gold, tying Gabby Douglas and Aly Raisman for her country's record of four Olympic/world team titles.

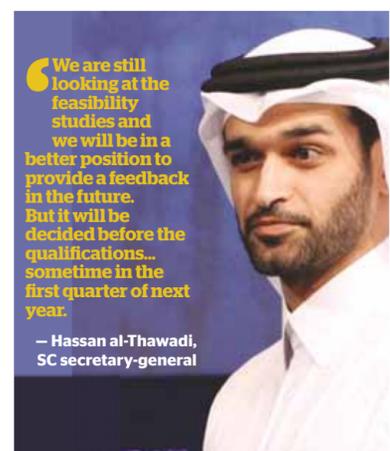
The 21-year-old, if she was to claim two more wins in the individual apparatus this weekend, will overtake Vitaly Scherbo's mark of 12 for the most golds in Worlds history.

**FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Artur Dalaloyan (Russia) 87.598 pts
2. Xiao Ruoteng (China) 87.598
3. Nikita Nagornyy (Russia) 86.331
4. Sun Wei (China) 85.898
5. Sam Mikulak (United States) 85.273
6. Kazuma Kaya (Japan) 84.765
7. Kenzo Shirai (Japan) 84.531
8. James Hall (Great Britain) 84.298

FOOTBALL

## Decision on 48-team World Cup for Qatar next year



AFP  
Kuala Lumpur

We are still looking at the feasibility studies and we will be in a better position to provide a feedback in the future. But it will be decided before the qualifications... sometime in the first quarter of next year.

— Hassan al-Thawadi, SC secretary-general

Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC) secretary-general Hassan al-Thawadi has said that a decision on expanding the 2022 World Cup to 48 teams will most likely be taken next year, even as FIFA president Gianni Infantino yesterday said the idea was "feasible".

Al-Thawadi told AFP that Qatar was studying the 48 teams proposal and would make a decision before qualifying gets under way.

"We are still looking at the feasibility studies and we will be in a better position to provide a feedback in the future," he said. "But it will be decided before the qualifications... sometime in the first quarter of next year."

He added that preparations remained on track. "We are very happy and excited with the progress. It is on track. By 2020-2021 all our (eight) stadiums will be ready," al-Thawadi said. "This is the first World Cup in the Middle East and is a perfect opportunity to bring people together and contribute to the process of healing," he added.

Meanwhile, talking at the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) annual congress in Kuala Lumpur, Infantino said, "We have decided... to increase the number of teams participating in the World Cup final tournaments from 32 to 48."

"It will happen in 2026. Will it happen in 2022? You know me. It is possible. It is possible. Why not?" he added.

Infantino said an expanded tournament would see Asia's allocation rise from 4.5 places to 8.5, raising cheers from the delegates assembled at a luxury hotel in the Malaysian capital.

"You will have (a bigger) chance. It is possible. It is feasible. We are discussing with our Qatari friends. We are discussing with many other friends in the region. We hope we have it happen. We always have to try," he said.

Ahead of FIFA's presidential election next year, Infantino said 180 out of the 211 federations had given him their support.

"You know there is an election coming. I have announced I will be a (presidential) candidate. I have received over 180 letters of support," he said. "And when it comes to Asia, only a couple are missing."

RALLYING

# Al-Attiyah eyes record-equalling 14th MERC title in Kuwait

By Our Correspondent  
Arifjan, Kuwait

Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah will be aiming to match one of the longest-standing records in world motor sport when he heads an international field of competitors from eight nations into Kuwait's exciting return to the FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) at Kuwait Motor Town today afternoon.

While Kuwait celebrates its own milestone of hosting an international FIA-sanctioned event for the first time at its new FIA Grade One race circuit facility, south of Kuwait City, al-Attiyah is focusing on claiming outright victory in the three-day event with his Autotek-run Ford Fiesta R5. This result would net the Qatari a record-equalling 14th regional rally title and put him alongside Dubai's Mohamed Ben Sulayem in the history books.

The Qatari already has the record for the greatest number of successes in the history of the Kuwait Rally with six wins (2009, 2011 and 2013-2016) to Ben Sulayem's four (1985, 1988, 1989 and 2006).

Al-Attiyah will also be chasing his 68th MERC win, while victory for his navigator Matthieu Baumel would be his 17th in MERC history. It would move the Frenchman ahead of John Spiller into tied third in the regional Hall of Fame behind Ronan Morgan (41 wins) and a tying Giovanni Bernacchini and Chris Patterson (25 wins apiece).

Al-Attiyah said: "This is an important rally for several reasons. Obviously the record is important, but the Kuwait Rally is always challenging and it would be nice to wrap up the championship before the final round in Qatar in two weeks' time."

Czech driver Vojtech Stajf is attempting to become the first non-Arab driver ever to win the regional rally series and Ladislav Kucera has replaced Marketa Skacelova as his navigator in the Skoda Fabia R5.

Stajf trails al-Attiyah by 32 points in the title race after rallies in Jordan, Lebanon and Cyprus, but there are two rounds to go and a possible 39 points available to the winner of each race with 30 potentially on offer to the Czech if he can shadow his Qatari rival to the finish and complete all the special stages. That would not be



Qatar's Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah (right) and Matthieu Baumel chase more silverware in Kuwait this week.

sufficient for Stajf to prevent al-Attiyah from retaining the title, however, and al-Attiyah's challenger will need to push hard over the opening stages to try and gain the upper hand on leg one.

While the leading duo swap seconds for supremacy at the top of the leader board, a fascinating tussle is sure to develop in MERC 2

for Group N cars such as the Subaru Impreza and derivatives of the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution.

Local driver Meshari al-Thefiri stands on the verge of claiming another showroom title with Qatari navigator Nasser al-Kuwari, but competition is sure to be fierce from a host of Jordanian, Omani, Qatari and Kuwaiti rivals.

Khaled Juma leads the way for Jordan and still has a chance to win the title, while fellow countrymen Ihab al-Shorafa and Shadi Shaban will be challenging hard.

Abdullah al-Rawahi flies the flag in the category for Oman and there are further Group N entries for Qatar's Nasser Khalifa al-Attiyah and Rashed al-Nuami, and

Kuwaiti drivers Jassim al-Muqahwi, Mubarak al-Thefiri and Fahad al-Mutairi.

Nasser Khalifa al-Attiyah returns to active competition after a long absence working in a senior role within both the Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and the FIA. He teams up with the experienced Italian navigator Nicola Arena, who won the regional title with the late Misfer al-Marri in 2010.

Arena, who competed in Kuwait in 2016 with al-Nuami, said: "The stages are nice, quite fast in places and a little confusing where there are different tracks from the other drivers doing the recce. Nasser and I are working well together."

Al-Attiyah got to grips with a rally car again at a recent test session in Lebanon and aired his rally car in the desert close to Kuwait Motor Town on Wednesday afternoon. He will be hoping to finish on his return to the MERC - a series he came within a whisker of winning outright back in 1993.

Lebanon's Henry Kahy needs to stay out of trouble and cross the finish line to confirm the MERC 3 title for two-wheel drive cars with Jordanian naviga-

tor Musa Djyerian also eager to clinch the MERC 3 Co-Drivers' Championship.

Action gets underway with a timed special stage of 2.3km at Kuwait Motor Town Race Circuit from 16.00hrs today afternoon, but the desert action is split into two loops of six different loose surface stages tomorrow and on Saturday.

"We had a look at some of the stages on Tuesday and the rest on Wednesday," said al-Attiyah's navigator Baumel. "There is a brand new stage - KMT - and that will be the second and fifth special and the first one on Friday. It is sandier than we may have expected, but that is easier on the car and we run less risk of punctures or damage."

In a total route of 587.80km, 198.62km will be timed against the clock.

2018 FIA MIDDLE EAST RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (TOP FIVE)

1. Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah (QAT) 107pts
2. Vojtech Stajf (CZE) 75pts
3. Roger Feghali (LBN) 38pts
4. Meshari al-Thefiri (KWT) 30pts
5. Christos Demostheous (CYP) 25pts

HORSE RACING

# De Mieulle, Diese open season with thrilling Al Ruwais Cup win

Trainers al-Malki and Ghazali saddle two winners each on the first day of the new racing season



Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club Racing manager Abdulla al-Kubaisi (right) presents the trophy to Alban de Mieulle after Diese won the Al Ruwais Cup at the Al Rayyan Park yesterday. PICTURES: Juhaim



Ronan Thomas (left) rides Diese to victory in the Al Ruwais Cup ahead of Ehwaz, ridden by Tomas Lukasek, at the Al Rayyan Park yesterday.

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

In a thrilling finish to the season's opening race meeting at Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club's Al Rayyan Park, Alban de Mieulle-trained Diese picked up a victory in the Al Ruwais Cup yesterday.

Olivier Materne-owned Diese had come close quite a few times last season, finishing in the top three eight times out of 10, including two victories.

Yesterday, jockey Ronan Thomas capped the day, which saw him finish in the frame two more times for de Mieulle, with a close win at the post, as Hadi Nasser al-Ramzani-trained Ehwaz, helmed by Tomas Lukasek, breathed down his ride's throat in the final stages of the 1900 race on dirt.

Jassim Mohamed Ghazali's AJS Wathanan, helmed by Marco Casamento, edged out Faleh

Bughanaim-ridden Bsheer by a short head for a third place finish.

Ibrahim al-Malki and Champion Trainer Ghazali notched two victories apiece on the season's opening day.

After both saddled maiden winners earlier in the day, al-Malki's Damsah comfortably won the Local Thoroughbred Handicap event for horses rated 80 and below under Jimmy Quinn, while Sheail bin Khalifa al-Kuwari's Cloudberry, with JP Guillambert in the saddle, edged out an al-Malki ward, Perfect Storm, at the post by a short head in the 1800m Thoroughbred Handicap event for horses rated 70-90.

After skipping the last season, Subaiya Awad Ibrahim-owned Bint Al Akaber returned to Al Rayyan Park for only her second victory in Qatar, when the seven-year-old, trained by Mohamed Khaled Elahmed, topped the Purebred Arabian Handicap

event for horses rated 75 and below.

In the six-furlong sprint, the mare, ridden by Anas al-Seyabi, beat Mubarak Mohamed al-Khayareen's Udal Al Wajba by a little over a length. Khalid Nasser al-Naimi-trained Saab was third.

Deborah Mountain-saddled Technicolour bounced back from a winless season with a handsome victory in the Thoroughbred Handicap event for horses rated 75 and below.

The gelding, owned by Abdullah Hassan Ali Abdulmalik had finished in the frame four times last season out of his eight outings, but the win had eluded him.

Yesterday, Qatari rider Rashid Ali al-Marri in the saddle of the five-year-old when he won by a little over nine lengths on Hadi Nasser al-Ramzani's ward, Tijan, helmed by Bughanaim. Ghazali's Al Fouz completed the top three under Ali Khalid al-

Mosallam.

Earlier in the day, Ghazali opened the new season just as he closed out the previous one - with a victory.

In the 1200m Purebred Arabian Maiden Plate event for fillies and mares, Khalifa bin Sheail al-Kuwari's Legtaifiya was ridden to her first career win by Champion Jockey Harry Bentley.

The other Arabian to shed the maiden status was Osama al-Dafea-trained Baker De Saularie, winning the 1700m Purebred Arabian Maiden Plate, while al-Malki-schooled Yvanlend shed his maiden status on his Qatar debut in the Class 6 Thoroughbred Maiden Plate event.

RESULTS

**Race 1:** 1. Legtaifiya (Harry Bentley), 2. Shaza Al Sulaimi (JP Guillambert), 3. Maraam (Ronan Thomas), 4. Ellianka (Faleh Bughanaim). Won by: 1 1/4, Shd, 1 1/2. Time: 1:20.51. Owner: Khalifa bin Sheail al-Kuwari. Trainer: Jas-

sim Mohamed Ghazali.

**Race 2:** 1. Yvanlend (JP Guillambert), 2. Qianlong (JP Guillambert), 3. On The Front Line (Tomas Lukasek), 4. Eledeed (Jean Baptiste Hamel). Won by: 2 1/4, 3/4, 2 1/4. Time: 1:49.71. Owner: Sheikh Faisal bin Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani. Trainer: Ibrahim al-Malki.

**Race 3:** 1. Baker De Saularie (Stephan Ladjadi), 2. Hareemah (Ronan Thomas), 3. AJS Al Moheen (Harry Bentley), 4. AJS Lafan (Jimmy Quinn). Won by: 26, 2 1/2, 2 1/2. Time: 1:59.71. Owner: Osama Omer al-Dafea. Trainer: Osama Omer al-Dafea.

**Race 4:** 1. Technicolour (Rashid Ali al-Marri), 2. Tijan (Faleh Bughanaim), 3. Al Fouz (Ali Khalid al-Mosallam), 4. Zainat (Abdulla Mubarak al-Maadeed). Won by: 9 1/4, 1 1/4, Shd. Time: 1:48.95. Owner: Abdullah Hassan Abdulmalik. Trainer: Deborah Mountain.

**Race 5:** 1. Bint Al Akaber (Anas al-Seyabi), 2. Udal Al Wajba (Marco

Casamento), 3. Saab (Syed Sadath), 4. Lolita Du Panjshir (Saleem Golam). Won by: 1 1/4, 5 3/4, 4 1/4. Time: 1:20.14. Owner: Subaiya Awad Ibrahim. Trainer: Mohamed Khaled Elahmed.

**Race 6:** 1. Damsah (Jimmy Quinn), 2. Khat Al Nar (Anas al-Seyabi), 3. Akram (Shakir al-Balushi), 4. Al Watan (JP Guillambert). Won by: 2 3/4, Shd, 1 1/4. Time: 1:13.97. Owner: Mohamed Abdulla Abdulmalik. Trainer: Ibrahim al-Malki.

**Race 7:** 1. Cloudberry (JP Guillambert), 2. Perfect Storm (Stephan Ladjadi), 3. Third Order (Harry Bentley), 4. Elkhart (Syed Sadath). Won by: Shd, 4 1/4, 2. Time: 1:55.23. Owner: Sheikh Khalifa al-Kuwari. Trainer: Jassim Mohamed Ghazali.

**Race 8:** 1. Diese (Ronan Thomas), 2. Ehwaz (Tomas Lukasek), 3. AJS Wathanan (Marco Casamento), 4. Bsheer (Faleh Bughanaim). Won by: Hd, 3 1/4, Shd. Time: 2:15.09. Owner: Olivier Materne. Trainer: Alban de Mieulle.

SPOTLIGHT

## Registrations open for 2019 Ooredoo Doha Marathon



Branding and Corporate Communications director Mustafa Jameel al-Qatami speaks at the Ooredoo Doha Marathon press conference.

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

The registration for 2019 Ooredoo Doha Marathon has been opened, Ooredoo announced at a press conference.

The seventh annual Ooredoo Marathon will take place on Friday, January 11, 2019 in Doha, with the exact route to be announced in the coming weeks.

Ooredoo began the marathon event to inspire Qatar's communities to get fit and raise money for a good cause.

The registration fees for the event will depend on the selected course and the age of the participant, and 100 percent of the same will be donated to charity.

Ooredoo Qatar COO Yousuf Abdulla al-Kubaisi said, "I'm delighted to announce that registration is now open for the 2019 Ooredoo Marathon. This event promises to be our most diverse ever, as we are inviting all of Qatar's communities to take part, as well as runners from around the world."

The 2019 edition of the marathon will feature courses for runners of all abilities, including a 10km run, half-marathon, full marathon, 5km run and a special children's 1km fun run.

Prizes will be awarded to the best runners in a range of categories, based on age and gender.

More information can be found at [https://www.premieronline.com/event/ooredoo\\_doha\\_marathon\\_2019\\_3912](https://www.premieronline.com/event/ooredoo_doha_marathon_2019_3912), or by following the #RunWithUS on Ooredoo's social media pages.

SPOTLIGHT

# Pakistan down N. Zealand in last-over thriller

AFP  
Abu Dhabi

Left-arm pace bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi defended 17 runs in the last over as Pakistan defeated New Zealand by two runs in a thrilling finish to the first Twenty20 international in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

New Zealand needed six off the last delivery to tie the match but experienced batsman Ross Taylor managed just a boundary as New Zealand - set 149 to win - finished at 146-6 at Sheikh Zayed Stadium.

The victory gave world number one ranked Pakistan their seventh consecutive win since July and 15th in 17 Twenty20 internationals this year.

Pakistan, who are on a roll after whitewashing Australia 3-0 in Dubai on Sunday, now have a 1-0 lead in the three-match series with the last two matches in Dubai on Friday and Sunday.

Mohamed Hafeez top-scored with 45 in Pakistan's 148-6 after they won the toss and batted.

Taylor finished with a 26-ball 42 not out with three boundaries but could not keep the run rate down as New Zealand needed 53 in the last five overs.

That was in contrast from the first five overs of their innings, dominated by opener Colin Munro's 42-ball 58 with three sixes and six boundaries.

Pakistan's varied bowling, led by Hasan Ali with 3-35, pulled them back significantly. Munro opened up in style, hitting two sixes and a four off Imad Wasim's fifth over of the innings before greeting Hasan with a six and a boundary to complete New Zealand's fifty in just 5.4 overs.

But Pakistan dismissed Glenn Phillips (12), Munro, captain Kane Williamson (11) and Colin de Grandhomme (six) as New Zealand stalled at 89-4.

Earlier, Pakistan lost in-form Babar Azam for seven in the third over while Sahibzada Farhan fell for one as they struggled to 10-2 before Hafeez and Asif Ali (24) lifted them during their 67-run stand for the third wicket. Hafeez hit five boundaries and a six in his 36-ball knock while Asif's 21-ball innings had a six and a boundary.

Pakistan managed 81 runs in the last ten overs with skipper Sarfraz Ahmed chipping in with a 26-ball 34 which had three boundaries and a six. Imad Wasim smashed a six and boundary in the last over to finish with 14 not out while Faheem Ashraf made 10 not out. For New Zealand, pace bowler Adam Milne finished with 2-28 while Ajaz Patel, Ish Sodhi and de Grandhomme took a wicket apiece.

**BRIEF SCORES**

Pakistan 148 for 6 (Hafeez 45, Sarfraz 34, Milne 2-28) beat New Zealand 146 for 6 (Munro 58, Taylor 42, Hasan 3-35) by two runs.



Pakistan's players celebrate after defeating New Zealand in their T20 match at the Abu Dhabi Cricket Stadium yesterday. (AFP)

PREVIEW

# India aim to extend dominance over Windies in final ODI

Kohli-led hosts lead the five-match series 2-1 after the second match ended in a tie

IAN S  
Thiruvananthapuram

Brimming with confidence after the massive 224-run win in the penultimate game, India will be eyeing to register their eighth straight series win over the West Indies when they face off in the fifth and final contest of the rubber at the Greenfield international stadium yesterday.

After the resounding victory in the fourth One-day International (ODI) at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai, the Virat Kohli-led hosts lead the series 2-1, with the second match being tied.

The last time the Caribbean side won a bilateral series against India was way back in 2006. With the northeastern monsoon in full cry, the match could well end up shortened as the weatherman has predicted a brief thunderstorm in the afternoon and late evening.

This is only the second international cricket match to be staged at the Greenfield Stadium. The first was on November 7 last year when the hosts defeated New Zealand in a T20 match that was shortened to inclement weather and saw just saw an eight over per side match. India won by six runs.

The organisers, the Kerala Cricket Association, are in an upbeat mood as the ground boasts of one of the best drainage systems in the business and even if the rain comes crashing down, they will be able to get it back into shape quickly once the rain stops.

Going into the final ODI, with opener Rohit Sharma, Ambati Rayudu and skipper Kohli in top form, India will like to keep the momentum into the series decider. Rayudu also took a step ahead in cementing his place at No. 4 slot with a fine century in the previous game.

Rohit also smashed an impressive 162 off 137 balls in the fourth ODI while the skipper has three tons from four games. The Indian batting will once again mostly rely on the shoulders of these two on Thursday.

Despite impressive performances by the top order, the cause of concern for the team management will be the flop show of stumper Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

The former skipper has failed to live up to the expectations, which also resulted in his exclusion from the Twenty20 international (T20I) series against the Windies and Australia.

It will be the litmus test for Dhoni, who has been under fire for his continuous poor performances.

In the bowling department, chinaman Kuldeep Yadav has been impressive in this series so far after scalping eight wickets from three games and Kohli will like him to replicate his past, specially in the middle overs.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah and Bhuv-



Indian bowler Yuzvendra Chahal (right) prepares to bowl in the nets while his teammate and batsman Ambati Rayudu looks on during the team's practice session on the eve of fifth one day international (ODI) match against West Indies at the Greenfield International Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram yesterday. (AFP)

## India plays 60 per cent more cricket than other teams: Bharath Arun

Indian cricketers play 60 per cent more cricket than other international teams and hence there is a heavy workload for the bowlers, Indian bowling coach Bharath Arun has opined. Interacting with the media here at the Greenfield International Stadium ahead of the final one-day international (ODI) with the West Indies, Arun said: "Since India plays 60 per cent more cricket than other teams, it's natural that there is a heavy work load on the fast bowlers and hence they will be rotated," said Arun, a former fast bowler who donned the Indian colours. He said the whole policy of rotation is to manage the work load of each

one of them. Arun praised the swanky Greenfield Stadium, which will be hosting just its second international cricket match today. Meanwhile, Nic Pothas, the fielding coach of the Windies side, went ga-ga over the sprawling 45,000 capacity cricket stadium and heaped praises on the facilities. While the West Indies skipped a practise session at the stadium, Indian captain Virat Kohli, former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and a few senior members preferred to rest at the hotel, the rest of the team had a two-hour net session under the watchful eyes of head coach Ravi Sastri. The Windies side was seen taking a stroll in the famed Kovalam

beach and had a round of beach volleyball. Sanju Samson, a local lad who has previously donned the Indian colours, lamented he is not playing for his country, which he would have loved to at his home town. Samson was busy preparing for the Ranji Trophy match against Hyderabad that also kicks-off on Thursday at a nearby stadium. The stadium will be opened for spectators at 11 a.m. Ticket sales continue briskly, with over Rs4 crore already realised and the organisers are confident that it will be a full-house for the series decider. Around 1,500 police personnel have been deployed for the match.

neshwar Kumar are expected to dismantle the Windies top order in the initial overs, while Khaleel Ahmad, who was a surprise package in Mumbai with figures of 3/13, could be a crucial support for his seniors.

Coming to the West Indies squad, batsmen Shimron Hetmyer and Shai

Hope are the only two batsmen who have shown some fight against the home side. They both have hit a century each and would like to repeat it for one final time to help their side tie the series.

Captain Jason Holder has shown he can be fruitful with the bat down the order. However, the visitors could pos-

sibly miss the services of off-spinner Ashley Nurse, who has been a consistent performer with five wickets from the series.

Nurse is doubtful for the series decider after suffering an injury during the last game. His absence could affect the hopes of the visitors in a crucial contest.

MATCH-FIXING

## ICC suspends Sri Lanka bowling coach

AFP  
Colombo

The International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday suspended Sri Lanka's bowling coach Nuwan Zoysa after accusing him of match-fixing and other "corrupt conduct" in the sport.

"Mr Zoysa has 14 days from 1 November 2018 to respond to the charges," the ICC said in a brief statement. Zoysa is charged, among other things, for "being party to an effort to fix or contrive or to otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect of an international match", the statement said.

It gave no further details. Forty-year-old Zoysa is the second Sri Lankan to be charged by the ICC's anti-corruption unit (ACU).

Earlier this month, dashing former batsman, ex-chief selector and former captain Sanath Jayasuriya was charged for failing to cooperate with a match-fixing probe and concealing information.

Jayasuriya, 49, was reportedly asked to cooperate with an inquiry from ACU chief Alex Marshall who visited Sri Lanka last

month. The ACU is acting further on their previous investigation which in January 2016 saw Galle stadium curator Jayananda Warnaweera banned for three years after he failed to cooperate with the ACU.

ACU head Marshall last month said: "There is currently an ICC (ACU) investigation under way in Sri Lanka. Naturally as part of this we are talking to a number of people."

It was not immediately clear if the charges against Zoysa and Jayasuriya relate to the same case or if they are being investigated separately. Sri Lanka has recently sought help from neighbouring India to drafting laws to combat cheating in the game.

Colombo has also promised to establish a special police unit to investigate match-fixing after a documentary aired in May showed Galle groundsman Tharanga Indika and professional cricketer Tharindu Mendis allegedly talking about doctoring the pitch for the Test against England starting November 6.

Indika and Mendis have been suspended by Sri Lanka Cricket pending an ICC investigation. A third man, provincial coach Jeevantha Kulatunga, was also suspended.

## MASTER AND HIS PUPILS



Former players Sachin Tendulkar (left) and Vinod Kambli pose for a picture with their coach Ramakant Achrekar (centre) as they seek his blessings for the Tendulkar Middlesex Global Academy in Mumbai yesterday. (AFP)

## Ganguly fires missive

Former captain Sourav Ganguly expressed his "deep sense of fear" about the running of Indian cricket as he slammed the sloppy handling of #MeToo allegations against board chief executive Rahul Johri, among other key issues. Johri was accused of sexual harassment on October 12 in an account shared by author Harnidh Kaur on Twitter, and the board's administrative committee gave him a week to explain. However, the Supreme Court-appointed committee is divided on the issue, with its two members arguing over the course of action against Johri. Ganguly, who heads Bengal's state cricket association, criticised the functioning of the national board, the richest and most powerful cricket body in the world. "I write this mail to you all with the deep sense of fear as to where Indian cricket administration is going," Ganguly wrote to BCCI secretary Amitabh Choudhary, president CK Khanna and treasurer Anirudh Chaudhary, in a letter seen by AFP. "I don't know how far it's true, but the recent reports of harassment has really made the BCCI look very poorly... more so the way it has been handled," he said.

## TENNIS

# Djokovic new number one as Nadal withdraws

Spanish ace troubled by abdominal injury, says doctor advised him not to play



Spain's Rafael Nadal gives a press conference on day three of the ATP World Tour Masters at The AccorHotels Arena in Paris yesterday. Below, Novak Djokovic.

DPA  
Paris

**W**orld number one Rafael Nadal withdrew from the Paris Masters due to injury yesterday, handing the top spot in the standings to Serbia's Novak Djokovic for the first time in two years.

It completes a remarkable turnaround for Djokovic in 2018 as he started the year poorly before returning to form. Wins at Wimbledon and the US Open sent him flying up the rankings while Nadal struggled for fitness. Nadal has battled knee issues since withdrawing from the final grand slam of the year in New York but it was an abdominal problem which ended his hopes in Paris.

He withdrew shortly before a second round match against compatriot Fernando Verdasco. "It was great to be here in Paris for a couple of days and practice and in terms of tennis, I think I am better than I thought one week ago," Nadal said.

"But I started to feel something the last few days in the abdominal, especially when I was serving. The doctor says it is recommended to not play.

"It has been a tough year for me. I want to avoid drastic things. The doctor says if I try to win the tournament, the abdominal will break for sure. I am not happy but I have to accept and stay



positive." Nadal could yet end the year as number one, especially if he can perform well at the season-ending ATP finals in London next month. But when the new rankings are released on Monday, it will be Djokovic's name at the top for the first time since October 2016.

The in-form Djokovic, who next faces

Damir Dzumhur in the French capital, has lost only twice in 34 matches as well as winning the last two Masters crowns in Shanghai and Cincinnati.

While Nadal was suffering, another of his long-time rivals moved into the last 16 without firing a shot. Roger Federer progressed without playing as Canadian

opponent Milos Raonic withdrew with injury. Raonic won an epic three-set encounter with home hopeful Jo-Wilfried Tsonga on Tuesday but succumbed to an elbow problem.

Federer, 37, is chasing his 100th career title will now begin his Paris campaign in the third round today against either Fabio Fognini or Marton Fucsovics.

On court, Germany's Alexander Zverev triumphed 6-4, 6-4 against American Frances Tiafoe in a topsy-turvy encounter. There were 23 missed break points between the pair as Zverev faced seven break points behind a poor 43-per-cent first serve success rate in the opening set, where Tiafoe could not take advantage.

However, 21-year-old Zverev finally broke serve in the 10th game to claim the first set lead after Tiafoe wilted with a netted return. Tiafoe saved one match point in the second set but after a double-fault released a second opportunity to wrap up the contest for Zverev, who entered the third round with a Tiafoe error after 1 hour and 44 minutes.

It is Zverev's first ever victory at the Paris event after losing on his debut match last year. Japan's Kei Nishikori advanced with a 7-5, 6-4 win over Frenchman Adrian Panatta and American John Isner progressed after claiming 6-3, 6-7 (2-7), 7-6 (7-1) victory against Kazakhstan's Mikhail Kukushkin.

## RUGBY

## Wales great Jenkins to retire after Zebre clash



AFP  
London

**W**ales' record cap holder Gethin Jenkins will retire from rugby union after taking part in Cardiff Blues' PRO14 clash against Zebre on Sunday.

The Blues announced yesterday the 37-year-old prop forward would end a career that yielded 129 Wales caps and saw him tour three times with the British and Irish Lions, playing in five Tests.

Jenkins, who has been struggling to overcome a chronic knee injury, said: "I have been working hard rehabbing over the last three months and I was confident I was going to be back playing, so it's disappointing to be retiring after Sunday's game against Zebre.

"It's obviously a big decision, but I've had a good innings, it's time to finish and I am looking forward to one more run-out on the weekend and hopefully finishing on a high."

Jenkins, who made his Wales debut in 2002, added: "The pain I have been experiencing from rugby, in my daily life, simply isn't tolerable, but it is impor-

tant to me that after all the work I have put in, I run out with my team one last time and finish on my own terms."

Jenkins has appeared in almost 200 games for the Blues in two spells, while he also captained Wales during an international career that saw him play a key role in three Six Nations Grand Slams.

Reflecting on his career, Jenkins said: "I have so many memories from over the years and could stay here all day listing them, but the biggest thing I will miss is that camaraderie with the boys, the buzz of running out and playing and the feeling in the changing rooms after a win.

"I am very proud of everything I have achieved in my career."

Jenkins is now set to take up a coaching role within the Cardiff Blues academy.

Blues coach John Mulvihill, paying tribute to the front-rower, said: "Gethin Jenkins is a legend of Welsh rugby, a great servant for both club and country and it is fitting that he finishes his career in front of his home crowd at Cardiff Arms Park.

"After 13 seasons at Cardiff Blues, at the top of his game, this weekend marks the end of an era at the club."

### Seven Russians given four-year bans

**Moscow:** Russia's anti-doping body RUSADA said yesterday that seven athletes in athletics and weightlifting have been given four-year bans for violating the country's anti-doping rules, with another being suspended for two years.

Shot putter Yana Mikhailova's two-year ban has been backdated to July 12 of this year, while Natalia Polyakova, Tatyana Kachegina and Sergey Kotov have all received four-year sanctions from the All-Russian Athletics Federation.

Weightlifters Valeriy Temnik, Roman Rednikin, Sergey Oreshnikov and Fatima Umakhanova have all been given four-year bans from their governing body, ruling them out of the world championships which begin in Turkmenistan today. Russian media said that Temnik and Umakhanova tested positive for banned substances while Rednikin and Oreshnikov were sanctioned for failing to appear at doping tests. RUSADA was last month reinstated by the World Anti-Doping Agency following its suspension in November 2015 for allegations of state-sponsored doping in Russia.

## GOLF

## American Wise named PGA Rookie of Year

AFP  
Los Angeles

**A**aron Wise, who captured his first US PGA Tour title in his 18th start as a member, won the 2018 PGA Tour Rookie of the Year Award on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old American, who was born in Cape Town, left South Africa for the United States when his family moved at age three.

"My parents did well to keep food on the table," Wise said. "We didn't have much."

Wearing oversized shoes so he would need fewer pairs, Wise battled through to win the 2016 US college title and helped Oregon win the college team crown.

Wise earned a US PGA Tour spot for the 2017-18 campaign and in just his 18th start as a member took the Byron Nelson tournament crown, hitting 66 of 72 greens in regulation, the most by any tour winner since 1997.

World number 53 Wise, three off his career-best world ranking, will open his 2017-18 campaign this week at Las Vegas.

Wise was the only rookie to reach the season-ending Tour Championship from among eight who qualified for the playoffs. He



became the 10th of 12 rookies in the Tour Championship to win Rookie of the Year in voting by players.

"It has been a year of ups and downs," Wise said. "The highs have been amazing, but there have been some lows. To finish it on a good note was a point of emphasis."

Wise was the fifth-youngest player to qualify for the showdown at East Lake, behind Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth, Spain's Sergio Garcia and South Korea's Kim Si-woo.

"Qualifying for the Tour Championship as a rookie proved there's no stage too big for him," PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan said.

## BOTTOMLINE

## Kasatkina hits out at scheduling after Keys defeat

AFP  
Zhuhai, China

**T**op seed Daria Kasatkina slammed the tournament scheduling at the WTA Elite Trophy in China on Wednesday after losing in straight sets to Madison Keys.

Kasatkina, 21, was beaten with relative ease by the 23-year-old American, who took 70 minutes to seal the win 6-2, 6-4.

The Russian, who finished her previous round-robin tie against Wang Qiang at 10pm on Tuesday, looked tired on court and had already criticised the match timetable, saying it "sucks".

Asked if she stood by the comments at her post-match press conference on Wednesday, she took a deep breath and said: "Yea. I mean if they want me to pull out of the tournament then they are doing a good job, be-



Daria Kasatkina of Russia hits a return against Madison Keys of the US in their second round match of the Zhuhai Elite Trophy tennis tournament in Zhuhai yesterday.

cause in less than 24 hours I've played two matches.

"The girls [Keys and Wang] are not playing tomorrow, they are playing on Friday, and I was supposed to play two matches in less than 24 hours.

"So there's nothing I can say, nothing I can do. I was fighting, I mean I did everything I could.

"I gave more than 100% of my abilities, so this is professional sport."

Keys cruised to take the first

set at the Hengqin International Tennis Center, and although Kasatkina put up a fight in the second, the sixth seed clinched the tie.

The American showed little sign of the left knee injury which forced her to retire from her last two tournaments, in Wuhan and Beijing.

After the match, she said: "I think I had a really good start today, and that definitely helped me.

"Overall, I think I just played really solid and went out and did what I needed to do."

Earlier, defending champion Julia Goerges suffered a bruising defeat to Anett Kontaveit.

The fifth seed took a nasty tumble mid-way through the match, which she went on to lose 2-6, 6-4, 4-6 after more than two hours.

Kontaveit, the tournament tenth seed, started brightly, breaking the world no. 14 three

times to take the opening set.

Goerges, 29, fell heavily on to the hard court in the sixth game of the second set, and needed to ice her right leg during the changeover.

Clearly slightly rattled, the German nevertheless dug deep to claim the set, pumping her fist and gesturing to her coach as she celebrated.

However, it was the 22-year-old Estonian Kontaveit who won the decider.

World number 20 Kontaveit has now played both her round-robin matches, after losing on Tuesday to Belgium's Elise Mertens, who will play Goerges today.

Yesterday's third and last match saw Spain's Garbine Muguruza beat China's Zhang Shuai.

The seventh seed dropped the first set, but recovered to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 in just over two hours.

NBA

# Leonard guides Raptors to thumping win over Sixers

It was the sixth straight home victory to open the season for the Raptors, a franchise best

Reuters  
Toronto

**K**awhi Leonard scored 31 points and grabbed seven rebounds, and Jonas Valanciunas added 23 points off the bench as the Toronto Raptors defeated the visiting Philadelphia 76ers 129-112 on Tuesday night. Kyle Lowry added 20 points and 12 assists for his fifth double-double of the season for Toronto, and Pascal Siakam finished with 15 points and 15 rebounds. Serge Ibaka chipped in with 16 points and eight rebounds, and Danny Green scored 10 points, putting all five starters in double digits in points.

It was the sixth straight home victory to open the season for the Raptors, a franchise best. They also have defeated the 76ers in 12 consecutive home games. Joel Embiid scored 31 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Philadelphia, and Ben Simmons finished with 11 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds — along with 11 turnovers. Robert Covington added 15 points while JJ Redick (13) and Mike Muscala (12) combined for 25 off the bench.

“Good bounce back, good win,” Lowry said afterward. “It was a good win. We were very active tonight, we were all over the place. It was a very scrappy night defensively and our guys played really great on defense.”

**TRAIL BLAZERS 104, ROCKETS 85** Jusuf Nurkic, Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum combined for 63 points and visiting Portland dismantled suddenly hapless Houston, the Rockets’ fourth straight loss. The Trail Blazers, completing a four-game, six-day road trip, overcame a sluggish start and pulled away from the rested Rockets with a 15-3 run in the second quarter.

Nurkic and Lillard each had 22 points, and McCollum added 19. The Rockets, playing a second consecutive game without All-NBA guard James Harden (Grade 1-plus left hamstring strain), offered token resistance in the second half, trailing by as many as 28 points while remaining winless at home. Chris Paul led Houston with 17 points and nine assists, and Clint Capela had 14 points and 14 rebounds.

**CELTICS 108, PISTONS 105** Kyrie Irving capped a 23-7 third-quarter run with 11 consecutive points, including three 3-pointers, propelling



Toronto Raptors forward Kawhi Leonard (right) looks to get past Philadelphia 76ers guard TJ McConnell during the NBA match in Toronto. (USA TODAY Sports)

host Boston to a big lead — which the Celtics nearly blew before hanging on in a wild one against Detroit. Irving led all scorers with 31 points, helping the Celtics beat the Pistons for the second time in four days. Blake Griffin (24 points, 15 rebounds) and Andre Drummond (17 points, 12 rebounds) each had double-doubles for the Pistons.

Detroit led 60-58 in the third minute

of the third quarter before the Celtics scored 10 straight points to take a lead they never relinquished. The Pistons rallied within 90-89 on a Reggie Bullock free throw with 4:21 remaining, but Irving, Jaylen Brown and Marcus Morris countered with consecutive hoops to create some breathing room and the Celtics went on to win their third straight.

**THUNDER 128, CLIPPERS 110**

Russell Westbrook and Paul George each scored 32 points, and Oklahoma City used an offensive eruption to open the second half and ultimately overrun visiting Los Angeles. Trailing 67-54 at half-time, the Thunder went on a 23-2 run to open the third quarter, winning their second consecutive game after opening the season with four consecutive defeats.

Westbrook, who missed the first two games of the season after undergoing a knee procedure, has scored at least 23 points in three of the four games he has played.

He has scored at least 30 points twice. He was not on the court when Oklahoma City lost to the Clippers 108-92 on Oct. 19 at Los Angeles.

**CAVALIERS 136, HAWKS 114**

Rodney Hood scored a season-high 26 points and helped Cleveland beat visiting Atlanta to earn its first win in seven games this season. The win marked the debut of Cleveland coach Larry Drew, who took over following the firing of Tyronn Lue on Sunday.

The Cavaliers also got 20 points from Cedi Osman, who has reached that mark in the past two games. The Cavaliers were playing without Kevin Love, who missed his third straight game with a sore left foot. Trae Young led Atlanta with 24 points, and Alex Len had 20 points and nine rebounds.

**KINGS 107, MAGIC 99**

Sacramento won for the fourth straight time, beating host Orlando for the Kings’ best start in four seasons.

Sacramento’s 5-3 start this season is its best since a 5-3 opening to the 2014-15 season, and the Kings are two games over .500 for the first time since Nov. 28 that same season.

Buddy Hield led the Kings with a season-high 25 points and 11 rebounds, and Nemanja Bjelica added 21 points. Willie Cauley-Stein contributed 14 points and 11 rebounds. Aaron Gordon (18 points, 10 rebounds) and Nikola Vucevic (15 points, 15 boards) had double-doubles for the Magic.

**HORNETS 125, HEAT 113**

Tony Parker came off the bench for 24 points and 11 assists as host Charlotte beat Miami for the second time in 11 days. Parker, a 17-year veteran in his first season with the Hornets, shot 8 of 15 from the field on a night when the Hornets hit 54.3% from the floor and were 13 of 28 from 3-point range.

Malik Monk and Nicolas Batum each had 20 points for Charlotte. Dwyane Wade topped the Heat with 19 points, and Hassan Whiteside contributed 16 points and 12 rebounds.

**GRIZZLIES 107, WIZARDS 95**

Garrett Temple scored 20 points, and Mike Conley and Marc Gasol added 19 apiece as Memphis topped visiting Washington for its second straight win. Temple hit 4 of 7 3-point attempts and all six of his foul shots.

He also grabbed seven rebounds. John Wall scored 22 points and Bradley Beal added 17 for the Wizards, who dropped the final four games of their five-game road trip. Wall had seven assists and nine turnovers.

NHL

# Eberle scores twice to lead Islanders past Penguins

Reuters  
New York

**T**he New York Islanders produced a three-goal second period on Tuesday, two of the tallies from Jordan Eberle, and rolled to a 6-3 win over the host Pittsburgh Penguins. Andrew Ladd, Brock Nelson, Matt Martin and Tom Kuhnhackl also scored as the Islanders won their third straight. Sidney Crosby had a goal and an assist, and Dominik Simon and Evgeni Malkin also scored for Pittsburgh, which had won four in a row. New York’s Robin Lehner stopped 23 of 25 shots before leaving after the second period for undisclosed reasons. Thomas Greiss stopped 12 of 13 shots in the third.

**LIGHTNING 8, DEVILS 3**

Brayden Point scored the tiebreaking goal and added four assists in a five-point night as Tampa Bay rallied from an early deficit and pulled away for blowout victory over visiting New Jersey. Point snapped a 2-2 tie 31 seconds into the second period by sweeping a loose puck into a vacated net.

He also set up the first of Braydon Coburn’s two goals in the opening period, a power-play goal by Steven Stamkos in the second and tallies by Tyler Johnson and Ryan McDonagh in the third period. Point recorded the 11th five-point game in team history and third since the start of last season.

**PREDATORS 4, KNIGHTS 1**

Ryan Hartman scored two goals and Juuse Saros had 23 saves as host Nashville scored four unanswered goals to rally for a victory over Vegas in a matchup of the last two Western Conference champions.

Hartman’s two goals came just 57 seconds apart in the second period and marked the third multi-goal game of his career. Calle Jarnkrok and Viktor

Arvidsson also scored goals for Nashville, while Kevin Fiala chipped in with two assists. Reilly Smith scored the lone goal for Vegas, on a first-period power play. Malcolm Subban, playing against his brother and 2013 Norris Trophy winner PK Subban for just the second time in their careers, finished with 25 saves for Vegas.

**BRUINS 3, HURRICANES 2**

Brad Marchand scored twice and Patrice Bergeron assisted on all three Boston tallies in a victory at Raleigh, NC Boston goalie Jaroslav Halak made 42 saves while Carolina goalie Scott Darling made 28 saves in his first appearance of the season. Micheal Ferland and Dougie Hamilton scored for the Hurricanes.

**STARS 4, CANADIENS 1**

Devin Shore scored a third-period goal after assisting on two second-period tallies as visiting Dallas skated past Montreal. Esa Lindell added a goal and an assist in the victory, which was the Stars’ first on the road this season after three losses.

Dallas also got goals from Miro Heiskanen and Alexander Radulov while winning for the third time in four games. Montreal, which lost for the second time in its past four games, scored when Brendan Gallagher skated hard into the net and pushed home the rebound of a Tomas Tatar shot early in the third period.

**RED WINGS 5, BLUE JACKETS 3**

Tyler Bertuzzi scored the go-ahead goal with 3:24 remaining, Dylan Larkin supplied two goals and an assist, and visiting Detroit recovered after giving away a three-goal lead to down Columbus. Bertuzzi’s goal came after the Jackets erased a 3-0 deficit during the third period.

Rookie defenseman Dennis Cholowski skated in from the point and went around the back of the net.



New York Islanders’ Anders Lee (left) handles the puck as Pittsburgh Penguins’ Sidney Crosby defends. (USA TODAY Sports)

He shoveled the puck toward the front, where Bertuzzi snared it and beat Sergei Bobrovsky just below the crossbar. Larkin added an empty-net tally at 19:17 to put the game away. Josh Anderson, Markus Nutivaara and Pierre-Luc Dubois scored for the Blue Jackets.

**FLAMES 2, SABRES 1**

A late equalizer and Johnny Gaudreau’s overtime goal gave Calgary a comeback road win in Buffalo. After being unable to solve Sabres goaltender Carter Hutton over the first 59 minutes of the game, Calgary finally broke through at the 19:04 mark of the third period

when Matthew Tkachuk redirected a shot into the net. After the Flames had to kill a penalty for the first two minutes of overtime, Gaudreau ended the game 2:40 into the extra frame, netting the score after a nice passing play with Sean Monahan and Mark Giordano. Buffalo’s Jack Eichel scored in the first period.

**WILD 4, OILERS 3**

Mikael Granlund scored the tie-breaking goal at 14:12 of the third period as Minnesota ended host Edmonton’s three-game winning streak. Granlund’s power-play goal, assisted by Eric Staal and Ryan Suter, gave the Wild

their only lead of the game and helped them improve to 1-1-0 on their season-high, seven-game trip. Granlund, who also had an assist, extended his points streak to nine games. He has six goals and six assists during the run. Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid and Alex Chiasson scored for Edmonton.

**COYOTES 5, SENATORS 1**

Alex Galchenyuk scored his first goal of the season in a two-point night, and Antti Raanta made 25 saves as Arizona defeated Ottawa at Glendale, Arizona, for its fourth straight win. The Coyotes, shut out in three of their first four

games, have been one of the most prolific scoring teams in the league lately, with 20 goals in their last four games.

Ottawa goalie Mike Condon gave up three goals on 11 shots and was pulled at 15:30 of the first period.

The only goal for the Senators, losers of four straight, was the first NHL tally for 2017 second-round pick Alex Formenton.

**FLYERS 3, DUCKS 2**

Nolan Patrick scored the game-winning goal with 1:51 remaining, and Brian Elliott made 23 saves as visiting Philadelphia snapped a three-game losing streak with an Anaheim. Sean Couturier and Ivan Provorov also scored goals for the Flyers, who had been outscored 13-2 in their three previous games.

Claude Giroux finished with two assists for Philadelphia, which was playing the first of four games on a Western Conference road trip.

Pontus Aberg scored both goals for Anaheim, which lost its sixth consecutive game. He also scored his first two goals of the season in the Ducks’ 4-3 overtime loss to the San Jose Sharks on Sunday night. Ryan Miller finished with 33 saves for the Ducks.

**RANGERS 4, SHARKS 3 (SO)**

Chris Kreider scored a pair of third-period goals, and Kevin Shattenkirk scored the lone shootout marker as New York Rangers ended a two-game losing streak with a shootout win at San Jose. Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist made 31 saves through regulation and overtime and denied all three San Jose skaters in the shootout.

San Jose’s Tomas Hertl scored with 1.3 seconds left in regulation to force overtime. Brent Burns and Timo Meier also scored for the Sharks, while the Rangers got a first-period goal from Mats Zuccarello. Martin Jones made 34 saves through regulation and overtime for the Sharks, who are 4-0-2 in their past six games.

## FOCUS

# Asian football boss urges 'fair play' in presidential poll

'In Asia and particularly here at AFC, we have built a positive reputation and image in the last five years. We do not need nor do we want any third-party interference or influence in our elections'



FIFA president Gianni Infantino (right) and AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim al-Khalifah hold a plaque after inaugurating the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) new headquarters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. (AFP)

AFP  
Kuala Lumpur

Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim al-Khalifah yesterday called for "fair play" in next year's elections where he will seek a fresh, four-year term as president.

The Bahraini royal said he had the support of nearly 90 percent of the AFC's 46 full members, but warned against "third-party interference" in the vote next

April. Sheikh Salman first took the reins in 2013 when the Asian body was still reeling from a corruption scandal which saw his predecessor, Mohamed bin Hammam, banned from football for life.

"In Asia and particularly here at the AFC, we have built a positive reputation and image in the last five years," he told the AFC annual congress in Kuala Lumpur.

"We do not need nor do we want any third-party interference or influence in our elections. We need to be strong on

this matter."

The congress passed an amendment to an electoral rule which said candidates must be backed by their home country and two other federations. Any three nominations are now acceptable.

It also approved a proposal to formally recognise five regional associations within the AFC.

At the AFC Congress in April, Sheikh Salman could face a challenge from Saudi Arabia's Adel Ezzat, head of a new regional bloc, the South West Asian Foot-

ball Federation.

However, the sheikh said he had letters of support from 40 of the federations in the AFC, which has influence as the world's second biggest confederation behind Africa.

"All member associations must be free to exercise their rights for the good of the game. And this, we must remember, is the Asian football family. Our family must stick together," he said.

"I can say I won't let you down," added the sheikh.

His potential challenger, Ezzat, resigned as head of the Saudi

football federation last month, saying he wanted to focus on the AFC elections.

While Saudi Arabia has long been a marginal player in the game, the oil-rich kingdom - currently involved in a diplomatic row with 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar - is seen as being in the midst of a push for influence in football.

Sheikh Salman was elected in 2013 and completed the last two years of bin Hammam's term, before being re-elected unopposed to a full, four-year term in 2015.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Messi back in Barca training as arm injury heals quickly

Reuters  
Madrid

Lionel Messi returned to training earlier than expected with Barcelona yesterday as the forward continues his recovery from an arm injury which kept him out of the team's wins against Inter Milan and Real Madrid last week.

The Argentine forward was set to miss three weeks after breaking a bone in his right arm on October 20 during a match against Sevilla, but reports in Spain suggest Messi may be available for first-team action quicker than forecast.

Messi, not included in the squad for Barcelona's Copa del Rey game yesterday at Cultural Leonesa, is unlikely to feature on Saturday in the La Liga match against Rayo Vallecano.

Barcelona face Inter in the Champions League on Nov 9 then play Real Betis in La Liga on Nov 11.

They beat Inter 2-0 at the

Nou Camp without Messi last week to go top of Champions League Group B, before thrashing Real Madrid 5-1 on Sunday to go first in La Liga.

**ALVES TRAINS WITH TEAM-MATES EYEING PSG RETURN**  
Dani Alves trained with his Paris Saint-Germain team mates for the first time in almost six months on Wednesday as the Brazilian defender moved closer to a return from a serious knee injury, French media said yesterday.

Alves damaged the cruciate ligament in his right knee during the French Cup final against Les Herbiers on May 8 and has not played since, missing the World Cup for Brazil and pre-season training with his club.

The 35-year-old former Barcelona and Juventus player began light training earlier this month but club officials did not put a date on his return to first-team action, L'Equipe reported.

Alves joined PSG in July 2017 on a free transfer.

## Di Maria extends PSG contract

Paris Saint-Germain winger Angel Di Maria has signed a two-year contract extension with the club keeping him at the French champions until June 2021.

The 30-year old joined PSG from Manchester United in 2015 for an estimated fee of 60 million euros (\$68.9mn), at the time it was the second largest transfer fee paid by the Parc des Princes club for a player, behind Uruguayan striker Edinson Cavani.

"I have loved the last three years in Paris where I have everything I need to play my best football" Di Maria said in a statement. "Every day I feel honoured and motivated to

be a part of such an ambitious project - unique in Europe. Along with my teammates, we have a lot more great things to achieve and we will continue to help PSG grow as a big club internationally," he added. After starting with Rosario Central in south America he moved to Europe and joined Benfica in 2007, before signing for Real Madrid three years later. He moved to Manchester United in 2014 and then PSG. He has scored 57 goals and made 58 assists in 150 games for the French club.

He won the Ligue 1 title in 2016 and 2018 as well as the French Cup and French League Cup in 2016, 2017 and 2018.



## LEAGUE CUP

## Superb Stanislas strike helps Bournemouth into quarters

Reuters  
Bournemouth, England

A superb goal from Junior Stanislas helped Bournemouth reach the League Cup quarter-finals with a 2-1 win over Norwich City on Tuesday while third tier Burton Albion beat Nottingham Forest 3-2 to reach the last eight for the first time.

Bournemouth, who are flying high in sixth in the Premier League, opened the scoring in the 39th minute when Stanislas weaved into the area with a couple of stepovers and then rifled the ball into the net.

It was a fantastic goal but harsh on second-tier Norwich, who had played well in the first half and went close when Dennis Srebný's effort came back off the inside of the post. Norwich were level with 20 minutes remaining through Onel Hernandez, but parity lasted only two minutes as a Bournemouth corner resulted in Steve Cook's shot finding the net via a deflection on the line.

Burton's victory was particularly sweet for manager Nigel Clough, who made more than 400 appearances for four-times League Cup winners Forest over two spells. "To get to the last eight as a League One club is pretty special," he told Sky Sports.

"To get to the last 16 was a hell of an achievement. We've had our breaks but we've earned



Bournemouth's English midfielder Junior Stanislas (centre) celebrates scoring the opening goal during the English League cup fourth round match against Norwich City at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, southern England. (AFP)

them and to be in the last eight is wonderful. We can't wait for the draw."

Clough's side missed a first-half chance to take the lead when Northern Ireland striker Liam Boyce blazed a penalty over the bar, but did open the scoring when Scott Fraser's shot took a wicked deflection before looping into the net.

Fraser added a second eight minutes later when he stroked home after being teed up by Boyce, yet Forest clawed a route back into the match when Lewis Grabban slotted home from six metres.

Forest's comeback hopes were stalled, however, with the goal of the game as Fraser turned provider, crossing for Jake Hesketh

to volley home with superb technique, but there was still time for late drama as Forest substitute Arvin Appiah prodded home in stoppage time.

Leicester City's fourth round match against Southampton was postponed after the chairman of the Midlands club Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha was killed in a helicopter crash on Saturday.

## EPL

## Mourinho escapes FA charge over abusive language

Agencies  
London

Jose Mourinho will not face a touchline ban after an independent panel cleared him of using foul language after Manchester United's 3-2 win over Newcastle, the FA has announced.

Mourinho was charged with improper conduct for remarks he allegedly made as he left the field at Old Trafford after the comeback win against Newcastle.

United vigorously contested the 55-year-old's charge and an Independent Regulatory Commission convened yesterday and decided Mourinho will avoid any sanction.

A statement from the FA read: "A charge against José Mourinho for allegedly using abusive language which was abusive and/or insulting and/or improper has been found not proven following an Independent Regulatory Commission hearing today.

"It related to an incident at the end of the Manchester United versus Newcastle United game on October 6, 2018. Written reasons for the decision of the Independent Regulatory Commission will be published in due course. This decision is subject to appeal."

The full written reasons are likely to be published next week, when the FA's disciplinary department will consider whether to appeal.



## ROONEY URGES MAN UNITED FLOPS TO SHOW RESPECT

Wayne Rooney has urged Manchester United's under-achieving stars to show more respect for their troubled club.

United are languishing in eighth place in the Premier League and have made a slow start to their Champions League campaign. Sunday's 2-1 win over Everton did little to lift the gloom around Old Trafford, with United manager Jose Mourinho under scrutiny following a spluttering run which has seen key players fail to produce consistent performances.

Mourinho has clashed with United stars including Paul Pogba, Luke Shaw, Alexis Sanchez and Anthony Martial.

And Rooney, who became United's record goalscorer before leaving in 2017, believes it is down to the team's highly-

paid stars to play with more pride and passion regardless of their issues with Mourinho.

In an interview with Football Focus, published on the BBC Sport website, DC United striker Rooney said: "Obviously they are going through a difficult period at the minute, but Jose Mourinho is very experienced and I think some players have to do a little bit better.

"In my experience, I have never seen or heard of a player not wanting to play in the game because they have had a falling out with the manager.

"I don't think as a player you could do that, you've got to respect the club and the fans and also respect your team-mates.

"I don't think any player, certainly at Manchester United, will be not playing for Jose, I'm sure they're all working hard behind the scenes to get results."

EPL

# Leicester to face Cardiff after owner Vichai's tragic death

'An announcement on the rearrangement of the club's League Cup fourth round tie against Southampton, postponed earlier this week, will be made in due course'



Buddhist monks lay tributes by a photograph of Leicester City Football Club's Thai chairman Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha, outside Leicester City Football Club's King Power Stadium in Leicester, eastern England, yesterday in honour and remembrance of those who died in a helicopter crash at the club's stadium on October 27 including the club's owner Srivaddhanaprabha. (AFP)

AFP  
London

Leicester have confirmed their Premier League clash at Cardiff will go ahead on Saturday following the tragic death of owner Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha.

Thai billionaire Vichai was among five people killed when his helicopter crashed outside Leicester's King Power Stadium following Saturday's match against West Ham.

With mourners flocking to the stadium and the crash site cordoned off as investigators picked through the wreckage, Leicester had already postponed Tues-

day's scheduled home League Cup tie against Southampton.

But the club announced on Tuesday that they will make the trip to south Wales to face Cardiff this weekend.

A minute's silence will be observed before kick-off at the Cardiff City Stadium and players will wear black armbands in Vichai's honour.

"Leicester City's Premier League fixture at Cardiff City this Saturday will go ahead as scheduled, as the club continues its tributes to its late chairman, Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha," a statement read.

"An announcement on the rearrangement of the club's League Cup fourth round tie against

Southampton, postponed earlier this week, will be made in due course."

Cardiff chief executive Ken Choo was respectful of Leicester's wish to return to action seven days after the horrific accident.

"Following Saturday evening's terrible events at King Power Stadium, the thoughts and feelings of Leicester City FC are at the forefront of our minds," Choo said.

"As such, we will be offering our support to Leicester City in any way necessary in respect of this weekend's fixture."

The death of the charismatic Vichai has stunned the football world, with tributes pouring in

from around the globe. Vichai's heavy investment after buying Leicester in 2010 transformed the unglamorous club into shock Premier League champions as 5,000-1 outsiders in 2016.

The 60-year-old was widely admired in Leicester for his charitable donations to the local community.

That warmth was reflected in the outpouring of grief following the news of Vichai's death.

Vichai's son Aiyawatt and widow Aimon walked through a sea of tributes from fans outside the stadium on Monday, including flowers, football scarves and Buddhist statues.

Vichai's son is chief executive

of his father's duty-free empire King Power and also vice-chairman of Leicester.

Aiyawatt was joined by the Leicester team, including striker Jamie Vardy, centre-back Harry Maguire and keeper Kasper Schmeichel, with the group pausing in reflection in front of the flow-

ers. Leicester have also opened a book of condolence in memory of Vichai in a marquee at the stadium, while the City Hall and County Hall will light up in blue this week to honour Vichai.

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB) are still conducting their investigation into what caused Saturday's tragedy.

SPOTLIGHT

## Wenger vows to return in 2019

AFP  
London

Arsene Wenger has promised he will be back in football management at the start of 2019, but the Frenchman does not yet know at which club.

The 69-year-old veteran boss ended his 22-year reign at Premier League side Arsenal at the end of last season but insisted at the time he was not yet finished with football.

Asked when he would be back in management, Wenger told Sky Sports yesterday: "At the beginning of the year."

"It will seem odd to go somewhere else but I can't tell you (where) because I don't know where I'll be. I'll be somewhere - but I don't know where. I have had a good rest and watched football a lot. I have many good memories, so I miss them."

Meanwhile Wenger, whose final seasons in charge of Arsenal saw the once mighty Gunners struggling to contend for the English title, was pleased by the north London giants' start to this season.

Under new manager Unai Emery, Arsenal are currently

fourth in the table, just four points behind Premier League leaders and reigning champions Manchester City, despite losing their first two league games this term.

"When Arsenal win I am happy," said Wenger. "I felt I worked very hard and I think I left it (the club) in good shape."

"After that, I'm a supporter like anyone else - I want them to win football games."

He added: "As a manager you have an influence, not only on the careers of players, the style of play and results but on the structure and impact you give to the club and overall that is very important - that the club can always continue at a very good level."

Wenger, in a separate interview with talkSPORT radio, was asked if Arsenal could win the Premier League this season, having last been crowned champions of England under him in the 2003/04 campaign.

"Why not?," he replied. "When you look at last season at home we won 15, drew two and lost two - it's away we were not good enough."

"But overall the quality's there. They have a chance - but at the moment we have some other teams who look very strong as well."



## UEFA 'closely monitoring' Wembley pitch for Spurs-PSV clash

European soccer's governing body UEFA said it is keeping a close eye on the playing conditions at Wembley Stadium for Tottenham Hotspur's upcoming Champions League match against PSV Eindhoven.

Repeated delays to Spurs' new stadium have meant they have had to play additional matches at Wembley amid other sporting events already booked in at England's major arena. Tottenham's 1-0 defeat by Manchester City in the Premier League on Monday came a day after an NFL match on the same pitch between the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Philadelphia Eagles.

The playing surface retained significant and visible wear and tear as well as gridiron line markings from the NFL event and UEFA said it was concerned with making sure the conditions were safe for the Champions League Group B match.

"UEFA is closely monitoring

the situation at the Wembley Stadium and working together with the Club, The Football Association and the management of the stadium, to guarantee safe playing conditions for the upcoming UEFA Champions League match," the body said in an email to Reuters.

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola was critical of the pitch on Monday, blaming it for errors from both sides. Both Tottenham and PSV need to win next week to have any realistic hope of reaching the last 16 of the Champions League.

Tottenham were originally due to move into their new 62,000-seater stadium in August but the opening has repeatedly pushed back. Last week the north London club announced the opening would not be until 2019. They are in their second season playing at Wembley having moved out of their White Hart Lane ground in May 2017.

FOCUS

# 'Sociopolitical factors no hindrance for journalists'

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

The AIPS president Gianni Merlo yesterday stressed that despite the sociopolitical or geographical roadblocks, a journalist can still be independent or vociferous in his writing.

"Yes, if he wants. Yes he can be independent and I am one of them," said Merlo. He was speaking on the sidelines of the AIPS Executive Committee/Jury Meet, yesterday.

"In many countries they live in a difficult situation, but this doesn't mean we are judging anybody. We are only judging 9th (entries) from the journalistic point of view; it's not the politics that is moving us."

"For example, today we saw an article that sent to jail the president the country's football federation. The journalist even got sued for it, but he won."

"So, we know how to judge and everybody here is free minded. The problem is that there are a lot of journalists, who are doing a good job (and that makes our job difficult)."

He also pointed out that regulation match reports have become redundant today. "Match report... who cares, now you have television, you can see the entire match there."

The future of journalism are the contents

of your article that are opinions or points or colour pieces that are completely new and you have to write them with photos and everything, so it is a different thing."

"See most often the reader knows the result before he reads the newspaper also in most cases the result is written write at the top of the article so the reader is looking for an opinion," he added.

Earlier, the AIPS President even spoke about the criteria adopted for selecting the best entries.

"Here we are choosing the journalists that are going to the semi-finals, so nobody is a loser. So it is only a criteria; the criteria of journalism and so on... and we are very satisfied as the level of the entries is very good."

No one is not accepted, it is only that if there is somebody that has more meaning, doesn't mean that the other journalist is less. It depends on the articles that he has decided to submit. It may be possible that the journalist may not have submitted his best piece."

The primary objective of the Meet is to shortlist the candidates for the 'AIPS Sport Media Awards' scheduled for Lausanne, Switzerland, in January 2019.

AIPS president Gianni Merlo (centre) during AIPS Executive Committee/Jury Meet in Doha, yesterday.



## SPOTLIGHT

# Qatar Airways becomes CONMEBOL's airline partner

The multi-year agreement will provide Qatar Airways with maximum exposure in South America

Qatar Airways has announced that it is the Official Global Airline Partner of The South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL), adding another strong sporting partnership to its expanding portfolio. The agreement was signed at a ceremony that took place in Doha yesterday at the Oryx Rotana hotel, attended by Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar al-Baker, and the Secretary-General from CONMEBOL, José Manuel Astigarraga, and Qatar Football Association Board Member Ahmed al-Buainain.

The multi-year agreement will provide Qatar Airways with maximum exposure in South America, while strengthening the airline's global sponsorship portfolio. As part of the agreement, Qatar Airways will be the sponsor of CONMEBOL's professional football club competitions across South America for the next 4.5 years, with immediate effect through 2022, including the Copa CONMEBOL Libertadores, South America's most prestigious football competition, as well as the Copa CONMEBOL Sudamericana and the CONMEBOL Recopa.

The agreement was negotiated on behalf of CONMEBOL by FC Diez Media, the joint venture between IMG and Perform Group, set up exclusively to service the confederation.

CONMEBOL is the continental governing body of football in South America and is one of FIFA's six continental confederations. The entity is responsible for the organisation and governance of South American football's major international tournaments.



Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar al-Baker, and the Secretary-General from CONMEBOL, José Manuel Astigarraga, sealing the sponsorship agreement yesterday.

Described as the "toughest qualifiers in the world", CONMEBOL national teams have won nine FIFA World Cups, and CONMEBOL clubs have won 22 Intercontinental Cups and four FIFA Club World Cups.

Akbar al-Baker, said: "Qatar Airways is thrilled to partner with CONMEBOL, which is the oldest continental confederation in the world. We are continually striving to boost our global sporting sponsorship portfolio, and this partnership is just one more example of our dedication to the sports

sector. We are also excited to further expand our presence in South America, and look forward to supporting the forthcoming CONMEBOL football competitions."

CONMEBOL President, Alejandro Dominguez, said: "We are proud to

embark on this journey with Qatar Airways, one of the world's most prestigious airlines, to drive football development in South America. CONMEBOL's competitions have a rich heritage and offer some of the world's most exciting and competitive professional football. And thanks to recent improvements, our tournaments are also among the world's fastest growing. Naturally, we're delighted to partner with Qatar Airways, the world's fastest growing airline, to bring our continents closer together through sport and build a brighter future for all of South American football."

Qatar Airways, the first-ever airline partner for CONMEBOL's club competitions, will leverage high brand association and large audience visibility at all 260 matches in both year-long competitions across the South American continent, and will feature beginning with the CONMEBOL Libertadores semi-finals on 31 October.

The airline will also be the presenting and sole partner for the Recopa Sudamericana, the home and away fixture between the champions of CONMEBOL Libertadores and CONMEBOL Sudamericana.

Qatar Airways has long celebrated its strong ties with South America; earlier this year the airline announced it was the Official Jersey Sponsor of the world-renowned Argentinian football club the Boca Juniors through the 2022/23 season. In addition, Qatar Airways Group acquired 10 per cent of South American LATAM Airlines Group in December 2016 through a strategic investment, further

strengthening ties with the continent.

Qatar Airways holds an extensive global sports portfolio, sponsoring some of the biggest teams around the world. In addition to its existing partnership with the German football club giants FC Bayern München AG, for which it is a Platinum Partner, Qatar Airways also recently revealed multi-year sponsorship agreements with Italian football club AS Roma, for which it is the Official Jersey Sponsor, and with Argentinian football club Boca Juniors, for which it is the Official Jersey Sponsor.

Earlier this month, the airline announced that it is the Official Global Airline Partner of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets and the team's home, Barclays Center, the Brooklyn, New York venue that hosts many of the world's most exciting entertainment and sporting events.

In May 2017, Qatar Airways announced a groundbreaking sponsorship deal with FIFA, which saw the award-winning airline become the Official Partner and Official Airline of FIFA until 2022. The partnership, one of the biggest sporting sponsorships in the world, will give Qatar Airways extensive marketing and branding rights at the 2022 World Cup Qatar™, with an expected audience reach of more than two billion people. The agreement sees Qatar Airways become the Official Airline Partner of the FIFA Club World Cup, the FIFA Women's World Cup, the FIFA Under-20 and Under 17 World Cups, the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup, and the FIFA Interactive World Cup.

## FOOTBALL

## Confident Qatar take on S Korea in semis today



Qatar U-19 coach Bruno Pinheiro guides a training session in Bogor, Indonesia, yesterday.

AFC  
Bogor, Indonesia

Qatar U-19 coach Bruno Pinheiro has called on young charges to remain focused on the task at hand – winning the Asian title – instead of adopting a relaxed approach because they have already qualified for next year's FIFA U-20 World Cup in Poland.

The Qatar young guns will take on South Korea today in the semi-finals of the AFC U-19 Championship in what promises to be yet another thrilling battle. The winners get to play either Japan or Saudi Arabia, who will be contesting the other semi-final.

"It is sometimes normal for a team to relax a little after qualifying for something such as a World Cup," Pinheiro declared.

"We will not be relaxing though. Of course, it was important for us to reach the World Cup so that we could pit ourselves against the planet's best players and coaches, but this team has the potential to go even further (in this competition).

"It is now a question of preparing the team both physically and mentally. We always want to win every game we play, and I am not expecting anything different from my team against South Korea."

High scoring games have been a feature of Qatar's campaign thus far, with a 6-5 group stage defeat of Indonesia and a 7-3 win over

Thailand in the quarter-finals amongst their successes.

With the Qataris just two wins away from repeating their 2014 title success, Pinheiro is adamant however that his side's approach will not change in the semi-finals where they will be without the suspended Ahmed Suhail.

"South Korea are a difficult team, and it will be a very tough game for us, but we will play our usual brand of football, which is to have the ball as much as possible and to make the most of our possession in the final third," he said.

"We are not about to change our approach. It really does not matter if you win 5-4 or if you win 1-0. The most important thing is to win."

Meanwhile, South Korean head coach Chung Jung-yong has urged his boys to take a confident approach into the match.

Chung's talented charges topped Group C and then saw off Tajikistan in the quarter-finals – a win which guaranteed them a place at next year's FIFA U-20 World Cup.

With South Korea's initial target already achieved, Chung is hoping for even greater things from his side as they continue their hunt for what would be a 13th AFC U-19 Championship title.

"My players have been under a lot of pressure during this tournament, but I believe now is the time for them to approach the game with more confidence rather than be

affected by any pressure," he said ahead of the encounter at Bogor's Pakansari Stadium.

"I think that the situation has told on us at times, and because of it we have not always played as well as we know we can. Nevertheless, we have reached the semi-finals, so I hope my team will forget about the pressure surrounding the game and do their very best against Qatar.

"The first goal for all the teams here was obviously to qualify for the World Cup. Now we have done that, the game against Qatar is not only a crucial semi-final, but also the first step in our preparation for the World Cup."

Korea Republic's plans will not, however, include striker Oh Se-hun who is serving a one-match ban after picking up yellow cards against Vietnam and Tajikistan.

Despite the 19-year-old's absence, Chung believes the Koreans have enough quality in reserve to cope, and is viewing the chance to utilise alternative personnel as a distinct positive. "Our players are still young, and they have been preparing for a long time for this competition both back home and here in Indonesia. We have some of the squad who are taking more time to recover after the last match, some who are carrying knocks and one who is suspended," he explained.

"There are also, of course, players who have not had an opportunity to feature much, this is therefore a great opportunity for them to do just that."

## SQUASH

## Peru's Elias stuns ElShorbagy in last 8



Diego Elias of Peru (front) in action against top seed Mohamed ElShorbagy of Egypt in the quarter-finals of the Qatar Classic yesterday. The Peruvian advanced to the last 4 with an upset victory.

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

Diego Elias of Peru pulled off a huge upset as he defeated defending champion and world number one Mohamed ElShorbagy of Egypt to reach the semi-finals of the 2018 Qatar Classic – the PSA World Tour Platinum event yesterday.

At the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex the eight seed overcame the Egyptian, who was aiming for his fourth title in Qatar, 11-8, 11-13, 13-11, 10-12, 11-7, in 76 minutes.

"I'm really happy to be into the semis of a major event for the first time in my career and to do it by beating the World No.1 is special," Elias said.

In the semi-finals, Elias will meet Germany's Simon Rosner.

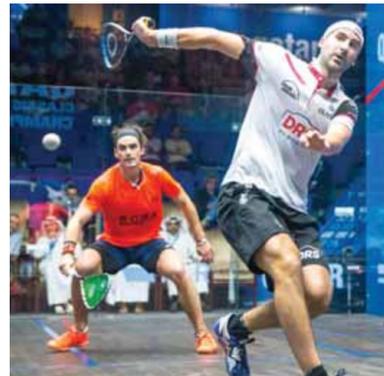
"I have a big opportunity now and I don't want to waste it so I will do everything I can to recover for tomorrow and come back and do my best against Rosner. It will be tough against him – we've only played once before and he smashed me – but I'm feeling good and hopefully I can play well," Elias said.

Earlier in the day, Rosner defeated New Zealand's Paul Coll 3-1 (8-11, 11-9, 11-4, 12-10) to book a place in semi-finals.

"I'm trying to improve constantly and put in everything that I can. I have good memories from here last year, it's good to be back at the semis and it's time to prepare for a really tough battle tomorrow," said Rosner.

In the second semi-final, Egypt's Tarek Momen will be against compatriot Ali Farag. Farag defeated 2016 champion Karim Abdel Gawad in straight games (11-9, 11-7, 11-8) in their quarter-finals earlier in the day.

Farag was delighted with his maiden semi-final spot.



German Simon Rosner goes for a shot against New Zealand's Paul Coll. PICTURE: Jayan Orma

"I'm very, very happy to be into the semis. I haven't been in the semis in Qatar, so I had my eye on this one but it's too early to celebrate – hopefully I can go all the way!" he said.

Third seed Tarek Momen of Egypt won 3-1 (8-11, 11-6, 14-12, 11-6) against Welsh's Joel Makin in the quarter-finals.

## RESULTS

[4] Simon Rosner (Ger) bt [7] Paul Coll (Nz) 3-1 (8-11, 11-9, 11-4, 12-10) (64m)  
[8] Diego Elias (Per) bt [1] Mohamed Elshorbagy (Egy) 3-2 (11-8, 11-13, 13-11, 10-12, 11-7) (76m)  
[2] Ali Farag (Egy) bt [6] Karim Abdel Gawad (Egy) 3-0 (11-9, 11-7, 11-8) (45m)  
[3] Tarek Momen (Egy) bt Joel Makin 3-1 (8-11, 11-6, 14-12, 11-6) (Wal)